

lit: unica in perferendo cruciati au-
quitate ac lenitate. Si osculo prod-
oarguit quidem, sed non percutit: si
o corripitur, ita exprobrat, ut tamen
atur: si zelo inflammatus Malchi au-
gladio præcide
loco suo resti
tus profugiat,
miticum adve
, poposceris,
latronem ob
acceperit, eun
lifum introdu
fti benigna on
fti passiones: q
majus ac præf
mortem ipia
lerit, nos con
s & injurias a
s? **Quin** hæc c
atque etiam n
idete) de quit
differui. Hi de
hi templa, ne
quod viva vive
næ vivæ, holo

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH



ORIGEN

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS, BOOKS 6-10

icia perfecta, Diī denique, Trinitatis
atæ beneficio. Hi populos habent, nos
los: hi temeritatem & audaciam, nos
n: hi minas, nos orationes: hi quod per-
ant, nos quod ferimus: hi aurum & ar-
am, nos repurgatam doctrinam. Feci-
i⁴² duplices & triplices contignatio-
(agnosce Scripturæ verba) domum
atilem, fenestris distinctam: at hæc
lum fide mea sublimiora sunt, nec cœ-
l quos tendo. At mihi grex exiguus?
a præcipitia non fertur. At angusta mi-
ala? sed quæ lupis non pateat, sed quæ
nem non admittat, nec a furibus, & ex-
transcendatur. Nec dubito quin eam
que latiore aliquando visurus sim.
os enim ex his, qui nunc in lupo-
ero sunt, inter oves, ac fortasse etiam
e pastores, recensendos habeo. Hoc⁴¹

τῆς ἐν τῷ πάθῃ μακροθυμίας ἀ-
τι προδοθῆ. ἐλέγχει μὲν, ἔπλη-
ἄφνω συλληφθῆ, ὀνειδίζῃ μὲν, ἐπι-
μαχαίρα Μάλχῃ τέμνης τὸ ἄν-

ἀποκαλασῆ
ρισελεῖ καὶ
τῆς ἀγούλας
διὰ κακίαν
εἰσάξῃ διὰ
λανθρόπῃ,
ἔπαθημά
Θεῶ καὶ θαν-
ομοίοις μηδὲ
τὸς δὲ καὶ
ῶμα, καὶ σκ-
ἢ πολλάνικ
τοὶ τῆς οἴκῃ
ῃ, ἡμεῖς τὸν
ἴν! Ⓞ καὶ ζ
ματὰ λογικ
ἀδ Ⓞ ἡρω

ἔτοι δῆμας, ἡμεῖς ἀγγέλως ἔτ
πίσω ἡμεῖς ἔτοι τὸ ἀπειλεῖν, ἢ
εὐχεσθαι ἔτοι τὸ βάλλειν, ἡμε
ἔτοι χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον, ἡμεῖς
φαρμένον. ἐποίησας σεαυτῶν διῶρ
ροφα; γινῶθι τὰ ῥήματα τῶ γραφ
πισὸν, διεσαλμένον θυρίσιν, ἀλλ
τῆ ἔμῃς πίσεως ὑψηλότερα καὶ τ
ἔς φέρομαι. μικρὸν μοι τὸ ποιμ
ἐπὶ κρημνῶν φερόμενον. σενῆ μ
πλὴν λύκοις ἀνεπίδατ Ⓞ, π
δεχομένη λησῆν, ἔδὲ ὑπερβαινομ
καὶ ξένοις. ὄψομαι ταύτην εὐ οἴ
τυτέραν, πολλὰς καὶ τῶν νῦν λ
βάτοισ ἀριθμῆσαι με δεῖ τυχόν
τῆτο εὐαγγελίζεται μοι ὁ ποιμ

*THE FATHERS
OF THE CHURCH*

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 104

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

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ORIGEN
COMMENTARY ON THE
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
BOOKS 6–10

Translated by
THOMAS P. SCHECK

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ABBREVIATIONS

General

- ACW Ancient Christian Writers. New York: Newman Press, 1946- .
- AGLB *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der allateinischen Bibel. Aus der Geschichte der Lateinischen Bibel.* Freiburg: Herder, 1957.
- ANF Ante Nicene Fathers. 1890. Reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmanns, 1994.
- BAGD *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 5th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- CCL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954- .
- ChH *Church History.* Chicago: American Society of Church History, 1932- .
- CWE Collected Works of Erasmus. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974- .
- DCB *A Dictionary of Christian Biography.* Ed. W. Smith and H. Wace. London: J. Murray, 1887.
- FC Fontes Christiani. Freiburg: Heider, 1991- .
- FOTC The Fathers of the Church. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947- .
- GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897-1949. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953- .
- JThS *Journal of Theological Studies.* London, 1899- .
- LCC The Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953-66.
- LCL Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. London: W. Heinemann, 1899- .
- L&S *A Latin Dictionary.* Ed. C. T. Lewis and C. Short. 1879. Reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- LXX Septuagint.
- MT Masoretic Text.

- NPNF A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. 1890. Reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmanns, 1994.
- NRSV Bible: New Revised Standard Version.
- PG Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1857-66.
- PL Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1878-90.
- SP *Studia Patristica*.
- SPCK Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Ed G. Kittel. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-76.
- TS *Theological Studies*. Baltimore, 1940- .
- TU Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlicher Literatur. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1882-1949; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953- .
- VC *Vigiliae Christianae*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1947- .
- Vulg. Latin Vulgate.
- ZThK *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*. Tübingen, 1891- .

Works of Origen

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Comm in Cant</i> | <i>Commentary on Song of Songs</i> |
| <i>Comm in Jn</i> | <i>Commentary on John</i> |
| <i>Comm in Ps</i> | <i>Books on the Psalms</i> |
| <i>Orat</i> | <i>De Oratone = Treatise on Prayer</i> |

Aside from those noted above, abbreviations of patristic texts follow G. W. H. Lampe, ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.

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PREFATORY NOTE ON THE PRINTED EDITIONS

The *Editio Princeps* of Origen's Commentary was printed by Simon de Lueres (Simone de Lovere) in Venice, 1506.¹ The text had been discovered and restored by Theophilus Salodanus, a monk of an Italian order of mendicants devoted to St. Jerome. Salodanus wrongly attributed the Latin translation to Jerome rather than to Rufinus. In 1512 Jacques Merlin with Jean Petit and Josse Bade published in Paris a four volume complete Latin edition of Origen's writings. For the text of the *Commentary on Romans* Merlin used the edition of Salodanus. Again Jerome was credited with executing the Latin translation.² Erasmus of Rotterdam's edition of Origen was printed posthumously in Basel (Froben, 1536). He reprinted the edition of Merlin with small changes. Erasmus was the first to identify Rufinus, rather than Jerome, as the translator of Origen's *Commentary*. He describes the process that led to this detection in an addition to his Annotation to Romans 3.5 made in 1535.³ Erasmus's edition was much improved upon in the edition undertaken by the Benedictine Gilbertus Genebrardus, published in Paris in 1574.⁴ Two learned Benedictines, Charles Delarue and his nephew Vincent Delarue, published a great edition of Origen's works in Paris between 1733 and 1759. This edition was reprinted by J.-P. Migne and by Lommatzsch. Delarue's edition

1. For detailed information about this edition, see Max Schär, *Das Nachleben des Origenes im Zeitalter des Humanismus*, Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 140 (Basel & Stuttgart: Verlag Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1979), pp. 153–60.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 191–207.

3. CWE 56:94–96.

4. For the history of editions after Erasmus, see C. P. Hammond, "Notes on the Manuscripts and Editions of Origen's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans in the Latin Translation of Rufinus," *JThS*, n.s., 16 (1965): 338–57.

marks “the first real advance”⁵ from the edition of Salodrianus. They consulted not only the earlier editions but some other manuscripts. The critical edition by C. P. Hammond Bammel, on which the present translation is based, represents the fruit of years of research of the manuscript tradition of Rufinus’s Latin translation.⁶

5. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

6. C. P. Hammond Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes: Kritische Ausgabe der Übersetzung Rufins* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1990–98).

*THE FATHERS
OF THE CHURCH*

THE SIXTH BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

THEREFORE, DO NOT LET SIN *exercise dominion in your mortal body to make you obey its desires. And do not present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness; but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God as weapons of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*¹

(2) Above he says, “just as sin exercised dominion in death.”² Now, however, he has not said: Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in death, but he says, “Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal body.” By this he is teaching that sin has a certain seat and kingdom in the body.³ This is also what he has said elsewhere, “The prudence of the flesh is hostile to God”;⁴ and again, “The prudence of the flesh is death.”⁵ Moreover, the Apostle declares that all sins are the works of the flesh, which he says are “fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, unchasteness, idolatry, evil deeds, enmity, rivalries, jealousy, rage, contention, dissensions, heresies, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.”⁶ Now if you ask why heresies are also numbered among the works of the flesh, you will find that they too proceed from a mind of flesh. For this is how the Apostle speaks about a certain person, “He is puffed up without cause by the mind of his own flesh, and does not control his head.”⁷ We have said these things so that the comprehension of how sin exercises dominion in the body would become clearer.

(3) For all of those things that we have enumerated above as the works of the flesh are like a kind of army [of sin], conduct-

1. Rom 6.12–14.

3. Cf. 5.7.3.

5. Rom 8.6.

7. Col 2.18–19.

2. Rom 5.21.

4. Rom 8.7.

6. Gal 5.19–21; Col 3.5.

ing military operations under their king of sin and subject to its law, which is written in the members of the flesh. For it is certain that, in view of the fact that the flesh offers obedience to the desires of sin, [M1056] “the flesh desires contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit contrary to the flesh; and these are opposed to each other.”⁸

(4) But notice that when the Apostle gives the command, saying, “Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal body, to make you obey its desires,” he is showing that the matter lies within our power, that sin should not exercise dominion in our body. For unless it were in our power that sin should not exercise dominion in us, he would not have given the command at all. So how is it possible for sin not to exercise dominion in our flesh? If we do what the Apostle himself says, “Put to death your members that are earthly,”⁹ and if “we always carry around in our body the death of Christ.”¹⁰ For it is certain that where the death of Christ is being carried around, it is not possible for sin to exercise dominion. For the power of the cross of Christ¹¹ is so great that when it is placed before the eyes and when it is faithfully retained in one’s mind so that the attentive eye of the mind should be fastened on the death of Christ, no [sinful] desire, no lust, no feeling of rage, no sin of envy will be able to get the upper hand; in its presence the entire army of sin and the flesh, which we enumerated above, is at once put to flight. But in fact sin itself does not exist since its substance could never exist except in works and deeds. So then, there is within us both the desire of sin, which has a kingdom in the flesh, and there is also the Spirit’s desire, which has a kingdom in the mind, according to what we said above that, “The flesh desires contrary to the Spirit but the Spirit desires contrary to the flesh.”¹² Consequently, when we desire what is not permissible or what is not befitting or what is not profitable, that is the desire of the flesh. But when our soul desires and faints for [M1057] the time when it may see the salvation of God,¹³ that is the desire of the Spirit.

8. Gal 5.17.

10. 2 Cor 4.10.

12. Gal 5.17.

9. Col 3.5.

11. Cf. 5.10.14.

13. Cf. Ps 84.2; Ps 119.81.

(5) And so, it seems that the soul is a mean, as it were, between the flesh and the Spirit.¹⁴ And certainly, if it unites itself with the flesh to obey the desires of sin, it becomes one body with it; but if it unites itself with the Lord it becomes one spirit with him, according to what has been said, “For whoever unites himself with a prostitute, he is one body; but whoever unites himself with the Lord he is one spirit.”¹⁵ You should not be surprised that he calls the flesh a prostitute, who is subject to all the vices and sins we have enumerated above, as if to the most shameless lovers.

(6) I wonder, however, why here he has added, “in your mortal body,” when it surely would have sufficed to say, “Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your body.” Why is the word “mortal” added, as if anyone would in fact doubt that the body is mortal? But it appears to me that not even this word has he added without reason. For by this means he has reminded [us] how it is possible for sin not to exercise dominion in the body according to what he had also said elsewhere, “The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.”¹⁶ So then, if we realize that our body can be put to death and become dead to sin, then it can come to pass that sin would not exercise dominion in it. For in accordance with this, anyone who dies is said to be justified from sin.¹⁷ For a dead man does not lust or become angry or rage or rob what belongs to others. If therefore we restrain the lust of the body from all these things, the body is said to be dead to sin. And this is what the Apostle’s adjective in the present passage seems to impress upon us when he says, “in your mortal body.”

(7) Someone else will possibly say that he has called this body in which we now live “mortal” to distinguish it from another body that is immortal. But the same Apostle says elsewhere that the body is immortal when he says, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and the mortal must put on immortality”;¹⁸ and there is no doubt but that, when immortality has

14. Cf. 1.5.3 to Rom 1.3-4; 1.10.2; 1.18.5.

15. 1 Cor 6.16-17.

17. Rom 6.7.

16. Rom 8.10.

18. 1 Cor 15.53.

been attained, the body, which is now mortal, would be made immortal.

(8) After this thing follows, "Do not present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness; [M1058] but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God as weapons of righteousness." Notice in every instance Paul's wisdom and wherein he makes use of critical distinctions. When he says that the weapons are not to be offered either to sin or to wickedness, he does not put "your-selves" but "your members." Yet where he is persuading us to present ourselves to God, he wants that we ourselves, that is to say, our soul and purpose, be presented to God, before our members, so that when we have first presented ourselves to God and have cleaved to him, it is only then that our members as well may become weapons of righteousness to God. For just as they are called holy hands that have served in doing holy works, as the Apostle says, "lifting up holy hands without wrath and dispute";¹⁹ and, on the other hand, they are called hands full of blood²⁰ that have served in the shedding of blood, so also in the present passage the members that are devoted to sin and wickedness are called weapons of wickedness. On the other hand, if we put to death the desire of sin in our mortal body and if we labor in the doing of righteousness and render service to righteousness with all our members, we become like those who are alive from the dead; that is to say, dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Consequently, our members as well may become weapons of righteousness to God. He has admirably preserved the metaphor he proposed earlier so that, because he had [previously] said that sin exercises a dominion, he could call the members weapons of sin and so that our members may become weapons of righteousness for God, the king.

(9) After these things follows, "For sin will have no dominion over you; since you are not under law but under grace."²¹ Notice even here the marvelous caution in the Apostle's words. When he is speaking about us, he says, "Sin will have no dominion

19. 1 Tm 2.8.
21. Rom 6.14.

20. Cf. Is 1.15.

ion over you,” but when he was speaking about the Savior, he did not say: Sin will have no dominion over him—for it was not fitting to speak this way about him—but he says, “Death will no longer exercise dominion over him.”²² For there was room for death in him, but not for sin. On the other hand, it was not fitting to be said about us: Death will not exercise dominion over you—for that is something we cannot avoid—but, “Sin will not exercise dominion over you,” sin that, doubtless, he knew we are able to avoid, according to what we have said above, if we put to death the desires of the flesh, in which sin was able to exercise dominion. For [M1059] this is why he includes, “since you are not under law but under grace.” He is apparently showing by this that we are not under that law that is present in our members, which he says fights against the law of our mind.²³ For it is certain that whoever puts to death his own members would not be under the law of the members but under the grace of God. Concerning this law he also says elsewhere that “the law is the power of sin.”²⁴ But if anyone would like to interpret this as referring to the law of Moses, he will doubtless say that we are not to be under the law of the letter, which kills, but under the law of the Spirit, who makes alive.²⁵ This law he has called “grace” in this passage.²⁶

2. *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*²⁷

(2) This seems to be similar to the saying we explained above, “What then shall we to say? Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means!”²⁸ Therefore one and same explanation should suffice for either passage. The only difference seems to be that what he says above, “What then? Shall we continue in sin?” seems to be said to those who have not yet forsaken sin. They must not continue in it, since they seem to be in it still. Here, however, the question seems to come from those who have already forsaken sin. In the former

22. Rom 6.9.

24. 1 Cor 15.56.

26. Cf. 6.8.5 n. 186.

28. Rom 6.1.

23. Cf. Rom 7.23.

25. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

27. Rom 6.15.

passage he was speaking of a kind of grace that was not yet present, that it might abound; but here he speaks as if the grace is already present, “because we are not under law but under grace.”

3. *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone for obedience as slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, for the righteousness either of sin or of obedience? But thanks be to God that you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed from the heart in the form of teaching to which you were handed over. Having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.*²⁹

(2) The expression may perhaps appear to be incomplete because he says, “You are slaves of the one whom you obey, for the righteousness either of sin or of obedience.” For reason would have required that it be said: You are slaves of the one whom you obey, through the obedience either of sin or of righteousness. But I think it superfluous to expect skillful construction of words in a man who freely admits his own lack of training in speech since his meaning is clear.³⁰

(3) So then, this is what the Apostle teaches in this passage: Each person has it within his own power and in the efficacy of his [free] will that he should become either a slave of sin or of righteousness. For to whichever side he renders obedience and to whichever side he wants to submit, that side claims him [Μ1ο6ο] as its slave. In this, as I have said, he is showing with no hesitation that there is freedom of will in us. For it rests with us to offer our obedience either to righteousness or to sin.

(4) “But no one can serve two masters at the same time,” sin and righteousness. “For either he will hate the one,” sin, of course, and “will love the other,” i.e., righteousness; or “he will endure the one,” sin obviously, and will “despise the other,” i.e., righteousness.³¹ Similar to this, then, is what the Apostle has also said, “You are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin or of righteousness.” Moreover, “Everyone who practices sin

29. Rom 6.16–18. The words “unto death” (εἰς θάνατον) are missing from v. 16.

30. Cf. 2 Cor 11.6. See also Preface of Origen (1).

31. Mt 6.24.

is a slave of sin,"³² has this in view, although he has not gone on to say: And everyone who practices righteousness is a slave of righteousness. Someone else may perhaps think he left this out because it was to be understood, as it were, from the ensuing material. It seems to me, however, that it is deliberately not added. For it was not fitting to be said that everyone who practices righteousness is a slave of righteousness. For even God himself practices righteousness, but he cannot on that account be called a slave of righteousness, but rather the Lord of righteousness. Thus not everyone who practices righteousness is a slave of righteousness in the same way that everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin. For it can hardly be doubted that even the devil himself is a slave of sin, since he withdrew from service to righteousness and rebelled in the presence of the almighty Lord, for which he was also named an apostate.³³

(5) Therefore it is established from these words in which Paul says, "To whom you present yourselves for obedience as slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin or of righteousness," that we present ourselves by our own accord, with no one forcing us either to serve sin or righteousness, through our obedience. Therefore we ought always to remember these things and not bring forth worthless complaints as an excuse for sin: "I sinned because the devil made me do it!" or, "under the compulsion of nature!" or, "my fated condition!" or, "[I sinned due to] the course of the stars!"³⁴ Rather, listen to the frank opinion of Paul in which he says, "To whom you present yourselves for obedience as slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin or of righteousness."

(6) After this he says, "Thanks be to God because you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed from the heart in the form of teaching to which you were handed over."³⁵ He seems to be saying these things to those whose life and advancement he has presupposed and concerning whom he had already said above, "I thank God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your

32. Jn 8.34.

33. Cf. Jb 40.20 LXX. See also *Princ* 1.5.5.

34. Cf. 6.4.2.

35. Rom 6.17.

faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.”³⁶ [M1061] Then as his next point he shows that all men serve, first of all, sin. For thus it is written, “There is no one righteous on the earth who does good and has not sinned.”³⁷ For first of all it is necessary for that which is written to be fulfilled in every man: “But when the commandment came sin revived.”³⁸ What follows, however, is said to few, namely to those who are already being freed from their faults: “Thanks be to God because you were slaves of sin but you obeyed from the heart in the form of teaching to which you were handed over.” So then, we were all slaves of sin, but when the form of teaching was handed over to us and when we chose to obey it, not in just any way whatsoever or with mere words, but from the heart, from the soul, with complete devotion, then we are liberated from servitude to sin and we become slaves of righteousness. Whence arises my apprehension that there may perhaps be a good number of us who indeed appear to have received the form of teaching about righteousness and who seem to obey righteousness, verbally by a public profession, but at heart we are obedient to sin, because the vices of the flesh are still exercising dominion within us. This is why, before all other matters, we need the mortification of the members that he has taught above.

(7) It must be investigated, I think, how, in what he says, “the form of teaching to which you were handed over,” each person is handed over. For we find it written that those who do not approve to acknowledge God, God hands them over according to the desires of their hearts to impurity to the degrading of their bodies among themselves;³⁹ and others who exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God he hands over to passions of disgrace.⁴⁰ We have discussed these matters in their own sections as well as we could. So then, here as well, God has handed over those who are to present themselves as slaves of righteousness through obedience, so that they might be instructed and trained in accordance with the form of teaching about righteousness.

36. Rom 1.8.

38. Rom 7.9.

40. Cf. Rom 1.23, 26.

37. Eccl 7.20.

39. Cf. Rom 1.28, 24.

(8) It also strikes me that he has not said, "By obeying from the heart the teaching to which you were handed over." Instead he put it, "the form of teaching." I do not think that the Apostle would understand "teaching" and "form of teaching" to be identical. On the contrary it seems to me that he would know that "the form of teaching" was less than "the teaching" itself. Indeed, now in the present life, while we are in the body and "this earthly tent burdens the very thoughtful mind,"⁴¹ we possess the form of teaching but not the teaching itself, just as the same Apostle says elsewhere, "But now we see in a mirror, in a riddle."⁴² But it is the teaching itself about which he says, "Then we shall see face to face."⁴³ For this reason as well, I think that in the present life [M1062] we may be able to attain to the form and shadow of the virtues, but then, when the perfect comes, to the virtues themselves.⁴⁴ And therefore it seems to me that the righteous man lives now more in the shadow of the virtues than in the virtues themselves. Possibly it is on this account that Jeremiah says in Lamentations, "The breath of our face is Christ the Lord, of whom we said, 'In his shadow we shall live among the nations.'"⁴⁵ Now if Christ is righteousness and wisdom and truth,⁴⁶ and we say, "In Christ's shadow we shall live among the nations," then we are living in the shadow of righteousness and in the shadow of wisdom and in the shadow of truth, even if we should seem to be righteous and wise and lovers of truth. It is on this account, then, that it is said, "If anyone imagines that he has known, he has not yet known as it ought to be known."⁴⁷ For perhaps even the Word of God himself will be known one way in the present condition of life, but otherwise when the perfect comes,⁴⁸ in accordance with the fact that, "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us."⁴⁹ Perhaps he will be perceived one way now in the form of a slave, but then in another way in the form of God and in equality to the Father.⁵⁰ On account of all these things we seem to live

41. Cf. 2 Cor 5.6; Wis 9.15. See also 3.2.14.

42. 1 Cor 13.12.

44. Cf. Heb 10.1; 1 Cor 13.10. See Preface of Origen (3); 10.10.3.

45. Lam 4.20.

47. 1 Cor 8.2.

49. Jn 1.14.

43. 1 Cor 13.12.

46. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6.

48. 1 Cor 13.10.

50. Cf. Phil 2.6-7.

among the nations either “in the form of teaching,” as the Apostle says, and not yet in the teaching itself, or “in the shadow of Christ,”⁵¹ as Jeremiah designated it, and not yet in Christ himself.

(9) “Having been set free from sin, then, you have become slaves of righteousness.”⁵² Here is the explanation of what he has said above. For if you are no longer enslaved to sin, it is certain that you have been set free from it and have become slaves of righteousness. But it is asked, Who is the one who frees from sin? Doubtless, the knowledge of the truth. For this is what Jesus was saying to the Jews who had believed in him: “If you believe my word, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”⁵³ Thus, it is the truth and the knowledge of the truth that sets one free from sin. Yet it is certain that everyone who would be set free from sin ought to serve righteousness. Now what we are saying, that a person should serve righteousness because righteousness is one member in the choir of the virtues, is just as if we had said that if anyone has been set free from sin, he will serve the truth and serve wisdom and serve chastity and serve piety. For this is how I perceive what has been said, “Open the gates of righteousness for me and entering them I shall confess to the Lord.”⁵⁴ Surely one who wants to confess to the Lord does not enter the gates of righteousness only, but also of truth and wisdom and piety and chastity. Indeed there is one palace for all the virtues, whose gates the righteous man demands to be thrown open for himself in the name of righteousness. [M1063]

4. *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and iniquity leading to unrighteousness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*⁵⁵

(2) Through these words the Apostle strikes a certain shame upon his hearers, that they might pay out to righteousness and

51. Lam 4.20.

53. Jn 8.31–32.

55. Rom 6.19.

52. Rom 6.18.

54. Ps 118.19.

sanctification at least as much obedience as they had previously bestowed on impurity and iniquity. What then could be put in more human terms? I mean, what could be so light, what could be so free from burden, which absolutely no weakness of the flesh can excuse? He says, "Just as you presented your members as slaves to iniquity leading to iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification." It is hardly a cause for boasting that one should be a slave to the virtues as much as one is to the vices. For righteousness ought to be esteemed far more and with much more earnestness. But I am behaving, he says, in human and general terms. I demand the same things, I seek similar things [from you]. A little while ago your feet were running off to the temples of demons; now let them run to the Church of God. Previously they were running off to shed blood;⁵⁶ now let them run out to save it. Earlier your hands were stretched forth to plunder the property of others; now stretch them forth to lavish your own goods upon others. Previously your eyes were looking around for a woman or some property to lust after;⁵⁷ now let them look around for the poor, the weak, the needy, in order to show them mercy. Your ears were formerly thrilled by listening to worthless talk and derogatory remarks⁵⁸ about good men; let them now be converted to hearing the word of God, to the explanation of the law, and to receiving wisdom's instruction. Let the tongue, which was accustomed to abuse, cursing, and obscene speech, now be converted to blessing the Lord at all times.⁵⁹ Let it bring forth wholesome and sincere speech so that it might give grace to the hearers and speak truth with its neighbor.⁶⁰ But what need is there to pursue every detail? After all, it is perfectly plain to you as well that in each of the members the service a person presented to the vices should apply to the virtues, and that the impulse that a person presented to uncleanness should now change to chastity and sanctification. It certainly seems that he has named righteousness here for all the virtues togeth-

56. Cf. Prv 1.16; Is 59.7.

58. Cf. Ex 23.1.

60. Cf. Eph 4.25; Zec 8.16.

57. Cf. Mt 5.28.

59. Cf. Ps 34.1.

er, just as, on the other hand, he set down iniquity for all the vices together. He has of course added, "righteousness [leading to] sanctification," whereby he was plainly commending the part of chastity both in a general way, in conjunction with the other virtues, and, specifically, as a virtue in and of itself. Moreover, observe how everywhere through these matters he notes the freedom of the will and shows that everyone has it within his own power that the services he was previously paying out to iniquity for iniquity should be paid out to righteousness and sanctification, once one's purpose has been converted to better things. [M1064] This could not be done at all if one's nature were fighting against this, as some think, or if the course of the stars opposed it.⁶¹

5. *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free of righteousness. So what fruit did you then have of which you now are ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves to God, you have your fruit leading to sanctification. But the end is eternal life.*⁶²

(2) In what sense someone may be a slave of sin has already been discussed adequately above⁶³ when we were explaining this passage: "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves for obedience as slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin or of righteousness?"⁶⁴ So then, when someone is serving sin as a slave, he is free of righteousness, that is to say, he is estranged from righteousness. For he says "free" here in the sense of "estranged," and rightly so. For no one can serve both sin and righteousness simultaneously, just as the Savior also has said, "No one can serve two masters."⁶⁵ But we have spoken more fully about these things above.

(3) A further point to be noted, of course, is that there is a blameworthy kind of freedom and a praiseworthy kind of servitude. For it is a reproach to be free of righteousness; but to be its slave is praiseworthy. Now when he speaks of someone be-

61. Cf. Preface of Origen (1) n. 3; 6.3.5.

62. Rom 6.20-22.

64. Rom 6.16.

63. Cf. 6.3.2-5.

65. Mt 6.24.

coming a slave of righteousness, understand that it is, at the same time, of wisdom, piety, chastity, and all the virtues together; just as, on the contrary, he who is a slave of sin is simultaneously a slave of evil desire, wrath, rage, unchastity, plundering, and all the vices and wicked behaviors at the same time. This is why we must always examine ourselves in everything we do and in each action consider whom we are serving, whether sin, leading to iniquity, or righteousness, leading to sanctification.⁶⁶

(4) He says, "So what fruit did you then have of which you now are ashamed? For the end of those things is death." Holy Scripture teaches that there is fruit both of the good and of the bad, as the Savior himself says in the Gospels, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad."⁶⁷ "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."⁶⁸ In these sayings the purpose and will of a man seems to be called a tree, either good or bad, and his works, its fruit. If, therefore, someone converts his soul and purpose to righteousness, doubtless, he is ashamed of and reprimands himself for his former deeds that he practiced while he was lying under sin[’s power]. For "the end of those things is death." Now my question is: Which death? Clearly this does not refer to the common death.⁶⁹ For after death no one is converted to righteousness or ashamed on account of his past evil deeds. Then which is it? Does he seem to speak of the death of sin, since "the soul that [M1065] sins shall die"?⁷⁰ Or is it more possible instead to understand that he speaks of that death by which we die to sin with Christ and by which we put an end to vices and wicked behavior, so that on this account he seems to say, "The end of those things is death"?

(5) "But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves to God, you have your fruit in sanctification, but the end is eternal life." He compares fruits with fruits. On the one hand the fruits of sin, for which now, that is, after they have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the

66. Rom 6.19.

68. Mt 7.18.

69. Cf. 5.1.19; 5.2.5; 5.4.2; 5.10.8-9.

70. Ezek 18.4. Cf. 4.5.10; 5.10.9; 6.6.4.

67. Mt 12.33.

saints are ashamed, are ended, he declares, by death. But he says that the fruits of righteousness, which consist in sanctification, receive their end in eternal life. In this, first of all, we must not overlook the fact that he was unwilling to identify in what the fruits of which we are now ashamed might consist; on the other hand, he does say that the fruit of those who have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God consists in sanctification. For we need to be reminded of good [fruits] more frequently than of bad. But he first made mention of bad fruits and their end, and afterwards of the fruits that consist in sanctification and of their end, which is eternal life. Observe how similar this is to that prophetic word by him who says, "I shall kill and I shall make alive"; and again, "I shall strike down and I shall heal";⁷¹ and once more in Job, "He himself inflicts pain and he grants healing; he strikes down and his hand heals."⁷² All these things have the following in view: First one must die with Christ so to live with him; first one must suffer with him so to reign with him.⁷³ For unless we first die to sin through repentance, we cannot live to God through righteousness.⁷⁴

(6) Moreover, what he said above, "Having been set free from sin you have become slaves to righteousness."⁷⁵ But now, though he could have said in a similar fashion, "Having been set free from sin," he has not said in like manner, "you have become slaves to righteousness," but, "you have become slaves to God."⁷⁶ This is no idle distinction. For through this it is shown that after someone has been set free from sin, he must, first of all, serve righteousness⁷⁷ and all the virtues together, so that from there he might ascend, by means of progress, to the point that he becomes a slave to God.⁷⁸ I grant that servitude to righteousness is servitude to God. For Christ is righteousness,⁷⁹ and to serve Christ is to serve God. Nevertheless, there is an order in the levels of advancement and there are degrees within the

71. Dt 32.39. Cf. 6.6.6.

73. Cf. 2 Tm 2.11-12.

75. Rom 6.18.

77. Rom 6.18.

79. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

72. Jb 5.18.

74. Rom 6.11.

76. Rom 6.22.

78. Rom 6.22.

virtues. And this is the reason Christ is said to reign, certainly according to this, that he is righteousness, until the fullness of the virtues is accomplished in each individual; but when the measure of perfection has been fulfilled, at that time it is said that he hands over “the kingdom to God, even the Father,”⁸⁰ so that now “God might be all in all.”⁸¹

(7) Moreover, I believe that, since we have said that the Apostle had made a comparison [M1066] between bad fruits and good fruits, it must still be observed that here at any rate, where he was speaking about bad fruits, he did not say: You had your fruit, of which you are ashamed; but he said, “So what fruit did you have?” But where he is speaking about good fruits he adds the word “your.” For so he writes: “You have your fruit in sanctification.” By this it seems to me that he is pointing out that bad fruit, i.e., fruit of which one should be ashamed and for which one should repent, is not our fruit. For God has not planted a bad tree in us that would produce bad fruits,⁸² as he himself says through the prophet, “I have planted you as a completely genuine and fruit-bearing vine. How then did you change into the bitterness of a foreign vine?”⁸³ So then, even though we may produce bad fruits, they are not our own but foreign to us, that is to say, they belong to sin; but if we produce good fruits in sanctification, they are our fruits. For human nature has received from the Creator the charge that it should bear these fruits.⁸⁴ But the foreign fruits within us have not been sown by God. Do you want to know that God does not sow bad fruits? Listen to him speaking in the Gospel, “‘Did we not sow good seed in the field? Where then did these weeds come from?’ And he answered, ‘An enemy did this.’”⁸⁵ Would you like to learn more extensively that the fruits of our flesh are not our own but someone else’s? The Lord himself once again says in the Gospel, “If you have not been faithful with someone else’s property, who will give you your own?”⁸⁶ So then, in the mystery of a profound matter the Apostle did not add the word “your”

80. 1 Cor 15.24.

82. Cf. Mt 7.17.

84. Cf. Gn 1.28.

86. Lk 16.12.

81. 1 Cor 15.28.

83. Jer 2.21.

85. Mt 13.27-28.

to "bad fruit"; but concerning good fruit he says, "You have your fruit in sanctification."

(8) But he says that those whom he reports serve God are more perfect than those whom he had first said, serve righteousness.⁸⁷ From this it is likewise proven that he assumed that their fruit consisted in sanctification.⁸⁸ Those who can be understood here are those who have vowed themselves to chastity and to continence. But those whom he has said are slaves to righteousness⁸⁹ can seem to be those who, though they are married, nevertheless exert themselves for the sake of righteousness and all the virtues.⁹⁰

(9) Now concerning eternal life, although we have frequently spoken about this subject in other places,⁹¹ nevertheless I ought to touch briefly upon it also in the present passage. In the Scriptures "eternity" is sometimes recorded because the end is not known, but sometimes because the time period designated does not have an end in the present age, though it does end in the future. Sometimes a period of time or even the length of one man's life may be designated as eternity, as, for example, is written in the law concerning a Hebrew slave. It says, "But if the slave loves his wife and children and wants to remain in servitude, for her sake [M1067] you should pierce his ear on a door-post with an awl; and he will be your slave eternally."⁹² No doubt he takes for granted that "eternal" here is the period of a man's life. And again in Ecclesiastes it is said, "A generation comes, and a generation goes, but the earth stands eternally."⁹³ Here "eternal" points to the time period of the present age. But where it says eternal life, we must take into consideration what the Savior himself has said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent";⁹⁴ and again, "I am the way and the truth and the life."⁹⁵ The same Apostle also says elsewhere, "We

87. Cf. Rom 6.18.

89. Rom 6.18.

90. Cf. 1.1.2, where he also compares marriage and virginity and rates the latter higher.

91. Cf. 2.5.8; 2.7.4-5; 3.1.15.

93. Eccl 1.4.

95. Jn 14.6.

88. Rom 6.19.

92. Ex 21.5-6.

94. Jn 17.3.

shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air and so we shall always be with the Lord."⁹⁶ Therefore in the same way that our always being with the Lord has no end, so also we must believe that eternal life also has no end.

6. *For the wages of sin is death, but the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.*⁹⁷

(2) What he said, "the wages of sin is death," is similar to what he had said above, "But the end of those things is death."⁹⁸ Of what things? Doubtless of those things on account of which "you are now ashamed,"⁹⁹ whose fruits he does not even deem worth mentioning. And again, "But the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," is similar to what he has said, "You have your fruit in sanctification, but the end is eternal life."¹⁰⁰ He admirably preserves the metaphor, i.e., the military figure he set down at the beginning, as he says that the wages owed to those serving as soldiers under King Sin, or rather, to those who submit to his tyranny, are discharged in death. But it was not worthy of God to give his soldiers wages as something owed, but as a gift and a grace, which is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(3) In my opinion even what he has added to "eternal life," namely, "in Christ Jesus our Lord," is not void of meaning. But perhaps he wanted it to be known that "eternal life" alone is one thing, whereas "eternal life in Christ Jesus" is something else. For even those who will rise in eternal disorder and disgrace¹⁰¹ certainly have eternal life, yet not eternal life in Christ Jesus, but in eternal disorder and disgrace. The righteous, on the other hand, who rise in eternal life, have eternal life in Christ Jesus.

(4) So then, sin pays out fitting wages, namely death, to his soldiers, over whom he reigns. The death we are speaking of here is not bodily death, but the kind [M1068] concerning which it has been written, "The soul that sins shall die."¹⁰² And

96. 1 Thes 4.17.

98. Rom 6.21.

100. Rom 6.22.

102. Ezek 18.4, 20. Cf. 4.5.10.

97. Rom 6.23.

99. Rom 6.21.

101. Cf. Jer 23.40; Dn 12.2.

although we may have already spoken on repeated occasions about the various kinds of death,¹⁰³ nevertheless because the present passage calls us to repeat the same things to you¹⁰⁴ more openly and to gather together in one place what has been said in passing, may this be neither a bother for me, nor burdensome to the readers.

(5) In the Scriptures “death” is a single term, but signifies many things. For the separation of the body from the soul is called death.¹⁰⁵ But this cannot be said to be either good or bad; it is neutral, what is termed “indifferent.”¹⁰⁶ And again the separation of the soul from God is called the death that comes through sin.¹⁰⁷ This kind is plainly bad and is named “the wage of sin.” This death “God did not make, nor does he delight in the destruction of the living”;¹⁰⁸ “but through the devil’s envy this death entered the world.”¹⁰⁹ Further, the very author of this death, the devil, is called death; and he is also said to be Christ’s last enemy, who will be destroyed.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the place below in the underworld, where souls were being held by death, is also named death.¹¹¹ There is even a praiseworthy kind of death,¹¹² namely, that by which someone dies to sin and is buried together with Christ,¹¹³ through which correction comes to the soul and eternal life is attained.

(6) Since then so many shades of meaning are contained in this single word, “death,” when you hear God saying, “I shall kill and I shall also make alive,”¹¹⁴ you need to understand what kind of death it is that befits God to inflict. Doubtless, it is that sort of death that confers life, i.e., that a person should die to sin and live to God.¹¹⁵ For it is in this sense that David too says of God, “While he was killing them, they were searching for him,”¹¹⁶ teaching with absolute clarity that the one whom God kills, he kills with the intention that the person might die to sin

103. Cf. 4.5.10; 5.1.19ff.; 5.1.36–37; 5.10.9.

104. Cf. Phil 3.1.

106. Cf. 4.9.3 n. 316.

108. Wis 1.13.

110. Cf. 1 Cor 15.26.

112. Cf. 4.5.10; 5.8.4; 5.10.9.

114. Dt 32.39. Cf. 6.5.5.

116. Ps 78.34.

105. Cf. 3.4.3.

107. Cf. 3.4.3; 4.5.10; 5.10.9.

109. Wis 2.24.

111. Cf. 5.10.9.

113. Cf. Rom 6.2–4.

115. Rom 6.11.

and seek God. It is in this sense that I understand what has been written, that God killed Er, because he was wicked,¹¹⁷ and anything else of this sort written about God that we read. It is also in this sense that the Apostle was handing over the sinner for the destruction of the flesh in order that his spirit might be saved;¹¹⁸ that is to say, in order that he would die to sin and live to God.¹¹⁹

(7) In the present passage as well, then, the wages that sin gives are called death, not that death that separates the body from the soul, but that [death] in which the soul is separated from God by means of sin. Moreover, we are said to be baptized into Christ's death,¹²⁰ doubtless, into that death in which he died to sin once and for all,¹²¹ so that we also might be separated from sin and live to God. For the one who dies by a death of this sort is said to be justified from sin.¹²² So then, a distinction must be made [M1069] because, although, to be sure, God is said to kill and to hand over to death, this is the kind of death that is given by God to confer life. For nothing evil is given by the [One who is] good, though it may bring grief and it may involve plenty of sorrow. Nevertheless, it is bestowed with healing in view and with the intention of restoring health, so that the severity of the harsh treatment might separate the soul from sin, that soul that the allurements and charm of sin had separated from God.¹²³ But sin, on the other hand, whatever it doles out, whatever it confers, is the death of the soul, even if it lavishes out wages.

7. Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law exercises dominion over a man for as long a time as it lives?¹²⁴ Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law of the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man while her husband is alive. But if her hus-

117. Gn 38.7.

119. Cf. Rom 6.11; cf. Preface of Origen (5).

120. Cf. Rom 6.3.

122. Cf. Rom 6.7.

124. Or "he lives." Cf. 6.7.8.

118. Cf. 1 Cor 5.5.

121. Cf. Rom 6.10–11.

123. Cf. 3.4.3.

*band dies, she is freed from that law, so that if she belongs to another man, she is no longer an adulteress. Consequently, my brothers, even you have been put to death to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, who rose again from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the vices of sins, which were through the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now, having died we have been discharged from the law in which we were being held, so that we might serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*¹²⁵

(2) When he was discoursing more extensively about faith and law up above, he showed everywhere that faith is to be preferred, insofar as it is the faith of those who believe “in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”¹²⁶ After this, he adds as well what their manner of life ought to be. In the course of these things he also treated the sin of Adam and the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, he has discussed both slavery and freedom, by which one either serves righteousness and is free in respect to sin, or he serves sin and is free of righteousness.¹²⁷ Now, therefore, after this rather extensive digression, he returns again to the treatment of the law and Christ, discussing such matters as we find in the present passage. We will attempt to disclose these things little by little, first of all by reviewing them according to the letter. Then we shall investigate as well as we can what power each expression contains.

(3) I am speaking, he says, to you who have knowledge of the law and know that its meaning is contained not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit—for this is what it is to speak to those who know the law—and I call you “brothers” on account of knowledge of this sort of law; and I say: Do you not know that law exercises dominion over each person who is subject to it and serves it, just as a husband [exercises dominion] over the woman who is joined to him? And in the same way that a husband during his entire life exercises dominion over the woman who has been legally joined to him, [M1070] so also the law exercises dominion over a man who is

125. Rom 7.1–6.

127. Cf. Rom 6.16–18, 20.

126. Rom 4.24.

under the law for as long a time as it is alive and is in force. But if the husband to whom the woman was subject by the laws happens to die, the woman becomes free and is released from the authority of the husband. Likewise, he who is under the law, if it should happen that the law dies, he becomes free from the works of the law. And just as the woman who has been freed from the laws of her prior husband possesses freedom to be joined to another husband, so also he who lived under the authority of the law has authority to join himself to the living Word, as to a husband, when he has seen the letter of the law dead. But if the woman wants to leave the first husband while he is still alive and be joined to another, doubtless, she will be called an adulteress. Something of a similar type will happen to the one who deserts the law, like a living husband, and is joined to another.

(4) But I am speaking these things to brothers, as I have said, "to those who know the law," in order that you might understand that you also have forsaken the law, as a dead husband. Now the death of that [first husband] occurred through the coming of Christ and his assuming a body, through which you became another's, i.e., you were joined to another husband, namely, to that one who rose again from the dead and who no longer receives the death that that former husband, i.e., the law, received. Therefore, now you have been made the bride of a husband who rose again from the dead; and for this reason you ought to live unto God in accordance with his will. For we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit,¹²⁸ even though we were once in the flesh and we were being impelled by the passions of sin and of the flesh. These passions, because of the law in our members, were bearing fruit, not for God but for death, that death that God did not make.¹²⁹

(5) Now then, just as when a husband dies the woman is free and is released from the law of the husband, so also we have become free from the law that seemed to exercise dominion over us like a husband. Doubtless, we are also dead to this law and

128. Cf. Rom 8.9.

129. Cf. Wis 1.13.

estranged from its condition, "in which we were being held," so that now, after this, "we should serve not in the oldness of the letter," as we did previously, but "in the newness of the Spirit." We have received this Spirit from our bridegroom as a nuptial pledge, just as it says elsewhere, "who has given us the Spirit as a pledge."¹³⁰ This is the sequence of speech and this is the structure of the Apostle's discourse.

(6) But now, as we go over what has been said, let us investigate them bit by bit. He says, "Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law exercises dominion over a man for as long a time as it lives?" Immediately, at the beginning, there is a hyperbaton¹³¹ that is expressed as follows: "Or do you not know, brothers, that the law exercises dominion over a man for as long a time as it lives?" and after this what is inserted in the middle is expressed, "I am speaking to those who know the law." But what he has said, "I am speaking to those who know the law," is similar to what [M1071] he says a little bit after this: "However we know that the law is spiritual."¹³² But Paul is not the only one who knew that the law is spiritual, but also those who were instructed by him, who, however, were spiritual, concerning whom he says, "But the spiritual man examines all things."¹³³ I am not able to declare positively about the Galatians that they knew that the law is spiritual, of whom he says, "O foolish Galatians!"¹³⁴ unless, perhaps, they knew it at the time when they had begun with the Spirit. But they did not persevere in this knowledge since they ended in the flesh.¹³⁵ But the doctrine of the apostles and of those who were instructed by them to teach was such that it would teach men to serve the law "not in the oldness of the letter" but "in the newness of the Spirit." I think that not only did the apostles understand this, that the law is spiritual, but also the prophets and whoever was wise among the people back then, although, on account of the multitude, they seemed to keep the fleshly observation [of the law] as well.

130. 2 Cor 5.5.

132. Rom 7.14.

134. Gal 3.1.

131. Cf. 1.13.1 n. 211.

133. 1 Cor 2.15.

135. Cf. Gal 3.3.

But this is not surprising, since Paul himself would say, "I became like a Jew to the Jews in order to win the Jews."¹³⁶

(7) So then, among the first people many were advancing in spiritual knowledge and were seeing the glory of the Word of God, as it is written that Isaiah too saw the glory of the Son of God, as John testifies when he says, "But Isaiah said these things when he saw his glory."¹³⁷ Paul is speaking, then, to those who know the law, that is, to those who know what the oldness of the letter in the law is, as well as the newness of the Spirit. For whoever understands this well doubtless knows that it is in this way that the law exercises dominion over a man for as long as it lives, like a husband over a wife. And just as by the death of the husband the woman is set free from the law of marriage and she receives the freedom to join herself to another husband, so also the soul, whose husband is the law. When it has detected the oldness of the letter in the law, that "what is becoming old is near to extinction,"¹³⁸ as though dead to the law according to the letter, it receives permission to marry another husband, who is the Spirit of the law; "but the Lord is the Spirit."¹³⁹

(8) But in what he has said, "The law exercises dominion over a man for as long a time as it lives," "lives" does not refer to the man but to the law. For he makes this clear in what follows, where he says, "She is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives." And the sequence asserts something imbued with the example that is taken, for he has put the law in the place of the husband and says of it, "But if the husband has died, [M1072] she is released from the law of the husband."

(9) Now if these things are understood as having been spoken about the apostles or those who believed from the circumcision, no problem will be generated; for it is clear that they would have possessed the law as a first husband, under whose authority they were living. But when the fullness of times came,¹⁴⁰ the law began to be weak in the flesh¹⁴¹ and death followed weakness, even if those who had lived as a wife under the

136. 1 Cor 9.20.

138. Heb 8.13.

140. Cf. Gal 4.4.

137. Jn 12.41. Cf. 1.10.3.

139. 2 Cor 3.17.

141. Cf. Rom 8.3.

authority of this husband marry the Spirit by believing in Christ, after the letter had died. But the Gentiles who believed in the Lord will seem to have never lived under the authority of this husband, i.e., under that of the law, nor did they have the message of the law as a husband. Isaiah will supply a testimony in support of this matter, i.e., that those who are of the circumcision were under this husband, but those who are from the Gentiles were without a husband, as he says, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; burst into song and shout, you who are not in labor! For the sons of the desolate woman are far more than of her that has the husband."¹⁴² He says, "the sons of the desolate woman are far more than of her that has the husband," because far more would believe from the Gentiles than from the circumcision. He makes known as well that she who has the husband is the synagogue, which has the law; but the woman, desolate and wandering and living without any authority of the law, is the multitude of the Gentiles, which used to be barren, producing offspring with no legitimate word.

(10) Here, then, the man who lives under the law is described by the Apostle as a woman who is under a husband. But he describes the husband as the message of the law, which he nevertheless calls a mortal husband, who is the message of the law according to the letter. But the sense in which he is dead must now be considered. Indeed in this he can seem to be dead since the spiritual understanding excludes and, as it were, kills the bodily understanding and shows that the letter that kills must be abandoned and the life-giving Spirit must be followed.¹⁴³

(11) Moreover, this husband will be proven to be dead even more plainly in this way. Truly, as long as "the law was bearing the shadow of the good things to come,"¹⁴⁴ and as long as an earthly image and type of the heavenly worship was being borne in Jerusalem,¹⁴⁵ and the altar continued to function, and the priesthood, the message of the law of the letter seemed to live in the letter. For Christ had not yet entered into the "sanc-

142. Is 54.1; Gal 4.27.

144. Heb 10.1.

143. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

145. Heb 8.5.

tuary not made with hands"¹⁴⁶ nor had he approached the inner curtain, which [M1073] the Apostle, when writing to the Hebrews, interprets to be the flesh of Christ.¹⁴⁷ But when the Word became flesh and lived among us,¹⁴⁸ his earthly presence in Jerusalem, with its temple and altar and everything that was borne there, was torn down, at that time her husband died, i.e., the law according to the letter. Or will it not rightly be said in this section that the message of the law is dead, since no sacrifices, no priesthood, and no ministries associated with the Levitical order are being offered? It cannot punish the murderer or stone the adulteress, for the Roman authorities avenge themselves on these things. Do you still doubt whether the law according to the letter is dead? No male goes up to appear before the Lord three times a year;¹⁴⁹ no sheep is being slaughtered at the Passover festival in the city that is believed the Lord God had chosen;¹⁵⁰ no offering of the piles of first-fruits are being celebrated; no leprous diseases and no defilement of sin are being cleansed. Is it possible to doubt in all these things that the letter of the law is dead?¹⁵¹

(12) Since, therefore, through all these things it should have become clear that the first husband is dead, there is no legal violation to be joined to Christ as to another husband, just as there is no reproach for a woman whose first husband has died if she enters a second marriage. This is why he says, "Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man while her husband is alive," to show that even a person's soul, if it comes to Christ and is united with Christ as with a second husband, in no respect should the oldness of the letter, which is, as it were, the first husband, be alive to it lest it, by having that first [husband] living with it, become an adulteress—one who is joined to a second [husband] while, for her, the first was still alive.

(13) This is what he had said by means of a different figure above, that it is first necessary to die and thus to be buried to-

146. Heb 9.24.

148. Cf. Jn 1.14.

150. Dt 16.2.

147. Heb 9.3; 10.20.

149. Cf. Ex 23.17; 34.23; Dt 16.16.

151. Cf. 2.13.15.

gether with Christ.¹⁵² After all, here in what follows he even goes on to say, "Consequently, my brothers, you have been put to death to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, who rose again from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God." You see how, although it may seem that these figures are different, yet they are together recalled to yield one single meaning. For when he says the law is dead to us, he wants the same thing to be understood as when he says that we ourselves have been put to death to the law through [M1074] the body of Christ. For in that body "he bore our iniquities and he carried our sins";¹⁵³ and in that body "he disarmed the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in himself."¹⁵⁴ We must therefore hasten to this second marriage, which is much more blessed than the first.

(14) Consider also whether perhaps even then the law was in this place foreshadowing something—who knows what—when it commands the woman who had not conceived offspring from her first husband, now dead—for he was so constituted that he was unable to bear fruit—she is commanded to marry his brother.¹⁵⁵ For the brother of the law of the letter seems to be the law according to the Spirit, so that the woman ought rather to bear fruit from him. But these things ought to be investigated more completely in their own places.¹⁵⁶ Now, however, as we said, first we must die to the law of the letter so that thus we may be joined to Christ, who rose again from the dead.¹⁵⁷ It is possible, however, that this may be understood not only of the law of Moses that is according to the letter, but we should believe that every man lives under the law that he makes use of since it is certain that he is guided by whatever institutions and whatever customs, as if under a law. Surely one must either die to this law, or it must die to him, lest when his soul comes to Christ, although set under another husband, it should appear not so much to enter a marriage as to become an adulteress, if indeed it is still living to the laws of the first husband.¹⁵⁸

152. Cf. Rom 6.2, 4.

154. Col 2.15.

156. Cf. *Comm in Mt* 17.31 to Mt 22.23-33.

157. Cf. Rom 6.5.

158. Cf. *Hom in Lv* 12.5.

153. Is 53.4, 11.

155. Cf. Dt 25.5-6.

(15) Yet the Apostle once again draws in different figures to explain the same thought of interpretation. For he adds, "But while we were in the flesh, the vices of sins, which were through the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now, having died, we have been discharged from the law in which we were being held, so that we might serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."¹⁵⁹

(16) In these things Paul appears to have departed from one chamber and entered into another using unmarked and hidden entrances, as we said above using the example of a certain parable.¹⁶⁰ For whereas above he had been treating the law of the letter, which certainly seemed to pertain only to those who had believed from the circumcision, now, by some kind of unmarked switch, he is discussing the law of the flesh and the vices. [M1075] He does this, no doubt, because such a discussion would seem to pertain to the rest of humanity as well, not merely to those who are from the circumcision. Therefore he says, "For while we were in the flesh." And indeed, as far as the subject is concerned, he certainly was in the flesh when he was saying these things. But "while we were in the flesh," that is, while we were living according to the flesh, "the vices of sins, which were through the law, were at work in our members." Now which law is this through which the vices of sins are at work? Does the law of Moses, even when it is observed according to the letter, generate the vices of sins? On the contrary, it is obvious that he is speaking of that law of the members, a law that resists the law of the mind,¹⁶¹ about which we previously have discussed how "the law entered with the result that sin was abounding."¹⁶² This, then, is the very law that causes the vices of sins to abound in those who live according to the flesh, with the result that they bear fruit for death. In fact, that law is in our members in order that, by striving against the law of the mind, it might lead us as captives to sin and offer these fruits to death.

(17) "But now, having died we have been discharged from the law in which we were being held." So then, we have now been discharged from this law. "Now." When? Doubtless, when

159. Rom 7:5-6.

161. Cf. Rom 7:23.

160. Cf. 5:1-9.

162. Rom 5:20.

we died with Christ and were buried together with him through baptism and were crucified with him.¹⁶³ And for this reason he says, "Having died, we have been discharged from the law." For unless someone has died with Christ, he is not discharged from that law. I am aware as well that in some copies it is written, "from the law of death in which we were being held." This, however, i.e., "having died," is both truer and more correct.¹⁶⁴

(18) What he adds in conclusion, "so that we might serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter," which also, doubtless, seems to have been spoken of the law of the letter, could be understood coherently in the following way. Certainly while we were in the flesh and were living according to the flesh on account of the vices of sins, which that law that was in our members¹⁶⁵ was nourishing so that they might bear fruit for death, we were unable to serve in the newness of the Spirit, so long as that law of the members was living in us, or rather, so long as we were living according to that law. But when Christ died for us and we died with him to sin,¹⁶⁶ and through him we were freed from the law of sin¹⁶⁷ in which we were being held, we are now able to serve the law of God, but to serve [M1076] in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter. For Christ did not draw us away from the law of sin in order that we might serve the oldness of the letter, that is, that we might receive circumcision and Sabbaths and the other things that the oldness of the law of the letter contains; but that we might keep the law of God in the newness of the Spirit, that is to say, that from everything that is written in this [law], we might receive the spiritual understanding as the Spirit grants it. As the same Apostle says elsewhere, "For a veil was placed on the face of Moses; but when someone is converted to the Lord, the veil will be removed. For the Lord is the Spirit. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."¹⁶⁸

163. Rom 6.4-8.

164. The variant belongs to the Greek textual tradition. Thus, this comment is Origen's, not Rufinus's. Cf. Bammel, *Römerbrieftext*, pp. 220-21.

165. Rom 7.23.

166. Rom 6.2, 8.

167. Cf. Rom 8.2.

168. 2 Cor 3.15-17.

(19) I am aware, of course, that certain mindless people have treated “newness of the Spirit” in such a way that they can say that the Spirit is new, as if he did not exist previously nor was he known by the ancients. And they do not realize that in this they are uttering the most serious blasphemy. For the Spirit is in the law, he is in the Gospels, he is always with the Father and the Son; and he always is, was, and shall be, just like the Father and the Son. Consequently, he is not new, but he renews those who believe when he leads them from the old evils to the new life and the new observance of the religion of Christ, and when he makes spiritual men out of carnal ones.¹⁶⁹

8. *What then shall we say? Is the law sin? By no means! Yet, I did not know sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness had the law not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, receiving an opportunity, worked in me through the commandment all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law sin is dead. But I was once alive without the law. But when the commandment came, sin revived. I, however, died; and the very commandment that was unto life was found to be unto death to me. For sin, receiving an opportunity through the commandment, seduced me and through it killed me. So the law indeed is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Is it that what is good, then, is death for me? By no means! But sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin, worked death in me through the good, so that sin itself might become a sinner beyond measure through the commandment.*¹⁷⁰

(2) It is essential to remind ourselves frequently, when in passages like this, of the various kinds of laws.¹⁷¹ For I think Paul, who changes the significance of this single term, “law,” from one meaning [M1077] to another without giving the reader any indications, wants [us to keep this in mind]. He does this with that foresight with which the prophetic Scriptures are in accord, that [M1078] the things that the divinely

169. In this paragraph Origen evidently has in view the heresy of Marcionism. In the *Antitheses* of Marcion, “new” was one of the most important keywords. Cf. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer*, p. 230 and A. Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, TU 45, p. 87.

170. Rom 7.7-13.

171. Cf. 3.6.1 n. 157.

inspired uttered¹⁷² were not to be set forth publicly before men who were unpolished and striving less for faith and zeal [M1079] and that it might not, so to speak, be given to be trampled under their feet;¹⁷³ but, rather that, in accordance with what we said above through a kind of parable,¹⁷⁴ the mystery of the king¹⁷⁵ was to reach unto few people, and it did so in a rather hidden manner.¹⁷⁶

(3) Accordingly he says, "What then shall we say? Is the law sin?" Did you think, he says, that I was speaking about the law of Moses [and claiming] that it was sin? "By no means!" The response, "By no means!" should suffice for both clauses: Neither am I speaking about the law of Moses nor am I saying that that law is sin. On the contrary: "I did not know sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness had the law not said, 'You shall not covet.'" Understand which law I am speaking about, he says, which, unless it existed, no one would know sin. Is it the law of Moses through which Adam knew his sin and hid himself from the presence of the Lord?¹⁷⁷ Is it the law of Moses through which Cain knew [M1080] his sin and said, "My sin is greater than that I should be left alive,"¹⁷⁸ or through which Pharaoh knew his sin and said, "The Lord is righteous, but I and my people are wicked"?¹⁷⁹ But if all these and innumerable others knew their sin before the law of Moses, it will, doubtless, not be the law of Moses about which the Apostle says, "I did not know sin except through the law," and about which he says, "I would not have known what it is to covet had the law not said, 'You shall not covet.'"¹⁸⁰ Rather, it is that law concerning which we have frequently said is in everyone's hearts, "written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God,"¹⁸¹ and teaches each man what ought to be done and what ought to be avoided. It is the same [law], then, through which a

172. Cf. 2 Tm 3.16.

174. Cf. 5.1.9.

176. Cf. 5.2.6-8.

178. Gn 4.13.

180. Rom 7.7; Ex 20.17. For the theme of sin before the law of Moses, see 3.6.1; 4.4.4 n. 99.

181. 2 Cor 3.3.

173. Cf. Mt 7.6.

175. Cf. Tb 12.7.

177. Cf. Gn 3.8.

179. Ex 9.27.

man knows his own sin. For it speaks to us within the conscience and says, "You shall not covet."¹⁸²

(4) But this law is found in man neither at all times nor from the beginning, when a man is born,¹⁸³ but rather he lives without this law for a certain time, while his age does not allow it, just as Paul himself acknowledges when he says, "I was once alive without the law." Therefore, at that time, when we lived without the law, we did not know covetousness. He did not say: I was not having it; but: "I was not knowing it," as if covetousness existed, but it was not known what it was. But when reason arrives and the natural law finds a place within us in the advancement of age, [M1081] it begins to teach us what is good and to turn us away from evils. Thus, when it says, "You shall not covet," we learn from it what we did not know before: Covetousness is evil.

(5) "But sin, receiving an opportunity, worked in me through the commandment all kinds of covetousness." That law of which he says, "For I would not have known covetous desire had the law not said: You shall not covet,"¹⁸⁴ is also called the commandment. Thus he says that by an opportunity afforded by this commandment, in which we are forbidden to covet, sin was kindled all the more intensely within us and worked all kinds of covetousness within us. For because the flesh lusts against the Spirit,¹⁸⁵ i.e., against the law¹⁸⁶ that says, "You shall not covet,"¹⁸⁷ it is likewise opposed to it and engages it in battle in a certain manner, so that not only would it satisfy the covetousness but also it would conquer an enemy.

(6) This then is the opportunity that he says comes from the commandment. For these things that are forbidden are somehow longed for more passionately. On this account, though the commandment is holy and just and good—for what prohibits evil must of necessity be good—yet by prohibiting covetousness it instead provokes and kindles it; and through the good it

182. Rom 7.7. Cf. Ex 20.17.

183. Cf. 3.2.8; 5.1.26.

184. Rom 7.7. Cf. Ex 20.17.

185. Cf. Gal 5.17.

186. Origen is virtually equating the law with the Spirit, who authors it. Cf. 6.1.9; 6.9.3; 6.12.7.

187. Rom 7.7. Cf. Ex 20.17.

worked death in me. The Apostle is showing by these things, however, that the origin of sin has arisen from covetousness. As long as the law is issuing prohibitions, whether it is Moses' law, which says, "You shall not covet,"¹⁸⁸ or even natural law, as I have explained above, whatever is forbidden is desired all the more tenaciously. Obviously one should recognize that covetousness is used here in a blameworthy sense. In many places, however, it is a praiseworthy thing, as we showed above.¹⁸⁹

(7) "For apart from the law sin is dead. But I was once alive without the law. [M1082] But when the commandment came, sin revived. I, however, died; and the very commandment that was unto life was found to be unto death to me."¹⁹⁰ Up above has already been conducted a full investigation of practically all these matters. Therefore, in order that we not be constantly repeating the same things, we shall briefly call to remembrance what was previously said. We showed how sin is dead in us without law, i.e., before the mind within us grows vigorous when it reaches the age of reason, when we introduced the example of the little child who strikes or curses his father or mother.¹⁹¹ In such a case it would appear that at least according to the law, which forbids striking and cursing the father and mother, a sin was committed. Yet that sin is said to be dead since the law is not yet present within the child to teach him that what he is doing ought not be done. It is certain that Paul and all men have lived at one time without this law, namely, the age of childhood. After all, during that time everyone is equally not yet capable of this natural law. For Paul's confession concerning this would not seem to be true. Indeed how will it be proved that Paul once lived without the law of Moses, seeing that he declares himself to be a Hebrew of Hebrews and circumcised on the eighth day according to the precepts of the law?¹⁹² On the contrary, in the way in which we have said, in childhood he also once lived without natural law. He did not say that sin did not exist in man at this time, but that sin was dead and afterward

188. Rom 7.7. Cf. Ex 20.17.

190. Rom 7.8-10.

192. Cf. Phil 3.5. See also 3.2.7; 5.1.26.

189. Cf. 4.9.2; 6.5.3.

191. Ex 21.15f.; Lv 20.9. Cf. 5.1.25.

revived when natural law came and began to forbid covetousness. This law raised sin from the dead, so to speak. In fact this is the nature of sin, if what the law forbids to be done happens.¹⁹³ Therefore, when sin revived, he says, "I died." "I." Who does he mean? Doubtless, the soul that had committed what the law was forbidding to be done; for "the soul that sins," as the prophet says, "shall itself die."¹⁹⁴ The commandment, therefore, that had been given unto life, i.e., unto [the life] of the soul, that it might teach the soul the works that lead to life, was found to have surrendered it over to death when it does not flee the things forbidden but desires them all the more passionately.

(8) It strikes me in these things, however, why he should say that sin is dead and has revived. For it seems that it could not be called dead unless it had been alive at some time and afterward was deprived of life. Moreover, what he says, "revived," itself shows not a life recently given but earlier restored; for the very word "revived" [M1083] means "to have lived again." If, then, it is said that sin has revived in a soul, how is it that certain people introduce from the phrase of the Apostle where he says, "But I was once alive without the law," the doctrine of μετενσωμάτωσις, which teaches that the souls of men were previously in beasts or birds or fish, and thus came to men? And, [they assert,] because of this the Apostle said, "But I was once alive without the law," as if before he came into this human body he lived at the rank, for example, of either birds or animals, where there was no law. How, I ask, can they respond to this, for he does not say that sin has only recently arisen in the soul, but that sin, which was dead, revived. And it is certain that if one who revives was at one time alive, it will appear, therefore, that the soul was never at that rank where it was not possible for sin without the law to exist or to be alive. Let these things be said against those who drag the Apostle's words into the doctrine of the impious.¹⁹⁵ We, on the other hand, consider

193. Cf. 3.6.4.

194. Ezek 18.4.

195. I.e., Basilides and the Gnostics. Cf. 5.1.27 n. 140; *Comm in Mt.* 13.1.

that death of sin to be given by the kindness of God at the time when we were living without law.

(9) Yet, even though, when the commandment, which is “both holy and just and good,” comes, sin revives in us and kills us—“for sin, receiving an opportunity through the commandment seduced me and through it killed me”—there is no accusation against the commandment through these things, that he says that the opportunity by which sin killed me came from the commandment. On the contrary, this is the logical inference of what has been said. That which teaches what ought to be done and what should be avoided is called a law or commandment.¹⁹⁶ That which says something must be avoided is supposed to inform us what kind of thing it is, so that it might become easier to avoid. For no one can avoid what he does not know. If, therefore, anyone who has been instructed through law what kind of thing it is that he needs to avoid not only fails to avoid it but does it, he will seem to have received the knowledge for doing this thing indeed by an opportunity of the law. But the law had not instructed him to do what he was not supposed to do and die, but not to do this and live. In this way, then, “sin, receiving an opportunity through the commandment, seduced me and through it killed me.”

(10) It is possible that here he has called the author of sin, “sin,” concerning whom it is written, “The serpent seduced me.”¹⁹⁷ Or he may even have personified sin, who seemed to have seduced man by means of an opportunity afforded it by the commandment in order to make covetousness seem sweet, and the soul, while enticed by the sweetness of covetousness, dies by transgressing the commandment that said, “You shall not covet.”¹⁹⁸ [M1084] But in order that no one should ascribe this to the commandment of the law, that the soul was seduced and killed by sin by means of an opportunity afforded it by a command, the Apostle says additionally, “And so, the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.” For the commandment is good, and the law is holy. For it bids the good

196. Cf. 3.6.4 n. 168.

198. Ex 20.17.

197. Gn 3.13.

and it commands the observance of good things. He asks, "Is what is good, then, death for me? By no means!" He refutes the objection that inevitably arises and says: It is not that the good of the law and the commandment have inflicted death upon me, "but sin," he says, "in order that it might be shown just how wicked it is, inflicted death upon me through the good." For the commandment is good, when it is observed; but if it is not observed, it will necessarily be evil to the one who has ruined the good. It may then come about that "sin itself is a sinner beyond measure" from the opportunity given by the commandment. We have also said above that it is as if he has personified sin, and he says concerning it that sin itself, about whose *persona* he is speaking, has become a sinner beyond measure by an opportunity of the commandment. For it is less of a sin if you give in to what is not forbidden.¹⁹⁹ But if you should commit what is forbidden and prohibited, you are a sinner, so to speak, beyond measure, for not only have you committed what you ought not have done, but you have also transgressed a precept.

(11) But what we said, "Sin is a sinner," we preferred to let this fault in expression stand, rather than to express an incomplete meaning of the Apostle. For in Latin diction the term "sin" constrained us because it is declined in the neuter gender; but in Greek it is feminine. This is why we rendered it [masculine] as *peccator*. For obviously, here it can be rendered [feminine as] *peccatrix*.²⁰⁰

9. *For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I*

199. Cf. 4-4-7.

200. In this paragraph, Rufinus is explaining ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἢ ἁμαρτία, which he has rendered into Latin as *ut fiat supra modum peccator peccatum*. Sider's editorial comment in CWE 56:192 n. 3 helped to clarify Rufinus's point here: "Though ἁμαρτωλός can be a feminine adjective (as here), Origen's translator [Rufinus] evidently read it as a masculine and insisted therefore on rendering it by the masculine *peccator*, in spite of the fact that its apposite *peccatum* is neuter. The translator defends the phrase in spite of its harshness." Hammond Bammel, "Philocalia IX, Jerome, Epistle 121, and Origen's Exposition of Romans VII," p. 66, thinks that the original apology may have been made by Origen himself.

*do not do what I want; but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. But now it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. The will is there within me, but I do not attain to the perfecting of the good. For I do not do the good I want; but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find that the law is in me while I want to do the good, because the evil lies close at hand to me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man; [M1085] but I see in my members another law fighting against the law of my mind, leading me away as a captive to the law of sin that is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*²⁰¹

(2) If, perhaps, the explanation we were maintaining concerning the different kinds of law²⁰² appeared to anyone as forced and presumptuous, let him now attend to this section, where not only a diversity of laws is introduced, but a diversity of *personae*.²⁰³ For Paul, who has said elsewhere, “For we do not live according to the flesh nor do we wage war according to the flesh,”²⁰⁴ claims in the present passage to be of the flesh. And here he claims to be sold into slavery under sin, whereas elsewhere he had said, “You were bought with a price,”²⁰⁵ and again, “Christ redeemed us.”²⁰⁶ What is more, in other places he said, “It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me,”²⁰⁷ and says again, “on account of his Spirit dwelling in us.”²⁰⁸ But now he says, “Good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh.” Well, if good does not dwell in his flesh, how can he say that our bodies are a temple of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit?²⁰⁹ Furthermore, how are all the other things, in which he declares that he is led captive to the law of sin by the law that is in his members and that fights against the law of his mind, congruent with apostolic dignity and especially with Paul, in whom Christ both lives and speaks?²¹⁰

201. Rom 7.14–25.

203. I.e., roles, characters. Cf. 2.11.2.

205. 1 Cor 6.20; 7.23.

207. Gal 2.20.

209. Cf. 1 Cor 3.16; 6.19.

202. Cf. 3.6.1.

204. 2 Cor 10.3.

206. Gal 3.13–14.

208. Rom 8.11.

210. Cf. Gal 2.20; 2 Cor 13.3.

(3) We should conclude from these things that it is the custom of Holy Scripture to imperceptibly change the *personae* and the subject matter and the reasons that it seems to discuss and the designations. Rather, it uses by all means the same designations at times for some subjects, at other times for others.²¹¹ For example, in the present passage the Apostle says, “For we know that the law is spiritual.” Up to this point, what he said, “we know that the law is spiritual,” is pronounced with apostolic authority.²¹² For one who is of the flesh and sold as a slave under sin does not know that the law is spiritual; on the contrary it is the one who has the Spirit of God in him who knows that the law is spiritual. This statement applies well to the law of Moses. For that law is a spiritual law and a life-giving Spirit²¹³ for those who understand it spiritually.²¹⁴ But the one who understands it in a fleshly way recalls it as a law of the letter and a letter that kills.²¹⁵ [M1086]

(4) Yet when he says, “But I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin,” as if a teacher of the Church, he has now taken upon himself the *persona* of the weak. On this account he has also said elsewhere, “I became weak to the weak to win the weak.”²¹⁶ Here as well, then, to whoever is weak, i.e., to those who are in the flesh and sold into slavery under sin, Paul becomes fleshly and sold into slavery under sin and he says the same things that are customary for them to say under the pretense of an excuse or accusation. He is therefore talking about himself as if speaking under the *persona* of these others: “But I am of the flesh and sold into slavery under sin,” that is to say, living according to the flesh and sold at the price of lust and covetous desire to the authority of sin. “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want; but I do the very thing I hate.” Therefore, when he says, “I do not understand my own actions,” he does not so much mean that a person does

211. Cf. *Comm in Cant* Prologue (1). Roukema, *The Diversity of Laws*, p. 9, goes so far as to say that Origen “made homonymity the key of his interpretation of this epistle.”

212. For the theme of apostolic authority, see 1.8.1; 5.8.7; 8.8.4; 8.12.5; 10.8.4-5.

213. Cf. 6.8.5 n. 186.

215. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

214. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

216. 1 Cor 9.22.

not understand the thing itself that he is doing, though he may be fleshly, but he is said not to understand the reason for what he is doing.

(5) But what he says, "For I do not do what I want; but I do the very thing I hate," shows that even though the one who is saying these things may be of the flesh and sold into slavery under sin, he is nevertheless also attempting to resist the vices to some small extent, obviously by means of the instinct that comes from natural law; but he is conquered by the vices and, against his will, is overwhelmed. This is what frequently occurs, for example, when someone resolves patiently to endure another who is inciting him, but in the end is overcome with wrath and suffers this against his own will. Thus he becomes angry even though he does not want to become angry. The same thing regularly happens with the vice of fear, so that even contrary to one's will a person may be terrified with dread and fright. This also comes to pass quite often in connection with sudden elation or unexpected honor, resulting in one being more arrogant and haughty than one wants.

(6) The person who is not yet spiritual but fleshly is therefore conquered by each individual [vice], even contrary to his will. For that will is not yet strong and robust enough that it may determine for itself that it must struggle even to the point of death for the sake of the truth.²¹⁷ Nor is this the kind of will to say, "Yes is yes; no is no";²¹⁸ and for that reason it cannot do what it wants, but what it does not want. Nevertheless the part that does not want the evil agrees with the law of God that whatever forbids evil is good. And natural law is brought into a kind of agreement with the law of God so that [the two laws] want the same things and [M1087] do not want the same things. But if we agree with the law of God according to the will, then the evil that we do is no longer being done by us but by the sin that is in us, that is, the law and will of the flesh, which leads us as captives to the law of sin. Surely here it is the fleshly Paul who says, "It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me."

²¹⁷. Cf. Sir 4.28.

²¹⁸. Mt 5.37.

But elsewhere the spiritual Paul says, "I labored more abundantly than all the others; but not I but the grace of God with me."²¹⁹ Therefore, just as he ascribes these labors of his not to himself but to the grace of God, which was working in him, in the same way, as a fleshly man he reckons the works that are not good not to himself but to sin that dwells and works within him. For this reason, then, he says, "It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh." For Christ is not yet dwelling within him²²⁰ nor is his body a temple of God.²²¹

(7) Nevertheless, the person portrayed is not completely estranged from good things but he has begun, at any rate, to seek the good with purpose and will, yet has not yet been able to attain it in reality and in deeds. For the weakness in those who receive the beginnings of a conversion is of such a nature that when anyone wants to do all at once everything that is good, the accomplishment of this may not immediately follow the will. To be sure he both reflects to himself and decides, for example, that he should not become angry, and he resolves this in his will; but since the vice of wrath has been dominant in him due to continuous practice and long-standing habit, it opposes even the will and purpose, and a violent outburst of rage results, in keeping with his usual and customary pattern. The vice of lust operates in a similar way. By means of the same malady of habit, lying sneaks in unawares and fear gives rise to terror; and in each particular case the very one who received the initial phases of a conversion will suitably say, "The will is there within me, but I do not attain to the perfecting of the good. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil thing I hate."

(8) Now if the will possesses judgment concerning the good, but the habit of fleshly vices, a habit that has been designated as the law of the flesh or the law of the members, offers resistance and sneaks in unawares, then "I agree with the law of God, that it is good," from the fact that I bear a will desiring good, even though I do evil things since I do them unwillingly. For I

219. 1 Cor 15.10.

220. Cf. Rom 8.10.

221. Cf. 1 Cor 3.16; 6.19.

hate evil and I desire to do the good that the law commands. But if, against the will, I do evil, having been overcome by the habit of the vices and by the practice of sinning, then "it is no longer I," i.e., the inner man, "who does the good I want to do, but sin that dwells within me." For he has designated the habit [M1088] of sinning "sin."²²²

(9) "So I find that the law is in me while I want to do the good, because the evil lies close at hand to me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man." Here also, as we have often recalled above,²²³ [Paul's] expressions do not appear to be explained in their entirety, but instead they are entangled either by an abundance of conjunctions or by improper usage. In order that the interpretation might become clearer, therefore, we ought to read it in this kind of order: So because evil lies close at hand to me, though I want to do the good, I find the law of God and I delight in it according to my inner man, through which he shows that the inner man, i.e., the will and purpose, by which one receives the beginning stage of being converted to the Lord, agrees with the law of God and takes delight in it. But, as we said above, this does not happen all at once that someone, though they have the will to be converted to the good, should as well attain the habits of doing the good. The will is a fast-working thing and is converted without hindrance; but the work is slow because it requires practice and skill and effort for working. But in order that this might become clearer, let us once again use a comparison as an example. For instance, whoever wants to become wise does not become wise immediately when he willed it. Indeed the will has preceded, and no one can become wise apart from the will; nevertheless once the will is there, effort, zealous study, solicitude, watchfulness, teaching, and instruction must be added, and scarcely at any time, after much practice and continuous training, does he become wise. Thus indeed he had the will to be wise immediately from the beginning, but the work of wisdom did not come to him at once. But even while he is being instructed within himself to become wise, how many things has

²²² Cf. 5.5.3.

²²³ Cf. Preface of Origen (1); 1.1.3.2; 3.1.2; 5.1.2; 6.3.3.

he done foolishly and contrary to wisdom! He was able, however, to understand the things he had done foolishly, for he now possessed the zealous study of wisdom; but he was not yet so wise that he could also avoid foolishly giving in to some things.

(10) This sequence must be considered as well about chastity, which a person will not immediately fulfill in deed, when he has willed to avow chastity, such that he will be aroused by no stimuli to lust. One should understand the same thing to be true concerning gentleness, patience, and each of the virtues. In all of them it is fitting to be said, "I delight in the law of God," i.e., in the virtues, "according to the inner man. But I see in my members another law fighting against the law of my mind, leading me away as a captive to the law of sin, which is in my members." He had said above, "For to will the good is present in me." This will for the good he designated as the law of the mind, which law of the mind agrees with the law of God and consents to it. But the impulses [M108g] of the body and the desires of the flesh, on the other hand, he calls the law of the members, which leads the soul away captive and subjects it to the laws of sin. For it is certain that the desires of the flesh drag the soul toward sin and subject it to its laws. And just as the law of the mind, which agrees with the law of God, if it can take possession of the soul, leads it to the law of God, so also the law that is in the members, and the lust of the flesh, if it seduces the soul, would subject it to the laws of sin.

(11) Having assumed the *persona* of the weaker person, Paul had taught that struggles occur within a human being. He had shown that a soul may be carried off to sin's jurisdiction, even against the will, through the desires of the flesh by the very practice of sinning. Since this is so, at this point he utters an exclamation, still under the *persona* of the one whom he has described, and says, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" For he sees himself as wretched, within whom so many laws are fighting with one another, and so many battles are being engaged in. "The flesh fights against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh";²²⁴ the law in the members fights against the law of the mind. And the

224. Gal 5.17.

captive soul is led away to the law of sin and is put under its yoke, even though the inner man may delight in the law of God. With so many evils of this kind in him, how could a man not say that he is wretched and dwells in a body of death? For a body in which sin dwells is deservedly called a body of death, since sin is the cause of death. This exclamation comes, then, from the *persona* of the one whom the Apostle describes as having received the initial phases of a conversion in that the will for the good is present in him, but he could not yet come to the accomplishment of the good. For he does not manage to perfect the good, because the practice and training in the virtues had not yet grown in him. The answer to what he had said, "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" is given no longer under the *persona* of that person but with apostolic authority: "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." From this it becomes apparent that the Apostle, because of this, has described all these things and he has set forth these evils that were going on within us in order that he might show clearly and demonstrate to the utmost from how many evils and from how many kinds of death Christ has rescued us.²²⁵

(12) That it is customary in the Holy Scriptures for saints to take on the *personae* of sinners²²⁶ and for teachers to take upon themselves the weaknesses of disciples, we are indeed taught in greatest detail in the book of Psalms when it says, "There is no peace in my bones before my sins, for my iniquities have gone over my head; [M1090] they have weighed down on me like a burden. My wounds have grown foul and have festered before my foolishness. I am afflicted with wretchedness and utterly bowed down,"²²⁷ etc. Almost the entire Psalm is written in this way. Now if perhaps it will seem to anyone that David could have said these things more about himself rather than about others on account of the things that had happened to him, well, what shall we say about Daniel? For no sin of his is recorded, but nevertheless a confession is described with fastings and sackcloth and ashes,²²⁸ and a prayer of this kind in which,

225. Cf. 2 Cor 1.10.

227. Ps 38.3-6.

226. Cf. 2.11.2.

228. Cf. Dn 9.3.

among other things, he says even this: "We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have acted unjustly, we have committed impiety and rebelled, and we have turned aside from your commandments and your judgments and we have not listened to your servants the prophets, who were speaking to us in your name, and to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and to all the people of the land. Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but shame falls on us."²²⁹ Who can deny that in these words Daniel has taken on the *persona* of sinners, on whose account he seems to say these things as though on his own behalf?²³⁰ Thus it is fitting for us, when we read the things said by the saints, when we see something like this said by them, to interpret and understand that in themselves they are describing our passions and our sins; and the reason they weep is in order that we might be invited to shed tears by their weeping. For they were considering that no one could possibly be found who is so hardened and ungrateful, who, when he sees his own wounds being lamented by others, should fail to receive a sense of grief from his own wounds. So then, also in the present section, the Apostle has described these things as if they are going on within himself, lest any of us should be ashamed of the things he has perceived are going on in himself; or even in the case of someone who has already been converted to the Lord and has already experienced a change in his will, lest this person should lose hope when he notices that these things within him are still inciting him. By the Apostle's example no one should feel ashamed of the nature of his body, no one should despair of improvement, and no one should be without the knowledge of the multitude of his own evils, from which he has been set free by the grace of Christ.²³¹

229. Dn 9.5-7.

230. Cf. Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* (which is infused with thoughts taken from Origen) on Dn 9.5: "He reviews the sins of the people as if he were personally guilty, on the ground of his being one of the people, just as we read the Apostle does also in his Epistle to the Romans." Trans. G. L. Archer, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), p. 91. See also Jerome's comments on Dn 3.29.

231. With regard to the "I" of Rom 7.13-25 Origen offers a range of interpretations and supplies the material for later exegesis of this debated passage. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer*, pp. 242-43, observes, "Without doubt Origen consid-

10. *So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.*²³²

(2) Someone will possibly say that the Apostle, because up to this point he has spoken not as himself but under the assumed *persona* of another, now, as if indicating a change of *persona*, says, "I myself," so as to show that what is needful to be said pertains to himself, that is, to the Apostle. Yet he says [M1091] that with the mind he serves the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin, as if the power of sinning is so great and the tyranny of the flesh is so strong that the Apostle could not escape it. And for this reason he would have said elsewhere, "I punish my body and reduce it to slavery, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be rejected."²³³ Yet it seems to me that whoever assumes that these things have been spoken under the *persona* of the Apostle smites every soul with hopelessness. For there would then be absolutely no one who does not sin in the flesh.²³⁴ For that is what it means to serve the law of sin in the flesh. Therefore, it appears more to me that he is still retaining the *persona* that he described above as though it were himself, of a man already converted to better things in the will and purpose, and one who is a slave to the law of God with the mind and soul, but who had thus not yet reached the point of bringing the obedience of the flesh into agreement with the mind.

(3) For since he had discussed above the putting to death of the body and had taught that there must be a dying together with Christ,²³⁵ in these words he seems now to be pointing out how arduous is this work. He seems to teach that it is not realized immediately in one's actions, as soon as one wills this and purposes to do good. On the contrary, the force of habit is so great and the enticement of the vices is so strong that when the mind is already aiming for virtue and has determined to serve the law of God, nevertheless the desires of the flesh may persuade it to serve sin and submit to its laws.

ered it valid for all men, insofar as all stand under sin. He thus thought it accurate to see an application here even to the baptized." Cf. *Dial* 146 and *Hom in Gn* 7.2.

232. Rom 7.25.

234. Cf. Eccl 7.20.

233. 1 Cor 9.27.

235. Cf. Rom 6.8.

11. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.*²³⁶

(2) Above he has shown what opposing forces exist in those who, as though placed in a type of combat, live indeed according to the law of God with the mind, but are led to the law of sin by the flesh.²³⁷ But now he is speaking of those who no longer are partly in the flesh and partly in the Spirit, but who are completely in Christ. He declares that there is nothing deserving of condemnation in them because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set them free from the law of sin and death.” Now the law of the Spirit of life is identical with the law of God, just as, on the other hand, the law of sin and the law of death are one and the same. There will therefore be no condemnation for those who are completely set free from the law of sin, which is the law of death, and who serve the law of God, which is the law of the Spirit. But to serve [M1092] the law of God and to be under the law of the Spirit is the same thing as serving Christ. But to serve Christ means to serve wisdom, i.e., to serve righteousness, to serve truth, and to serve all the virtues at the same time.²³⁸ This is why it must not be imagined that all at once, when a person expresses the will, he immediately becomes transferred into Christ Jesus from the slavery of the law of sin, so that he would possess nothing in him any longer that could serve as grounds for sin’s condemnation. For in each person righteousness searches for its own portions and it tests to see if one has been reformed and corrected so that it can find no unjust work in the man, on the basis of which condemnation would follow. In a similar manner truth also searches for its own portions in the individual to see whether the person who has been transferred from the law of sin is still found to be defiling his obedience to the truth, in part, with lying. Likewise, chastity too investigates its own portions to see whether the person is being stained by any unchaste desires. So do piety and wisdom examine their portions in the individual. If

236. Rom 8.1–2.

238. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6.

237. Cf. Rom 7.25.

they will have discovered that things are holding together in the individual rightly and with integrity, then the person will be reckoned to be in Christ and to have no condemnation. There is absolutely no doubt that these things should be sought after by means of constant practice and training and by vigilant effort. And for this reason it is certain that this does not come to pass in those who are lazy or inactive but rather in those who are gradually making progress, and who at first sin only a little, then later even less, and ultimately, if they are able to attain it, who no longer sin at all. It seems to me that it was with this understanding in view that the same Apostle had also written elsewhere, "forgetting the past I strain forward toward the future."²³⁹ By these words he was indicating that the things in which there would be something blameworthy and worth forgetting should be in the past; but in the future lie the things that are in Christ, and these are the things toward which we must strain forward; these are the things we must aspire to with all eagerness of mind.

(3) We have said that the law of the Spirit of life should indeed be understood to mean the law of God, according, obviously, to that aspect in which the law is said to be spiritual.²⁴⁰ This is why he said additionally, "the law of the Spirit of life." For he could not have said this of the law of the letter, concerning which he had declared in another place, "The letter kills."²⁴¹ Elsewhere he had called this "the ministry of death."²⁴² The law, then, contains both the letter that kills and the Spirit that gives life. Consider then whether perhaps even that tree of which it is written, [M1093] "for knowing good and evil,"²⁴³ might not contain a figure of this matter. For both aspects are contained in one [and the same object], just as in the law as well. Moreover, we should not overlook the fact that, certainly here, the one who sets one free from the law of sin and death is called the Spirit of life, whereas in the Gospel according to John it is written that the Lord says, "If you continue in my word, you will

239. Phil 3.13.

241. 2 Cor 3.6.

243. Gn 2.9.

240. Cf. Rom 7.14.

242. 2 Cor 3.7.

know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”²⁴⁴ To me, at any rate, it seems that, although they may appear to be different from one another in deed or in name, nevertheless in reality they are one. For Christ is life,²⁴⁵ and it is he who sets free; and here [it says that] the Spirit of life sets free. And why is it not one freedom in both? For what the Spirit does, Christ also does; and the things that are Christ’s the Spirit does. For just as those whom the Holy Spirit sanctifies Christ sanctifies, so also those whom the Spirit of life sets free life also sets free. It is such that, once we have been set free by the law of the Spirit of life, let us abide in Christ and no longer be found to serve the law of sin. For just as he who is set free by the law of the Spirit of life abides in Christ, who is life,²⁴⁶ so he who serves the law of sin abides in death,²⁴⁷ which comes from the condemnation of sin.

12. *For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh, God [has done] by sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and, concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the Spirit, [on the things] of the Spirit. For the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the Spirit is life and peace; because the prudence of the flesh is hostile to God; for it is not subject to God’s law, for it cannot be. Now those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.*²⁴⁸

(2) Since he has named many kinds of laws above—for he has spoken of “the law of God,”²⁴⁹ “the law of the mind,”²⁵⁰ and “the law of the Spirit of life”;²⁵¹ and in contrast he has also mentioned “the law that is in the members,”²⁵² “the law of death,”²⁵³ and “the law of sin”²⁵⁴—it is a matter requiring a great deal of

244. Jn 8.31–32.

246. Cf. Jn 11.25; 14.6.

248. Rom 8.3–9.

250. Rom 7.23, 25.

252. Rom 7.23.

254. Rom 8.2. On the various meanings of “law,” see 7.1.1 n. 1.

245. Cf. Jn 11.25; 14.6.

247. Cf. 1 Jn 3.14.

249. Rom 7.22.

251. Rom 8.2.

253. Rom 8.2.

deliberation [M1094] to select here which of these laws he is speaking of when he says, "For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened through the flesh." I think, however, that here as well, as we have already spoken elsewhere on numerous occasions, the Apostle distinguishes the law of Moses in two aspects. The one he would call its flesh, the other its spirit. Observance of this law that is done according to the letter he would name "fleshly thinking," just as he says of a Jew of this sort, "he is puffed up without cause by his own fleshly thinking."²⁵⁵ On the other hand, that aspect that is understood spiritually he would name "spirit," as he also says in another passage, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."²⁵⁶ In this passage, then, in which he says, "impossible for the law," and, "in that it was weakened through the flesh," can be understood of interpretation that is according to the letter. For it was both impossible and weak, when it was interpreted according to the flesh, i.e., according to the letter. Indeed what could be more impossible than the observation of the Sabbath according to the letter of the law, as we have already often discussed?²⁵⁷ For it is commanded not to go out of the house, not to move from one's place, and to carry no burden.²⁵⁸ Because the Jews, who observe the law according to the flesh, also regard these things as impossible, they contrive certain inept and ridiculous interpretations in order to seem to repair the impossible aspect of the law.²⁵⁹ What should I say of the sacrificial system, which also has become completely impossible to carry out? For there is no temple or altar or any other place for sacrificing. In each of these things, I would not [merely] say that the law is impossible and weak, but it is plainly already dead.

(3) For it was weak before its death, at the time when it was attempting, but was not able, to take away sins by the blood of bulls and goats.²⁶⁰ It was also weak in respect to the laws concerning leprosy,²⁶¹ which it never could explain or fulfill. In all these matters then and in innumerable other things, the law

255. Col 2.18.

257. Cf. 1.10.2; 2.9.1; *Princ* 4.3.2; *Hom in Lv* 4.7; *Hom in Lk* 5.

258. Cf. Ex 16.29; Jer 17.21.

260. Cf. Heb 10.4.

256. 2 Cor 3.6.

259. Cf. 1.10.2; 2.9.1.

261. Cf. Lv 13; 14.

was both impossible and weak insofar as one considers the fleshly understanding. And for this reason, “God, sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and concerning sin,” or—as it reads more correctly among the Greeks—“and for the sake of sin he condemned sin in the flesh.”

(4) What he has said, “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” shows that we indeed have flesh of sin, but the Son of God had “the likeness of flesh of sin,” not the flesh of sin.²⁶² For all of us human beings who have been conceived from the seed of a man coming together with a woman,²⁶³ must of necessity employ that utterance in which [M1095] David says, “in iniquities I have been conceived and in sins did my mother conceive me.”²⁶⁴ He, however, who came to an immaculate body with no contact from a man, but only by the Holy Spirit coming upon the virgin and by the power of the Most High overshadowing,²⁶⁵ did indeed possess the nature of our body, but he possessed in no respect whatsoever the contamination of sin, which is passed down to those who are conceived by the operation of lust.²⁶⁶ For this reason, then, it is said that the Son of God came “in the likeness of flesh of sin.”

(5) He says, “And for the sake of sin he condemned sin in the flesh.” All the Scriptures testify to the fact that Christ became a sacrifice for the sake of sin and was offered for the cleansing of sins,²⁶⁷ especially Paul, when writing to the Hebrews, where he says, “For he did this once and for all, by offering himself as a sacrifice.”²⁶⁸ And again, “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all.”²⁶⁹ By means of this sacrifice of his own flesh, therefore, which is said to be for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, just as the same Apostle also says elsewhere, “He appeared in the last days for the destruction of sin”;²⁷⁰ and again the prophet says, “He himself bore our sins and carried our iniquities.”²⁷¹ Therefore, it was for the sake of sin, that is, through the sacrifice of his flesh, which he offered

262. Cf. 5.9.10.

264. Ps 51.5.

266. Cf. 3.8.4; 5.9.10.

268. Heb 7.27.

270. Heb 9.26.

263. Cf. Wis 7.2.

265. Cf. Lk 1.35.

267. Cf. Heb 1.3; 9.14, 26, 28; 10.2.

269. Rom 8.32.

271. Is 53.4.

for sin, “he condemned sin in his own flesh, so that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” For after this sacrifice of Christ’s flesh, which was offered for sin and condemned sin, i.e., put sin to flight and took it away, the justification of the law is fulfilled in us who keep the law according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh, in which aspect, as we explained above, the law was impossible and weak.

(6) “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the Spirit, [on the things] of the Spirit.” Here he now plainly sets the law of Moses in the middle, as it were, between us and the Jews. He says, “Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh”; that is, the Jews whom he calls Israel according to the flesh.²⁷² They set their minds upon the fleshly aspect of the law in that they understand the law according to the flesh. But, “those who are according to the Spirit”—speaking of those whom he calls Jews in spirit, not in the letter—[set their minds on the things] “of the Spirit.” And he furnishes the same meaning and discloses it more clearly when he says, “For the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the Spirit is life and peace.” Is not what he says, “The prudence of the flesh is death,” one and the same as this: [M1096] “The letter kills”?²⁷³ So then, “The prudence of the flesh is death.” But to what does it bring death? Doubtless, to the soul. For whoever would understand the law according to the flesh, i.e., according to the letter, does not come to Christ, who is life;²⁷⁴ and therefore, “the prudence of the flesh is death, but the prudence of the Spirit is life and peace.” For surely the one who will have understood the law spiritually possesses life and peace, which is Christ.²⁷⁵

(7) “Because the wisdom²⁷⁶ of the flesh is hostile to God, for it is not subject to God’s law, for it cannot be.” The same understanding still seems to be unfolding. For how could the wisdom

272. Cf. 1 Cor 10.18.

274. Cf. Jn 11.25; 14.6.

276. The translator (Rufinus) switches here from *prudencia* to *sapientia*.

273. 2 Cor 3.6.

275. Cf. Eph 2.14.

of the flesh, i.e., that fleshly understanding, not be hostile to God, seeing that it opposes Christ, it does not receive him whom God has sent,²⁷⁷ and it says, "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God?"²⁷⁸ How then could a wisdom like this and an understanding of the law of this sort not be said to be hostile to God and his law,²⁷⁹ a law that, of course, is according to the Spirit, to which this understanding is neither subject nor can be subjected? For just as death and life are contrary to one another, so the killing letter of the law,²⁸⁰ which is the wisdom of the flesh, and the life-giving Spirit, which truly is the law of God, are contrary to one another.²⁸¹

(8) "Now those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you." The same understanding persists. "Those who are in the flesh," he says, i.e., those who follow the law according to the letter, "cannot please God." For this was predicted by God in a former time through Isaiah when it says, "I cannot endure your fastings and appointed festivals and great days; your new moons and Sabbaths my soul hates."²⁸² But as for you, he says, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, if only he dwells [in you], you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, that is to say, you do not follow the fleshly understanding of the law, but the spiritual, through which you have attained to the life-giving Spirit,²⁸³ if only your deeds and manner of life are such that you should deserve to have the Spirit of God in you.

(9) As we have said, since he divides the law of Moses into two aspects, i.e., into the spirit and the flesh, to us he has handed down those things that are of the Spirit, which he also called the spiritual law. But the things that are of the flesh he has left to the fleshly Jews. After all, this is how he has interpreted the passage about Abraham when he said, "But the one who was from the slave woman was born according to the flesh; but the one from the free woman through a promise. And just as at that

277. Cf. Jn 5:38, 43.

279. Cf. 4.8.1.

281. Cf. 6.8.5 n. 186.

283. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

278. Jn 19.7.

280. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6.

282. Is 1.13-14.

time the one who was born according to the flesh was persecuting him who was according to the Spirit, so it is now also."²⁸⁴ For it is certain [M1097] that those who are the Jews according to the flesh would persecute us, who are Jews not outwardly but in secret²⁸⁵ and who keep the law according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. It is therefore consistent that those whose way of thinking is according to the flesh hope as well in a fleshly manner for the promises of the law.²⁸⁶ But we await the promises in a spiritual fashion in accordance with the words of Paul, who says, "in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit";²⁸⁷ and again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."²⁸⁸ From all of this it is shown what is the law according to the flesh and what the law according to the Spirit is; and also what the fleshly hope of promise is and what is the spiritual hope.

(10) It is, no doubt, also possible for this passage to be interpreted as referring to the law of the mind. Let us go back to the beginning: "What was impossible for the law in that it was weakened through the flesh." Above [Paul] said that the mind wants to do the good, but is not able to fulfill it through the weakness and frailty of the flesh.²⁸⁹ And for this reason God sent his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, that is, through the sacrifice that was offered for sin, he condemned sin. For when the remission of sins was granted to us, sin took to flight and was destroyed from our flesh, and the justification of the law began to be fulfilled in us, strictly speaking of that law that delights in the law of God, which is fulfilled at the time when the law of sin, which was in our members,²⁹⁰ no longer strives against it,²⁹¹ if only we walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. For as long as anyone is in the flesh and lives according to the flesh, he sets his mind on the things of the flesh; but when he will have turned himself to the Spirit and has died to the law of sin and of the flesh, he sets his mind

284. Gal 4.23, 29.

286. Cf. 5.1.2.

288. Eph 1.3.

290. Cf. Rom 7.22-23.

285. Cf. Rom 2.28-29.

287. Gal 3.14.

289. Cf. Rom 7.18.

291. Gal 5.17.

on the things of the Spirit. For to set one's mind according to the flesh is death to the soul; but [to set one's mind] according to the Spirit is life and peace.

(11) Because "the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to God"; that is, as long as the flesh is opposing the Spirit and is not subjected to the law of the mind, which is God's law, it is hostile to God. And therefore, "those who live in a fleshly way cannot please God. But you," he says, "are not in the flesh," i.e., you are not living according to the flesh, "but according to the Spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you." These matters can be applied, in their own place, according to the alternative interpretation, as we have said. But the reader must select and approve what is more appropriate; and if perchance he approves of one, let him follow it.

13. *But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, [Mt 1098] he does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies as well because of his Spirit that dwells in you.*²⁹²

(2) That the Apostle Paul makes use of syllogisms accepted and derived from the art of dialectic, both in this passage and in his other letters, is a fact that, in my opinion, does not require expansion at the present time, lest we should appear to be defenders not so much of his knowledge as of his words, in which he wishes not to be called skilled.²⁹³ And therefore we shall hasten instead to investigate the meaning of the section before us. Above where he said, "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you," we explained what it is to be in the Spirit in a twofold way. That is, it means either to understand the law not according to the letter but according to the spiritual sense, or yet to live by the laws of the Spirit and not of the flesh through the putting to death of the body.

292. Rom 8.9-11.

293. Cf. 2 Cor 11.6. See also 6.3.2.

(3) And therefore, what he now says, "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him," and what he adds, "But if Christ is in you," we need to ask whether the Spirit of God in someone is different from the Spirit of Christ, or even from Christ himself, or from the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead. When I observe what great logical coherence the present passage contains, and what the Savior says about the Holy Spirit in the Gospels, "he proceeds from the Father,"²⁹⁴ and, "he will take from what is mine";²⁹⁵ and [when I notice] the explanation of this word that he adds in what follows, "Father, all things that are mine are yours and that are yours are mine, and therefore I have said that he will take from what is mine";²⁹⁶ when, I say, I see this manner of unity between the Father and the Son, to me it appears that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same Spirit.²⁹⁷

(4) We, however, can also understand in another way what he says, "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him." For this really seems to be pronounced bluntly, to say that one who is not of character and stature such as to deserve to have the Spirit of Christ would immediately be repudiated as belonging to Christ, even though in the Psalms it says, "All the wild animals of the forests are mine, the beasts on the mountains and oxen."²⁹⁸ And if the wild animals and beasts are his, how is it that human beings are not his? But as I have said, it is possible for this to be understood like what is in the Gospel, "Whoever does not take up [M1099] his own cross and follow me is not worthy of me."²⁹⁹ Here as well, then, whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ in himself, i.e., whoever is not being led by the same Spirit so that, for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of the truth, for the sake of declaring the word of God and preaching the kingdom of heaven, for the sake of casting aside the letter of the law and uncovering its Spirit, for the sake of the struggle against sin, for all these things, whoever is not prepared to die is not his disciple.

294. Jn 15.26.

296. Jn 17.10; 16.15.

298. Ps 50.10.

295. Jn 16.14.

297. Cf. 1.3-5.

299. Mt 10.38.

Therefore, whoever is not like this, whoever does not bear this kind of spirit within himself, though he certainly is his creature, just as the wild animals of the forests and the beasts on the mountains and the oxen, he is not his disciple. So then, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him."

(5) "But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness." It appears to me that he is calling the Spirit of Christ and Christ one and the same thing in this passage. Therefore, he says what Christ is in: "We always carry around the death of Christ in our body."³⁰⁰ Yet death is imposed upon the body because of sin, that is to say, that it might not sin. But if the body has died to sin, the spirit must be alive to do righteousness. For whoever has died in the body and does not serve sin must necessarily be alive in the Spirit and serve righteousness. This is why the same Apostle says in a certain passage that he had handed over a certain man unto the destruction of the flesh in order that his spirit might be saved.³⁰¹

(6) "But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies as well because of his Spirit that dwells in you." Since above he had spoken of those who put to death their own bodies in the likeness of Christ's death that they should avoid sin,³⁰² he now necessarily makes mention of him who raised Christ from the dead. He does this so that they know that they are going to be made alive and resurrected from the dead in the likeness of Christ through the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead in a similar manner, and for the same reason for which they died together and were buried together with Christ.³⁰³ And he shows to what extent this takes place when he says, "because of his Spirit that dwells in you." For if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, it seems necessary that to the Spirit his own dwelling place should be given back and the temple restored.

300. 2 Cor 4.10.

302. Cf. Rom 6.5.

301. Cf. 1 Cor 5.5.

303. Cf. Rom 6.4, 8; 2 Tm 2.11.

(7) But I would wish to give attention to what meaning may be found in what is said, [M1100] that the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of God, or even Christ himself, dwells in us. Does it mean that the Spirit is given to all at the beginning and afterwards is withdrawn because of the worst actions that are foreign to God, in accordance with what is written, "My Spirit will not remain in these men, because they are flesh"?³⁰⁴ Or is it deservedly given at a later time because of life and faith, in accordance with the things that are taught in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit came upon each one of them like tongues of fire,³⁰⁵ or surely as we are taught in the Gospel, when the Savior himself says to the disciples after he rose again from the dead, "'Receive the Holy Spirit,' and he breathed into each of them"?³⁰⁶ Thus it seems to me that this gift should be sought by merits and preserved by the blamelessness of one's life, and even grace should be increased in each person according to his progress in faith. And the purer the soul is returned, the more generously the Spirit is poured into it. But what he said, "My Spirit shall not remain in these men, because they are flesh,"³⁰⁷ refers to the fact that because the soul of those men had repudiated serving the Spirit and had turned itself to all the vices of the flesh, it even adopted the name "flesh," to which it had joined itself and with which it had become one.³⁰⁸

(8) The Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, then, can be possessed in various ways. He is possessed according to that which we mentioned above, by divine inspiration, as it says, "'Receive the Holy Spirit,' and he breathed into them";³⁰⁹ and again [he may be received] in the manner in which we said it was accomplished in the Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles were speaking in different tongues.³¹⁰ There is also that manner that is recorded in the Books of the Kingdoms when the Scripture says, "And the Spirit came upon Saul and he began to prophesy."³¹¹ There is still another manner as well. When after the resurrection the Savior was going along the road with

304. Gn 6.3. Cf. *Hom in Nm* 6.3.

306. Jn 20.22.

308. Cf. 1 Cor 6.16.

310. Cf. Acts 2.4.

305. Cf. Acts 2.3.

307. Gn 6.3.

309. Jn 20.22.

311. 1 Sm 10.10.

Cleopas and another disciple, he opened the Scriptures to them and so set them aflame by the Spirit of his mouth that they were saying, "Was not our heart burning within us when he opened the Scriptures to us?"³¹² Yet, do you want to know that it is not only when Jesus speaks that he bestows his Spirit to his hearers, but that anyone who speaks the word of God in his name also bestows God's Spirit to those who hear? Consider how, in the Acts of the Apostles where Peter is speaking to Cornelius, [M1101] Cornelius himself is filled with the Holy Spirit along with those who were with him.³¹³ Therefore, you as well, when you speak the word of God and speak it faithfully with a pure conscience,³¹⁴ not being convicted yourself by your own words, as one who would teach one thing but practice something else, it can come to pass that while you are speaking the fire of the Holy Spirit may inflame the hearts of your hearers. They may at once begin to glow and burn to carry out everything you are teaching, so that they would fulfill in deeds what they have learned in words and they may "seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; they may set their minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth."³¹⁵

(g) Moreover, each person shall be tested to see if he has the Spirit of Christ within him. Christ is wisdom;³¹⁶ if he is wise according to Christ and sets his mind on the things of Christ, he has the Spirit of Christ in himself through wisdom. Christ is righteousness;³¹⁷ if anyone has Christ's righteousness in himself, through righteousness he possesses the Spirit of Christ in himself. Christ is peace;³¹⁸ if anyone possesses the peace of Christ in himself, through the Spirit of peace he has the Spirit of Christ in himself. So also love, so also sanctification, so also each particular thing that Christ is said to be.³¹⁹ It must be believed that the one who possesses these qualities has the Spirit of Christ in himself and hopes that his own mortal body will be made alive because of the Spirit of Christ that dwells within him.

312. Lk 24.32.

314. 1 Tm 3.9.

316. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

318. Cf. Eph 2.14.

313. Cf. Acts 10.44.

315. Col 3.1-2.

317. 1 Cor 1.30.

319. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

14. *So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live.*³²⁰

(2) He has taught above that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us³²¹ and the gifts of the Spirit have been shared with us. It is therefore consistent that he now says additionally that we, beyond any doubt, are debtors of the thing that we have attained from the Spirit of Christ. He says, "But we are not debtors to the flesh." Surely God did not make us in his own image in order that we should be subject to the servitude of the flesh, but instead in order that our soul, by serving its Creator devotedly, might make use of the service and ministry of the flesh. But perhaps someone may say: How can it be that we are not debtors to the flesh, seeing that we are forced by the necessity of nature to provide both nourishment and clothing for it? But in order to show that it is not deemed blameworthy to confer such things to the flesh, but only to subject one's life to service of the flesh, he therefore adds, "for if you live according to the flesh, you will die." What it means to live according to the flesh it has already been frequently discussed. It is [M1102] to indulge in the desires of the flesh. It is in this respect, then, that he is denying that we are debtors, as he also says elsewhere, "Make no provision for the flesh in respect to its lusts."³²² He is not absolutely denying that provision should be made for the flesh in respect to necessary matters, but only in respect to its lusts. So then here as well: "For if," he says, "you live according to the flesh, you will die." And he adds, "But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live."

(3) Concerning this it has already been said above how the body, to be sure, ought to be dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.³²³ Therefore the one who acts in accordance with the Spirit and puts to death the deeds of the flesh will live because of the Spirit of life dwelling within him.³²⁴

(4) A person puts to death the deeds of the flesh through

320. Rom 8.12-13.

322. Rom 13.14.

324. Cf. Rom 8.11.

321. Rom 8.9.

323. Cf. Rom 8.10.

the Spirit in the following manner: “The fruit of the Spirit is love,”³²⁵ but hatred is a deed of the flesh; therefore hatred is put to death and extinguished through love. Likewise joy is a fruit of the Spirit,³²⁶ whereas “the sorrow of this world,”³²⁷ which works death, is a deed of the flesh; therefore this sorrow is extinguished when the joy of the Spirit is in us. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit,³²⁸ dissension and discord are of the flesh. But surely discord can be put to death through peace. In a similar manner, the patience of the Spirit³²⁹ extinguishes the impatience of the flesh, and goodness³³⁰ destroys malice, and gentleness³³¹ ferocity, and self-control immoderation, and chastity slays unchastity. Whoever puts to death the deeds of the flesh through the Spirit in such a manner will live.

(5) One should, of course, notice that when he speaks of death here, “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die,” he does not mean that common death,³³² but rather that death of sin. Likewise, he speaks not of that life that all share in, but eternal life, unto which all will attain who put to death the deeds of the flesh through the fruit of the Spirit in the manner we have explained above. Moreover, we need to realize that this putting to death of the deeds of the flesh should come through repentance, and [it does] not [come] suddenly but gradually. First of all these deeds must grow weaker and weaker in those who are starting out; then when they begin to make progress more fervently and to be filled more fully with the Spirit, not only will [the deeds of the flesh] grow weaker, but they will even begin to decay. But when they then reach the point of perfection so that no indications of sin whatsoever appear in them, either in deed or in word or in thought, then they should be believed to have put to death the deeds of the flesh and to have completely handed over these deeds unto death.

325. Gal 5.22.

327. 2 Cor 7.10.

329. Gal 5.22.

331. Gal 5.23.

326. Gal 5.22.

328. Gal 5.22.

330. Gal 5.22.

332. Cf. 5.4.2.

THE SEVENTH BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS



JUST AS WE HAVE SHOWN THAT PAUL brings up various kinds of laws in this letter under the single term “law”¹ and names various kinds of death under the one appellation “death,”² similarly, now we see various kinds of spirits being indicated under the one name “spirit.” Thus, he says in the present section: *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*³ Surely he is speaking here of the Spirit of God. And again in what comes next he says, “For you have not received a spirit of slavery again unto fear,”⁴ in which he shows that the spirit of slavery is different from him whom he called above the Spirit of God. And for this reason he adds, “But you have received the Spirit of adoption, by which we cry: Abba, Father!”⁵ In this he makes known that the Spirit of adoption is identical with him whom he had above called the Spirit of God. He goes on to say of him, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit”;⁶ that is to say, the same Spirit of God by whom we cry out “God, Father!” bears witness with our spirit. Doubtless, our spirit is different both from the spirit of slavery who is given unto fear, and from him who supplies it testimony concerning the invocation of the Father.⁷ Then all human beings, as it seems, are led by some spirit, as Paul himself writes, “You yourselves know that when you were Gentiles, you were being led to mute idols.”⁸ There he is showing that even Gentiles are led to idols by some spirit.

(2) So then, the Spirit of God is the same as the Spirit of

1. Cf. Preface of Origen (8); 3.6.1; 4.4.2-10; 4.5.7; 5.1.24; 5.6.2-4; 5.10.9; 6.8.2; 6.9.2; 7.1.1; 7.19.7.

2. Cf. 5.10.9; 6.6.5.

4. Rom 8.15.

6. Rom 8.16.

8. 1 Cor 12.2.

3. Rom 8.14.

5. Rom 8.15.

7. Cf. Rom 8.15-16.

Christ, who is himself the same as the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit of adoption seems to be called the same [Spirit], as the Apostle's current passage declares. David too seems to be speaking of the same Spirit, whom he calls, "May you not take your Holy Spirit from me"; and, "with the governing Spirit, strengthen me."⁹ Because of this, I believe that he is called the governing Spirit that it might be shown that indeed there are many spirits but among them the Holy Spirit, who is named "governing," holds sovereignty and dominion.¹⁰ For just as there are many sons of God, as the Scripture says, "I have said: You are gods, and you are all sons of the Most High,"¹¹ and yet there is one who is by nature the Son and only-begotten from the Father,¹² through whom all sons are named, so also there are indeed many spirits, yet there is one who truly proceeds from God himself.¹³ It is he who bestows the grace of his own name and sanctification to all the others. But that there are more [M1104] spirits, this same Paul also declares when writing to the Hebrews, stating, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"¹⁴ Moreover, David says, "Who makes his angels spirits."¹⁵ And Daniel, no less, bears testimony and says, "Praise the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just."¹⁶ And in the passage at hand Paul says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit,"¹⁷ and elsewhere, "that your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁸ It is not a matter of doubt that all these things have been said of rational spirits.

(3) In addition, spirits are labeled "evil" and angels [are labeled] "evil," both as David says, "He sent to them the wrath of his own indignation, an embassy through evil angels";¹⁹ and as it is written in the Books of the Kingdoms about Saul, "And the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord was tormenting him";²⁰ and as it is related in the Book

9. Ps 51.11-12.

11. Ps 82.6.

13. Cf. Jn 15.26.

15. Ps 104.4.

17. Rom 8.16.

19. Ps 78.49.

10. Cf. 7.5-7.

12. Cf. Jn 1.14.

14. Heb 1.14.

16. Dn 3.86 LXX.

18. 1 Thes 5.23.

20. 1 Sm 16.14.

of Judges, “And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.”²¹ This evil spirit then, which is said to have gone forth to torment Saul or create division between Abimelech and the Shechemites, and is said to have gone out and to have been sent from the Lord, should be understood as a type of executioner, sent to exact punishments from sinners. And, although they should be called evil on account of their own purpose and will, nevertheless they offer a service to the divine will in those who deserve punishment as even the one whom Micah the prophet refers to as a lying spirit. When God said, “Who will seduce Ahab for me?’ it answered, ‘I will seduce.’ And the Lord said, ‘How?’ And it said, ‘I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets, and I will say that he should go up to Gilead, and there he will fall.’ And the Lord said, ‘Go. You shall seduce, and indeed you will succeed.’”²² In this way, then, even those who are called evil spirits offer service to God in performing the infliction of punishments.²³

(4) In addition there are also other spirits of which David speaks, “With a violent spirit you will shatter the ships of Tarshish.”²⁴ It is also called “a spirit of storm”²⁵ and “a spirit of burning.”²⁶ I would, however, prefer to call these physical winds rather than rational spirits.²⁷

2. Since the nature of the distinction concerning the different meanings behind the designation “spirit” [M1105] has been recorded by way of a preface, let us now consider what he says: *For you have not received a spirit of slavery again unto fear.*²⁸ It is written also in the prophet Malachi, “The son honors his father, and a slave his master; and if I am a father—where is my honor? and if I am a master—where is my fear?’ says the Lord Almighty.”²⁹ Now it is certain that a person becomes a son of God through the Spirit of adoption, but a slave of God through

21. Jgs 9.23.

22. Cf. 1 Kgs 22.20–22.

24. Ps 48.7.

26. Is 4.4.

27. The LXX πνεῦμα, like the Hebrew *ruach*, means both “wind” and “spirit.”

28. Rom 8.15.

23. Cf. 1.16.4.

25. Ps 107.25.

29. Mal 1.6.

a spirit of slavery. So then, because “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,”³⁰ the starting point of serving God [as a slave] is being filled by the spirit of fear, while one is still called a child. And for children especially, fear is a pedagogue.³¹ This is why the Apostle also says of such a child, “As long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, though he is the lord of everything; but he is under tutors and guardians until the date established beforehand by the father. So with us, while we were children we were under the elements of this world, being enslaved.”³² You see how Paul here, in accordance with the wisdom bestowed upon him by God,³³ could designate the spirits of slavery that are given in fear as children’s tutors and guardians,³⁴ which keep each one of us, while a child according to the inner man, in fear³⁵ until we come to the age when we merit receiving the Spirit of adoption of sons and become now a son and lord of everything.³⁶ For he says, “All things are yours,”³⁷ and he has given all things to us with Christ.³⁸ What Paul is teaching, therefore, is this: After we have died together with Christ³⁹ and his Spirit has come into us, we do not receive once again a spirit of slavery unto fear. That is to say, we have not become children and beginners again, but as those who are perfect we now receive the Spirit of adoption once and for all, “by which” Spirit “we cry: Abba, Father!” For no one but a son cries out to a father. But what he has added, “Abba,” has repeated the same word using a word from his mother tongue. It is as if he had said: Father, Father.

3. [*For the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God. But if sons, then heirs; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if only we suffer together so that we may also be glorified together.*]⁴⁰ [M1106]

30. Sir 1.12: LXX 1.14.

31. Cf. Gal 4.2.

33. Cf. 2 Pt 3.15.

35. Cf. 2.9:3-4; 7.5:3; *Comm in Mt* 13.26.

36. Cf. Gal 4.1.

38. Cf. Rom 8.32.

40. Rom 8.16-17. The bracketed lemma is not found in the Hammond

32. Gal 4.1-3.

34. Cf. Gal 4.2.

37. 1 Cor 3.22.

39. Cf. Rom 6.8.

Bammel edition but that of the Migne.

(2) So then, the Spirit of adoption himself, through whom someone is adopted as a son, bears witness and assures our spirit that we should be sons of God after we have gone from the spirit of slavery to the Spirit of adoption, when we no longer do anything out of fear, that is, out of fear of punishment, but instead, perfect everything on account of love of the Father. He has admirably said that the Spirit of God bears witness not with the soul but with the spirit, which is the human being's better part. It can be considered, in addition, in order to distinguish those who are being led by a spirit of slavery unto fear and those [who are led] by the Spirit of sons, that Abraham indeed gave his inheritance to Isaac; but to the sons of slave women or concubines, it is said that he had given not an inheritance, but gifts and presents.⁴¹ Doubtless, what was being foreshadowed in this is that those who go on serving God out of fear will not be entirely rejected, but there are gifts for them and there are presents; it is, however, to those who merit to receive the Spirit of adoption that the inheritance belongs, through which they are glorified together with Christ.⁴²

(3) After these things the Apostle now devises a syllogism based upon logical inferences and says: If we receive the Spirit of adoption, then we are sons. But if we are sons, doubtless, also heirs. For a slave expects a wage, a son hopes for an inheritance. And again he adds another expansion to the conclusion. "Heirs indeed," he says, "of God, but co-heirs of Christ." Someone becomes an heir of God when he merits receiving the things that belong to God, i.e., the glory of incorruption and immortality,⁴³ the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.⁴⁴ But one becomes a co-heir of Christ when "he will transform the body of our humility to be conformed to the body of his brightness";⁴⁵ but also when one should merit to attain to what the Savior has said, "Father, I want that where I am, there also they might be with me."⁴⁶ There is, besides, that dignity of co-heirs of Christ, that certainly the Father "gave all judgment to

41. Cf. Gn 25.5-6.

43. Cf. 1 Cor 15.53.

45. Phil 3.21.

42. Cf. *Hom in Gn* 7.4.

44. Cf. Col 2.3.

46. Jn 17.24.

the Son.”⁴⁷ But also to his co-heirs the Son says, “And you will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”⁴⁸ And in this way Christ leads his co-heirs not only into a share of the inheritance, but also into a participation in his authority.

(4) “If only,” he says, “we suffer together so that we may also be glorified together.” [M1 107] We suffer together with Christ whoever of us says, “I have been crucified together with Christ; I live no longer, but Christ lives in me”;⁴⁹ and, once more, whoever says, “If we have died together, we shall also live together, if we persevere, we shall also reign together”;⁵⁰ or even anyone who can say, “I fill up in my body what was lacking of the sufferings of Christ.”⁵¹ And just as God highly exalted Christ because he had humbled himself, having become obedient to death, even death on a cross, and he gave him the name that is above every name,⁵² so also God exalts with him in glory those who suffer together with Christ and who follow the example of his sufferings. Indeed, this is the way Christ has disclosed to his co-heirs, that they might be exalted not because of strength or wisdom, but through humility, that they might attain to the glory of the eternal inheritance through their perseverance out of afflictions.⁵³

4. *For I consider that the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the future glory that will be revealed to us. For the expectation of creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation has been subjected to futility, not of its own will but because of him who subjected in hope; because even the creation itself will be set free from slavery of corruption unto the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. For we know that all creation groans together and suffers grief together until now.*⁵⁴

(2) Consider the person who has become a son of the Most

47. Jn 5.22.

49. Gal 2.19–20.

51. Col 1.24.

53. Cf. Heb 9.15.

54. Rom 8.18–22. For an analysis of this section of the *Commentary* see Paul Lebeau, “L’interprétation origénienne de Rm 8:19–22,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970) 1:336–45.

48. Mt 19.28.

50. 2 Tm 2.11–12.

52. Cf. Phil 2.8–9.

High God⁵⁵ and an heir of his goodness and glory and a co-heir of Christ,⁵⁶ the only begotten Son of God. Even if he persists without complaint in the observance and just requirements of all the commands of the Lord⁵⁷ and abides in them with vigilant mind; even if he sustains every manner of punishment that can be inflicted either within human nature or without; or even if anyone suffers the events recorded about Job,⁵⁸ where someone destroyed not only the things that seemed to be outside of him, his assets and his children, but also touched his flesh and bones and struck him with a terrible wound from head to foot, so that he had to take a potsherd to scrape the puss that flowed out from his sores;⁵⁹ even if, I say, in this extremely short span of life, someone endures things worse than these, and suffers affliction in everything,⁶⁰ and is tormented in mind and body; and should he compare these things both “to the future glory that will be revealed” to [M1108] the saints, and to the things that “eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has entered the heart of man”;⁶¹ then one can understand why Paul has said with great profundity, “For I consider that the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the coming glory that will be revealed to us.” For there is indeed nothing that can be found worth comparison to the future glory. For how would you compare the mortal with the immortal, or the visible with the invisible, or the temporal with the eternal, or what is perishable with what is perpetual?

(3) But if, in the present life, it is in any way possible to gather up what one might call seeds of the future glory, those seeds, he says, are gathered from afflictions and sufferings, as the same Apostle also says elsewhere, “For our light and momentary affliction in the present is producing for us a weight of eternal glory vastly beyond all measure, for us who look not at what is seen but at what is not seen.”⁶² For he is showing by this that the one who looks at what is not seen and eternal regards every affliction, whatever it is that happens, though it may seem

55. Cf. Ps 82.6.

57. Cf. Lk 1.6.

59. Cf. Jb 2.5, 7-8.

61. 1 Cor 2.9.

56. Cf. Rom 8.17.

58. Cf. Jb 1-2.

60. Cf. 2 Cor 4.8.

62. 2 Cor 4.17-18.

tortuous and unending, as momentary and light, even if one should be subjected to the torture racks and ripping claws. If, at the time when his body is being torn to pieces by punishments, he should behold the future glory that is to be revealed, and should consider how, through these tortures, this body of humility will be transformed so that it should become conformed to the body of the glory of the Son of God,⁶³ he regards the present affliction as momentary and light.⁶⁴ But he reckons the weight of the future glory to be heavy, i.e., great and eternal. And the more he sees the punishments of his afflictions being multiplied, so much the more will he understand the weight and magnitude of glory being accumulated for him.⁶⁵

(4) But in my opinion even David the prophet indicates that a certain measure and amount of glory, based upon the extent of afflictions, is being collected, when he says, "According to the multitude of my sufferings in my heart, your consolations have gladdened my soul."⁶⁶ This is why I think that the consolation given to the righteous in the present life may be given in accordance with the magnitude of tortures; but the future glory about which the Apostle says, "it will be revealed to us," is not given in accordance with the magnitude of sufferings; "for the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the future glory." But, just as we advanced what was said to the Corinthians, [M1109] out of the light and momentary hardship of our afflictions certain seeds, having been gathered, were preparing for us an immeasurable eternal weight of glory.⁶⁷ But the same Apostle confirms in Second Corinthians that, in the present life, divine consolation is bestowed upon the righteous in proportion to their sufferings, by writing, "Because, just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolation abounds."⁶⁸ And he did not say that it abounds "beyond measure" or [it is] "immeasurable," but only that the consolations are as great as the sufferings.

(5) Now what he says, "the future glory that will be revealed

63. Cf. Phil 3.21.

65. Cf. 2 Cor 4.17.

67. Cf. 2 Cor 4.17. See also *Mart 2*.

64. Cf. *Mart 2*.

66. Ps 94.19.

68. 2 Cor 1.5.

to us," I think that we have already sufficiently shown above, concerning different kinds of glories,⁶⁹ what is the glory that has already been revealed, and what is that which will be revealed. We have also shown that what we now see, "we see through a mirror in a riddle,"⁷⁰ but then, "when the son of man comes in the glory of the Father and the holy angels,"⁷¹ we shall see "face to face,"⁷² just as John has also said, "we shall see him as he is."⁷³ Moreover, that glory that is to be revealed can be seen when the doctrine that concerns each individual principle of the world or of things beyond measure, begins to be known and "the treasures of his wisdom and knowledge"⁷⁴ begin to be revealed.

(6) After this he says, "For the expectation of creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God." Since the Apostle wants to show how great and of what nature the glory that is going to be revealed in him, or, in those who exert themselves to the uttermost in the struggles of Christ is, he says that even the creation, namely, the rational creation, has a certain expectation and sets hope for that time when the glory of the sons of God is going to be revealed, that is, when the things that have been prepared for those who will be deemed worthy to be sons of God will be revealed;⁷⁵ or at least when, because the veil with which they are covered has been taken away from them,⁷⁶ they themselves would be manifested to be sons of God.

(7) But which creation is it that "waits for the revealing of the sons of God"? That one, he says, which now "has been subjected to futility," but subjected "not willingly" nor of its own accord, but by the will of him who governs the universe. For his sake, therefore, it has been subjected, but subjected not under the condition that it should abide always subjected to futility, but with a certain hope. Now what that hope is, he mentions when he says, "Because even the creation itself will be set free from the slavery of corruption, in the freedom of the glory of the sons of God." Yet Paul says that he and those like him know

69. Cf. 4.8.8-10.

71. Mt 25.31.

73. 1 Jn 3.2.

75. Cf. 1 Cor 2.9.

70. 1 Cor 13.12.

72. 1 Cor 13.12.

74. Col 2.3.

76. Cf. 2 Cor 3.16.

“that creation groans together and suffers grief together until now”; or, as [M1110] other copies read, “groans together and suffers birth pains until now.” To groan together and to suffer grief together means to groan and to grieve with another who is groaning and grieving; that is to say, since he himself has no cause to groan and suffer grief, he groans nevertheless for the sake of the one who has reason to groan and be in grief. He says that the creation does this because it has been subjected to futility and is placed in the slavery of corruption. Let these things stand as an explanation of the sequence of the Apostle’s discourse.

(8) But now let us go back and investigate more carefully what is that futility to which the creation is said to be subjected, and what is that corruption from whose slavery it hopes to be set free. To me it appears that these things are being said concerning that physical and corruptible substance of our bodies. For corruption exercises dominion over nothing else than the body. For the inner man, who has been created according to God and made in the image of God,⁷⁷ is incorruptible and invisible and can even be said to be incorporeal according to its own special nature. The outer man, however, is said to be both corporeal and corruptible. For that reason Paul was also saying, “For although our outer man is being corrupted, our inner man is being renewed.”⁷⁸ But the renewal of the inner man, inasmuch as it is rational and intellectual, consists in the knowledge of God and in the capacity for receiving the Holy Spirit.

(9) But in order that we might briefly and summarily commit to paper even something concerning such profound matters, let us assemble a picture of the substance of the inner man, i.e., of the soul and intellect, to find out how “the creation has been subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected in hope.” And, if it seems fitting, let us put before us Paul himself, whose soul and intellect, which is his inner man, certainly surpasses and ascends beyond everything pertaining to the body, everything visible and subject to the

77. Cf. Gn 1.27; Eph 4.24; Col 3.10.

78. 2 Cor 4.16.

senses and to sight, and becomes capable of receiving the divine nature itself. Even the essence of his soul, however, as great and excellent as it was, which comprehends the definitions and understanding of heavenly and divine ideas—the reasons for this are known to God—was subjected to servitude to the corruptible body and was overcome by its futility.

(10) For, consider the needs of the body: the appetite for food, the embarrassing process of digestion, the sense of shame associated with procuring offspring, how children are conceived, born, and raised. And behold, what great futility is contained in these things, what great corruption to which the creation of the soul, noble and rational, has been subjected, although unwillingly. It was subjected, [M1111] however, in hope, namely, in hope for the time when it would be set free, when the time of freedom for the sons of God comes. This, then, is what the Apostle was speaking about with more openness than in another passage in reference to himself, “As long as we are in this tent, we groan.”⁷⁹ Wisdom was also saying this through Solomon, “The corruptible body weighs down the soul, and this earthy tent burdens the very thoughtful mind.”⁸⁰ And, furthermore, the same Apostle says, “For while we are in the body we are away from the Lord,”⁸¹ and he prefers to be away from the body and to be present with the Lord.⁸² He makes this known and explains it much more openly in that [passage] where he says, “But I am hard pressed between the two, having the desire to go back and to be with Christ; for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.”⁸³ There he shows plainly that he was not willingly serving this corruption and futility as far as pertains to the things he was conscious of in his own soul; rather it was for the sake of him who willed these things so, and also for our sake⁸⁴ that we might be able to be saved. And so he remains in the flesh for our sake; but when the sons of God are revealed and gathered into one through the Church, which he has appointed “for one husband, to present to Christ as a pure virgin,”⁸⁵ at

79. 2 Cor 5.4.

81. 2 Cor 5.6.

83. Phil 1.23–24.

85. 2 Cor 11.2.

80. Wis 9.15.

82. Cf. 2 Cor 5.8.

84. Cf. Phil 1.24.

that time he is set free from the slavery of corruption, as he himself says, "I am already being offered as a sacrifice, and the time of my departure has come. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith; moreover, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness."⁸⁶ This is [what it means] to be freed from the slavery of corruption unto the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.

(11) But if it seems fitting, ascend from these examples to even higher things and consider the services of the sun itself and of the moon and of the stars of the sky and of the entire world. In what sense have they been subjected to futility and serve corruption? For they cause crops to grow for man's use. They produce the fruits of trees and the herbs of the fields; and by their returns they rotate each year across the same cycles. For they renew things that pass away and then they let things that have been renewed pass away once more. If you look at Paul's statement that says, "They are all ministering spirits sent to carry out service for those who will receive salvation as an inheritance,"⁸⁷ you will understand that also angels themselves carry out such tasks and are subjected in this matter, certainly not by willing, I believe, but because of him who subjected [them] in hope. "For who resists his will?"⁸⁸ [M 11 12]

(12) I am allured by the prophetic discourses to understand something similar in respect to the archangels. Indeed, what could you find of such great futility and such great corruption as to wage wars in this world, to incite kings and nations into battles against one another? Consider, therefore, that the chief duty of the archangel consists in these very activities, as Daniel the prophet testifies when he says that the archangel was speaking to him and was saying to him that he had fought against the ruler of the Persians.⁸⁹ "And no one," he says, "came to my help except your ruler Michael."⁹⁰ Through each of these things one detects that the rational "creation is subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected in hope."

(13) The hope is, namely, one day to be at rest from these

86. 2 Tm 4.6-8.

88. Rom 9.19.

90. Dn 10.21.

87. Heb 1.14.

89. Cf. Dn 10.13, 20.

bodily and corruptible matters. For this rational creation has this expectation, that the revealing of the sons of God might take place. It is for their sake that angels are sent to carry out service, in order that they too might receive the inheritance of salvation⁹¹ together with those to whom they have ministered, so that there might be one flock⁹² of earthly and heavenly things,⁹³ and one shepherd,⁹⁴ and "God might be all in all."⁹⁵ And in order to strengthen and clarify what he had said about these things, he added, "For we know that all creation groans together and suffers grief together until now." Above he had said, "For I consider the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the future glory."⁹⁶ And although in the latter passage he only claims to consider this, in the former he claims to know that all creation groans together and suffers grief together, obviously, in order that no doubt should be entertained in this matter. For although the creation is not subjected willingly, nevertheless, because it yields to the will of him who subjected, it exhibits, as it were, an affection and love for those for whose sake it seems to be subjected; and it grieves for their griefs and groans for their groanings.

(14) But if, as is found in other copies, we should read the text this way: "groans together and suffers birth pains," we shall understand "to suffer birth pains" in the sense in which the Apostle says that through the gospel he had begotten those whom he brought forth to the light through faith in Christ;⁹⁷ or, as he said about certain others, "My little children for whom I am again suffering birth pains until Christ should be formed in you."⁹⁸ Therefore, the creation also suffers birth pains for those whom it regenerates unto salvation.

(15) But suppose it still seems to readers necessary to ask why he named the creation three times up above and never called it [M1113] "all creation"; but here at the end he says, "For we know that all creation groans together and suffers grief together." This can be interpreted in the following way. It is in-

91. Cf. Heb 1.14.

93. Cf. Phil 2.10.

95. 1 Cor 15.28.

97. Cf. 1 Cor 4.15.

92. Cf. Jn 10.16.

94. Cf. Jn 10.16.

96. Rom 8.18.

98. Gal 4.19.

deed not all creation that groans and grieves, i.e., that which is subject to the needs of the corruptible body, but it is all creation that grieves together with those who grieve and groans together with those who groan. For all creation above looks upon our struggles and battles, and grieves when we are vanquished, but rejoices when we overcome. Indeed, it is far more natural for those [created beings above] to rejoice with those who rejoice and to grieve with those who grieve than for us.⁹⁹

5. *But not only this, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, likewise groan within ourselves while we wait for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For how could someone hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*¹⁰⁰

(2) We have frequently taught that this is the custom of the apostolic communication style: When he says, "And not only this," and then adds nothing to which this should be applied, one must refer to the words spoken above.¹⁰¹ So also the present section lends itself to be understood. For this is the kind of thing he seems to be saying: Not only does all creation groan together and suffer grief together, "but also we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves. For we wait for the adoption as sons and the redemption of our body." However much we recognize that by this itself, that we believe in Christ, we already have salvation offered to us, nevertheless that salvation is still in hope, not in the sight of things that can be seen. For if it were already seen, certainly it would not be hoped for. For a person hopes that he might see. But if he sees the things he was hoping for, it is superfluous to keep hoping for what he sees. Now we have hope not in things that are seen, lest our hope should be empty, but in things that are not seen. And for this reason, because we hope for what we do not see, and because those things are so great and so glorious that they may be attained by much effort and many afflictions and dan-

99. Cf. Rom 12.15.

100. Rom 8.23-25.

101. Cf. Preface of Origen (1); 1.9.6; 1.13.1; 6.9.9.

gers, on that account we wait for these things with patience as for things that scarcely at any time are going to come. We have said these things in order to straighten out, so to speak, and clarify the sequence of the apostolic thoughts.

(3) Now, if it is suitable, let us see what he is indicating by this new expression in which he has said, [M1114] "Moreover, we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit." For we know that it is written in the law, "You shall not hold back the firstfruits of the threshing floor and the firstfruits of the wine press";¹⁰² and, "The firstfruits of all your fruits you shall bring to the house of the Lord God."¹⁰³ What then? The firstfruits of the threshing floor and the firstfruits of the wine press are composed of the same fruit or fluid from which the rest comes, whether the grain from the threshing floor or the liquid from the press. Will it not also seem so in the case of what he calls the firstfruits of the Spirit, that, from the many other holy and blessed spirits, one is preeminent over the other? Or shall we interpret this instead in accordance with what we have set forth above,¹⁰⁴ that there are many ministering spirits, who have been sent in service on behalf of those who will receive the inheritance of salvation?¹⁰⁵ Each believer, by acting under these spirits, is instructed, as if under tutors and guardians, until the time established beforehand by the father,¹⁰⁶ i.e., until he should reach the legal age of the maturation of the soul, when anyone who has gone beyond the spirit of slavery, which he had received leading to fear and by which he was being kept as by a pedagogue,¹⁰⁷ becomes worthy to receive the Spirit of adoption, the firstfruits of the Spirit, through whom, as an adopted son, he is even able to be united with the Church of the firstborn ones, which is in heaven.¹⁰⁸ And just as there is a great difference between a son and a slave,¹⁰⁹ so is there between the Holy Spirit, of whom Paul claims that he and those like him possess the firstfruits, and the ministering spirits.¹¹⁰ Let this be one way in which we have been able to track down the meaning of this expression.

102. Nm 18.27.

104. Cf. 2.9.3-4; 7.2.1; 7.4.11.

106. Cf. Gal 4.2.

108. Cf. Heb 12.23.

110. Cf. Heb 1.14.

103. Ex 34.26.

105. Cf. Heb 1.14.

107. Cf. Gal 4.2.

109. Cf. Gal 4.1.

(4) Now let us consider another way as well. We read in the writings of the Apostle Paul himself that the gifts or graces of the Holy Spirit are designated “many spirits,” as when he says, “But now since you are zealots for the spirits, seek to abound, leading to the edification of the Church”;¹¹¹ and again elsewhere, “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,”¹¹² saying that the spirits of the prophets are not as things inferior being subjected to what is better, but in view of the fact that anyone with the spirit of prophecy is not compelled to speak unwillingly, as those are who possess unclean spirits, but instead, when he wants to and when reason demands it, he speaks. Yet when it will not seem appropriate to speak he is silent because he knows well that there is a time for speaking and a time for silence.¹¹³ And, therefore, it is said that the spirits are subject to the prophets¹¹⁴ not in order to injure them but in order to govern, just as we accept what was said [M1115] about the Savior, “Then the Son himself will be subjected to him who subjected all things to him.”¹¹⁵ Here as well “subjected” does not imply inferiority. Indeed, how could he who is the Son and is everything that the Father is be called inferior? For he says, “Everything that is yours, Father, is mine.”¹¹⁶ But he himself is said to be subjected in those who believe in him because he claims to be in each one of them, and he says that he hungers and thirsts in them; in them he declares that he is naked and cared for and is clothed.¹¹⁷ Therefore, he himself is also said to be subjected in them. These things have been said as a kind of digression. Now let us return to our theme.

(5) So, then, Paul calls the various gifts of the Spirit “many spirits.” Doubtless, the apostles attained to whichever of these many gifts were the highest and greatest so that, as Paul himself says, they might be suitable “ministers of the new covenant”¹¹⁸ and that “they might be able to fully preach the gospel from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum.”¹¹⁹ This gift of the Holy Spirit, therefore, which has been bestowed upon them

111. 1 Cor 14.12.

113. Cf. Eccl 3.7.

115. 1 Cor 15.28.

117. Cf. Mt 25.35-37.

119. Rom 15.19.

112. 1 Cor 14.32.

114. Cf. 1 Cor 14.32.

116. Jn 17.10.

118. 2 Cor 3.6.

more vastly and magnificently than in the rest, he has rightly named "the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit." And this is why he says, "Moreover, we ourselves," by which he seems to designate particularly the apostolic dignity. Therefore, he says, "We ourselves," i.e., the apostles, "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit," who have been chosen for this, that we might receive the firstfruits of the Spirit, "we likewise groan within ourselves." He says that there is, to such a degree, no creature that is free from sufferings and groanings, that even we ourselves, who have received from the Holy Spirit the best and chosen gifts, must nevertheless suffer grief and groan as we wait for the adoption of sons, i.e., the perfection of those whom we have been sent to teach and instruct, until we see them advance until they merit being adopted as sons.

(6) Therefore, I say that as long as we who are being instructed by them disregard these things and delay, and put off the time of our correction and improvement till later, as long as we choose not to seek invisible things but take delight in what is visible, we cause the apostles to suffer grief and, if I may put it this way, we provoke the entire creation to sorrow and groaning. For the whole creation groans and suffers grief, sighing over the penalties of our own hard-heartedness and negligence. This alternate way of explaining the words, "firstfruits [M1116] of the Spirit," occurs to us, should you deem it worthy.

(7) We shall however add still a third way as well. This Apostle says likewise of the Lord Jesus Christ that he is "the firstborn of all creation."¹²⁰ It may be possible, then, that as he is called "the firstborn of all creation," by the same token the Holy Spirit is called the firstfruits of many spirits. Let this be the third mode of explanation. But the reader should test which of these agrees most with the apostolic intention.

(8) Now if you receive what he has said, "we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit," as spoken of all who seem to attain the grace of baptism, then that which the same Apostle has said must be hoped for: "But if the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole batch; and if the root is holy, so are the branches."¹²¹

¹²⁰. Col 1.15.

¹²¹. Rom 11.16.

But even if this is the case, nevertheless the firstfruits of that batch, in which a multitude of believers seems to be indicated, will necessarily seem to have been bestowed upon the apostles. For this is what is written: "In the Church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers."¹²² It is therefore suitable to believe that those who have been appointed to have the first place have the firstfruits of spiritual grace.

(9) Let us now consider how he claims that he waits for the adoption of sons, who had said above, "the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God";¹²³ and again, how he hopes for the redemption of the body who elsewhere says, "Christ has redeemed us."¹²⁴ But it seems to me that he himself has solved this by the expression that appears after. For he says, "In hope we were saved." So then, that we are sons and that we have been redeemed and that we have been saved consist in hope. "For now we see through a mirror in a riddle."¹²⁵ Therefore, we accept both adoption and redemption through a mirror and in a riddle. For "the fullness of times arrived" and "God sent his own Son, born from a woman, born under the law, in order that he might redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons."¹²⁶ We receive adoption, then, but that which is through a mirror and in a riddle. But when the things that are perfect come, then we shall attain adoption face to face.¹²⁷

(10) Now what he said, "the redemption of our body," [M1117] I think points to the body of the Church as a whole, as he says elsewhere, "But you are the body of Christ and members individually."¹²⁸ So then, the Apostle is hoping that the whole body of the Church will be redeemed, and he does not consider it possible for the things that are perfect to be given to the individual members unless the entire body has been gathered unto one. Yet it is also possible for him to be understood such that he speaks of that redemption of our body that is to come in the resurrection, when not only souls but also bodies

122. 1 Cor 12.28.

124. Gal 3.13.

126. Gal 4.4-5.

127. Cf. 1 Cor 13.10, 12. See also 1.1.4.

128. 1 Cor 12.27.

123. Rom 8.16.

125. 1 Cor 13.12.

will come "before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one might receive his own reward for what he has done in the body";¹²⁹ and according to what was said, "Instead, fear him who can destroy both the body and soul in hell."¹³⁰ And for this reason each person must suffer and groan in this age, lest, on account of wicked deeds and negligence in the present life, he might not merit to attain to the redemption of his own body,¹³¹ but that sentence that condemns body and soul to the fires of hell should overtake him.¹³²

(11) After these things he says, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope." Just as he had said above concerning the creation that "it has been subjected to futility because of him who subjected in hope,"¹³³ so also here he says about himself and whomever he knows to be included with him, "For in hope we were saved," just as he had also associated their groanings too with the groanings of the creation. Yet we have already taught above how salvation is "in hope," but a hope placed not in things that are seen but in what is unseen. We shall only add briefly the following. Both from these words and from those in which he says, "not looking at that which is seen but at what is unseen,"¹³⁴ he is teaching us that none of the goods that are seen at this time or that can be seen ought to be hoped for among the good things of the future, even if you look at this visible heaven, even if at the earth. About these things, listen: "Heaven and earth will pass away,"¹³⁵ since they are visible; and "why do you hope for what you see?" In the future, therefore, absolutely nothing should be hoped for from the things that are seen. "For eye has not seen what God has prepared for those who love him."¹³⁶ Yet the eye beholds heaven and earth; therefore, it is not fitting to think that what is seen has been prepared by God for those who love him but that that heaven, or rather, those heavens that are far greater and loftier than that firmament that can be seen with the eyes [have been prepared]. Moreover, we must hope for an earth, but not

129. 2 Cor 5.10.

131. Cf. Lk 20.35.

133. Rom 8.20.

135. Mt 24.35.

130. Mt 10.28.

132. Cf. Mt 10.28.

134. 2 Cor 4.18.

136. 1 Cor 2.9.

that one that is called dry¹³⁷ and lies before the eyes, but it will be that earth belonging to the meek,¹³⁸ which eye has not seen. For the Apostle's meaning is very clear, teaching that visible and bodily things must not be hoped for in the future, but spiritual and eternal things, since "what is seen is temporal" [M1118] and limited with time, "but what is unseen is eternal."¹³⁹ The Apostle is teaching that we must hope for these latter things. And so, on account of these things, even the renewal of our body is itself restored incorruptibly from corruption and immortally from the mortal and powerfully from weakness; and from a living body is made a spiritual body,¹⁴⁰ so that when it is made spiritual, it can also enjoy the good things that are unseen. Since we do not now see these good things in the present age, we await them through hope and we long for them through patience.

*6. Likewise the Spirit helps our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf with unutterable groanings. And he who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires because he intercedes for the saints according to God.*¹⁴¹

(2) He had said above that all creation was groaning together¹⁴² and was suffering grief together for those who are placed in the struggle of this life. That is to say, it was laboring together and was conferring strength; then Paul had recounted as well that he himself and those who are like him endure groanings for those who are exerting themselves¹⁴³ in order that through these things he might comfort those who are still in the struggle when they see that all the saints and the entire creation are emotionally laboring with them and combining their groanings. Now he adds something more exalted and profound. He says, "You should not consider it a small thing that all creation is groaning together and suffering grief together with us. It should not seem insignificant that we ourselves are groaning on behalf

137. Cf. Gn 1.10.

139. 2 Cor 4.18.

141. Rom 8.26-27.

143. Rom 8.23.

138. Cf. Ps 37.11; Mt 5.5.

140. Cf. 1 Cor 15.42-44.

142. Cf. Rom 8.22.

of your exertions. Even in the divine nature itself there is a certain emotion of pity towards our struggles—for I include myself with you as well—and, ‘the Spirit himself helps our weakness.’ After all, we do not know what we ought to pray for, what is befitting to ask of God. For occasionally, compelled by weakness, we desire things that are contrary to our salvation. For, just as anyone beset by the body’s sickness demands from the physician not what is conducive to health, but instead what the cravings of the present illness give rise to, so also we who lie ill in the weakness of this life sometimes ask from God what is not beneficial to us. After all, I, Paul, the one saying this to you, was myself ignorant of what I ought to pray for. Three times I asked the Lord to remove from me the angel of Satan who had been given to me by the Lord on account of the loftiness of the revelations. He tormented me so that I would not become arrogant.¹⁴⁴ And for that reason, because I did not know how I ought to pray, the Lord did not listen to me, but said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.’¹⁴⁵ So then, “We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf with unutterable groanings.”

(3) I do not know what great thing Paul means [M1119] by “groanings”; for behold, this is now the third time he has used “groanings.” He says, “the creation groans,”¹⁴⁶ “we ourselves groan,”¹⁴⁷ and “the Spirit himself intercedes to God on behalf of the saints with groanings.” In connection with the groanings that he says are being offered to God through the Spirit, he reasonably adds that they are “unutterable.” He did not say this about the groanings of all creation or about his own. And consider whether we can understand in these groanings a great deal of confidence and freedom in the presence of God, because prayer that is offered to God with pain and groaning would receive confidence from the Holy Spirit for ascending to God. After all, Adam, when he had sinned, lost confidence and was hiding himself from the presence of God.¹⁴⁸ But the saint says, “My groaning is not hidden from you.”¹⁴⁹

144. Cf. 2 Cor 12.7–8.

146. Cf. Rom 8.22.

148. Cf. Gn 3.8.

145. 2 Cor 12.9.

147. Cf. Rom 8.23.

149. Ps 38.9.

(4) But let us see the meaning of what he says, "The Spirit himself intercedes for us." For John even indicates that Jesus does this when he says, "Little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone of us does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus, the just,"¹⁵⁰ he who also intercedes for us.¹⁵¹ And here the Spirit intercedes for us. Now the Spirit does this by helping our weakness. But what our weakness is the Lord himself teaches when he says, "The spirit is ready but the flesh is weak."¹⁵² So then our weakness is a consequence of the weakness of our flesh. For it is the [flesh] that lusts against the spirit,¹⁵³ and as long as the [flesh] pours forth its lusts, it impedes the purity of the spirit and it clouds the sincerity of prayer. But when the Spirit of God sees our spirit exerting itself in the struggle against the flesh and cleaving to him, he lends a hand and helps its weakness.

(5) And he is like a teacher who accepts a student who is both a raw recruit and completely ignorant of the alphabet.¹⁵⁴ In order to be able to teach and instruct him, he is forced to stoop down to the elementary attempts of the student and he himself first pronounces the name of each letter so the student learns by repeating. And in a way, the teacher himself becomes like the beginning student, saying and practicing the things that the beginner needs to say and practice. In this way as well then, when the Holy Spirit sees that our spirit is being harassed by the struggles of the flesh and does not know what or how it ought to pray, he, like the teacher, first says the prayer that our [M1120] spirit, if it longs to be a pupil of the Holy Spirit, should imitate. He offers groanings by which our spirit may be taught to groan in order to re-propitiate God with itself. But if the Spirit indeed teaches, and our spirit, i.e., our mind, should by its own fault not follow, then the teacher's lesson becomes unfruitful to it.

(6) Because he knows that this mystery is being accomplished within man, Paul was also saying, "For if I speak with tongues, my spirit prays, but my mind is without fruit."¹⁵⁵ There

150. 1 Jn 2.1.

152. Mt 26.41.

154 Cf. *Hom in Jer* 18.6.

151. Rom 8.34.

153. Cf. Gal 5.17.

155. 1 Cor 14.14.

he calls his own spirit the Holy Spirit's grace that is given by God to men. For this reason as well, when he encourages us not to possess this benefit of the Holy Spirit unfruitfully, he goes on and says, "What then? I shall pray with the Spirit, I shall pray also with the mind; I shall sing a psalm with the Spirit and I shall sing a psalm with my mind."¹⁵⁶ Although Paul then has indicated that these things are unutterable and are accomplished by unutterable groanings, nevertheless we have set forth to the best of our ability a graphic representation, as it were, of the things that are accomplished spiritually, which [Paul] himself offers in a hidden manner. "He who is spiritual should test everything,"¹⁵⁷ and if he is able to trace out something more lofty in these matters, he should keep it to himself; for "a trustworthy man conceals matters in his spirit."¹⁵⁸ Yet those who demand from God prosperity for themselves in the present life and health or riches or honors need to be admonished that they do not know what or how to pray. For it often happens that present gains and secular honor yield the loss of the soul and its eternal reproach. And for this reason we ought instead to keep to what the Lord has taught us to say in prayer, "Thy will be done."¹⁵⁹

(7) "And he who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires because he intercedes for the saints according to God." He is showing indeed that in prayer God weighs not so much our words as our heart and mind. For he is the one who "searches hearts and affections."¹⁶⁰ For the second time he says that "the Spirit intercedes." In this he is showing that even through the Holy Spirit significant ministry is accomplished in men. For although it was the only begotten Son of God who became incarnate and suffered for the salvation of the human race, and by his death destroyed death, and by his resurrection restored life, nevertheless, through the Holy Spirit wonderful things as well are promptly accomplished even without [M1121] his having become incarnate. Just as the former died for the ungodly—

156. 1 Cor 14.15.

158. Prv 11.13.

160. Ps 7.9.

157. 1 Cor 2.15.

159. Mt 6.10.

for this is what Paul himself makes known when he says, “For at the time when we were still weak, Christ died for the ungodly”¹⁶¹—in contrast the Holy Spirit intercedes now not for the ungodly but “for the saints.” And he intercedes not according to the flesh but “according to God,” but Christ is said to have died not according to God, but according to the flesh.¹⁶² And for this reason it is said that the Spirit offers intercession for the saints not with words but with groanings, and not with ordinary groanings, but unutterable ones. For, how is it possible to describe in words what the Spirit of God says to God, since now and then not even our spirit can explain in speech what it feels and understands?

*7. But we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*¹⁶³

(2) The Spirit, he says, intercedes for us with unutterable groanings,¹⁶⁴ and all creation groans together and suffers grief together until now.¹⁶⁵ This creation will only be set free from the slavery of corruption at that time when the freedom of the glory of the sons of God arrives.¹⁶⁶ How then will it not be fitting to be declared, “For we know that all things work together for good for those who love God”? For, so much so do all things work together and collaborate for those who love God, that even the Spirit himself offers help,¹⁶⁷ and the divine nature does not disdain to be a guide for the journey toward the good.

(3) But if some have the spirit of slavery unto fear while others are superior to these, who receive the Spirit of adoption¹⁶⁸ because they worship God no longer out of fear but out of affection and love, and because in them “perfect love casts out fear,”¹⁶⁹ it must be seen whether, perhaps for those who are still abiding in a spirit of slavery, not all things would work together;

161. Rom 5.6.

163. Rom 8.28–29.

165. Cf. Rom 8.22.

167. Cf. Rom 8.26.

169. 1 Jn 4.18.

162. Cf. 1 Pt 3.18.

164. Rom 8.26.

166. Cf. Rom 8.21.

168. Cf. Rom 8.15.

to be sure some things work together even in them, but not all things. Nor do I know whether they lead to the good itself, but rather, as I would say, to the doors of the good. For those, however, who love God and cleave to him with total loving devotion, all things, as we have said, collaborate and help and even contribute something of its own effort, inasmuch as these things would establish them in the good [M1122] that is never subject to change. But if there are some who love God, and others who receive the spirit of slavery, it must be seen whether perhaps even what he says, "for those who are called according to purpose," and, "those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his own Son," might not be appropriate in respect to those who are in the spirit of slavery.¹⁷⁰ For they too can indeed be said to be called, but not "called according to purpose." And since they are still in the spirit of slavery, they cannot be established among the many brothers of whom the Son of love is the first-born and the "image of the invisible God" and "the first-born of all creation."¹⁷¹

(4) Moreover, I would like to investigate what he has said, "conformed to the image of his own Son." Into which form may they be said to be conformed? For we read that the Son of God was at one time in the form of God, and at another time in the form of a slave.¹⁷² It seems to me that the distinction between these two forms, to which the Apostle says that they who love God and for whom all things work together for good are going to be conformed, is not superfluous. I then view it in accordance with what the same Paul indicates elsewhere, where he says, "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you."¹⁷³ He says that Christ is formed in those who strive for perfection. Insofar as he is the Word,¹⁷⁴ [this happens] when the sincerity of the word of God will be purely formed in them; and insofar as he is the truth,¹⁷⁵ when truth exists within them without the admixture of any deceit; and insofar as he is wisdom,¹⁷⁶ when the wisdom of God

170. Cf. Rom 8.15.

172. Cf. Phil 2.6-7.

174. Cf. Jn 1.1, 14.

176. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

171. Col 1.13, 15.

173. Gal 4.19.

175. Cf. Jn 14.6.

would be preserved in them, the wisdom that Paul speaks among the perfect,¹⁷⁷ pure and without even the smallest deviation into error. The same applies with all that Christ is, whether righteousness, sanctification,¹⁷⁸ or any of the other virtues. If these are clearly formed in them, having become conformed into his image they will be seen in that form in which [Christ] is in the form of God.¹⁷⁹ But if anyone turns back to the beginning stages—but the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom¹⁸⁰—and, while remaining in fear, he undertakes the first elements of the worship of God, they who receive the initial foundations in the fear of God must be understood to be conformed to [Christ] in his slave-form,¹⁸¹ a form that he took in order that he might teach the fear of God to the raw recruits and the ignorant.

(5) He says, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Let us not pass over what he has said: “he foreknew and predestined.” For I think [M1 123] that just as he has not said concerning everyone that they have been predestined, so he has not said concerning everyone, “those whom he foreknew.” For not according to the common opinion of the multitude should it be thought that God foreknows good and evil, but we should think in accordance with the custom of Holy Scripture. For, let the person who is diligent in the Scriptures observe where he finds Scripture to say that God foreknows the evil, in the same way it plainly says in the present passage concerning the good, that “those whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” For if it is those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, and yet no evil man can be conformed to the image of the Son of God, then it is obvious that he is only speaking of the good, “whom he foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Of the others, however, God is said not only not to foreknow, but not even *know* them. For “the Lord knows those who are his.”¹⁸² But to those who are not worthy to be known by

177. Cf. 1 Cor 2.6.

179. Cf. Phil 2.6.

181. Cf. Phil 2.7.

178. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

180. Prv 9.10; Sir 1.12; LXX 1.14.

182. 2 Tm 2.19.

God, the Savior says, "Depart from me, because I have never known you, you workers of iniquity."¹⁸³ Therefore, in the same way, even in the present passage, whomever God foreknew he has also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. But it is not said that he foreknows the others, not because anything can be hidden from that nature, which is everywhere and never absent, but because everything that is evil is deemed unworthy both of his knowledge and foreknowledge.¹⁸⁴

(6) Accordingly, "those whom he foreknew and predestined." But consider even this, whether God can be said to foreknow and predestine in respect to those who are not yet [in existence];¹⁸⁵ or in respect to those who indeed exist, but are not yet "conformed to the image of his Son," and it is more suitable to speak of foreknowledge then than in the case where what is not yet in existence is about to happen. For in this it is more a question of choice than of the foreknowledge of the Creator. For where will the foreknowledge appear, since what is future depends on the decision of the agent?¹⁸⁶

(7) It may occur to attentive readers to ask even this: Why did he say, "conformed to the image of his Son" rather than, "conformed to his own Son"? Doubtless, the one who raises this question will say that, just as the Son himself, who is called "the image of the invisible God"¹⁸⁷ as far as his person is concerned, is different from him whose image he is, so also here, that which is called the image of his Son must be different from him whose image he is. And though these things appear hard and difficult, nevertheless consider whether we can say the following: Though everyone [M1124] who fashions himself into the image that we set forth above is the image of God, i.e., the image of the Son of God, nevertheless his special and unique image, which has received him totally and completely and has

183. Mt 7.23; Lk 13.27.

184. Cf. *Hom in Jer* 1.8, 10; *Comm in Ps* 1.6.

185. Cf. 1.5.

186. There seems to be tension between this passage and 3.8.9, "For what is, is determined; what not yet is, is pre-determined." Cf. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 4:91 n. 59.

187. Cf. Col 1.15.

formed this image within himself, should be called the very soul of Jesus that has adapted itself in every way to the Word and wisdom of God so that in no respect whatsoever does it possess any disfiguration from his likeness.¹⁸⁸ Thus, whoever would attain to this height of perfection and blessedness should steer towards that one's image and likeness, which, in the first place and beyond all the others, is the image of the Son of God, so that "he might be a first-born among many brothers," in those, namely, who possess the primacy¹⁸⁹ by their being conformed to the image of the Son of God.

8. *And those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified; and those whom he justified, these he also glorified.*¹⁹⁰

(2) Above he said, "Those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined." Now he adds, "And those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified." And if we interpret "foreknew" and "predestined" in the general sense, it will surely seem that the one who is justified is justified because he has been called; and the one who has been called is called because he has been predestined; and the one who has been predestined is predestined because he has been foreknown. Yet once more, the contrary is to be understood. Whoever is not justified is not justified because he has not been called; and the reason anyone is not called is because he has not been predestined; and the reason one is not predestined is because he was not foreknown. And behold, into what an absurd interpretation they would fall who understand in this case the foreknowledge of God, as if only someone who knows beforehand what will come to pass afterwards. For through the things we have set forth above, it is found that God did not foreknow those whom he has not predestined. And again, if to this popular understanding is applied that which

188. Evidently Origen means here that just as the Son or Word is the image of God, so is the human soul of Jesus the image of the Son or Word. Cf. Tollinton, *Selections*, p. 14 n. 3.

189. Cf. Col 1.16.

190. Rom 8.30.

says that "those whom he called, these he also justified," we shall be opening a huge window to those who deny that it lies within man's power to be saved. For they say: If it is those whom God has foreknown that he has also predestined, and it is those whom he has predestined that he has also called, and it is those whom he called that he has also justified, those who are not justified are not to blame. For they were neither called, nor predestined, nor foreknown. Then the following is also openly objected to us: [M1125] Not even all who are called are justified.¹⁹¹ For even the apostle Judas was called¹⁹² but he was not justified. But even if anyone contends that he was justified by the very fact that he was called, he was at any rate not glorified. Moreover, those concerning whom the Apostle says that "they have made a shipwreck of the faith"¹⁹³ had indeed been called, but they were not justified. And according to the parables of the Gospel, those who excused themselves when servants were sent to them¹⁹⁴ had been called, but they were not justified; and he who entered the feast of the king but did not have wedding clothes¹⁹⁵ was called, but he was not justified.

(3) Since these individual instances are so constituted, how will the Apostle's words that he has recalled about foreknowing, predestining, calling, and even justifying, appear true? For my part I think, in accordance with what we have explained above,¹⁹⁶ that we need to go over again the custom of Scripture, which habitually uses a certain colloquialism in this discourse, i.e., in "knowing," in order to determine how God knows or foreknows. For example, when it says, "And Adam knew his wife Eve,"¹⁹⁷ this is said for, "He united with his wife." And again of Rebecca it says, "She was a virgin, a man had not known her."¹⁹⁸ Moreover, of the sons of Levi it is said that they would punish transgressors because none of them "knew" his own father and mother.¹⁹⁹ Doubtless, what is being made known here is that he was not united in his affection and love with his father or moth-

191. Cf. *Orat* 5.5.

193. 1 *Tm* 1.19.

195. Cf. *Mt* 22.11-14.

197. *Gn* 4.1.

199. Cf. *Dt* 33.9.

192. Cf. *Mk* 3.13, 19.

194. Cf. *Lk* 14.17-18.

196. Cf. 7.7.5.

198. *Gn* 24.16.

er. Furthermore, you will discover many things said in the Scriptures about “knowing” with this sense; and therefore, it is established that in the present passage as well the Apostle had set down this word “knowing” in accordance with the custom of Holy Scripture. His aim is to show that those who are foreknown by God are those upon whom God had placed his own love and affection because he knew what sort of persons they were. In accordance with this it has been written, “The Lord knows those who are his,”²⁰⁰ though surely, as far as pertains to this ordinary knowledge, God not only knows those who are his own but also he is not ignorant of those who go astray from him. But he is said to have known his own, that is, he held them in love and united them with himself. It is in this way, then, that “those whom God foreknew, these he also predestined, and those whom he predestined, these he also called, and those whom he called these he also justified.”²⁰¹

(4) There remains for us still the solution to this problem: How can it be that “those whom he called, these he also justified” when, as we have stated above, it is certain that “many are called, but few are chosen”?²⁰² But it seems to me that there are different kinds of callings, as we have explained in an earlier section.²⁰³ For, to be sure, everyone [M1126] is called, but not everyone is called “according to purpose.” For those who are called in accordance with the good purpose and good will that they exhibit toward the worship of God are those who are called “according to purpose,” and these are the ones who, having been called, are justified. For, the only thing missing from their good purpose was a calling. But those who do not have a good and fixed purpose either toward spiritual worship or toward good work are, to be sure, also called, lest an excuse

200. 2 Tm 2.19.

201. Cranfield, *Romans* 1:431 n. 1, thinks that Origen here is right to observe that Paul uses “foreknow” in a special biblical sense but objects to his subsequent interpretation. “But there is a weakness in his grasp of the nature of grace; for he sees this special divine knowledge as resting upon a divine knowledge according to the ordinary sense of the word ‘know’.” Thomas Aquinas had also reproached Origen on this point.

202. Mt 22.14.

203. Cf. 1.2.1.

should be left to them and they should be able to plead when they are judged: "Would that we had only been called! Then we could assuredly be justified, and not only justified but also glorified!" Therefore, they too are certainly called, but as if they are the seed sown on rocky places, there is indeed a quick sprouting, but when the sun of afflictions rises, since they do not possess the deep root of a good purpose, immediately they wither and perish.²⁰⁴ And these are the ones of whom the Apostle says, "They have made a shipwreck of the faith."²⁰⁵ Therefore, those whom he has called, i.e., whom he has called according to the purpose of the good, these he has also justified.

(5) But even if "according to purpose" should be referred to God, that is, they are said to be called according to the purpose of God, who knows that a pious mind and the longing for salvation is in them,²⁰⁶ even this will not seem contrary to the things we have set forth. In this way, then, the cause of our salvation or destruction does not lie in the foreknowledge of God; nor will justification depend solely upon the calling; nor has being glorified been completely removed from our power. For even if we should conceive of foreknowledge according to the popular understanding, it will not be because God knows that an event will occur that it happens; but, because something is going to take place it is known by God before it happens.

(6) For even if, for instance, we were to imagine that God does not know some future thing in advance, it was without doubt that it is the way that it is. For example consider the fact that Judas became a traitor²⁰⁷ and the prophets had predicted that this would happen in this way.²⁰⁸ Judas did not betray because the prophets had predicted it,²⁰⁹ but because he was go-

204. Cf. Mt 13.5-6.

205. 1 Tm 1.19.

206. *Qui sciens in eis religiosam mentem et salutis inesse desiderium.* There may be a veiled reference to Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls in these words. As Hammond Bammel, *Römerbrieftext*, p. 65, notes, Origen says God knows that this religious mind and longing for salvation "is in them" (*in eis inesse*), not "will be in them" (*in eis futurum esse*). Cf. 1.3.3.

207. Cf. Mt 26.25.

208. Cf. Ps 41.9; Ps 67.25; Ps 109.8; Jer 22.5; Mt 23.38; Acts 1.20.

209. Cf. *Cels* 2.20.

ing to be a traitor the prophets predicted these things that he was going to do out of the wickedness of his own purpose. For surely Judas had it within his power to become like Peter and John had he wanted to; but instead he chose the desire for money²¹⁰ rather than the honor of the apostolic society. And the prophets, seeing in advance this will of his,²¹¹ committed this to the annals of their books. In order that you might know that the cause of each person's salvation is not placed in the foreknowledge of God but in one's own purpose and actions, observe Paul as he expresses fear, lest perhaps after he has preached to others he himself might be rejected, and so he punishes his own body and subjects it to slavery.²¹²

(7) We can still say the following in answer to those who raise questions of this sort against us: [M1127] If those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined, but he has not predestined everyone, then he did not foreknow everyone; and in respect to these persons there will be something of which God is ignorant. But if "to foreknow" is taken in the sense we have stated above, i.e., "to receive in affection and to unite with oneself," it will be true that just as he has not predestined everyone, so has he not foreknown everyone. For it is in this sense as well that Jesus is said not to have known sin.²¹³ Shall we say that Jesus did not know what sin is? That is, that he did not know that murder is a sin or adultery or theft and things like these? Instead, when it is said that he did not know sin, does it not mean that he did not entangle himself in sin and that sin did not cleave to him? Thus, it is also written elsewhere, "He who keeps the commandment will not know an evil word,"²¹⁴ that is to say,

210. Cf. Mt 26.15; Jn 12.6.

211. Cf. Zec 11.12.

212. Cf. 1 Cor 9.27. This passage (see also 1.3.3; 6.10.2) seems to confirm the observation of Wiles, *Divine Apostle*, p. 21, that Origen never really integrated his thought about the Paul's gradual spiritual development. In his Preface (3-6) and again in 5.10.15 Origen claims that in Romans Paul had surpassed the level of perfection attained in 1 Cor, so that now, in Romans, he viewed himself as incapable of falling away from God. But in the present passage, Origen cites 1 Cor 9.27 as expressing Paul's capability of falling away, which is evidently still valid for the Apostle as he writes Romans.

213. Cf. 2 Cor 5.21.

214. Eccl 8.5 LXX.

he will not receive an evil word, he will not believe it, he will not freely listen to it or allow it to enter his mind.

(8) Therefore, “those whom God foreknew,” in this manner, “these he also predestined, and those whom he predestined, these he also called”—according to the different kinds of callings we have spoken about²¹⁵—“and those whom he called, these he also justified, and those whom he justified, these he also glorified.” We are able to have understanding about glorification even in the present age, according to what the Apostle says, “But all of us, with unveiled faces, observing the glory of the Lord, are being transformed by the same image from glory to glory, as from the Spirit of the Lord.”²¹⁶ This then is the glory that each of the justified perceive in the present life; there is also that [glory] that is hoped for in the future when this body of our humility,²¹⁷ which “is sown in dishonor, will rise in glory”;²¹⁸ and when “there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars, and star differs from star in glory, so also the resurrection of the dead will be.”²¹⁹

9. *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for all of us, how has he not with him also given us everything else?*²²⁰

(2) In what way God is for us is plain from what he has set forth above, i.e., because the Spirit [M1128] of God dwells in us and because the Spirit of Christ, or Christ, is in us; or because the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in us,²²¹ or because we are being led by the Spirit of God, or because we have received the Spirit of adoption, or because we are sons of God and heirs and co-heirs of Christ,²²² or because we receive the firstfruits of the Spirit, or because the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings, or because the entire creation groans together and suffers grief together with us, or because all things work together for good for us who love God, or because we have been called according to purpose

215. Cf. 1.2.

217. Cf. Phil 3.21.

219. 1 Cor 15.41-42.

221. Cf. Rom 8.9-11.

216. 2 Cor 3.18.

218. 1 Cor 15.43.

220. Rom 8.31-32.

222. Cf. Rom 8.14-17.

and are foreknown and predestined and justified and glorified.²²³ For, recapitulating all these things, as it were, and at the same time repeating everything, he says, "What then shall we say to these things?" i.e., to all these things we have just said. For if God is for us to such an extent that he has bestowed all these things upon us, who could be against us? He would not say that we have no adversaries whatsoever. Otherwise, how will what was said by Peter stand, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour"?²²⁴ But what [Paul] is making known is this: Our adversary will be rendered contemptible and will be nullified when God goes into action on our behalf. In a similar way David also says, "The Lord is my light and my Savior; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"²²⁵ He is not saying that there is no one to fear and no one who opposes him, but that even though "my enemies and those who afflict me come upon me to devour my flesh," but while the Lord is defending my life, "they have weakened and fallen."²²⁶

(3) Moreover, he gives the greatest proof of God's immense love for us. He says that he loved us so much that "he did not spare his own Son but handed him over" to suffer "for us all." And to bind us with greater admiration, he has added an expression that contains such a boundless mystery, saying, "He did not spare his own Son." For he had said above that even we who have received the Spirit of adoption are sons of God.²²⁷ But lest [M1129] it should be thought that he handed over one of these who appeared to be adopted amongst his sons, by the general sense of "sons," he has added, "his own Son," in order to point to him who alone is begotten by an ineffable generation from God himself.

(4) "He handed him over, therefore, for all of us." This does not refer to that kind of "handing over" where it is written, "brother will hand over brother unto death and parents their sons."²²⁸ Instead he is said to have handed him over in that, al-

223. Cf. Rom 8.22-30.

225. Ps 27.1.

227. Cf. Rom 8.15-16.

224. 1 Pt 5.8.

226. Ps 27.2.

228. Mt 10.21.

though he was in the form of God, he allowed him to empty himself and take the form of a slave and even to reach the point of death on the cross²²⁹ so that in him he might offer an example of obedience for everyone and open up the way of resurrection for the dead.

(5) “He handed him over, therefore, for all.” The Father handed over his own Son not only for the saints, not only for the great, but even for the least ones and for absolutely all who are in the Church.²³⁰ And therefore, even if someone injures one of the least of these weak ones by offending his weak conscience, he is said to sin against Christ.²³¹ For he causes a soul for which Christ died to stumble.²³² Since, therefore, the Father handed over the Son for all of us, no one at all, not even the least person in the Church, should be despised. This is also why the Lord himself was saying, “If anyone causes one of the least of these little ones to stumble, it is better that a great millstone is fastened around his neck and he is cast into the sea,”²³³ than to cause one of these to stumble.

(6) Therefore, God has made us precious by pouring out the precious blood²³⁴ of his own Son for us. “How has he not with him given us everything else?” For there is nothing either of the visible or invisible creation that can be put on the same level with the Son. For a creature cannot in any way be compared with its Creator; and if the Creator himself has been given to us, how will not all creation be given to us with him? Although this expression, i.e., “with him he has given us everything else” could be understood in two ways. For it can be viewed in the following way: If we have Christ in us in accordance with the fact that he is the Word, wisdom, truth, righteousness, peace,²³⁵

229. Cf. Phil 2.6–8.

230. Readers should not conclude from this statement that Origen held the opinion that Christ died only for believers. As Vogt, *Kirchenverständnis*, p. 328, observes, Origen can speak of Christ’s death for the Church alone and leave the rest of humanity out of view, as he does here, but he can also speak of the salvation of the entire human race as the goal of Christ’s mission, without mentioning the special status of the Church and/or believers. Cf. *Cels* 7.42.

231. 1 Cor 8.12.

232. Cf. Rom 14.15; 1 Cor 8.11.

233. Mt 18.6.

234. Cf. 1 Pt 1.19.

235. Cf. Jn 1.1; 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6; Eph 2.14.

and everything else that is written about him, everything else will be given with this fullness of virtues to us. So that we may possess not merely one of all the creations, and this small place of the earth we seem to inhabit now; but equally with Christ we may possess everything whatsoever God has created, visible and invisible, hidden and manifest, temporal and eternal.

(7) But what he has said, "with him he has given us everything else," can be understood in another way as well: The whole [M1130] creation will indeed be given to him, as to the heir, but to us, as to his co-heirs, to be enjoyed equally with him.²³⁶

10. *Who will make accusation against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? It is Christ Jesus, who died; yes, who resurrected, who is at the right hand of God, who even intercedes for us.*²³⁷

(2) It seems to me he is speaking about the devil when he says, "Who will accuse God's elect?" For there is no one so chosen and so great that the devil would not dare to accuse,²³⁸ save only him alone "who committed no sin,"²³⁹ who was also saying, "Now the ruler of this world is coming and he finds nothing in me."²⁴⁰ But although he may reveal the wickedness of his own purpose, what will the accuser accomplish when God is the one who justifies, and who "wipes out the iniquities of their own elect like a cloud and their sins like a mist";²⁴¹ and, of previously committed transgressions, who "cleanses them like snow and makes them white as wool"?²⁴² Moreover, since Christ has died for them; yes, and more than that, has resurrected from the dead and stands at the right hand of the Father²⁴³ and intercedes for them, who could possibly condemn them? Above he says that the Holy "Spirit intercedes for us with unutterable groanings";²⁴⁴ here he says, "Christ Jesus, who died and resurrected," himself "intercedes for us." God, who handed over his

236. Cf. Rom 8.17.

238. Cf. Rv 12.10.

240. Jn 14.30.

242. Is 1.18.

244. Rom 8.26.

237. Rom 8.33-34.

239. 1 Pt 2.22.

241. Is 44.22.

243. Cf. Acts 7.56.

own Son for us,²⁴⁵ justifies the elect. Who will remain who would dare to condemn?

(3) But consider more carefully how the Apostle never departs in his statements from his innate caution. He did not say, "Who will make accusation against the called?" but, "against the elect?" For unless you are chosen, unless you show yourself to be approved by God in all things,²⁴⁶ you will have an accuser. For if you have a bad case, if your indictment convicts you, what would an advocate help you, even if it be Jesus who intercedes?²⁴⁷ For Jesus is truth;²⁴⁸ therefore, the truth cannot testify falsely on your behalf. An advocate will only be of help to you in this so that you will not be overwhelmed by the malicious charges of the accuser, so that your past sins, which were wiped out through baptism, should not be imputed to you. But if after these things you should again transgress and do not wash these things away with any tears of repentance, you will be offering material to your accuser to bring an indictment against you. And even though Jesus may intercede for us, nevertheless Jesus cannot call darkness light and what is bitter sweet.²⁴⁹ If then you wish to be victorious when you are judged,²⁵⁰ do what is written about the just man: "Dispense your works in [M1131] the judgment! Prepare your works for the end! Remember your last things and you will not sin!"²⁵¹ lest what is written about the person who, "when he is judged, departs condemned,"²⁵² apply to you. Therefore, take heed of how you understand that Jesus "intercedes for us."²⁵³ For he is the one of whom it is also written elsewhere that "the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son."²⁵⁴ And just as he is sacrifice and priest,²⁵⁵ and he is in the form of a slave and in the form of God,²⁵⁶ so he is both advocate and judge.²⁵⁷

245. Cf. Rom 8.32.

247. Cf. 1 Jn 2.1.

249. Cf. Is 5.20.

251. Ps 111.5 LXX; Sir 7.36.

253. Cf. *Hom in Lv* 9.5, where Origen says in a similar way that Christ does not intercede for those who fall back into sin.

254. Jn 5.22. Cf. 2.10.1.

256. Cf. Phil 2.6-7.

257. Cf. 1 Jn 2.1; Jn 5.22. See also *Hom in Jer* 4.4.

246. Cf. 2 Tm 2.15.

248. Cf. Jn 14.6.

250. Cf. Ps 51.4.

252. Ps 109.7.

255. Cf. Heb 4.14; 7.21, 27.

11. *Who will separate us, then, from the love of God? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep of the slaughter." But in all these things we overcome through him who loved us.*²⁵⁸

(2) On behalf of everything we have recounted above—i.e., that we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit; and that the Spirit of God dwells in us; and that Christ, through whom the body is dead because of sin, is in us but our spirit is life because of righteousness;²⁵⁹ and that we are no longer debtors to the flesh that we should live according to the flesh, because through the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the flesh;²⁶⁰ and that through the Spirit of adoption we have been made sons of God, and if sons, also heirs of God, but co-heirs of Christ;²⁶¹ and that the entire creation both groans together and suffers grief together with us,²⁶² awaiting the revelation of the sons of God,²⁶³ and that to those of us who love God all things work together for good; and that he has foreknown and predestined us to be conformed to the image of his own Son, we who have been called according to purpose²⁶⁴—since, [Paul] says, in view of all these benefits we have attained, we are fixed and rooted in the love of God,²⁶⁵ who can separate us from it?

(3) If *affliction* should come, we shall say to God, "You have enlarged me in affliction."²⁶⁶ If there should be a confining *distress* of the world that arises from the needs of the body, we shall seek after the breadth of the wisdom and knowledge of God,²⁶⁷ in which the world cannot constrict us. For I return to the wide open fields of the Holy Scriptures; I would seek the spiritual meaning of the word of God, and in it no narrowness of distress will confine me. I shall ride through the most spacious places of the mystical and spiritual understanding. [M1132] If I suffer *persecution* and confess my Christ²⁶⁸ before men, I am certain

258. Rom 8.35–37.

260. Cf. Rom 8.12–13.

262. Cf. Rom 8.22.

264. Cf. Rom 8.28–30.

266. Ps 4.2.

268. Origen was the first Christian to use this expression, i.e., "my Jesus" or

259. Cf. Rom 8.9–10.

261. Cf. Rom 8.15–17.

263. Cf. Rom 8.19.

265. Cf. Eph 3.17.

267. Cf. Rom 11.33; Col 2.3.

that even he will confess me before his Father in heaven.²⁶⁹ If *famine* strikes, it cannot overwhelm me for I have the bread of life, who comes down from heaven²⁷⁰ and refreshes hungry souls.²⁷¹ That bread can never fail since it is perpetual and eternal. *Nakedness* will not disconcert me, for I have put on the Lord Jesus Christ and I expect to be clothed with our dwelling that is from heaven.²⁷² "For this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption."²⁷³ I shall not fear *danger*, "for the Lord is my light; whom shall I fear? And the Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"²⁷⁴ An earthly *sword* cannot terrify me, because I have a stronger one with me: "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"²⁷⁵ and with me, it is "the living and effective word of God," which is "more penetrating than any sharp double-edged sword."²⁷⁶ Therefore, if a sword of this world comes down over my neck, it procures for me greater love toward God. For I shall say to him, "As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep of the slaughter.'"²⁷⁷ For it is not enough for me to be killed or crucified for the sake of Christ in one hour, but "all day long," that is to say, during the whole period of my life. For if I would live my entire life in the midst of persecutions and dangers, I shall say, "the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing with the future glory about to be revealed to us."²⁷⁸ Surely the time of this life that we spend involved in persecutions is brief and fleeting; but the time we look forward to spending in glory is eternal and perpetual. And for this reason he says, "In all these things we overcome," not by our virtue, but "through him who loved us." For when we weigh his love, we do not receive the sensation of the pain. For his love with which he has loved us²⁷⁹ and seized our affection to

"my Christ," to express his own love for Jesus. See *Hom in Lk* 12.1; 18.1; 22.4; *Hom in Jer* 13.1. Cf. J. Lienhard in Origen, *Homilies on Luke*, p. 48,

269. Cf. Mt 10.32.

270. Jn 6.41, 51.

271. Cf. Ps 107.9; Jer 31.25.

272. Cf. Rom 13.14; Gal 3.27; 2 Cor 5.2.

273. 1 Cor 15.53.

274. Ps 27.1.

275. Eph 6.17.

276. Heb 4.12.

277. Cf. Ps 44.22.

278. Rom 8.18.

279. Cf. Eph 2.4.

himself causes us not to feel bodily torture and pain.²⁸⁰ For this reason, then, “in all these things we overcome.” The bride in Canticles says something similar to this to the Word. “I have been wounded,” it says, “by his love.”²⁸¹ In this way as well, then, our soul, having received the wound of love from Christ, will not feel the wounds of the flesh, even if it should hand the body over to the sword, on account of his wound of love.²⁸² [M1133]

12. *For I am confident that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor another creation,*²⁸³ *will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*²⁸⁴

(2) The Apostle seems to have made known two classes of things that customarily arouse temptations for men. Among these, a class of human temptations that we previously discussed is certainly understood to be described. Of these he was even saying to the Corinthians, as to those who were unable to bear greater [temptations], “No temptation overtakes you except the human sort; but God is faithful, and he would not let you be tempted beyond your strength.”²⁸⁵ But now, in the words we have in hand, he is not indicating human temptations, but greater than human ones. In my opinion this is the reason why, after he had enumerated each individual thing in the foregoing, he says at the end, “But in all these things we overcome.”²⁸⁶ In these temptations of the second class, however, he is not so confident as to say, “We overcome,” but very tenuously he says that none of these things “will be able to separate us from the

280. In the account of the torture of Theodore of Antioch recorded by Rufinus in *Ecclesiastical History* 10.37, an interesting confirmation of Origen’s words here is found.

281. Song 2.5. For a detailed study of the theme of “the wound of love” in Origen, see H. Crouzel, “Origines patristiques d’un thème mystique: le trait et la blessure d’amour chez Origène,” in *Kyriakon*, 1:309–19, cited in n. 54 above.

282. Cf. *Comm in Cant* Prologue 2.

283. Or “created thing,” or “creature.”

284. Rom 8.38–39.

285. 1 Cor 10.13.

286. Rom 8.37.

love of God that is in Christ Jesus.” For of human temptations, as if of things that are trivial and light, he confidently declares that we overcome; but with respect to those greater and more than human [temptations], even though we are not strong enough to overcome them and cast them to the ground—for this is the work of Christ alone, who “stripped the rulers and authorities, triumphing over them in himself”²⁸⁷—nevertheless, in place of a victory there is this: Though they weave together every scheme in their assaults against us, they are nevertheless not strong enough to separate us from the love of God.

(3) But let us now attempt to examine each thing and to disclose as well as we can what is to be thought of each expression of the Apostle. Although the Apostle seems to touch upon matters in this section that are profounder than the power of our explanation or the business of brevity permits, nevertheless let us investigate whether these things the Apostle has recorded, or [only] some of them, intentionally and zealously act so as to strive to separate human souls from the love of God and, therefore, hurl at us everything we suffer. For it seems that *death* is perhaps indeed capable of doing this, i.e., of separating us from the love of God, and *angels* and *rulers*, and the *powers* that oppose us, doubtless also *things present*, which are certainly fleeting and transitory. Moreover, the *depth* can be understood in a similar way. But it does not seem superfluous to explain the manner in which *life*, *things future*, *height*, and *another creation* would strive to separate us from the love of God. Unless perhaps someone might say [M1134] that the Apostle is saying these things using hyperbole. That is, not only can we not be deflected from the love of God in any manner by things that can happen, but not even by things that cannot possibly take place. For instance, if another *life* were granted to us than the one that has been given from God, or if another hope of *future things* were promised to us, or another *height*, or even if there were *another creation* than the one that groans together and suffers grief together on our behalf²⁸⁸ (which cannot possibly happen) yet not even these

²⁸⁷. Col 2.15.

²⁸⁸. Rom 8.22.

things would be able to separate us from the love of God. Here then is one way to explain the passage.

(4) But let us consider whether it might be possible to admit as well the following interpretation. The "death" which he speaks of is to be understood to be called that which, as we have explained above,²⁸⁹ is the last enemy of Christ to be destroyed.²⁹⁰ It is assuredly called "death" from the fact that, just as the common death separates the soul from the body, so also it strives to separate the soul from the love of God; and this surely is the death of the soul. It is possible, then, that there may also be from part of the soul another "life" that acts with it in order to separate us from the love of God. This is the life of sin. For unless this life were evil, the Apostle would never have urged us to die to sin and be baptized into the death of Christ and be buried together with him.²⁹¹ It can be, then, that it is this life of sin that longs to separate us from the love of God. Yet I am of the opinion that every single sin has another life of its own within us; for each of the vices is a life of sin. So then the more the vices are found within us, so much the more were the lives of sin manifest within us. And for this reason perhaps it is said, "Your mercy is better than lives."²⁹²

(5) "Neither angels, nor rulers, nor powers." It is easy to understand these angels as those for whom, along with the devil, the Savior says eternal fire has been prepared.²⁹³ But the rulers and powers are, doubtless, those against whom we must struggle,²⁹⁴ or those rulers and authorities concerning whom he says, "When he has destroyed every ruler and authority and power";²⁹⁵ among which there is also the one called "the ruler of this world."²⁹⁶

(6) After these things he says, "nor things present," or, "things impending." This statement can seem written of those things that the same Apostle has elsewhere named "the rulers of this world and of the darkness";²⁹⁷ or even because the pleas-

289. Cf. 5.1.37.

291. Cf. Rom 6.2-4.

293. Cf. Mt 25.41.

295. 1 Cor 15.24.

297. Eph 6.12.

290. Cf. 1 Cor 15.26.

292. Ps 63.3.

294. Cf. Eph 6.12.

296. Jn 12.31; 14.30; 16.11.

ure and delight of present things and the vain glory of this world endeavor to lead us away “from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(7) After these things let us see what are the “future things” that indeed want, [M1135] but are not able, to separate Paul and those like him from the love of God. It appears to me that this also can be understood in two ways. For, “things future” can be understood from that time when he was writing these things so that he seems to say this: If any trials, if any afflictions should come, they cannot separate me from the love of God. Or even the “future things” are understood to refer to what is going to befall those who depart from this world when the ruler of this world²⁹⁸ and the other powers under him will fight to hold fast the soul that is setting out from the body. Yet they are not able to hold fast to these souls, for which the “perfect love” of God, which is in Christ Jesus, “casts out fear.”²⁹⁹ This understanding appears to be confirmed by the Scripture that says, “For while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord; but we long instead to be absent from the body and present with the Lord”,³⁰⁰ and, “but whether we are absent or present we strive to please him.”³⁰¹ He calls us “absent” as long as we are placed in the body, but “present” when we depart from the body. And he shows that saints should strive to please God even as they depart from the body. If then perfect love exists in them, those things that belong to the future, in which they must please God, will not be able to separate them from that love, although those who are so unstable in the love for God that they can be separated from it will by no means be pleasing to God.³⁰² Let this be what we say concerning the two-fold manner of “things future.” It is possible that there may even be a third way that is superior. Let him who is able to track it down prefer it to these, should he judge it worthy.

(8) Then he adds, “nor powers.” It would appear that, from the many kinds of rational creatures, there is one class who do

298. Cf. Jn 12.31.

300. 2 Cor 5.6, 8.

302. Origen's view of the mobile state of souls in the future world is apparent here. Neither the necessity to strive for spiritual advancement nor the possibility of regression are limited to this life, but continue into the next world.

299. 1 Jn 4.18.

301. 2 Cor 5.9.

not lead their lives in a mortal body but are like angels; and yet they are of a different order than the angels. And it is these powers, then, which engage in the struggle to separate us from the love of God; but he says they are not able to if [our love for God] is rooted and solidly founded.³⁰³

(9) In a similar way both “height” and “depth” fight against us, as David also says, “There are many who war against me from on high”,³⁰⁴ doubtless, because he was being hard-pressed by spiritual forces of wickedness from the heavenly regions.³⁰⁵ And again, [M1136] when he is being attacked by those who have been assigned to the underworld, and by the spirits of hell he says, “I cried out to you from the depths, O Lord.”³⁰⁶ But not even these, Paul says, are able to separate us from the love of God.

(10) “Nor,” he says, “another creation.” The other creation he has spoken of here can be understood of a creation besides the one that we see. For there is another one now invisible to us. It is also possible, however, for his words to be taken in the following sense: “Aside from what I have enumerated above,” i.e., angels and powers and if there is any other created thing; so that he would not seem to draw out the discourse to an unnecessary length by enumerating every kind of creature in detail.

(11) Or there is another way. Paul indeed knew that the creations of God are many and innumerable, of which even he had not received complete knowledge, only partial knowledge.³⁰⁷ Not only are their forms unknown in the present age, but even their names. The same Apostle says of them elsewhere that the Savior has sat down “above every ruler and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the future.”³⁰⁸ On account of these things, then, which he knows cannot be named in the present age but in the future, it will seem that he has said, “nor any other creation will be able to separate us from the love of God.”

(12) Nevertheless, from all these things, Paul reveals confi-

303. Cf. Eph 3.17.

305. Cf. Eph 6.12.

307. Cf. 1 Cor 13.9.

304. Ps 56.2.

306. Ps 130.1.

308. Eph 1.21.

dence in his own salvation when he now claims that neither by the opposing angels, nor by the fighting powers, nor by the things present or future that struggle against him, nor by any other hostile creation can he be torn away from the love of God. Nor is there room for any fear of so many adversaries. In this he has truly shown that perfect love has now cast out fear from him.³⁰⁹ For at one time he did have fear and was afraid that he might perhaps fall away.³¹⁰ And this man, who now was unafraid if hostile heavenly powers should incite wars against him, at one time feared his own flesh and dreaded the treachery that could arise from it, when he said while writing to the Corinthians, "I buffet my body and subject it to slavery lest perhaps, after I have preached to others, I myself might be rejected."³¹¹ And therefore, [M1137] the treachery of the flesh must be dreaded beyond all the others. We must be on guard against this enemy advancing from us, until the soul should reach such a degree of advancement that, having been bound by the sweetness of the love of God,³¹² it abhors the allurements of the body and the enticements of the flesh, having become one spirit with God.³¹³

13. *I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I hoped that I myself were accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, who are kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belong the adoption as sons, and the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to whom belong the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever.*³¹⁴

(2) Paul sees that it would have seemed contradictory and incredible that, in light of what he had explained above that by no power, in heaven and earth, in things present and future opposing him, he could be separated from the love of Christ,³¹⁵ he

309. Cf. 1 Jn 4.18.

310. Cf. 1 Cor 9.27. See Preface of Origen (3-6); 7.8.6.

311. 1 Cor 9.27.

312. Cf. 5.10.16.

313. Cf. 1 Cor 6.17.

314. Rom 9.1-5.

315. Cf. Rom 8.35, 38-39.

was determined to say now that he hoped to be accursed from Christ, i.e., to become estranged, whom he loved with such inseparability. Lest he should seem to be branded a liar, he sets down a satisfactory explanation so that there will be no doubt whatsoever about his words and says, "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit." But let us see why he says, "I am speaking the truth in Christ," as if showing that there is some truth that is not in Christ. See whether we can distinguish truth that is in Christ from that which is not in Christ in some such way. For the same Paul says in another passage, "The truth of Christ is in me, that I am not lying."³¹⁶ So then, one should believe that the truth of Christ is there where the rest of the virtues, which Christ is said to be, exist. That is, where there is righteousness, where there is peace, where there is the Word of God,³¹⁷ there also is the truth of Christ. Yet there is also a truth in unrighteousness,³¹⁸ as if, for instance, we would call that demon of Python that is reported in the Acts of the Apostles to have taken up residence in a certain servant girl and to have called after the apostles, "These are servants of the Most High God, who are declaring the way of God to men."³¹⁹ There was truth in these words, for what was said was true; but that truth was not in Christ. And for that reason Paul turned around and said, "Be silent and come out of her!"³²⁰ Moreover, there was also that truth that Caiaphas spoke, "It is better for you [M1138] that one man die for the people and not that the entire nation should perish";³²¹ that truth, however, was not in Christ. And therefore, the Apostle claims to be speaking the truth in Christ, to distinguish it from truth that is outside of Christ.

(3) Moreover, what he says, "my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit," seems to me to have a similar sense. For according to what this same Apostle says above, the conscience bears witness even for the Gentiles: "while the conscience bears witness to them and their thoughts mutually accuse or even de-

³¹⁶ 2 Cor 11.10; 1 Tm 2.7.

³¹⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Eph 2.14; Jn 1.1; 2 Cor 11.10.

³¹⁸ Cf. Rom 1.18.

³¹⁹ Acts 16.16-17.

³²⁰ Acts 16.18.

³²¹ Jn 11.50.

fend them."³²² In those, then, in whom their own thoughts have something that would accuse and in whom the conscience comes as a witness, it is impossible to be said what witness the conscience would bear in the Holy Spirit for evil deeds. But in the Apostle, where the thoughts no longer have anything that can accuse him, the conscience justly bears witness in the Holy Spirit. But behold the greatness of the Apostle's heart. From the love of God he cannot be separated; what he speaks he speaks in Christ; what he has in his conscience is controlled by the Holy Spirit. What heavens exist, I ask, what thrones are there, what minds of heavenly powers, though most expansive, are able to encompass the whole Trinity in such spacious rooms!³²³

(4) He says, "That I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart." Go ahead, have sorrow; go ahead, feel pain because of the lostness of your brothers, "who are kinsmen according to the flesh." But does it really extend so far that you should wish to become accursed from Christ? And why would their salvation benefit you if you should be cut off from salvation? And what benefit is it to save others if you yourself perish? He says, It is not so, but I have learned from my teacher and Lord³²⁴ that "whoever wants to save his soul shall lose it, and whoever loses it will find it."³²⁵ What is so astonishing, then, if the Apostle should desire to become accursed for the sake of his brothers? He knows that the one who was in the form of God emptied himself from that form and took on the form of a slave³²⁶ and became a curse for us.³²⁷ What is astonishing then if, since the Lord became a curse for the sake of slaves, a slave should become accursed for the sake of brothers? Yet I believe that this is also what Moses was saying to the Lord when the people sinned, "And now, if indeed you will forgive their sin, forgive it; but if not, blot me out of the book of life that you have written."³²⁸ What then? Do you want Paul to seem inferior to

322. Rom 2.15.

323. Cf. *Comm in Cant* 2.9. See also 3.8.6.

324. Cf. Jn 13.13.

326. Cf. Phil 2.6-7.

328. Ex 32.32.

325. Mt 16.25; Mk 8.35.

327. Cf. Gal 3.13.

Moses? The latter asks to be blotted out of the book of life for the sake of his brothers. Is then Paul not obliged to hope to be accursed for the sake of his brothers? [M1139]

(5) But perhaps someone says that Moses, in making this offer, merited to procure salvation for the people; but although Paul hopes, he was not heard. What if I should show you that Paul was heard more than Moses? For all those who had gone forth through Moses fell in the wilderness.³²⁹ But their descendants, who had received the promised land, are even now meandering away from it as wanderers and exiles.³³⁰ But listen to what Paul says about Israel, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, that a blindness has occurred to Israel in part until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in and thus all Israel will be saved."³³¹ You see, then, that Paul was heard; and because he offered himself to be accursed, he merited salvation for his brothers. And so it seems to me that the reason why he first said all those things, that by no power could he be torn away from the love of God, was so that when he offers himself to be accursed for the sake of his brothers, you should not judge that his own falling away has happened. But just as he, who is by nature inseparable from the Father and immortal, went to death and descended into the underworld, so also [Paul], by imitating the master, even though he was incapable of being separated from love, i.e., Christ, becomes accursed from Christ for the sake of his brothers assuredly out of devotion, not transgression.³³² That the Israelites are Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh" requires no explanation.

(6) He says, "Whose is the adoption as sons." For even the sons of Israel were adopted by God at that time "when the Most High divided the nations and dispersed the sons of Adam according to the number of the angels of God, and Jacob became the Lord's portion and Israel the line of his inheritance."³³³ This, then, is [the meaning of] adoption as sons.

(7) "The glory, the covenants, the giving of the law." It has

329. Cf. Jos 5.4; Heb 3.16-17; 1 Cor 10.5.

330. Cf. Heb 11.9.

332. Cf. *Hom in Lv* 7.2.

331. Rom 11.25-26.

333. Dt 32.8-9.

already repeatedly been spoken about the glory of the law that was given.³³⁴ As the Apostle himself says, "For if what is being nullified came through glory," i.e., the old covenant, "how much more is that which remains in glory,"³³⁵ namely, the proclamation of the gospel. But what he says, "the covenants and the giving of the law," this perhaps seems to declare one and the same thing. For the law that was given is itself also called a covenant. But in my opinion there is this distinction: There was but one law, dispensed all at one time through Moses, but covenants were established over and over again. For as often as they sinned and were rejected so often were they disinherited. And again as often as [M1140] God was propitiated again and called them back and led them into the possession of their inheritance so often it must be believed that he renewed the covenants and recorded them as heirs.

(8) "The worship and the promises." He calls the priestly duties "worship"; "promises" refer to those that were made to the fathers and that are hoped to be given to those who, through faith, are called Abraham's sons.³³⁶ But it is certain that not only the fathers but also the Christ came from that race, i.e., from the Israelite race, according to the flesh. As he also says through the prophet, "Woe to them because my flesh is from them."³³⁷ But why, "Woe to them"? Because Jesus was born "for the falling and resurrection of many,"³³⁸ and because he was rejected by those from whom his flesh was [descended],³³⁹ and he was received by the Gentiles, by whom he was not known, as he also says through David, "A people whom I have not known have served me."³⁴⁰ From them, therefore, is also the Christ according to the flesh. "Who is over all God, blessed forever." He has already described Christ according to the flesh and according to the Spirit in the earlier part of this letter where he says, "who was born from the seed of David according to the flesh and was destined to be Son of God with power according to the Spirit of sanctification."³⁴¹ We have to the best of our ability given a more

334. Cf. 3.11.4-5.

336. Cf. Gal 3.7.

338. Lk 2.34.

340. Ps 18.43.

335. 2 Cor 3.11.

337. Hos 9.12 LXX.

339. Cf. Mt 13.57.

341. Rom 1.3-4.

complete explanation of how he is the Son of God according to the Spirit and the son of David according to the flesh.³⁴² The one, then, whom he there called the Son of God according to the Spirit, here he declares to be the very “God, who is over all”³⁴³ (because the level of doctrine is advancing for those who are making progress, as one might expect for hearers).

(9) What amazes me³⁴⁴ is how certain persons who read what this same Apostle says elsewhere, “There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things,”³⁴⁵ should deny that the Son of God ought to be confessed to be God, lest they should appear to speak of two gods.³⁴⁶ What will they do about this passage of the Apostle in which Christ is explicitly recorded to be “God over all”? But those who interpret these things this way fail to observe that he has not called the Lord Jesus Christ “one Lord” in such a way that therefore God the Father may not be called Lord. Likewise, he has not called God the Father “one God” in a sense in which the Son would not be believed to be God. For that Scripture is true that says, “Know that the Lord himself is God.”³⁴⁷ But both [M1141] are one God, since there is no other source of deity for the Son than the Father; but of that one paternal fountain, as wisdom says, the Son is “the purest emanation.”³⁴⁸ Christ, therefore, is “God over all.” But over “all” of what? Doubtless, over those things we spoke about a short while ago, “over principalities and authorities and powers and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the future.”³⁴⁹ He

342. Cf. 1.5–6.

343. As early as Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.16.2, Rom 1.4 and Rom 9.5 were linked together in the Church’s developing Christology. Cf. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 4:138 n. 92.

344. Cf. 5.10.13.

345. 1 Cor 8.6.

346. Erasmus, CWE 56:250, thought this passage was directed against Arius and therefore attributed it to Origen’s translator, Rufinus. As R. Sider, however, indicates, the words may refer to the Monarchians, “who also saw in incipient orthodoxy the implication of two gods. The Monarchians were well established before Origen wrote.” *Ibid.*, p. 252 n. 10. Cf. Kelly, *Doctrines*, p. 117.

347. Ps 100.3.

348. Wis 7.25, for a more detailed interpretation of which, see *Princ* 1.2.10.

349. Eph 1.21.

who is over all has no one over himself. For he himself is not later than the Father, but from the Father. But the wisdom of God has granted that this same thing be understood of the Holy Spirit as well, where it says, "The Spirit of the Lord filled the earth, and he who contains all things, has knowledge of his voice."³⁵⁰ If, therefore, the Son is called "God over all" and the Holy Spirit is recorded to contain all things, but God is the Father "from whom are all things,"³⁵¹ then clearly the nature and essence of the Trinity, which is over all things, are shown to be one.³⁵²

14. *But the word of God has not failed. For not all who are from Israel are Israel; nor because they are Abraham's descendants³⁵³ are they all sons; but, "It is through Isaac that descendants will be named for you." This means that it is not the sons of the flesh who are the sons of God, but the sons of the promise are counted as descendants.*³⁵⁴

(2) He had said above that he hoped even to be accursed for the sake of his brothers, who are kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, because theirs was the adoption as sons and the giving of the law and the promises.³⁵⁵ Therefore, now, he says of them that the word of God has not failed, that is to say, the promise that was made to them was not in vain. For the one who was truly of Israel, not merely one tracing his lineage from Abraham out of a fleshly lineage—"for it is not the sons of the flesh who are the sons of God"—but he who has descended from Abraham according to the promise of faith, he indeed attains the promises of God. For there are many from Israel's race, but they are not all named Israel. For Israel received its name by seeing God. For Jacob himself says the following: "I

³⁵⁰. Wis 1.7.

³⁵¹. Cf. 1 Cor 8.6.

³⁵². In *Fr in Heb* (PG 14:1308) Origen used the term *homoousios*, "of one substance or essence," to describe the relation between the Father and the Son. According to J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3d ed. (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972), p. 245, by this term he was apparently claiming "not that the Father and Son were identical in substance, but that they participated in the same kind of essence."

³⁵³. Or "seed" *et infra*.

³⁵⁴. Rom 9.6-8.

³⁵⁵. Cf. Rom 9.3-4.

have seen God face to face, and my soul was saved."³⁵⁶ Therefore, since he saw God, he was called Israel.³⁵⁷ But the one who has not seen the one who said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father as well"³⁵⁸ cannot be called Israel.

(3) "Nor because they are Abraham's descendants are they all sons as well." Evidently this was already being pointed out back then to Abraham, who had with him many sons whom the Apostle calls sons of the flesh, [M1142] but in Isaac alone, who was the son of promise, the lineage of his own descendants was appointed. And now, therefore, those who are sons of promise according to Isaac, i.e., [sons] of that faith through which Abraham merited to receive the promise of the future inheritance, these alone are reckoned as descendants; for in them the succession of the inheritance is established.

15. *For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son." But not only this, but also Rebecca, who conceived by one act of intercourse with our father Isaac.³⁵⁹ For though they had not yet been born or had done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to election might continue, not by works but by the one who calls, she was told, "The elder will serve the younger." As it is written, "I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau."³⁶⁰*

(2) The Apostle has resolved to explain that, although the people of Israel have been repudiated through unbelief, nevertheless the promises of God that had been given to them did not fail and were not frustrated. He also teaches that though Abraham had many sons, in Isaac alone was the promise made. For he says, "It is not the sons of the flesh who are the sons of God."³⁶¹ And he strives to show how Isaac is not a son of the flesh, but a son of God. And he turns back to the things that were written about him in Genesis, "This is the word of promise: At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son."³⁶² He is

356. Gn 32.30.

357. Cf. 8.12.6.

358. Jn 14.9.

359. The wording of the Latin text here differs from how Origen understood this passage in *Hom in Gn 12.4*.

360. Rom 9.9-13.

361. Rom 9.8.

362. Cf. Gn 18.10.

saying, therefore, it is not by the course of a fleshly birth that Isaac is born, since Abraham was already considered to have a dead body and Sarah's womb was dead, as it was said above.³⁶³ But it is through the power of him who said, "At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son." Therefore, he is called a son by merit, not of the flesh, but of God, who is born out of the arrival and discourse of God.

(3) He says, then, this reasoning should be received not only in Isaac's case but also in Jacob's. For, he says, Rebecca also gave birth not in the course of a fleshly birth.³⁶⁴ For when she had conceived twins from a single act of intercourse with Isaac, before the birth occurred, and before the boys had any good or evil deeds among men, the divine election was reckoned toward Jacob, and it is said, "The elder will serve the younger,"³⁶⁵ and, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."³⁶⁶ But he teaches why these things are said in this way, "in order that according to election the purpose of God might abide not by works, but by the one who calls"; that is, in order that it might not be those who are sons of the flesh, but those who are sons of God who are reckoned as descendants.³⁶⁷ For just as [M1 143] there out of many sons of the flesh God chooses Isaac, who would be adopted among the sons of God, so also here the younger of the two, Jacob, who is adopted among the sons of God, is chosen. And thus it proves true that the promises of God consist not in the sons of the flesh, but in the sons of God.

(4) But all these things are directed toward the fact that the Apostle would show that if either Isaac or Jacob had been chosen by God for the sake of his merits, which they had acquired while placed in the flesh, and they had merited being justified through the works of the flesh, the grace of their merit could assuredly pertain also to the posterity of flesh and blood. But in fact, since their election did not come about based on works but out of God's purpose and from the choice of the one who calls, the grace of the promises is not fulfilled in the sons of the

363. Cf. Rom 4.19.

365. Gn 25.23.

367. Cf. Rom 9.8.

364. Cf. Gn 25.21.

366. Mal 1.2-3.

flesh but in the sons of God, that is, in those who are, like him, chosen by the purpose of God and are adopted as sons. For what we already explained above is likewise fulfilled in them: "Those whom he foreknew, these he also predestined; and those whom he predestined, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified; and those whom he justified, these he also glorified."³⁶⁸ But whatever we have set forth above³⁶⁹ about these expressions are more than abundantly sufficient for the explanation of the present passage lest, by repeating the same things, we arouse a sense of loathing in the readers.³⁷⁰

16. *What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I have mercy on whom I shall have mercy, and I shall offer compassion to whom I shall have compassion." So it is not of the one who wills or strives, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose that I might show my power in you and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills. You will say to me then, "Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?"*³⁷¹

(2) It is fitting for the one who reads these things carefully to call to mind that parable we set down in the preceding books³⁷² concerning the management of the apostolic discourse. It is like the household of a certain royal palace that is marked by a great number of entrances and exits from one chamber to another, such that one may pass through, with traces of him entering or departing scarcely appearing at all. In this way as well Paul

368. Rom 8.29-30.

369. Cf. 7.7.

370. Cf. 2.14.25; Epilogue of Rufinus (2).

371. Rom 9.14-19. Origen understands vv. 14-19 not as Paul's own words but the explanation of his imaginary opponent, who cites vv. 15 and 17 in order to conclude vv. 16 and 18. Paul himself, according to Origen, does not represent this view but rather rejects the entire objection in vv. 20-24. Sanday & Headlam, *Romans*, p. 253, protest against Origen's artifice, "Such a construction which was adopted in the interest of free-will is quite contrary to the structure of the sentence and of the argument. In every case in which μή γένοιτο occurs it is followed by an answer to the objection direct or indirect." Similarly Cranfield, *Romans* 2:482 n. 2, says Origen's view "is certainly to be rejected."

372. Cf. 5.1.9ff.

seems to uncover the secrets of the divine mysteries for us, but only slightly, not throwing them open completely and openly.

(3) After all, when for the things he had said above concerning Isaac and Jacob, that through election and by the purpose of God,³⁷³ before they had done any works, good or bad, God said either of the one, "At this time I will come [M1144] and Sarah will have a son,"³⁷⁴ or of the other, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated",³⁷⁵ when in the present section he had introduced some *persona* that contradicts him and raises objections by saying: Is there injustice on God's part if it is not of the one who wills or strives, but of God who shows mercy, and if [God] chose Pharaoh for the purpose of showing in him the authority of his power, and if he himself shows mercy to whom he wants and he hardens whom he wants, so that he asks, Why does he still blame men and why is the one who sins found culpable, since his will would be deemed such concerning each? With a most deserved exclamatory rebuke, [Paul] confronts the person who raises these [complaints] and things like these, as a man who is impudently and inappropriately intruding into the chamber of this mystery. He says, "Who are you, O man, that you should reply against God?"³⁷⁶ It is as if he were saying: Who are you to rush into the king's inner court and to dare to penetrate the secrets of the inner apartment! Therefore, we also, by treading softly, as if put in the royal inner courts, let us pass by most of these things in silence and a few words, since the Apostle Paul himself has become our teacher and guide on this tour.

(4) So then, under the *persona* of the one contradicting him, the Apostle says, "Is there injustice on God's part?" And immediately at the beginning he answered, "By no means," so that it seems that to everything else that will be raised as objections under the *persona* of the one who is contradicting him it is always answered by the Apostle, "By no means." As a consequence, the opponent even makes use of the words of Moses that God says to him, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will offer compassion to whom I shall have com-

373. Cf. Rom 9.11.
375. Mal 1.2.

374. Gn 18.10; Rom 9.9.
376. Rom 9.20.

passion."³⁷⁷ But if that is the case, he says, then salvation is not of the one who wills or strives, but of him on whom God shows mercy. For, he says, it is even said to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose that I might show my power in you and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth";³⁷⁸ so that it might seem to be made known that if Pharaoh was chosen for this purpose, that through him the power of God might be declared to everyone, it did not lie within his own power that he perishes. But after all these things, he adds, "So then he has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills." This is what you are asserting, he says, you who raise the objection that God finds fault and condemns men without reason. For if he chooses whom he wants and rejects whom he wants, who resists the will of that one, through whom are all things? Without a doubt that objection sets in motion that there is no freedom of will in man nor does each one have it [M1145] within his own power either that he be saved or that he perish.³⁷⁹ We have indeed discussed these matters more fully in the book where we took up each detail concerning the freedom of the will to the best of our ability. The material there should be more than sufficient to explain.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, we will even now call attention to a few things that were said there.

(5) What he has said, "It is not of the one who wills or strives, but of God who shows mercy," should be interpreted in the same way as David says in the Psalm, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it have labored in vain, and unless the Lord guards the city, the guard has kept watch in vain,"³⁸¹ in which he shows not that one who builds a house should do nothing and be idle and that this is how the Lord builds it, but he must indeed invest as much attentive care and effort as lies within man; but it depends on God, once all obstacles have

377. Ex 33.19.

378. Ex 9.16.

379. See Preface of Origen (1).

380. Cf. *Princ* 3.1. For an unfavorable analysis of Origen's understanding of Paul's argument here, see W. J. P. Boyd, "Origen on Pharaoh's Hardened Heart: A Study of Justification and Election in St. Paul and Origen." *SP* VII, pt. I, ed. F. L. Cross, TU 92 (1966), p. 434-42.

381. Ps 127.1-2.

been removed, for the work to reach completion. Since, therefore, through this it is being taught that man must indeed expend effort and attentive care, but that God grants the success and completion to the work, it is assuredly pious and religious, while God and man do what is in themselves, to attribute the chief part of the work to God rather than to man. And so, although Paul was planting and Apollos was watering, God is said to give the increase.³⁸² It is also added, "Consequently, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but he who gives the increase, God."³⁸³ So then, we too say likewise in the present passage: Consequently, neither the one who strives nor the one who wills is anything, but he who grants the completion, God. For the one who wills and the one who strives seems to correspond to "he who plants and he who waters." But the Apostle says that he who plants and he who waters are nothing, not that they do nothing, but that they may be regarded as nothing in comparison with God, who gives the increase to the work or its completion.³⁸⁴

(6) Moreover, let us now consider what the meaning might be of what is said to Pharaoh: "I have raised you up for the very purpose that I might show my power in you."³⁸⁵ It is certain that God not only knows the purpose and will of each man, but he also foreknows this. But though he knows this and knows it in advance, being a good and just steward,³⁸⁶ he makes use of the affections and the purpose of each individual to accomplish the works that the mind and will of each person has chosen. For example, if we would say: If there is a certain master of a house who is wise and just and who has a large body of slaves, will he not, with as much prudence as there can be, [M1 146] consider which of these has a spirit suitable for cultivating the ground and then assign them to the fields? But he will also determine whose talent might be suitable for doing business, whose for the task of feeding the cattle, whose for household service and attending his own chamber. And so, being a wise man, he will

382. Cf. 1 Cor 3.6.

384. Cf. *Princ* 3.1.18.

386. Cf. 1 Pt 4.10.

383. 1 Cor 3.7.

385. Ex 9.16.

dispense suitable duties to each. Since, however, it is not hidden from him, whether the master of a household or this king, that it is inevitable sometimes for subjects to rebel and to break the disciplinary rules, and on this account to need correction and floggings, it is necessary, therefore, to choose from all things those that are suitable, and for these things that are properly disposed for this purpose, if any of them are more savagely agitated, although carried by their own inner affections, nevertheless to apply the necessary correction to those who commit faults.

(7) Let us suppose, then, that this housemaster or king had seen the time when those who had committed many things against morality and discipline had to be corrected. And he chose someone extremely hardened and far more depraved than those who were to be corrected; who, on account of his own crimes deserved not merely correction, but death. But since he wants his destruction to advance the correction of the others, he sends him to those whom he desires to be corrected by his death and he says to him, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the world."³⁸⁷ For notice that he has not said, "For this very purpose I have made you"; otherwise the blame would seem to be referred to the Creator. But he says, "For this very purpose I have raised you up," that is, through the malice of your own mind, which you have acquired for yourself by living in an unbridled fashion without any fear of God, so that a beneficial and fruitful reproach might be inflicted upon others, and so that in you a most spectacular destruction might be conferred as an example for posterity.³⁸⁸

(8) Yet what he says, "So then he has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills," he seems to take from what was written in Exodus. For there it says, "I shall harden Pharaoh's heart so that he will not let the people go."³⁸⁹ The heart of Pharaoh was hardened in this manner: God was unwilling to inflict immediate and total revenge upon him. For al-

³⁸⁷. Ex 9.16.

³⁸⁹. Ex 4.21.

³⁸⁸. Cf. *Hom in Jer* 12.6.

though he was a man of consummate malice, nevertheless God, in his patience, had not barred his capacity for conversion; and therefore, he uses lighter punishments on him at first, then he gradually increased their severity. But because God bore with patience, he was hardened [M1147] from this leading to greater contempt, storing up such wrath for himself that what the Apostle writes may be fittingly addressed to him: "Or do you despise the riches of his goodness and long-suffering, unaware that God's patience leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath."³⁹⁰ It is not, therefore, that God hardens whom he wants, but the one who is unwilling to comply with patience is hardened. Therefore, it is superfluous what you are saying to the Apostle, O you who retort, "Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?" It is certain indeed that no one opposes his will; but it befits us to know that his will is just and right. For that we may be good or evil depends on our will; but that the evil man should be appointed for punishments of some sort and the good man for glory of some sort depends on the will of God.

17. *But who are you, O man, that you should reply against God? Will what is molded say to the one who molds it, "Why have you made me like this?" Or has the potter no authority over the clay, to make out of the same mass one vessel for honor and another for reproach?*³⁹¹

(2) We read in the Gospels as well that those who were impudently and faithlessly inquiring of the Lord by what authority he was doing the things he was doing, and who had given him this authority, were not even deemed worthy of an answer.³⁹² In a similar way, we see in the present passage that the Apostle is aroused against those who ask insolent questions. In his response he has confounded the arrogance of the questioner, for he says, "Who are you, O man, that you should reply against God?"

(3) For this means that man before God is like clay before a

390. Rom 2.4-5.

392. Cf. Mt 21.23-27.

391. Rom 9.20-21.

potter.³⁹³ And just as a worthless slave whose master decides that some job that is full of reason and use ought to be done, but the servant, being unwilling to do the work the master is commanding,³⁹⁴ begins to discuss the issue and inquire from the master, “Why did you order this job to be done? Who benefits from it? Why is it necessary?” what more fitting answer could be given to the arrogant slave than to say to him, “Who are you to reply against your master? This is what is pleasing to the master, this is what seems best to him”?

(4) But I do not think that if a faithful and wise servant asks a question out of the will to understand and marvel at his Lord’s wisdom, that it would be said to him, “Who are you?”³⁹⁵ After all, when Daniel the prophet desired to know the will of the Lord, for which he was even named “man of desires,”³⁹⁶ it was not said to him, “Who are you?” But an angel was sent to teach him [M1148] about all God’s ways and judgments.³⁹⁷ Therefore, if there is some secret and hidden thing of God we long to know, if we are men of desires and not contentions, let us faithfully and humbly inquire into the more concealed judgments of God that are sown in the Holy Scriptures. Surely this is also why the Lord was saying, “Search the Scriptures!”³⁹⁸ since he knew that these things are opened not by those who fleetingly listen to or read [the Scriptures] while occupied with other business, but by those who with an upright and sincere³⁹⁹ heart search more deeply into the Holy Scriptures, by constant effort and uninterrupted nightly vigils. I know well that I myself am not one of these. But if anyone seeks in this way, he will find.⁴⁰⁰ But now let us, as we are able, turn back to the things we have at hand.

(5) “Does what is molded say to the one who molds it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Has the potter no authority over

393. Cf. Jer 18.6.

394. Cf. Mt 24.45.

395. Cf. Eusebius’s moving description of the boy Origen’s eager desire to know and understand the inner meaning of Scripture and his persistent questioning of his father in *Ecclesiastical History* 6.2.8–11.

396. Dn 9.23 LXX.

397. Cf. Dn 9.21–22.

398. Jn 5.39.

399. Or “simple,” *et infra*.

400. Cf. Mt 7.8.

the clay, to make out of the same mass one vessel for honor and another for reproach?" In the writings of Jeremiah the prophet we also read something like this, where God commands him to enter the house of a potter and observe him molding clay. As he gathers up a vessel that had fallen from his hands he molds it a second time according to his own will.⁴⁰¹ It says, "And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Shall I not be able to do with the house of Israel as this potter has done?'"⁴⁰² Wisdom also says, "The furnace tests the potter's vessels, and temptation [tests] just men."⁴⁰³ Therefore, God has authority over us as also the potter over the clay, to make from the same mass vessels for honor and vessels for reproach. To you, therefore, who insolently reply to God, let it be enough to have heard these things.

(6) But as for the one who longs to contemplate the works of the wisdom of God in his ways of governing, let him listen to Paul discussing these matters in another passage where he is aware of the divine mysteries. He says, "But in a large house there are vessels not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay and some indeed for honor, but some for reproach. If, therefore, anyone should cleanse himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work."⁴⁰⁴ Do you hear Paul in these things in which he had no impudent opponent, how he has explained that there are various kinds of vessels? For there, where there was no worthy hearer but there was an opponent, he mentions only clay vessels; but here he says that there are [vessels] of gold, silver, wood, and clay, some indeed are for honor, but others for reproach, just as he mentioned there. But although there he was silent about the grounds [M1149] for there being "some for honor, but some for reproach," here he has explained this openly. He says, "For if anyone should cleanse himself from these things"—doubtless, from the defilements of sin—"he will be," he says, "a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work."⁴⁰⁵

401. Cf. Jer 18.2-4.

403. Sir 27.5.

405. 2 Tm 2.21. Cf. *Princ* 2.9.8; 3.1.20.

402. Cf. Jer 18.5-6.

404. 2 Tm 2.20-21.

(7) It follows, therefore, that whoever has not cleansed himself and has not washed away the stains of sin through repentance, he would be a vessel for reproach. But even if, through the hardness of his mind and the impenitence of his heart, he should grow in wickedness and should completely scorn being converted,⁴⁰⁶ he will now become not merely a vessel of reproach but a vessel of wrath.⁴⁰⁷ So then, the understanding that he closed off there to those who demanded it in an unworthy fashion here he throws open⁴⁰⁸ for those desiring in a worthy manner, through which even that which he set forth before about Jacob and Esau is explained more clearly. For, in order for Jacob to have been a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work, his soul had cleansed itself; and God, seeing its purity, having the authority to make from the same mass one vessel for honor, another for reproach, he made Jacob, who, as we have said, had indeed cleansed himself, into a vessel for honor. But from the same mass he made Esau into a vessel for reproach, whose soul he saw was neither so pure nor so simple. But in order that you might know that Jacob was made into a vessel for honor because of the purity and simplicity of his soul, listen to how Holy Scripture bears testimony to his simplicity. It says, "Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in a house."⁴⁰⁹ On this account, then, the Apostle says about these men that before they were born it is said of them, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."⁴¹⁰

18. *But if God, wanting to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath ready for destruction so that he might make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared for glory, including us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles. As he also*

⁴⁰⁶. Cf. Rom 2.5.

⁴⁰⁷. Cf. Rom 9.22; 2 Tm 2.20.

⁴⁰⁸. The language used here recalls the parable of the king's palace in 5.1.9 and 7.16.2, where doors are closed and opened to the companions of Paul on the tour.

⁴⁰⁹. Gn 25.27.

⁴¹⁰. Mal 1.2-3; Rom 9.13. Cf. *Princ* 2.9.7, where he says that Jacob was worthily loved by God according to pre-existing merit.

says in *Hosea*, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and she who was not beloved 'beloved.' And it will be: In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called sons of the living God."⁴¹¹

(2) We have often mentioned the Apostle's unpolished constructions and their lapses that are found no less in the present passage.⁴¹² For the words at the beginning of the section, "But if God, wanting," do not correspond to anything. For example, as elsewhere he has also said, "But if the firstfruits are holy, and the lump,"⁴¹³ [M1 150] he responds with nothing similar, but he abandoned that copula as if it were a stray. Even if it were not supplied, the meaning would be rather clear without it. For example, we read in this way, "God, wanting to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath ready for destruction so that he might make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy." In this it seems to be understood that while God endures and patiently bears with unbelievers and unfaithful people, he makes known to men both his patience and his power: patience, while he endures them for a long time if, perchance, they might possibly come to their senses and be converted; power, while he sometimes punishes and does not leave their crimes unavenged forever.

(3) On the other hand "for the vessels of mercy," i.e., those who have cleansed themselves from every defilement of sin,⁴¹⁴ from which "no one is pure, even if his life should be one day long,"⁴¹⁵ he makes known the riches of his glory. He has prepared these vessels for glory not through some arbitrary or fortuitous grace, but because they have purged themselves from the aforementioned defilements.⁴¹⁶

(4) But he has added, "us whom he has called," as if he had said: Like us whom he called "not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles." For he seems to be following up prior material about Pharaoh, who was a vessel of wrath, and about the

⁴¹¹ Rom 9.22-26.

⁴¹² Cf. Preface (1); 1.9.6; 4.9.1; 4.12.5.

⁴¹³ Rom 11.16.

⁴¹⁵ Jb 14.4-5 LXX.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. 2 Tm 2.21.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. 4.17.6-7.

sons of Israel who were vessels of mercy. In what he adds here, then, “us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles,” he seems to take up this comparison. That is, it seems to be said in this way: Just as we are vessels of mercy whom he called not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. Let these things be said as much as pertains to the sequence of his apostolic expression and the explanation of the words.

(5) Now let us briefly go back and ask something about the inner meaning as well. How then does God make known his wrath? He says, through the vessels of wrath ready for destruction. I am struck with amazement within myself when I look intently into the counsel of the Holy Spirit in the divine books. For it certainly says that the wrath of God, which comes from outside his nature, becomes known to men, as this passage of the Apostle indicates. But it relates that his goodness and kindness, which belong to his very nature, are hidden and concealed, as David says, “How great is the multitude of your kindness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you!”⁴¹⁷ What then shall we say is the reason why God manifests his wrath to men and conceals his kindness? [M1151] Doubtless, he knows that the human race is weak and susceptible to falling away through negligence. It is more expedient for them to be under the fear of wrath than to be set loose by the hope of God’s goodness and kindness, just as the wisdom of God says, “He who spares the rod hates his son. For if you strike him with a stick, he will not die, but you will save his soul from death.”⁴¹⁸ Therefore, God makes known his power when he punishes and corrects the ungodly, so that, in accordance with the proverb of Scripture, “When a scourge strikes, the innocent become wiser.”⁴¹⁹

(6) But he also makes known “the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared for glory.” God’s riches are made known when his mercy is shown toward those who are despised and lowly among men, who put their hope not in

417. Ps 31.19.
419. Prv 19.25.

418. Prv 13.24; 23.13-14.

their own riches⁴²⁰ or strength, but in the Lord. As the nation of the Hebrews formerly attained mercy after they had been given up on by men and rejected by God, so also now, therefore, the people of the Gentiles, who were looked down upon and given up on by those who boast in circumcision, have attained mercy. But we need to examine what that means more critically, that they have also attained mercy and have been called the people of God and were loved by God,⁴²¹ but since they were ignorant of how to preserve the grace they had received, it is said to them, "Because the dwelling place of Israel committed adultery, I sent her away and put a decree of divorce in her hands";⁴²² and again in another passage, "You have become loathsome to me, I will no longer forgive your sins."⁴²³ And through Jeremiah the Lord says, "My inheritance has become to me like a jackal's den,"⁴²⁴ lest perhaps in our case too, we who were not God's people, but through the riches of his glory he called us his own people, and who were not beloved, but have become beloved and sons of the living God, if we fail to walk as sons of the light⁴²⁵ and sons of God, if we do not behave as God's people, "so that men who see our good works may glorify our Father in heaven,"⁴²⁶ it has to be feared lest we fall upon that word of the Apostle when he says, "For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you."⁴²⁷

(7) ["As he says in Hosea, Those who were not my people I shall call my people, and she who was not beloved I shall call beloved, and she who has not attained mercy, [M1 152] the one who has attained mercy. And it will be: In the very place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God"].⁴²⁸ This testimony, which the Apostle has clearly taken from Hosea, does not appear to have been spoken about Gentiles but about the people of Israel, at least as far as the passage of the prophet is itself concerned. But as we have said above,⁴²⁹ Paul adopts a pattern from a similar

420. Cf. Prv 11.28.

422. Jer 3.8.

424. Jer 12.9.

426. Mt 5.16.

428. Rom 9.25-26. The bracketed text is the reading of the Migne edition.

429. Cf. 5.8.7.

421. Cf. Hos 2.1.

423. Cf. Is 1.14.

425. Cf. Eph 5.8.

427. Rom 11.21.

case to show that just as it was first said to them when they had been rejected and given up on, “You are not my people, and I am not yours”;⁴³⁰ and he goes on to say after these things, “And it will be in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they themselves will be called sons of the living God”;⁴³¹ so also he says, “those of us whom he called not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles,” who formerly were not his people, now he has called his own people; “and the one not beloved, beloved; and in the place where it was said to us: You are not my people, there we shall be called sons of the living God.” But perhaps those who are from the circumcision may inquire of us and say: So where has it been said to you that you are not the people of God so that there you may be called the sons of the living God? For they assert that God spoke these things in Judea—for it is in that place alone that God is known⁴³²—and that none of these things pertain to us, since “the law speaks to those who are under the law.”⁴³³ On the contrary, I will show a far worthier location where it was both fitting and possible for God to speak. For it is not appropriate to say that God speaks on mountains and in caves and in whatever other terrestrial locations. Instead God speaks in the mind of man, in the rational senses, and in the governance of the heart; and wheresoever unworthy deeds that are estranged from God are convicted by the accusing conscience,⁴³⁴ where, I say, it is declared, where it is said to each individual, “You are not my people.” But if anyone cleanses and purifies himself from these things,⁴³⁵ and the “peace of God that surpasses every mind should begin to guard his heart,”⁴³⁶ there, i.e., in the hiddenness of the heart, he will be called a son of God, since, as his conscience testifies, he has become a peacemaker.⁴³⁷

19. *But Isaiah cries out for Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel were like the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved”; for fulfilling and shortening his word in justice, since the Lord will make*

430. Hos 1.9.

432. Cf. Ps 76.1.

434. Cf. Rom 2.15.

436. Phil 4.7.

431. Hos 1.10.

433. Rom 3.19.

435. Cf. 2 Tm 2.21.

437. Mt 5.9.

*his word shortened on the earth. And as Isaiah predicted, [M I I 53] "If the Lord of hosts had not left seed to us, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah." What then are we to say? That Gentiles, who were not seeking righteousness, have attained righteousness, but a righteousness that is from faith. But Israel, seeking a law of righteousness, did not attain unto the law. Why? Because it was not from faith, but as it were from works, they have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, "See, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal; and whoever believes in him will not be ashamed."*⁴³⁸

(2) Through the wisdom that Paul speaks among the perfect,⁴³⁹ he has afterwards set forth secret and hidden matters⁴⁴⁰ pertaining to the divine way of dispensing things. And he has shown the reason and ordered way in which God reveals either his wrath for the vessels of wrath or the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy.⁴⁴¹ And he has taught that each person becomes a vessel of wrath in consequence of the fact that through his own hardened and impenitent heart he stores up for himself wrath.⁴⁴² On the other hand the vessels of mercy are those who have cleansed themselves from these things and prepared [themselves] for every good work.⁴⁴³ Now, in order that he might strengthen these very things with greater authority, he teaches that these things were also written down fully in the prophets. He says, "Isaiah cries out for Israel, 'Though the number of the sons of Israel were like the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved.'"⁴⁴⁴ For the prophet, by looking into the future, saw that most of Israel and particularly those who are compared with the sand of the sea, through their own hardened and impenitent heart,⁴⁴⁵ were going to be "vessels of wrath ready for destruction,"⁴⁴⁶ by not believing in their life, but instead by crucifying the Lord of majesty.⁴⁴⁷ He says, "Though they were like the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved." Those who are not saved are like the sand of the sea;

438. Rom 9.27-33.

440. Cf. Eph 3.9.

442. Cf. Rom 2.5.

444. Cf. Is 10.22.

446. Rom 9.22.

439. Cf. 1 Cor 2.6.

441. Cf. Rom 9.22-23.

443. Cf. 2 Tm 2.21.

445. Cf. Rom 2.5.

447. Cf. 1 Cor 2.8.

but the remnant that will be saved are like the stars of heaven. For the word of promise that came to Abraham contains both. It says, "Your seed will be like the sand of the sea and like the stars of heaven."⁴⁴⁸

(3) And this is what he says: "For fulfilling and shortening his word in justice, since the Lord will make his word shortened on the earth." The word is shortened where "many are called but few are chosen."⁴⁴⁹ But we can call the word of all doctrine shortened, in that what the former law and prophets were containing in a breadth of precepts, the Lord, when he came, announced and said, "You shall love [M1154] the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength; and your neighbor as yourself. In these two commands hang the entire law and prophets,"⁴⁵⁰ in which he has clearly condensed the prophets and the law into these two statements.⁴⁵¹ It is also possible that the "shortened word" refers to the faith expressed in the Creed, which is handed down to believers, in which the essence of the entire mystery is contained in only a few statements.⁴⁵²

(4) He says, "And as Isaiah predicted, 'If the Lord of hosts had not left seed to us, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.'"⁴⁵³ Which seed does Isaiah say was left by the Lord? Undoubtedly the seed that the same Apostle is expounding upon in another passage when he says that it was said to Abraham, "To you and to your seed I will give this land. He did not say, 'and to seeds,' as to many; but, 'to your seed,' as

448. Gn 22.17. Here and in other passages Origen has apparently misread the conjunctive parallelism of Hebrew poetry by interpreting the clauses disjunctively.

449. Mt 22.14.

450. Mt 22.37, 39-40.

451. The idea of the faith and love of the Gospel as the *verbum brevium* ("shortened word"), in contradistinction to the many demands of the law, belongs to the ante-Nicene exegesis. Cf. Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostles' Preaching* 87.

452. Cf. Kelly, *Creeeds*, p. 92f. There is an echo of the current passage in Rufinus's *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* 1, where Rufinus too sees the formulation of the Apostles' Creed as a verification of the prophet's words "fulfilling and shortening the word in justice."

453. Is 1.9.

to one, who is Christ."⁴⁵⁴ This, then, is what Isaiah is saying, "If the Lord had not left the seed for us," that is to say, if he had not given Christ to us, that he would be born from us, "we would have become like Sodom," in terms of the magnitude of godlessness. Except that among the Israelites something even more grievous has been committed. For the residents of Sodom are reported to have been incestuous and shameless toward strangers;⁴⁵⁵ but the people of Israel showed themselves sacrilegious toward him who, though he was the Lord of majesty,⁴⁵⁶ wanted both to be and to be called their brother.⁴⁵⁷ Therefore, unless the Lord had left that seed through which the remnant would be saved and the vessels of mercy would be saved, that people would have perished like Sodom.

(5) It was, however, not superfluously that Isaiah called what was left "seed." For we call something that is sown in the earth and bears abundant fruit a seed. By this he is showing that Christ also had to be sown,⁴⁵⁸ i.e., buried in the earth, and after rising from there would bring forth very much fruit, the multitudes of the entire Church, as the Lord himself says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it does not bear fruit; but if it dies, it bears very much fruit."⁴⁵⁹

(6) He says, "What then are we to say? That Gentiles, who were not seeking righteousness, have attained righteousness, but a righteousness that is from faith." This perhaps appears to contradict what we said above, either that each person must cleanse and purify himself in order to become a useful vessel and a vessel of mercy,⁴⁶⁰ or [M1155] what we discussed above, that the Gentiles also make use of natural law, in which, doubtless, there is also righteousness.⁴⁶¹ How then is he saying here, "Gentiles, who were not seeking righteousness, have attained righteousness"? Consider then whether we can reply in this way. It is one thing to seek, another to have it inborn. That person is said to seek who, through much instruction and reading, desires to attain something. Also the "sects" have been named

454. Gal 3.16.

456. Cf. 1 Cor 2.8.

458. Cf. Mt 13.3-8; Mk 4.3-20.

460. Cf. Rom 9.23; 2 Tm 2.21.

455. Gn 19.4-9.

457. Cf. Heb 2.11.

459. Jn 12.24-25.

461. Cf. Rom 2.4.

from “seeking”⁴⁶² after the sort of doctrine that they are taught by human tradition. The Gentiles then are not said to have sought righteousness, since they did not have the law written on tablets or in books. Yet what natural law had taught them they had inborn. On this account, then, they were near to the righteousness that comes from faith, i.e., to Christ.

(7) “But Israel, seeking a law of righteousness, did not attain unto the law.” And this passage, as we have already above stated should be observed,⁴⁶³ uses “law” in different senses in one and the same verse. For it is certain that Israel was seeking the law of righteousness according to the letter, but has not attained unto the law. Which law? Doubtless, that of the Spirit.⁴⁶⁴ For the Apostle would not have said that [Israel] did not attain unto that law that she was seeking and that she was holding fast to and that she was possessing. He therefore gives the reason why Israel was not able to attain to the law: “Because,” he says, “not from faith, but as it were based on works.” We have extensively discussed faith in Christ and the works of the law at the beginning of this letter; and therefore, so that we might not be constantly repeating the same things, we shall explicate the present passage by using a few statements of the Apostle himself, in which he says, “For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God’s righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.”⁴⁶⁵ Therefore, since they were seeking a law not in accordance with the works of God’s righteousness but in accordance with the works of their own righteousness, on that account they stumbled over the stumbling stone, concerning whom it is written, “See, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal; and whoever will believe in him will not be ashamed.” It should be known, however, that in the prophet Isaiah this testimony has been

⁴⁶². *A sectando sectae appellatae sunt*. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 4:182 n. 125, thinks that because this etymology is only possible in Latin, it must stem from Rufinus. Obviously that is so, but Rufinus was probably inspired by Origen’s own derivation of ἀρεσις (sect) from ἀρέω (choose).

⁴⁶³. Cf. 3.6.1; 7.1.1.

⁴⁶⁴. Cf. Rom 8.2.

⁴⁶⁵. Rom 10.3-4.

written as follows: "See, I am sending in the foundations of Zion a precious stone, a chosen and brilliant cornerstone in her foundations; and the one who believes [M1156] will not be ashamed."⁴⁶⁶ But into this testimony the Apostle has inserted "stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal" from another passage of the prophet Isaiah, where it was written as follows: "You will not run into him as a stone of stumbling or as a rock of downfall."⁴⁶⁷ [The Apostle] has excerpted from each passage what seemed appropriate to place in his argument.

(8) It may however perhaps appear astonishing that the Lord Jesus, whom we find addressed with many good and salvation-bringing designations, should be named in this passage, which the Apostle has taken from Isaiah the prophet, "a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal." Surely only whatsoever things that seem good and salvation-bringing ought to be applied to the good Lord, and to the Son of the good Father: things such as peace,⁴⁶⁸ righteousness,⁴⁶⁹ truth,⁴⁷⁰ the door⁴⁷¹ through which one enters to the Father, the shepherd,⁴⁷² the lion of the tribe of Judah,⁴⁷³ the lion's whelp who rises from sleep,⁴⁷⁴ sanctification, redemption,⁴⁷⁵ and whatever else of this kind that seems to agree with his dignity. But consider whether we are able to show to what extent "stone of stumbling and rock of scandal"⁴⁷⁶ might also be fittingly applied to him. Stumbling and scandal⁴⁷⁶ signify nearly one and the same thing. For we speak of a hindrance⁴⁷⁷ when some barrier is found in the road that blocks the course of the one going along or climbing⁴⁷⁸—whence the word "hindrance"⁴⁷⁹ is derived. Those then who were in Zion, because they were not going down good roads,⁴⁸⁰ were running down the road of destruction with swift feet, mutually supporting one another in their evils, as the prophet says, "The sinner is praised for the lusts of his soul and he who car-

466. Is 28.16.

468. Cf. Eph 2.14.

470. Cf. Jn 14.6.

472. Cf. Jn 10.9, 11.

474. Cf. Hos 5.14; Gn 49.9.

476. *Offensio et scandalum.*

478. *Scandentis.*

480. *Vias bonas.*

467. Is 8.14 LXX.

469. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

471. Cf. Jn 10.7.

473. Cf. Rv 5.5.

475. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

477. *Scandalum.*

479. *Scandalum.*

ries out iniquity is blessed.”⁴⁸¹ But when our Lord and Savior came, he began to condemn their ways⁴⁸² and to say, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees!”⁴⁸³ and again, “Woe to you who are rich”⁴⁸⁴ and again, “Woe to you, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.”⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, by saying many things like this in his charges against them, he began to block the roads of their destruction and for them he became a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal by not allowing them to travel the broad road that leads to death.⁴⁸⁶ After all, this is also what is written in Hosea the prophet about those who travel down the road of sin: “On this account,” it says, “behold, I will hedge up her road with thorns; and I will obstruct her roads and she will not find her path.”⁴⁸⁷

(g) Therefore, let us again set forth [M1157] Paul himself before us, if it is becoming. He once had received letters from the priests and was going to Damascus to lead all the men and women who believed in Christ to Jerusalem as prisoners. While he was then making that sinful journey, the Lord Jesus encountered him on the road and struck him with blindness for a time.⁴⁸⁸ As far as [Paul’s] purpose was concerned, [M1158] he had become for him a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal where he was traveling, so that he was not able to finish that sinful journey that he was undertaking, but that, once he was converted, he would put his faith in him who had closed down his road and obstructed it with what one might call the thorns⁴⁸⁹ of his threat. And by believing in him, he would not be ashamed.⁴⁹⁰

481. Ps 10.3.

483. Mt 23.13.

485. Mt 23.37.

487. Hos 2.6.

489. Cf. Hos 2.6.

482. *Vias*.

484. Lk 6.24.

486. Cf. Mt 7.13.

488. Cf. Acts 9.1–9.

490. Cf. Is 28.16.

THE EIGHTH BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

INDEED BROTHERS, *the will of my heart and prayer to God is on their behalf for salvation. For I testify for them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness.*¹

(2) Both at the beginning of the epistle and in the preceding text, we have said that Paul speaks at one time on behalf of the Gentiles, at other times even on behalf of the Jews.² Thus, in the things just now explained, he made such a use of many testimonies of the prophets against Israel that he quoted from Isaiah, "Unless the Lord of hosts had left seed for us, we would have been made like Sodom and become like Gomorrah";³ and again, "Though the number of the sons of Israel is like the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved."⁴ And to these things he adds, "Israel, seeking a law of righteousness has not attained to the law."⁵ On account of these things, since he now wants to console that people again and by this means to invite them to faith, he says, "Indeed brothers, the will of the heart and prayer to God is on their behalf for salvation." He also shows the reason why his will and prayer to God is held on their behalf. "For I testify for them," he says, "that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." He is saying: However much they have entangled themselves in so many evils of their own sins, nevertheless, because a zeal and jealousy for God is in them, this cause induces me to plead [M1158] to God on their behalf, that they might indeed at the end, at some time, attain to

1. Rom 10.1-3.

2. Cf. 2.14.1; 3.1.2; 3.2.2; 3.9.1; 8.6.9; 8.10.2; 10.8.2; 10.11.2.

3. Rom 9.29; Is 1.9.

4. Rom 9.27; Is 10.22.

5. Rom 9.31.

salvation. For they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And he shows how they have zeal for God that is not according to knowledge. He says, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God," they have obeyed their own righteousness. So it is not of much benefit to have zeal for God and not to have knowledge of the zeal. After all, the Jews imagined that they were behaving with zeal for God when they rose up in blasphemy against the Son of God because they were not zealous according to knowledge, as was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, who, in his zeal according to knowledge, destroyed the Midianite woman together with the Israelite who was committing fornication with her;⁶ and as was Elijah, who said, "I am zealous with a zeal for the Lord, the Almighty God of Israel, because the sons of Israel have deserted you, they have killed your prophets and overturned your altars";⁷ and as was Mattathias, of whom it is written in the book of First Maccabees, "He was zealous for the law of God and his heart was stirred and his fury ascended according to judgment."⁸ The zeal and jealousy of all these was according to knowledge. But the zeal of the Jews was not according to knowledge. That is why, since they were ignorant of God's righteousness, they were trying to fulfill their own, i.e., the righteousness that was seen by men,⁹ though assuredly they should have instead obeyed the righteousness of God, who is Christ.¹⁰

(3) But see now whether it was perhaps not concerning these matters alone that the statement seems to be said, "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." [M1159] For the Apostle can say in a similar fashion concerning others too, "I testify for them," that they have a fear of God, but not according to knowledge; and of others, that they have a love of God, but not according to knowledge. For if anyone has affection for God, but does not know that love must be patient, kind, and without envy, it must do no wrong, it must not be puffed up, ambitious, or selfish¹¹—if he does not retain these

6. Cf. Nm 25.7-8, 11.

8. 1 Mc 2.24.

10. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

7. 1 Kgs 19.10.

9. Cf. Mt 6.1.

11. Cf. 1 Cor 13.4-5.

and similar things in his love, but loves God by the affection alone, it will be fittingly said to him that he has love for God, but not according to knowledge. But similarly it can be said even of someone else that he has faith in God but not according to knowledge, if that one is unaware that faith in God without works is dead,¹² and that faith in God does not consist in words alone that sometimes are learned from another [faith that is] composed and written out, but in a certain disposition of the mind, the kind that she had, she who said to herself, "If I touch the hem of his garment, I shall be saved."¹³ If, therefore, anyone does not have faith in this way, so that by his good actions he makes known the one in whom he believes,¹⁴ it can also be said to him that he has faith in God, but not according to knowledge. Of another it can even be said that he has chastity of God, but not according to knowledge. And someone else takes care of the poor, but not according to knowledge, obviously, if he wishes to be praised by men.¹⁵ And another can be called abstinent, but not according to knowledge, if he fasts in order to appear to men.¹⁶ And thus, in every single thing we do, unless we do it according to knowledge and understanding, it can be said to us that we have zeal for good works, but not according to knowledge. And therefore, the works of knowledge must be given first and foremost, lest the situation should unhappily come upon us that we who are in the faith should be tricked out of our faith, and, although having a zeal for the good, we should fall away from the good.

(4) Do you want to know that someone can die away in his faith if he does not have knowledge? Listen to Paul himself as he speaks to certain individuals: "unless you have believed in vain."¹⁷ To have believed in vain is what comes to pass in those who do not strive for knowledge, so that in addition to their having believed, they should receive as well the understanding of the truth. After all, even the apostles, when they perceived that there is this difference between a faith that has been

12. Cf. Jas 2.20.

14. Cf. Jas 2.18.

16. Cf. Mt 6.16.

13. Mt 9.21.

15. Cf. Mt 6.2.

17. 1 Cor 15.2.

passed down simply and a faith that is according to knowledge, were saying to the Savior, "Increase our faith."¹⁸ That is to say, since we have the faith that is not according to knowledge, [M1160] may we also have that faith that is according to knowledge. Anyhow, Paul testifies for the Jews that they have a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. Nevertheless, because they have to some extent this zeal for God, they have given the Apostle a reason to offer prayer to God on their behalf. For it is better to have zeal for God, even if it is not according to knowledge, than not to have it at all. For as it is written, "The one who has, to him it will be given,"¹⁹ indeed, in the last days, when "all Israel will be saved,"²⁰ "but the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."²¹

2. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who does that righteousness that is from the law will live in it. But the righteousness that is from faith speaks this way, "Do not say in your heart, Who ascends into heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down; "or, Who descends into the abyss?" that is, to bring back Christ from the dead. But what does the Scripture say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith that we proclaim, that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes leading to righteousness, and with the mouth the profession is made that leads to salvation. For the Scripture says, "Everyone one who believes in him will not be ashamed."*²²

(2) "Christ is the end of the law," that is, the perfection of the law, and Christ is righteousness,²³ but for believers. For those who do not believe, however, since they do not have Christ, they do not have the perfection of the law and, therefore, they cannot attain to righteousness. "For Moses writes that the man who does that righteousness that is from the law will live in it. But the righteousness that is from faith speaks this

18. Lk 17.5.

20. Rom 11.26.

22. Rom 10.4-11.

19. Mt 13.12.

21. Mt 13.12.

23. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

way." The Apostle had already mentioned above two kinds of righteousness when he says that Israel, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, was seeking to establish their own righteousness.²⁴ Here also he now speaks again of two kinds of righteousness, one that is from the law and the other that is from faith. But it seems to me that that righteousness of God that he said above was not known by Israel is this righteousness that is from faith. But that [righteousness] of which he says, "seeking to establish their own righteousness,"²⁵ is that of which he insinuates here in the words of Moses, "the man who does the righteousness that is from the law will live in it."²⁶ But consider the different kinds of righteousness in a similar manner as the different kinds of lives. For notice how the righteousness of God, [M1161] i.e., Christ, "who became for us righteousness from God"²⁷ and peace,²⁸ says, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."²⁹ Therefore, this righteousness offers not merely life but eternal life. But he has not said that the man who does that righteousness of the law will live eternally, but only that "he will live in it." For if Christ is the end of the law, as the Apostle says, the one who does not accept Christ as the end of the law is not capable, without Christ, of fulfilling that righteousness that is from the law.

(3) So then, this righteousness that is from faith, a righteousness that is Christ, as if a living, subsisting thing, says these things. He says, "'Do not say in your heart, Who ascends into heaven?' that is, to bring Christ down; 'or, Who descends into the abyss?' that is, to bring Christ back from the dead." You should not be surprised that since Christ is himself righteousness,³⁰ he seems to speak these things concerning himself in such a way as if about another. For you will discover in many passages that the Savior speaks about himself in such a way as if about another. For example, in the Gospel he says, "And he will place the sheep on the right and the goats on the left; and he

24. Cf. Rom 10.3.

26. Lv 16.5.

28. Cf. Eph 2.14.

30. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

25. Cf. Rom 10.3.

27. 1 Cor 1.30.

29. Jn 17.3.

will say to those on the right, and again to those on the left"³¹ the things that are written. Thus, except for the words [Paul] has inserted in the middle, "That is, to bring Christ down," and, "That is, to bring him back from the dead," what he says, "Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? or Who will descend into the abyss?" and, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," seem to be taken from Deuteronomy, where it is written as follows: "This commandment that I am commanding you today is not high above you, nor is it far away from you. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that we should say, Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it so that we may hear it and do it? The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart and in your hands that you may do it."³² Since, then, these things have been taken from Deuteronomy, and the Apostle writes that the righteousness that is from faith, a righteousness that is Christ, itself says these things, doubtless the Apostle is declaring that the things said in Deuteronomy have been spoken by Christ. It is he, therefore, who has said, "This commandment that I give to you today is not high [M1162] above you nor far away from you,"³³ and the other things that follow.

(4) What then is the Apostle teaching through this? Obviously, that we should not say in our heart and imagine that Christ is contained in a certain location and is not himself everywhere and diffused through all things. For when he was on earth he was saying that he was also in heaven. For this is what he was saying to his own apostles, "No one ascends to heaven except him who comes down from heaven, the son of man who is in heaven."³⁴ He did not say, "who was," but, "who is in heaven." And furthermore, lest we should imagine that he is only in heaven, but that his presence is absent from the abyss, therefore, the righteousness that is from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, Who ascends into heaven?" And, as if it would be

31. Mt 25.33, 35, 41.
33. Dt 30.11.

32. Dt 30.11-14.
34. Jn 3.13.

like one saying this is to bring Christ down from heaven, the Apostle has added, "That is, to bring Christ down." And again, if anyone who should descend in mind and thought into the abyss, imagining that Christ is contained only there, as if this would be like calling back Christ from the dead, thus he adds, "That is, to bring back Christ from the dead." But, he says, you should think of Christ in the following way: as the Word, wisdom, the truth, and the righteousness of God.³⁵ Now none of these things are sought for in a place, but they are present everywhere; nor are they called forth from the infernal regions, but they are apprehended by the mind and intellect alone. As the Word and as wisdom,³⁶ therefore, he is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. And he says, "That is, the word of faith that we proclaim, that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes leading to righteousness, and with the mouth the profession is made that leads to salvation."

(5) We even need to realize that it is one thing for there potentially to be existence in a subject, it is another thing for it to be in actuality or effectual achievement, what the Greeks call *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*.³⁷ For example, a newly born child is potentially a rational human being since it is capable of becoming rational if it matures. And a person is also called a potential craftsman, sea captain, and grammarian; for it is possible that there is something of these [in a person]. But so long as one is a child, there is neither of these in actuality or effective achievement, i.e., in reality and in effect. But if one begins to be capable of reason or achieves something in the art of craftsmanship or in any other art, then at that time he can be designated in actuality "rational" or "craftsman," or whatever else there is [M1163] that operates by the effect of the work. In this way, as well, then one must believe that Christ, who is the Word of

35. Cf. Jn 1.1; 14.6; 1 Cor 1.30.

36. Cf. Jn 1.1; 1 Cor 1.30.

37. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1, 1103a; *De Anima* 2.2, 414a. *Dynamis* means the capacity or potentiality of something that is only latent in something until it actively exercises this power. *Energieia*, "actuality," signifies the effective achievement of the latent potential. For a parallel discussion, see *Princ* 1.8.3.

God,³⁸ is indeed potentially near us, i.e., near every human being, just as reason is to children; but it will be said that he is in me in actuality when I shall have confessed with my mouth that Jesus is Lord and believed in my heart that God raised him from the dead.

(6) Do you want to know that he is present everywhere and is in the midst even of those who do not know him and do not confess him? Listen to the very things John the Baptist testifies about him: "In your midst stands one whom you do not know, who comes after me."³⁹ Therefore, he is in the midst even of those who do not know him, but he is potentially in their midst and not in actuality. For they are capable of receiving him, but do not yet receive him. But in actuality or effectual achievement he is in the midst of those to whom he was saying, "Wherever two or three should be gathered together in my name, even I am in the midst of them."⁴⁰ For they are confessing with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and they believe in their heart that God raised him from the dead. Otherwise it seems absurd if he is said to be in the midst of those who are gathered in his name⁴¹ and among those who do not know him, unless a distinction of this sort should be preserved, that he is said to be potentially in the midst of those who do not know him and who do not yet believe, but among those who believe [he is there] in actuality, i.e., in the effect of the reality itself and of the work.

(7) But also observe what he says, "That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that he raised that God from the dead,⁴² you will be saved." For through this it will seem to some that even if a person lacks the advantages of good works, even if he fails to put forth effort for the virtues, nevertheless, by this, that he has believed, he would not perish but would be saved and would possess salvation, even though he would be unable to possess the glory of blessedness.⁴³

(8) But consider whether instead it ought to be understood

38. Cf. Jn 1.1.

40. Mt 18.20.

42. Migne's text reads, "that God raised him from the dead."

43. It is not clear of whom these words are speaking, only that Origen opposes the views expressed. Possibly he means Marcion and the Gnostics who emphasized salvation "by faith alone" to the exclusion of good works. Cf. 2.4.7

39. Jn 1.26.

41. Cf. Mt 18.20.

that whoever truly, and not falsely, confesses with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in the heart would equally confess himself to be subjected to the lordship of wisdom, righteousness, truth, and to everything that Christ is.⁴⁴ He confesses mammon not to be his lord any longer,⁴⁵ that is to say, he is no longer to be under the lordship of greed, unrighteousness, unchastity, or lying. For, having confessed once and for all that Jesus Christ is Lord, [M1164] he is declaring publicly that he is not a slave of any of these things. Moreover, by believing in his heart that God raised him from the dead, it is certain that he believes him raised unto his own justification.⁴⁶ Otherwise, what would it profit me to know and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? If I should not have him raised within myself, if I neither walk in the newness of life⁴⁷ nor flee from the old habit of sinning, Christ has not yet resurrected from the dead to me.⁴⁸ The words that follow agree with this sense as well, which say, "For the Scripture says that everyone who believes in him will not be ashamed."⁴⁹ This is written in Isaiah. But if everyone who believes in him is not ashamed, but everyone who sins is ashamed, just as also Adam sinned and was ashamed and hid himself,⁵⁰ anyone who still encounters the shame of sin seems not to believe.

3. *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For he is the same Lord of all, rich toward all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*⁵¹

(2) The manner in which there is no distinction in the faith of the Jew and the Greek we have already repeatedly shown

n. 72; 2.12.4; 2.13.23; 3.7.12 n. 233. Or possibly he intends orthodox Christians who deny the necessity of good works. See Introduction (17).

44. Cf. Jn 14.6; 1 Cor 1.30.

45. Cf. Mt 6.24.

46. Cf. Rom 4.25.

47. Cf. Rom 6.4.

48. Cf 4.7.8. Vogt, *Kirchenverständnis*, p. 224, cites this passage together with *Hom in Jos* 10.1–2 to point out Origen's view, that it is not the individual sin committed one time that excludes one from the fullness of the future glory, but the persistence in sin, the impenitence, lethargy, and refusal to make progress in virtue.

49. Is 28.16.

50. Cf. Gn 3.8.

51. Rom 10.12–13.

above. You should understand that “he is the same Lord of all,” in accordance with the things we have just now put forth: that is, if righteousness and truth and wisdom and sanctification, all of which are Christ the Lord, are reigning within us.⁵² For these are his riches, inasmuch as “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him.”⁵³ Still, he did not say that he bestows these riches upon all men, but upon all who call upon his name. Moreover, a similar question seems to arise as in earlier matters.⁵⁴ For not everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord in any manner whatsoever can be saved, even if they do not lack works worthy of the name on which they have called, especially since even the wisdom of God in Proverbs says, “For it will be that though you call upon me, I shall not hear you.”⁵⁵ It seems to me that here wisdom is admonishing and strongly urging those who want to be saved that they should call upon wisdom quickly and not delay and put it off, lest perchance, when the time appointed passes by, [M1165] this [time] in which the possibility for repenting exists, they will call after this, when it is too late, when there is no opportunity for repentance. And then she says, “You will call upon me, and I will not hear you.”⁵⁶

(3) Yet the words that the Apostle cites here, i.e., “Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved,” are recorded in the book of the prophet Joel in the following way: “I will give portents in the sky above and on the earth below, blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord comes. And it will be: Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”⁵⁷ Yet it seems to me that something magnificent is being depicted in the Holy Scriptures under this term “to call upon.” For it is not written about men of any sort whatsoever, but only in respect to great and conspicuous men. For example, “Enosh, as the first, hoped to call upon the name of the Lord.”⁵⁸ And in the Psalms, “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call on his name. They

52. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6.

54. Cf. 2.7.6; 4.5.7.

56. Prv 1.28.

58. Gn 4.26. Cf. 8.5.2.

53. Col 2.3.

55. Prv 1.28.

57. Jl 2.30–32.

were calling upon the Lord, and he was hearing them; he was speaking to them in the pillar of cloud."⁵⁹

5.⁶⁰ *How, then, will they call on one in whom they have not believed? Or how are they to believe in one of whom they have not heard? But how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news!"*⁶¹

(2) By what he says, "How, then, will they call on one in whom they have not believed?" he has taught plainly that the statement he set down above from the prophet, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved,"⁶² must be referred to Christ the Lord. For, after he said, "For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved," he adds, "How, then, will they call on one in whom they have not believed?" For the Jews have not believed in Christ and, therefore, they do not call upon him in whom they have not believed. Moreover, at the beginning of the letter he writes to the Corinthians, where he says, "together with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours,"⁶³ he declares that the one whose name is being called upon is the Lord Jesus Christ. If, therefore, Enosh and Moses and Aaron and Samuel were calling upon the Lord and he was hearing [M1166] them,⁶⁴ doubtless they were calling upon Christ Jesus the Lord; and if to call upon the name of the Lord and to pray to the Lord are one and the same thing, just as Christ is called upon, Christ must also be prayed to; and just as we offer prayers to God the Father, to the one who is first of all,⁶⁵ so also to the Lord Jesus Christ; and just as we offer requests to the Father, so we offer requests also to the Son; and just as we offer thanksgiv-

59. Ps 99.6-7.

60. This should be "4" but the editions of Migne and Lommatzsch skip to "5" at this point. (The Hammond Bammel text corrects the error.) To lighten the task of comparing the editions, I follow Heither's lead in preserving the (mistaken) enumeration.

61. Rom 10.14-15.

62. Cf. Rom 10.13; Jl 2.32.

63. 1 Cor 1.2.

64. Cf. Gn 4.26; Ps 99.6-7. See also 8.3.3.

65. Cf. 1 Tm 2.1.

ings to God, so we render thanks also to the Savior.⁶⁶ For the divine Word teaches that one honor is to be conferred to both, i.e., to the Father and to the Son, when it says, “that all might honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.”⁶⁷ But what we set forth about the letter to the Corinthians, where the Apostle, at first, anyway, says, “to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to those called to be saints,”⁶⁸ and after this, as though joining certain others as if of another level and of another order, about whom he says, “together with all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours,”⁶⁹ it will perhaps appear that he regards there to be some distinction because he designates at any rate “the church of God” and “those who are sanctified” and “those called to be saints,” but these he merely [says] that they “call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Consider whether perhaps this diversity marks the sort of thing that the present section seems to also have. Here he teaches that the name of the Lord cannot be called upon unless one first believes in Christ. But when someone believes in Christ, even if he is not yet sanctified and joined to the body of the Church, it is still necessary that he should now call on him in whom he has believed. For Christ came to reconcile the world to God⁷⁰ and to offer those who believe in him to the Father.⁷¹ Now those whom he offers to the Father the Holy Spirit receives in order to sanctify them and give them life as members of the heavenly Church of the first born ones⁷² and to restore them in the solidity and perfection of the whole body. And so, only then would they deserve to be called the Church of God, having no spot or

66. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, p. 347, thinks Rufinus may have altered this passage in the interest of orthodoxy. There seems to be a contradiction between these words and what Origen says in *Orat* 15.1, where he recommends prayer to the Father alone. Chadwick also notes, however, that Origen did not entirely disapprove of prayers addressed to the Son. Cf. *Cels* 5.4; 5.11; 8.13. The tension can possibly be resolved if we understand Origen to mean that Christ, as the Mediator, ought not to be prayed to; but Christ, as the Word and the Son, may be addressed in prayer.

67. Jn 5.23.

69. 1 Cor 1.2.

71. Cf. 1 Pt 3.18.

68. 1 Cor 1.2.

70. Cf. 2 Cor 5.19.

72. Cf. Heb 12.23. See 1.6.3.

blemish.⁷³ Therefore, before they would advance to that level of perfection, [M1167] they call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as [the name] of the mediator between God and men;⁷⁴ but after the Spirit of God crying out, "Abba, Father,"⁷⁵ comes into their heart, the Spirit himself teaches them to call upon the name even of the Father. This then is why [he says], "How will they call upon one in whom they have not believed?" And in this he binds them to an extremely narrow conclusion. There is no salvation, he says, except to the one who calls. But no one calls who does not believe. Therefore, since you do not believe, you do not call; and because you do not call, you are not being saved. "But how," he asks, "will they believe in one of whom they have not heard?" That they did not hear we can understand in the following way: They were unwilling to listen either to him when he lived in the flesh or to his apostles when they preached about him. For this is also what the Lord himself says, "He who hears you, hears me; and the one who rejects you rejects me."⁷⁶ But this can also be understood that both now and always, Christ, as the Word and as reason, speaks to each person in the heart and teaches about piety, advises concerning righteousness, and bears witness concerning chastity, purity, and all the virtues at the same time, just as he himself says, "My sheep hear my voice."⁷⁷ After all, it was he that was speaking in Paul's heart in such a way that he said, "Or are you seeking proof of him who is speaking in me, of Christ?"⁷⁸

(3) Then follows, "But how are they to hear without someone preaching?" Here he is showing that Christ is heard more through one preaching words in which, according to what we said above, Christ is shown to be speaking and teaching.

(4) "And how will they preach unless they are sent?" To me, in this statement a certain difficulty seems to arise. For if we should interpret it thus, that the reason they will not preach is because they are not sent, but with no one preaching they will not hear, but since they do not hear they will not believe, and

73. Cf. Eph 5.27.

75. Rom 8.15.

77. Jn 10.27.

74. Cf. 1 Tm 2.5.

76. Lk 10.16.

78. 2 Cor 13.3.

since they do not believe they will not call, and since they do not call they will not be saved, from this it is concluded that the cause for which they are not saved falls back on the Creator's initiative, who failed to send preachers. But let us instead travel down that path of interpretation that is more correct and let us receive what he says, "But how will they preach unless they are sent?" [M1168] in the following way, that the Apostle is saying: We heralds and preachers of Christ would not be able to preach, nor would any power for proclaiming be left to us, unless he himself who sent were with us. But if you are unwilling to listen to us preachers, it is now your fault if, when you hear, you do not believe, and by failing to believe, you do not call, and by failing to call, you are unable to be saved.⁷⁹

(5) Since, then, they have been sent to preach, therefore it is written of those who have been sent by him, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"⁸⁰ However much a person may be a friend of the letter,⁸¹ I do not think it is possible to deny that he is calling not bodily but spiritual feet "beautiful feet" here.⁸² For he will not degrade the Apostle's meaning to the point of the ridiculous so that he would imagine that evangelists' feet that can be seen with the bodily eyes are being called by him well-formed and beautiful. On the contrary, those feet are well-formed and beautiful that walk through the way of life. For according to him who said, "I am the way,"⁸³ understand that the well-formed and beautiful feet of those who preach the gospel refer to those who merit going down such a road. These are the feet with which Paul also says he runs the race⁸⁴ and runs in such a way as to take hold,⁸⁵ i.e., the vigor of his soul whereby he is steered and hastened toward heaven.⁸⁶

(6) But you will readily confirm that these are the feet that

79. One of Origen's chief concerns in the *Commentary* is to defend human freedom. Cf. Preface of Origen (1); Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 4:218 n. 22.

80. Is 52.7.

81. This expression, *amicus litterae*, "friend of the letter," occurs in *Hom in Gn* 6.3; 13.3; *Hom in Ex* 2.1; *Hom in Lv* 16.6. Cf. also *Hom in Lk* 31.2.

82. Cf. 3.4.3.

83. Jn 14.6.

84. Cf. 2 Tm 4.7.

85. Cf. 1 Cor 9.24, 26.

86. Cf. Phil 3.12-14.

Jesus washes for his disciples and wipes with the linen cloth with which he is girded.⁸⁷ And although this was fulfilled in bodily fashion at that time; nevertheless, listen to the message of such a profound mystery that is disclosed to Peter, who understood only what he saw being done and who, as if for the sake of honor, pleaded that the Lord not wash [his] feet for him, [being] a servant, "If I do not wash you," he says, "you will have no part with me."⁸⁸ And again, he expresses another utterance similar to this, as it were, from the concealed treasures of knowledge,⁸⁹ and says, "What I have done, you do not understand now; but you will understand later."⁹⁰ And he adds, "Just as I, the Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also wash one another's feet. For I have set an example for you."⁹¹ Let us consider, then, what that example might be, in which teachers are responsible for washing the feet of their disciples,⁹² and with what sort of water. If anyone finds living water, [M116g] and if anyone takes a drink from Jesus, and that water becomes in him a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life,⁹³ with such water of spiritual instruction he can wash the feet of his disciples and wash away all the uncleanness and every filthy stain from their soul; and by doing this he will fulfill the example set by the master.⁹⁴

(7) "Beautiful," therefore, "are the feet of those who proclaim good news." It is also concerning these feet, I believe, that the bride in the Song of Songs says to the Word of God, "I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them?"⁹⁵ And it is no less said of them, "Your legs are like columns of marble set upon silver bases."⁹⁶ And possibly it is because this beauty is in the feet of evangelists that the Lord Jesus does not want them to cover them with sandals and hide their beauty but he commands them not to have sandals on the road.⁹⁷

87. Cf. Jn 13.5, 8.

89. Cf. Col 2.3; Mt 13.52.

91. Jn 13.14-15.

93. Cf. Jn 4.10, 14.

94. Cf. Jn 13.15. See also *Hom in Gn* 13.4.

95. Song 5.3.

97. Cf. Mt 10.10.

88. Jn 13.8.

90. Jn 13.7.

92. Cf. Jn 13.14.

96. Song 5.15.

(8) But let us now see what are the good things that they preach, i.e., that they announce. Although what he says, *evangelizare*, may be translated “to announce good things,” we need to endeavor to ascertain what the good things are that he has added to this good. The one true good is God,⁹⁸ whose image of goodness is the Son⁹⁹ and his Spirit, who is called good.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, he has designated as “good things” that one good, since it consists in God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For this is what evangelists announce, according to the command of our Lord and Savior, who said, “Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰¹ These, then, are the good things of those who preach the gospel.

(9) Yet since the announcer himself is said to be good and to announce the good news, this is why they not only announce the good news but announce good news well. For there are many who, to be sure, announce and preach about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but not sincerely¹⁰² and completely.¹⁰³ There are, for example, all the heretics who certainly announce the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; but they do not announce well or faithfully. For either they wrongly separate the Son from the Father, when they say that the Father is of one nature and the Son is of another nature, or they wrongly confuse them, when they imagine either that God is composed of three or that he is merely referred to by three names.¹⁰⁴ But whoever announces the good news well will bestow upon each one, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, his own unique characteristics; but he will not confess that there is any differ-

98. Cf. Mt 19.17.

100. Cf. Ps 143.10.

102. Cf. Phil 1.17.

99. Cf. Wis 7.26.

101. Mt 28.19.

103. Cf. 3.11.2.

104. The Sabellian heresy (also called modalistic monarchianism) was named after Sabellius, a contemporary of Origen. It taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were simply three different names for the successive modes or operations of God. They were also called Patripassians since they believed, in effect, that the Father suffered on the Cross. The heresy stands at the opposite extreme from Ebionism (also called Adoptionism), which claimed that Jesus was a mere man of an altogether different nature than the Father. See Kelly, *Doctrines*, p. 121ff.

ence in essence or nature. Those who announce the gospel in this way, then, not only announce the good news, [M1170] but they announce the good news well and irreproachably.

(10) He seems to have taken this testimony from Isaiah, but there the prophet referred the duty of preaching to the Lord himself. For he says the following: "Since it was I myself who was speaking, I am present like a season on the mountains, as the feet of one preaching a message of peace, as one preaching good news."¹⁰⁵ Because the prophet had said, "as the feet of one preaching a message of peace, as one preaching good news,"¹⁰⁶ it truly seems to me that Paul recorded this as if a comparison of one thing to another, as if he were saying: I shall thus come as a man who preaches peace and who preaches good news—but the apostles do this. Therefore, he seems to receive this statement as spoken about themselves, i.e., the apostles, in comparison with whom, Christ had claimed through the prophet that he was going to be present and preach good news.¹⁰⁷

6. *But not all have obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So faith comes from the message; and the message through the word of Christ. But I say, Have they not heard? "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." But I say: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." And Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those not seeking me; I appeared openly among those who were not asking for me." But what does he say to Israel? "All day long I have stretched out my hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people."*¹⁰⁸

(2) Not all of the Gentiles have believed the gospel nor has all of Israel. More, however, even far more, [have believed] from the Gentiles than from Israel. And so, in what the Apostle cites that Isaiah said, "Lord, who has believed our message?"¹⁰⁹ "who" has been said for "few." And we ought to observe that

105. Is 52.6–7 LXX.

107. Cf. Lk 4.18, 21.

109. Is 53.1.

106. Is 52.7 LXX.

108. Rom 10.16–21.

this word is sometimes recorded in the Scriptures for “few,” sometimes for “no one” at all. For instance as when it says, “Who is wise and understands these things?”¹¹⁰ and, “Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord?”¹¹¹ and, “Who is the man who wants life?”¹¹² In all of these passages, it signifies each “who” as “few.” But where he says, “‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ that is, to bring Christ down; ‘or, Who will descend into the abyss?’ that is, to bring Christ back from the dead,” here, “who” means “no one.” For there is no one who ascends to heaven to bring Christ down from there. So then, [M1171] now, “Lord, who has believed our message?”¹¹³ which Isaiah says, it signifies each “who” as “few.” It befits us to know, however, that “Lord” is missing from the Hebrew copies¹¹⁴ in the passage “Lord, who has believed our message?”¹¹⁵ but it is in the translation of the seventy elders. And the Apostle, approving of the fact that it is found in the latter, has recorded “Lord.”¹¹⁶ But Isaiah seems to prophesy this under the *persona* of the Apostles, to whom the task of preaching had been entrusted. And when they saw how “few” believers there would be, especially from the people of Israel, they say to the Lord, “Lord, who has believed our message?”¹¹⁷ just as that also is said under their *persona*, “We have announced as a child before him, as a root in the thirsty ground.”¹¹⁸ And they are no less the ones who, when they are with him and see him in human condition, say, “We saw him, and he had no beauty or comeliness,”¹¹⁹ and so forth.

(3) But even if these words should be applied to the *persona* of the prophets themselves, as those who are complaining before the Lord that what they had prophesied concerning Christ, no one, or at most few, of that people would believe, this

110. Hos 14.10.

112. Ps 34.12.

114. Cf. 2.13.8 n. 333.

116. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, p. 178, describes Origen’s understanding of the inspiration of the LXX as follows: “The translators had been prompted to make a number of additions and omissions and modifications of a deliberately Christological sort, but not in such a way as to allow Christians to conclude that the LXX had finally superseded either the Hebrew text or other versions.”

117. Jn 12.37–38.

119. Is 53.2.

111. Ps 24.3.

113. Is 53.1.

115. Is 53.1.

118. Is 53.2.

will not appear discordant. Or must one not think that Moses would say to the Lord: Lord, no one has believed my message, for if they believed my writings, surely they would have believed in Christ; for I have written about him?¹²⁰

(4) "So faith comes from the message; and the message comes through the word of Christ." Here "word of Christ" signifies the preaching about Christ. For it was not only those who have heard the word from Christ the Lord speaking who have believed; but there are many more who heard him speak through others who preached, as the Lord himself had predicted when he said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who do not see and believe."¹²¹ Therefore, he is declaring that each word that the apostles or others who have received grace from him preach about Christ is the word of Christ. Moreover, in the Church, if anyone should speak the wisdom that comes from God, and the truth of God, if anyone should teach the way of God, which is Christ, and should expound upon his righteousness, it is not to be doubted that what he is speaking is the word of Christ.

(5) "But I say, Have they not heard? 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.'" These things are taken from the Eighteenth Psalm, where it says, "There is no [M1172] speech, nor words by which their voices are not heard. Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."¹²² In which, doubtless, the nations are understood for the variety of their languages and words. And it is said that the sound of Christ's apostles has indeed gone out to all the earth; but to the ends of the world, not the sound but the words have reached. This can be understood in the following way. He is calling certain ones who are inexperienced and slow to learn "the earth," unto whom reach not the words, in which the meaning of the faith and the explanation of wisdom is contained, but the sound of the faith by means of a general and simple proclamation. But he has named certain ones who are more learned and prudent "the

120. Cf. Jn 5-46.
122. Ps 19,3.

121. Jn 20.29.

end of the world." For "end" points to the perfection of things. He is declaring, therefore, that unto men of this sort the words and meaning have reached, not the mere sound of the voice. They are assuredly the ones who, when they hear the word of faith, are even able to examine it thoroughly and search through the Holy Scriptures to understand the truth of these words¹²³ that have been announced to them by the apostles. And, knowing that this difference exists in these things, i.e., between sound and words, he says in a certain passage the following: "And my word and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but in a manifestation of the Spirit and power,"¹²⁴ in order to show that on the one hand it is the word by which God's wisdom is explained more clearly through the power of the Spirit; but it is concerning the preaching that the prophet says, "their sound has gone out into all the earth,"¹²⁵ where, of course, there would be the simple announcement of the faith that suffices for each of the simple. Moreover, elsewhere he says concerning himself that he is "preacher and Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles."¹²⁶ There the Apostle, who not only preaches but also teaches, is making known the general designation of his task. Indeed, he will preach the simple faith as to those to whom he says, "I determined to know nothing else among you except Christ Jesus and him crucified",¹²⁷ but he would teach those to whom he was saying, "But we speak wisdom among the perfect."¹²⁸ Here it is shown that he has, to be sure, conveyed the sound of the preaching to the former, but to the latter he has discussed the wisdom of God through words.¹²⁹

(6) "But I say: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, 'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.'" [M 1173] What he said above seems to be spoken about the Gentiles; but now, as is his custom, he adds something about Israel as well. By means of suitable witnesses, he wants to verify that Israel is without excuse.

123. Cf. Lk 1.4.

125. Ps 19.4.

127. 1 Cor 2.2.

129. Cf. 5.2.6-7.

124. 1 Cor 2.4.

126. 1 Tm 2.7; 2 Tm 1.11.

128. 1 Cor 2.6.

Moses himself, he says, speaks under the *persona* of God, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation." Doubtless, he is speaking here of Christians, who have been received by God, to the jealousy of the first unbelieving people and of the scorner. But it may perhaps appear that Moses has wrongfully arraigned this nation that has been chosen by God by the merit of faith and devotion when he says, "by those who are not a nation," and he thinks so little of them that he thinks they do not deserve to be called a nation or, even if he must title them so, he calls them a foolish nation. But Moses is not wrongful, seeing that he is the friend of God, towards his elect;¹³⁰ nor will slander be evident in his words if the meaning of the words becomes clear. Each nation, for example, the Egyptians or the Syrians or the Moabites, is designated as this or that nation in view of the fact that it is distinguishable by its own particular borders, language, disposition, customs, and institutions. Syrians are never called Egyptians, nor are Moabites named Idumeans, nor Arabs, Scythians. But Christians are not a single nation but are one people from all nations. And for this reason Moses named them "not a nation"¹³¹ as a supreme honor since they were not one nation, but can be called a nation of all nations.

(7) But we shall appear to be excluded by the things that follow, where he says, "with a foolish nation I will make you angry." For he has named [the Christians] both a nation and foolish. Yet not even in this does Moses, the servant of God, commit a slander against the people of God. On the contrary he was seeing in advance in the Spirit that if anyone wants to be wise in this world he must become foolish in order that he might be wise before God;¹³² and "because the world through wisdom did not understand God, it will be pleasing to God to save those who believe through the foolishness of the preaching";¹³³ and because through the preaching of the cross of Christ, which is foolishness to the Gentiles,¹³⁴ a people will be gathered that would become foolish in this world in order that it might be wise before God.

130. Cf. Ex 33.11.

132. 1 Cor 3.18.

134. Cf. 1 Cor 1.23.

131. Dt 32.21.

133. 1 Cor 1.21.

(8) The Jews are angry, then, because, while they make excuses and refuse [to come to] the king's banquet, the Gentiles have been invited.¹³⁵ They do not look back to the things that "Isaiah was so bold as to say" a long time ago concerning this mystery, "I have been found by those not seeking me; I appeared openly among those who were not asking for me."¹³⁶ But what does he say to Israel? "All day long I have spread out my hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people."¹³⁷

(9) Just as we have pointed out on repeated occasions above¹³⁸ that the Apostle Paul speaks at one time of the Gentiles, [M1174] at another time even of Israel, yet he does not indicate the change of *persona* plainly and openly, so also Isaiah does this in the statements that the Apostle has cited as a testimony. Indeed, the first part, i.e., "I have been found by those not seeking me; I appeared openly among those who were not asking for me,"¹³⁹ he is doubtless speaking about the Gentiles. And where he [Isaiah] without indication changes the *persona*, the Apostle has plainly made a distinction in his own words in what he has added, "But what does he say to Israel?" And he explains that the things that come before this question are to be referred to the Gentiles, but what follows must be referred to Israel, in which he says, "All day long I have spread out my hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people."¹⁴⁰

(10) But let us see first of all what he says, "Isaiah is so bold as to say." How is he being bold, or what is the boldness of the prophet that is taught here? If we look into the words of the blessed Stephen when he says, "For which of the prophets who were announcing the coming of the righteous one have your fathers not persecuted?"¹⁴¹ then we understand the boldness of Isaiah, who, in the midst of persecutions and a threatening death, was bold enough, in spite of this, to preach concerning the coming of the righteous one, and he even dares to die for the good man.¹⁴² But at the same time in this passage the following is being made known: It is not the case, as some think,

135. Cf. Mt 22.5, 9; Lk 14.18-20.

137. Is 65.2.

139. Is 65.1.

141. Acts 7.52.

136. Is 65.1.

138. Cf. 2.11.2.

140. Is 65.2.

142. Cf. Acts 7.52; Rom 5.7.

that the prophets were ignorant of what they were saying and that they were prophesying, so to speak, while deprived of their senses.

(11) For what the Apostle says concerning Isaiah, that "he is so bold as to say," indicates that, despising death and the persecutions that were being inflicted, although he knew that danger loomed over him, he is nevertheless bold and preaches the word of God, just as Paul himself was saying, "I know that chains and prisons await me in Jerusalem; but I do not regard my life as very precious to me."¹⁴³ In this way, then, Isaiah too was aware that he was going to be killed by the godless by being sawn in two.¹⁴⁴ And yet he is bold and says under the *persona* of Christ, "I have been found by those not seeking me."¹⁴⁵ Now it is certain that there were Gentiles who neither knew how to seek Christ nor had they learned to ask about him. Yet they found him whom they had not sought, because he sought them first. For he is the good shepherd¹⁴⁶ and he searched for the sheep that was lost;¹⁴⁷ and he is the wisdom that searched for the lost drachma and by seeking found.¹⁴⁸ The Jews, on the other hand, are still at the present seeking the Christ and search the Scriptures for him, and they do not find because his cross is a stumbling block to the Jews.¹⁴⁹ And this is the reason he says to them, "All day long I have spread out my hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people."¹⁵⁰ That refers to when he was hanging on the cross. Not only did they not find him then, but [M1175] beyond this they even said, "If you are the Son of God, come down now from the cross and we will believe you."¹⁵¹

(12) But listen also to what is said in the Wisdom of Solomon, "He will not be found by those who put him to the test, but to those who are not unbelieving toward him."¹⁵² But not even this is proper for us to fail to mention, that in the

143. Acts 20.23-24.

144. Cf. Heb 11.37. This apocryphal story (*Martyrdom of Isaiah* 5.11-14) is also mentioned in *Comm in Mt* 10.18; *Hom in Jer* 20.9; *Hom in Is* 1.5; *Ep* 1.9.

145. Is 65.1.

146. Jn 10.11, 14.

147. Cf. Lk 15.4.

148. Cf. Mt 7.8; Lk 15.8. See also 2.8.4.

149. Cf. 1 Cor 1.23.

150. Is 65.2.

151. Mt 27.40, 42.

152. Wis 1.2.

copies of the Hebrews, the words “and contradicting” are not found.¹⁵³ In his own writings, however, the Apostle, by following the truth of the seventy translators, cites according to how they have translated it.¹⁵⁴

*7. I say, then, Has God disowned his own people? By no means! For even I myself am an Israelite from the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Benjamin. God has not disowned his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have overturned your altars and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” But what does the divine response say to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knees to Baal.” So then, also at this time there has been a remnant according to the election of grace. But if it is grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*¹⁵⁵

(2) On the basis of what has been said above, it could perhaps seem that the people of the Jews have been disowned by God and no longer have any hope, if indeed God made them jealous of those who are not a nation, and angry at a foolish nation.¹⁵⁶ And he became manifest to those who were not seeking him and he was found by those who were not asking about him. In light of this, the Apostle wants to tend to these things and show that a way of salvation remains for the people of Israel if they believe.¹⁵⁷ And since they were disowned not because they are the race of Israel but because they became unbelievers he says, “God has not disowned his people whom he foreknew.” And in order that he might prove this by means of a current example, he adds, “For even I myself am an Israelite from the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Benjamin,”¹⁵⁸ and yet I am teaching faith in Jesus and I am announcing that he is the Christ. But if the fact that I am an Israelite and am from the seed of Abraham did not stand in the way for me, [M1176] that I would believe in Christ and would be justified by faith in him,¹⁵⁹ it is

153. Cf. 2.13.8 n. 333.

155. Rom 11.1–6.

157. Cf. 3.1.3.

159. Cf. Gal 2.16.

154. Cf. 8.6.2 n. 116.

156. Cf. Rom 10.19–20.

158. Cf. Acts 9.20, 22.

certain that "God has not disowned his people whom he foreknew." Now how "those whom he foreknew, these he also called; and those whom he called, these he also justified,"¹⁶⁰ has already been said above.¹⁶¹ In the Scriptures it is recorded that God foreknows, not so much that he knows the future in advance—which cannot be doubted—but that he approves of and deems people worthy of knowledge of himself.

(3) Lest it be insufficiently apparent that the Apostle, by offering himself as an example, was illustrating that the people of God had not been disowned, he searches for more weighty examples and says, "Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have overturned your altars and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life,'" in which he is teaching that even the prophet was once filled with zeal for God when he put forth a complaint before God over the transgression of a people who had not only killed the prophets and overturned the altars, but also were attempting to destroy Elijah, who appeared to be the only one left of the Lord's prophets.¹⁶² And while Elijah was deploring this before the Lord, listen to what the divine oracles respond to him: "I have kept for myself," it says, "seven thousand men who have not bowed their knees to Baal."¹⁶³ Baal is the name of the idol to whose worship the people fell away when they had forsaken the law of God. This is what the Apostle adduces as an example for the present time. And he adds, "So then, also at this time, there has been a remnant according to the election of grace. But if grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." Thus, to the best of our abilities, it must be shown how, just as it happened under Elijah, when the prophet thought that all the people had been rejected all at once, seven thousand men are found who had abided in God's covenant, in the same way it has also come to pass as well at the coming of Christ and in these times in which Paul is preaching.

160. Rom 8.30.

161. Cf. 4.6; 7.7.5-6; 7.8.2-7; *Hom in Gn* 3.5.

162. Cf. 1 Kgs 19.10.

163. 1 Kgs 19.18.

And consider whether perhaps we can put John the Baptist, who preceded the coming of the Savior, in the place of Elijah; seeing that even the Gospel bears such a witness [M₁₁₇₇] to him, that he would come “in the spirit and power of Elijah.”¹⁶⁴ And the Lord himself said of him, “And if you want to know, he himself is Elijah. He who has ears for hearing, let him hear.”¹⁶⁵ He, then, who had come “in the spirit and power of Elijah” was so filled with despair concerning that people that he did not call them Abraham’s offspring but the offspring of vipers.¹⁶⁶ And to these things he said additionally, “Do not say, We have Abraham for a father. For I say to you that God can raise up sons of Abraham from stones.”¹⁶⁷ So then, to this one who makes such complaints about the people, our Lord and Savior may respond, “I know whom I have chosen”;¹⁶⁸ and, once more, “My sheep hear my voice and I go before them and my own follow me”;¹⁶⁹ and again, “I also have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold. I must bring them in also.”¹⁷⁰

(4) But let us also see what seven thousand, the number of men, indicates. The number seven pertains to rest. For “on the seventh day God rested.”¹⁷¹ Listen then in addition to Christ inviting those who believe in him to rest he says, “Come to me you who labor and are burdened down and you will find rest for your souls.”¹⁷² Therefore, everyone belongs to the number seven who, when they come to Christ, have laid aside the burdens of sin and have found the rest of salvation. The Apostle, then, rightly says, “so also at this time there has been a remnant according to the election of grace.” He is calling those from the circumcision who have believed “the remnant,” both the apostles, among whom he numbers himself, and the others who

164. Lk 1.17; cf. Mal 4.5–6.

165. Mt 11.14–15.

166. Cf. Mt 3.7.

167. Mt 3.7, 9. For a persuasive argument that Origen’s views of John the Baptist developed during his lifetime, from his speculative and ambiguous early writings to more ecclesiastically orthodox views in his late writings, see J. Lienhard, “Origen’s Speculation on John the Baptist,” in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R. Daly (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), pp. 449–53.

168. Jn 13.18.

169. Jn 10.27.

170. Jn 10.16.

171. Gn 2.2.

172. Mt 11.28–29.

along with them have followed in faith in Christ. But when he says that "there has been a remnant according to the election of grace," it does not seem to me that the added word, "election," is superfluous. For he could have said, "There has been a remnant through grace"; but he is showing by this that there is grace both without election and with election. For doubtless all indeed who are saved through faith are saved through grace;¹⁷³ but it seems to me that those who are saved through "the election of grace" are shown to have more perfect souls. For just as everyone who descends from the race of Israel is called Israel, but he is a true Israelite who sees God¹⁷⁴ with a pure mind and a sincere heart, so also we can understand concerning this, that everyone indeed who comes to faith in Christ comes through grace; but the one who adorns the gift of grace with works of virtue and with purity of heart will be said [M1178] to be saved by Christ not only through grace, but also through "the election of grace."

(5) After all, even the Apostle himself, if anyone observes him in his words, he sees how he uses distinctions of this sort. In one passage he names Israel according to the flesh;¹⁷⁵ in another he does not make any mention of that of the flesh, as in the present passage, where, when he said, "God has not disowned his own people," and he wanted to set forth the nobility of the Israelite soul he says, "For I also am an Israelite." But in Second Corinthians, where he is forced to respond to certain men from the Israelite race who were boasting according to the flesh, see what he says first, "What I am saying I do not say according to the Lord, but, as it were, in foolishness in this matter of boasting. Since many indeed are boasting according to the flesh, I too shall boast."¹⁷⁶ And after a few things he says, "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I."¹⁷⁷ So then, when he was speaking about Israel in that inner man—for such is that people whom God has foreknown and has not disowned—he does not say Israel "according to the flesh"; but when speaking to those who were

173. Cf. Eph 2.8.

175. Cf. 1 Cor 10.18.

177. 2 Cor 11.22.

174. Cf. 7.14.2.

176. 2 Cor 11.17-18.

boasting in their fleshly race, he first said that in boasting of this sort he was not speaking “according to the Lord” or in wisdom, but, as he himself says, “in foolishness.”¹⁷⁸ Such then is the “remnant” that “has been according to the election of grace.”

(6) And he has added, “But if grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.” One should know that the works that Paul repudiates and frequently criticizes are not the works of righteousness that are commanded in the law, but those in which those who keep the law according to the flesh boast; i.e., the circumcision of the flesh, the sacrificial rituals, the observance of Sabbaths or new moon festivals.¹⁷⁹ These, then, and works of this nature are the ones on the basis of which he says no one can be saved,¹⁸⁰ and concerning which he says in the present passage, “not on the basis of works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.” For if anyone is justified through these, he is not justified *gratis*. But these works are by no means sought from the one who is justified through grace; but this one should take care that the grace he has received should not be in him “in vain,” as Paul also says, “For his grace in me was not in vain but I worked harder than any of them.”¹⁸¹ And again he adds, as one mindful of grace, “Not I, but the grace of God with me.” So then, one does not make grace become in vain who joins works to it that are worthy and who does not show himself ungrateful for the grace of God. For anyone who sins after having attained grace [M1179] becomes ungrateful to him who offered the grace.

(7) But if you do not cause grace to become vain, grace will be multiplied to you, and you will attain a multitude of graces as a reward for the good works, as he himself writes and as Peter says in his epistle, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the recognition of God”,¹⁸² and likewise in another passage, “as good stewards of the multiplied grace of God.”¹⁸³

8. *What then? What Israel was seeking it failed to attain; but the chosen attained it, but the rest were blinded; as it is written, “God gave*

178. 2 Cor 11.17.

179. Cf. Col 2.18.

180. Cf. Eph 2.8–9. See Introduction (19).

181. 1 Cor 15.10.

182. 2 Pt 1.2.

183. 1 Pt 4.10.

them a spirit of confusion,¹⁸⁴ eyes that they would not see and ears that they would not hear, down to the present day." And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a retribution for them. Let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see, and their backs forever bent."¹⁸⁵

(2) In these things the Apostle divides Israel into two groups, one of which he calls "the chosen," which has obtained what it was seeking, the other he names "the rest," which not only did not obtain what they were seeking, but they have been blinded by a spirit of confusion. To them as well he says that God gave "eyes that they would not see and ears that they would not hear, down to the present day," that is, until the consummation of the age. But a problem is raised for us, how this statement would seem worthy of the good God, that he gives eyes to the rest of Israel with which they may not see, and ears with which they may not hear. But consider whether perhaps this might be a retribution and reward for unbelief, according to the things that we have explained above, where because "they did not think it right to have God in knowledge, God gave them over to a base mind."¹⁸⁶ For here too he is speaking of the eyes and ears of the heart, not of the body, in which they have been blinded and they do not hear, they who, undoubtedly, upon seeing Christ in the body and hearing his teaching, were unwilling to believe the works that they were seeing or to obey the word that they were hearing. But we have spoken sufficiently about this problem in the first sections of this letter.¹⁸⁷

(3) Up to now I have not been able to find where what the Apostle says, "As it is written: God gave them a spirit of confusion, eyes that they would not see and ears that they would not hear, down to the present day,"¹⁸⁸ is written. But if anyone who looks into the Holy Scriptures more diligently than I have finds it, [M 1180] let him make it known.¹⁸⁹

184. *Compunctio*, which translates *κατάλυσις*.

185. Rom 11.7–10.

186. Rom 1.28. Cf. 1.18.1ff.

187. Cf. 1.18.1–10.

188. Cf. Is 29.10; Dt 29.3; Mt 13.13; Acts 28.16–17.

189. For similar admissions, cf. 3.2.6; 9.4.2.2; *Hom in Lk* 6.7; 39.2; *Orat* 3.1; 22.1; 23.3.

(4) But I believe that the Apostle has said in this manner, "But the rest were blinded; and as it is written about them: God gave them a spirit of confusion," so that he might seem to say in his own words that God had given them a spirit of confusion, according to the things that were said through Isaiah concerning the blindness of the eyes and the hearing of the ears. For Isaiah says it this way: "Go and say to this people: You will hear with hearing and you will not comprehend; and seeing you will see, and you will not see. For the heart of this people is fat, and they have hardly heard with their ears, and they have shut their eyes, lest perchance they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand in the heart, and be converted and I would heal them."¹⁹⁰ Here then the Apostle seems to have presented the meaning of Isaiah in his own words,¹⁹¹ but to have added, "as it is written," because he was saying the meaning of the prophet. He does something similar with the things that he declares to have been spoken through David. For he says, "And David says, 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a retribution for them. Let their eyes be darkened lest they see, and their backs forever bent.'¹⁹² For in what he has said, "Let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block," "trap" is not found written in the Psalm, either in our copies of the seventy translators or in those of the Hebrews.¹⁹³ What is more, it reads in the Psalm, "Let their table become a snare before them"; but the Apostle has not cited, "before them." We have recorded these things about the arrangement of the words and the condition of the testimonies that are adopted in order to show in each instance that apostolic authority in no way puts faith in the copies of the Hebrews nor does it always comply with the wording of the translators,¹⁹⁴ but it unfolds the meaning of the Scriptures with words that are suitable.

(5) So let us now see how the meaning of the present section ought to be explained. He proves the blindness of heart with

190 Is 6.9-10.

192. Ps 69.22-23.

194. I.e., the LXX. Cf. 8.6.2 n. 116.

191. Cf. 5.8.7.

193. Cf. 2.13.8 n. 333.

which the remnant of Israel, i.e., those who did not believe, has been blinded by two prophetic testimonies, which seem to be taken, one from Isaiah, the other from David. And in both basically a single sense is set forth. For in the one passage they are given eyes with which they may not see, and ears with which they may not hear; and in the other passage it is wished that their table should become before them a snare and a trap and a retribution and a stumbling block; and that their eyes should be darkened so that they might not see. [M1181] And it seems to be no superfluous matter to make known how these things may be believed to have been said worthily, and especially in the Psalm, under the *persona* of Christ.

(6) Consider then whether we can explain what is sought in the following manner: Each person uses bodily eyes for looking either at good things or evil things,¹⁹⁵ and he has it within his power either to lift up his eyes to heaven and, through what he sees, to perceive his Maker and give praise to his Creator, or he can lend his eyes to the public shows of the circus or to the theater or to the amusements of any other filthy sights in which the soul would be set on fire with lust or greed or any of the other vices. Thus with me understand likewise the eyes of the soul, which some people use to perceive the Word of God and the doctrine of truth, and to make daily progress in its wisdom. But others use these eyes for the opposite purpose, namely, training themselves each day and searching how they may destroy the doctrines of truth and, to the extent that seems good to them, to fight against faith in Christ. Let us suppose, then, that someone prays for these people, who indeed possess penetrating minds and who are full of arguments in false knowledge, and says: May God give them "eyes so that they might not see" the point of [their] perverted interpretation; and "ears so that they might not hear" obviously the teachers of deception; and may "their eyes be darkened so that they might not see." Does it not seem to you that he who wishes for these people such things, by which their sins might be lessened, should be embraced? For it is far better not to have understanding than to understand things badly.

195. Cf. 9.26.1.

(7) I say, does it not seem to you that Marcion, who has composed blasphemous writings against the Creator God, and Basilides and Valentinus¹⁹⁶ and the other originators of depraved doctrines, would have been blessed if they had not possessed those eyes of the heart with which they understood things badly? For Isaiah says of them, “Woe to the scribes! For the scribes write wickedness.”¹⁹⁷ Similarly David prays and says in the Psalms for those who teach badly and speak badly, “Let their wicked lips become mute, which, in arrogance and contempt, speak evil against the righteous.”¹⁹⁸ So, then, it is also said of Israel, “May their eyes be darkened so that they might not see”;¹⁹⁹ and, “may God give them eyes so that they might not see.” Let these things be said as far as pertains to the blindness of the eyes that seem to be given by God to unbelieving Israel, which sees badly, as a kind of remedy.

(8) Now let us consider the table as well, which is said to become “a snare and a trap, a stumbling block [M1182] and retributions for them.” But first, a few things ought to be said to those who resist the allegories of the Holy Scriptures and who habitually ridicule those who do not follow the historical sense in every instance.²⁰⁰ Let them tell us, then, whether the prophet is here speaking of that table of the Jews at which they customarily eat breakfast and dine, so that it become a snare to them and catch them; or whether that table becomes retributions to them so that from this table they experience vengeance for the things in which they have offended; or let them explain how it becomes a stumbling block to them. But if they are not able to give an explanation for each of these details, and they see their joke turned into confusion, then let them come along with us and seek from the Holy Scriptures just how this table of Israel can be understood.

196. According to Clement, *Stromateis* 3 (FOTC 85:257, tr. John Ferguson, 1991), Basilides’ followers did not lead upright lives but claimed to have the authority “actually to commit sin because of their perfection, or that they will in any event be saved by nature, even if they do sin, because of their ingrained election.” This seems to be the same Gnostic teaching against which Origen is engaged in the *Commentary*. Cf. also *Hom in Lk* 29.4; 31.3.

197. Is 10.1.

199. Ps 69.23.

198. Ps 31.18.

200. Cf. 2.13.17.

(9) To us, then, as far as our powers of comprehension go, it seems that the table of Israel signifies all the Scriptures that were in Israel's possession before the coming of the Lord—"for the oracles of God were first entrusted to them"²⁰¹—and all that is called the Old Testament. If anyone wanted to consume the Word of God at that table, he was nourished by the discourses of the law and prophets that were set out for him. In my opinion this is also that table of which Solomon says, "When you sit down to eat at the table of the mighty, understand intelligibly what things are set out for you and put forth your hand, knowing that you must prepare such things."²⁰² Moreover, when the Savior says, "When you eat and drink at my table,"²⁰³ what other table of his are we to understand but where he teaches the worthy and those who are capable of receiving the word of wisdom and the knowledge of realities? Solomon also testifies to this about wisdom in Proverbs when he says, "Wisdom has built a house for herself and set in place seven pillars; she has offered her sacrifices, mixed her wine in the bowl and prepared her table."²⁰⁴ All Scripture, then, is a table of wisdom. But let us see in what sense David prays that this table should become to the unbelieving Israelites in their sight "a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution."²⁰⁵

(10) The Holy Scripture becomes a snare for them when they read the things that have been prophesied about Christ, "He will build my city and convert the captivity of my people";²⁰⁶ and they say that these things were not fulfilled by Jesus. For he did not build the city of God, they say, nor did he call back the captivity [M1183] of the people. But they say these things because, although they are sitting at the table of the mighty, they do not do what Solomon advised, to understand intelligibly the things that have been set out for them.²⁰⁷ For Christ was prophesied as one who was going to do these things not visibly but intelligibly, that is, spiritually. For he truly did build the city of God, but out of living stones from which he

201. Rom 3.2.

203. Lk 22.30.

205. Cf. Ps 69.22.

207. Cf. Prv 23.1.

202. Prv 23.1–2 LXX.

204. Prv 9.1–2.

206. Is 45.13.

raised up sons of Abraham. Out of them he built the Church of God.²⁰⁸ And he converted the captivity of those people whom the devil was holding captive in sins. So then, for those who do not understand these things in this way, this table of Holy Scripture has become “a snare and a trap.”

(11) But that trap of this table can be seen where the Lord trapped them when he said to them, “What does it seem to you concerning the Christ? Whose son is he? And they responded: David’s. And the Lord: Why then does David call him Lord saying: The Lord said to my Lord? And they were unable to answer a word to him.”²⁰⁹

(12) But this table, for me to put it briefly, also becomes “retributions” in accordance with the word of the Lord by which he says, “Do you think that I will accuse you before the Father? It is Moses who will accuse you”;²¹⁰ and according to what the Apostle says, “As many as have sinned through the law will be judged through the law.”²¹¹ But this table also becomes a “stumbling block” in the following manner: From the Scriptures the Jews had learned that “Christ remains forever.”²¹² But when they saw Jesus in the flesh, and not only in the flesh but also in death, even death on the cross,²¹³ they stumbled over him, not knowing that “although he suffered because of the weakness” of the flesh, “he lives by the power of God.”²¹⁴ Therefore, because they did not receive intelligibly each of these things that had been set out for them on the table of the mighty,²¹⁵ they have stumbled and the very table of the Holy Scriptures has become a stumbling block for them, and their eyes have been darkened in accordance with what we have said above, and their back is continually bent.²¹⁶ For those who sinned against the Creator of heaven and against the Lord of majesty²¹⁷ ought no longer look at heaven.

(13) But also each one of us must fear lest, possibly, this table of the divine words at which we seem to have sat down to

208. Cf. Is 45.13; Mt 3.9; 1 Pt 2.5.

210. Jn 5.45.

212. Jn 12.34.

214. 2 Cor 13.4.

216. Cf. Ps 69.23.

209. Mt 22.42-46.

211. Rom 2.12.

213. Cf. Phil 2.8.

215. Cf. Prv 23.1.

217. Cf. 1 Cor 2.8.

partake of the food of the Word of God according to our ability should become a snare and a retribution and a stumbling block,²¹⁸ should we not partake from it intelligibly²¹⁹ and as is fitting of the clean and pure spiritual food of wisdom. At the same time we must take heed [M1184] not to sit down at the table of wisdom with unclean and filthy garments, that is to say, with a defiled body or heart. Instead, meditating even now on the sight of the coming banquet in heaven, through conversion and repentance, let us prepare every day cleaner wedding garments. Wearing them, let us merit to enter the palace of wisdom and the chambers of the King's Son.²²⁰

9. *So I say, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their offence salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make them jealous. Now if their offence means riches for the world, and if their forfeiture means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness mean!*²²¹

(2) The Apostle had expounded the circumstances under which Israel was rejected and the Gentiles were brought in and he had also enumerated the prophecies that had predicted their blindness and snare and retribution and stumbling block.²²² Lest he should once more offer material to the Gentiles for being puffed up, and reasons to insult [the Jews], he says that Israel's lapse was not of such a nature that they should fall but that they might give salvation to the Gentiles by their offence. And he says, "So I say, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their offence salvation has come to the Gentiles." And he shows in what way by their offence salvation is given to the Gentiles. He says, "so as to make them jealous," that is to say, when they see the conversion of the Gentiles, and the covenant of God, which they had previously received,²²³ passed on to them, and the law and the prophets held with a greater and more worthy observance among them, even they themselves may receive zeal, at least in the end times. And just

218. Cf. Ps 69.22.

220. Cf. Mt 22.11-12.

222. Cf. Ps 69.22-23.

219. Cf. Prv 23.1.

221. Rom 11.11-12.

223. Cf. Rom 9.4.

as their lapse had now bestowed salvation to the Gentiles, so the faith and way of life of the Gentiles may confer jealousy for conversion and salvation upon Israel.

(3) It is to be noted, however, that Paul cites "to stumble" and "to commit an offence" as one thing, but "to fall" as another. And he records a remedy for stumbling or offending, but he does not promise this for those who have fallen, as if this would be some hopeless situation in this. For he says, "Have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But by their offence salvation has come to the Gentiles." It is also surprising, in view of the number and kinds of things that the text of the entire epistle sets forth about them, that the Apostle should nevertheless deny that they had fallen. But it seems to me that Paul well recognizes that there are different kinds of falling. He knows that it is one thing to fall according to what is written, "The righteous man falls seven times and will rise again";²²⁴ and again, "Do not insult me, my enemy, because I have fallen; I will also rise again";²²⁵ and, according to what Jeremiah says, "Will not the one who falls increase and rise again? Or the one who [M1185] has turned away not be converted?"²²⁶ Moreover, Job says about himself, "It has been determined for him to fall below others at the appointed time and his house is to be plundered by foreigners";²²⁷ and in the Fourth Book of Kingdoms it is written, "Hezekiah has fallen because of the haughtiness of his own heart."²²⁸ And all of these falls, about which we mentioned in the above passages that the Scripture announces, clearly possess a rising again and their turning away possesses a conversion.

(4) But in the present section, as if the Apostle knows that if they would have fallen, they would not be able to rise again at all, he thus denies that they had fallen and he vigorously excuses in that by which he says, "Have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means!" lest perhaps then the Apostle, looking back on another fall, should excuse Israel and deny that they have fallen,

224. Prv 24.16.

226. Jer 8.4.

228. Cf. 2 Kgs 20.17; 2 Chr 32.25.

225. Mi 7.8.

227. Jb 12.5 LXX.

possibly that [fall] of which our Lord and Savior was speaking, "For I saw that Satan had fallen like lightning from heaven";²²⁹ and that fall of which Isaiah says, "How has Lucifer fallen from heaven, who was rising in the morning?"²³⁰ He is denying, then, that Israel had fallen by this kind of fall. For indeed there will be a conversion for them at the end of the age, at that time when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, and all Israel will be saved;²³¹ but for that one who is said to have fallen from heaven,²³² there will not be any conversion at the end of the age.²³³

(5) We should observe that this fall, then, of which we have spoken above, i.e., in which he who falls may increase to rise again,²³⁴ is similar to what the Apostle is designating in the present passage as a stumbling and what he calls an offence, which seems to me is the following: If at some time a righteous man, having been overcome by one thing, for example, by the weakness of the flesh or by any other offense, would have fallen, he would not, however, on that account depart from all observance of the law, but he would hold fast to righteousness, cultivate mercy, preserve faithfulness, piety, and gentleness, and would not neglect to meditate on the law of God;²³⁵ of this we can say, "Has he stumbled so as to fall? By no means!" For even the Israelites, although they have denied their own redeemer

229. Lk 10.18.

230. Is 14.12.

231. Cf. Rom 11.25-26.

232. Cf. Is 14.12.

233. Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity*, p. 431 n. 5, and many other scholars attribute this sentence to Rufinus on the assumption that Origen taught that the devil will, or at least might, be saved. Other scholars claim that this is the voice of the real Origen, who "rejected the salvation of the devil as unbiblical, even insane." F. W. Norris, "Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus," in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell: Papers presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. N. M. de S. Cameron (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), p. 48. In my view, the best solution to the apparently contradictory statements in Origen's writings is that of R. Heine, *FOTC* 89:59-65. Origen distinguishes between the devil as a being created by God and the devil as wicked on the basis of his own choice. The former, Origen thinks, will be changed through ages of disciplinary chastisement and will be restored to his original state. But the latter, i.e., the devil *qua* devil, cannot be said to be restored, since he will no longer be the devil. With Heine (*ibid.*, 65), however, I am not confident that Origen would entirely approve of stating it this way.

234. Cf. Jer 8.4.

235. Cf. Ps 1.2.

and have stoned and persecuted those sent by him to preach salvation;²³⁶ nevertheless they still have something that remains. The meditation on the law is among them, though by not believing they do not understand. Zeal for God is also among them, though not according [M1186] to knowledge.²³⁷ And on this account the Apostle says, "they have not stumbled so as to fall"; that is to say, so as to turn away completely from all observance or meditation on the law. And he has designated a fall of this sort an offence. For he says, "By their offence salvation has come to the Gentiles." Therefore, because David too was aware that there are offences of this sort in which the one who falls may rise again, and there are others in which the one who falls may not rise again, not even at the consummation of the age, he was saying, "Who will understand offences?"²³⁸ or, "falls."

(6) After these things follow, "Now if their offence means riches for the world, and if their forfeiture means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness mean!" Consider the wisdom of God in these things, how with him not even offences and falls happen uselessly. But although each person offends by the freedom of his own purpose, the superintendence of the divine wisdom sees to it that this matter, by which they become impoverished through the penalty of their own negligence, makes others rich. For "when God divided the nations and dispersed the sons of Adam, he established the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. At that time Jacob became the Lord's portion and Israel the line of his inheritance."²³⁹ These angels, to whom a portion of the nations had been distributed in some manner, seduced each individual nation away from being the Lord's portion. And by corrupting them they made them stumble so that the Lord said through the prophet, "My desired portion has become a curse to me."²⁴⁰ And since that one had been rejected and repudiated, it was necessary that another portion of the Lord upon the earth should undertake the glory and the

236. Cf. Mt 23.37; Lk 13.34.

238. Ps 19.12.

240. Jer 12.10.

237. Cf. Rom 10.2.

239. Dt 32.8-9. Cf. 2.11.5; 8.12.3.

covenants and the giving of the law and the obedience of the worship of God²⁴¹—for the riches of the Lord’s portion consisted in all these things—and be called the Lord’s portion in place of that portion that had stumbled. On that account, their offence becomes riches for the world. For now no longer the single nation of the Hebrews, but the entire world, has become the Lord’s portion.²⁴² For thus the Savior himself says, “For I have come not to judge the world but that the world should be saved through me.”²⁴³ And in order that the term “world” not seem ambivalent, since the designation “world” often refers to the heaven and the earth, often to the earth alone, and occasionally even to all human beings, [M1187] on that account the Apostle repeats and designates with greater clarity what he is calling the “world.” For he says, “This forfeiture of theirs is riches for the Gentiles.” For what was forfeited by those who stumbled and was taken away has been applied as riches for the Gentiles, who, through faith, have become the Lord’s portion and his inheritance.

(7) Yet Paul has admirably assigned the fullness to “forfeiture.” And it is not without some deep significance that he calls the people of Israel “the fullness.” As far as I am able, I understand something like this here: At the present time, while all the Gentiles are coming to salvation, the riches of God are being gathered from the multitude of believers; but as long as Israel persists in unbelief, the fullness of the Lord’s portion will not be said to be completed. For the people of Israel are missing from the whole. But when the fullness of the Gentiles enters in and Israel comes to salvation through faith in the end time,²⁴⁴ there will be that people that were first but, in coming last,²⁴⁵ would in a manner complete that fullness of the inheritance and portion of God. The reason it is called “the fullness” is because in the last days it will fill in what was lacking in God’s portion. And in this way the superintendence of the good and almighty God makes the offences of some fruitful for others,

241. Cf. Rom 9.4.

243. Jn 12.47.

245. Cf. Mt 19.30; 20.16; Lk 13.30.

242. Cf. 10.12.4.

244. Cf. Rom 11.25–26.

just as in the present the offences of Israel produce riches for the world and makes their forfeiture wealth to the Gentiles. Now of course whether the dispenser of all things may do something similar with the Gentiles' offences that they inevitably commit, and bestow riches upon certain others from these, lest it should seem that this was unique to Israel alone, but that equity with the just and good God might be preserved over all, even you, the reader, should investigate on your own.

10. *For I am speaking to you Gentiles: As long, indeed, as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I will make my ministry illustrious if somehow I might provoke my flesh to jealousy, and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what is [their] reception if not life from the dead?*²⁴⁶

(2) As we have frequently observed,²⁴⁷ in this epistle Paul speaks sometimes for the Jews, sometimes for the Gentiles, occasionally to one of these or to both. For example, when he was saying, "But if you call yourself a Jew,"²⁴⁸ it is as if he is addressing the Jews; and again, "for the Jew first and for the Greek,"²⁴⁹ as if for both. But now he is speaking openly to the Gentiles, i.e., to those especially who had believed from the Gentiles in the city of Rome. [M1188] "I am speaking to you Gentiles." Well then, let us see what he says to the Gentiles: "As long, indeed, as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I will make my ministry illustrious, if somehow I might provoke my flesh to jealousy, and save some of them." Someone will say, What he says, "As long as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles," seems to be showing that he will not always be the Apostle of the Gentiles, but once his ministry has been completed, he is going to become an apostle of certain others. But to the extent that it is inferred both from his own words and from the record of his exploits, it is established that as long as he was in this world, he remained, in faithfulness and truth, the Apostle of the Gentiles.²⁵⁰ What then shall we say? Was he knowing, as a good and faithful ser-

246. Rom 11.13-15.

247. Cf. 2.14.1; 3.1.2-3; 3.2.2; 3.9.1; 8.1.2; 8.6.9.

248. Rom 2.17.

249. Rom 1.16.

250. Cf. 1 Tm 2.7.

vant who was faithful with a few things, that he was to be placed over much²⁵¹ and was to become after his death the Apostle not only of the Gentiles but also of the Israelites and possibly of other invisible creatures in that place where the spirits and souls of the just are praising the Lord,²⁵² singing a hymn to him and highly exalting him forever?

(3) Or should we instead understand in a simpler sense the statement, "As long as I am Apostle of the Gentiles," as the Lord also says to the apostles, "And behold I am with you for all days until the consummation of the age"?²⁵³ In that passage he is not claiming that he will not be with them after the consummation of the age; but that he might show that he will never leave them he said, "until the consummation of the age." In the same way the Apostle said, "as long as I am an Apostle," instead of, "always," and, "without end." As to which explanation ought to be received, we leave to the choice of the reader.

(4) Therefore, as long as he is Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul says that he makes his ministry illustrious; and what could be more fitting than that each person should adorn the ministry he has received through the providence of God? One adorns his ministry and makes it illustrious who ministers well, just as, on the contrary, one disgraces his ministry and makes it notorious who ministers negligently and unworthily.²⁵⁴ For example, he says that in church ministry "a deacon who has ministered well gains a good standing for himself and much confidence in the faith in Christ Jesus."²⁵⁵ But if one has not ministered well, that is to say, if he has not shown himself to be as the Apostle describes, serious, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain, but holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience,²⁵⁶ [M118g] he no longer gains a good standing for himself but an evil punishment, as one who has disgraced his spiritual service. Likewise, if anyone takes up the position of elder in the Church, he has

251. Cf. Mt 25.21, 23.

253. Mt 28.20.

254. Cf. *Hom in Lk* 17; *Hom in Nm* 2.1.

255. 1 Tm 3.13.

256. Cf. 1 Tm 3.8-9.

252. Cf. Dn 3.86 LXX.

more than enough to do to make the ministry of the elder illustrious. For the things the Apostle writes to Titus about elders²⁵⁷ apply to him, as well as what Isaiah writes when he says, "The Lord will come into judgment with the elders of the people and he will go to court with their rulers." And, he adds, "Why do you set my vineyard on fire and why is what you have plundered from the poor in your houses? Why do you injure my people and shame the face of the poor?"²⁵⁸

(5) In accordance with these things, a bishop also makes the ministry of his episcopacy illustrious if he lives according to what the Apostle describes: above reproach, vigilant, prudent, respectable, hospitable, a teacher, not a drunkard, not a fighter, but modest, not quarrelsome, not greedy, directing his own household well, having obedient sons, with all seriousness, not puffed up by arrogance, lest he should fall into the devil's judgment.²⁵⁹ Whoever is like this makes illustrious the ministry of his episcopacy so that he may even hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I shall appoint you over much."²⁶⁰ In a similar way as well a widow makes illustrious the ministry of her widowhood if she abides in prayers and supplications night and day. But suppose she acts like those the Apostle brands as idle and loquacious, and not only loquacious but also meddlesome, saying things that are not fitting; or suppose she is devoted to pleasures and, though living, is really dead.²⁶¹ Then she has disgraced the ministry of her widowhood rather than made it illustrious.

(6) In the same way a virgin consecrated to God also makes the ministry of her virginity illustrious if she is holy in body and spirit and does not think about the things of men but the things of God, how she may please God.²⁶² But if she behaves differently, not only does she not make the ministry of her virginity illustrious or adorn her lamp, but to the contrary her light is extinguished and she becomes one of the foolish virgins.²⁶³

257. Cf. Tit 1.5-9.

259. Cf. 1 Tm 3.2-6.

261. Cf. 1 Tm 5.5-13.

263. Cf. Mt 25.1-12.

258. Is 3.14-15.

260. Mt 25.23.

262. Cf. 1 Cor 7.32, 34.

(7) Let everyone in the Church consider these same things in relation to himself so that in whatever position he stands, whether in the clergy or among the people, he should make the ministry of his faith illustrious and do such deeds "that men, by seeing his good works, [M1190] will glorify the Father who is in heaven."²⁶⁴ For Paul too was doing this by teaching and by instructing the Gentiles, whose Apostle he was, by feeding the weak with vegetables,²⁶⁵ infants with milk,²⁶⁶ by supplying the strong with the more solid food of the word,²⁶⁷ by suffering the pains of childbirth all over again out of his maternal affection for those who were going astray and wavering in the faith, and for those who, as it were, had been born prematurely, until Christ would be formed in them.²⁶⁸ And through all these things, by making the ministry of his apostolate illustrious, he was making his own flesh, i.e., his kinsmen according to the flesh,²⁶⁹ jealous of the faith and zealous for good conduct so that he might save, if not all, at least some of them.²⁷⁰ So then, as he endures ever-watchful care and constant anxiety²⁷¹ for the teaching and way of life of the Gentiles, and as he makes their life praiseworthy, he invites and provokes the Israelites, who see these things, who were his kinsmen according to the flesh,²⁷² to imitate those who are advancing in faith in God. And it is the glory of his ministry when he brings advancement to the former from the proficiency of the latter.

(8) "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what is their reception if not life from the dead?" To me it appears that the Apostle is showing in these words that by Israel having been rejected and by the preaching having of necessity been transferred to the Gentiles, the world, that is, all the nations, has been reconciled to God, according to what is written, "Because God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their transgressions to them."²⁷³ And again, as Paul says, "Who appointed for us the word of reconciliation";

264. Mt 5.16.

266. Cf. 1 Cor 3.2; Heb 5.12-13.

268. Cf. Gal 4.19.

270. Cf. 1 Cor 9.22.

272. Cf. Rom 9.3.

265. Cf. Rom 14.2.

267. Cf. Heb 5.14.

269. Cf. Rom 9.3.

271. Cf. 1 Thes 2.2.

273. 2 Cor 5.19.

through which word he was saying, "We beseech you for Christ's sake, be reconciled to God."²⁷⁴ If then, he says, the rejection of this Israelite nation furnished reconciliation to the world, and the grace toward that nation was so great that, once it had been taken away from it, it was sufficient to reconcile the entire world to God, then how much do you think the world will merit at that time when that nation as well should merit being reconciled to God? And he shows briefly just what the world would obtain as a result of the reconciliation of Israel when he says, "life from the dead." For there will be a reception of Israel at that time when even those already dead will receive life and the world will pass from corruption to incorruption and mortals are given immortality.²⁷⁵ [M1191] For it would seem absurd if their reception would not bestow something greater and more excellent to the world, seeing that their stumbling gave reconciliation to the world.

11. *If the first portion of the dough is holy, then also the lump; and if the root is holy, then also the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though you were a wild olive shoot, were grafted among them and you were made a sharer of the root of the fertility of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. Well then, you will say, Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. Very well; they were broken off because of unbelief. But you stand by faith. Do not understand arrogantly, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you. Consider then the goodness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen; but goodness toward you, if you continue in goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off, and they, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, how much more will they, in keeping with nature, be grafted into their own olive tree?*²⁷⁶

(2) I do not know how those who come forth from the school

274. 2 Cor 5:20.
276. Rom 11:16-24.

275. Cf. 1 Cor 15:53.

of Valentinus or Basilides, failing to hear what Paul has said here, should imagine that there is a nature of souls that would always be saved and never perish, and another that would always perish and never be saved;²⁷⁷ though Paul plainly says that the branches of the good olive tree were broken off on account of their unbelief and that they were in need of the vengeance of the divine severity. And, on the other hand, he says that the branches of the wild olive tree, which they assert are of a ruined nature, are engrafted into the root of the olive tree's fertility. Through these things it is easy to respond to these men.

(3) Now we say that there is one nature for all men, or rather for all rational beings, and it is suited equally for salvation and, if it becomes negligent, for perdition. Nonetheless it can be said as an objection to us: Why then does Paul set forth a good olive tree and a wild one, since assuredly, if he were aware that there is one nature for all, he would not have introduced the example of the different kinds of trees?

(4) To these things then it must be said, Just as all bodily matter, since it, no doubt, consists of a single nature, through its inherent qualities produces various species of bodies or trees or plants, in the same way, since there is one nature for all rational beings, the choice of each—the liberty of the impulse of each is distributed equally—when summoned by the power of choice, and by guiding the soul subjected to them either toward virtue or toward evil desire, creates the species of a good tree or an evil tree. It may be called a good tree if, through its power of choice, [M1192] it appoints good things; or it may be called evil if it should choose evil things.²⁷⁸ And in this way, each person, according to the impulses of his own purpose, will be designated [either] a good olive tree, if he travels down the road of virtue, or a wild olive tree, if he follows the opposite [path]. This, after all, is why even the Lord was saying in the Gospel, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or make the tree evil and its fruit evil,"²⁷⁹ in order to show that a tree, good or evil, is made, not born.

277. Cf. Preface of Origen (1); 2.4.7; 2.10.2; 4.12.1; *Princ* 2.9.5.

278. Cf. Mt 7.17.

279. Mt 12.33.

(5) But if something external approaches the freedom of will, either to incite it to evil or to exhort it to good through certain ineffable superintending activities of divine providence, in no respect does this now offend against the consequence of the proposed finish. For the rational nature possesses within itself a freedom of will alive for even these things, a will by which it can either obey the one inciting it, if it wants, or spurn the one exhorting it, if it is unwilling.²⁸⁰

(6) But what we have said should be understood this way, that external characteristics occurring in bodily substance create different species,²⁸¹ some of which remain for a long time, some for a short time. Many endure for not merely a few short years, but some scarcely even for a few months or days. For example, the species of the sky and the sun and the moon and the stars have been fashioned with certain kinds of qualities that are sufficient to last until the end of the age, and until the time when they will be set free from the slavery to corruption unto the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.²⁸² But the qualities of earthly bodies are different, and there are great differences among them.²⁸³ For the bodies of some animals and trees and birds can last for quite a long time; but [the bodies] of others last for a short or extremely brief time.

(7) Now if you have understood these things well, let us now pass from the examples of corporeal quality to the quality of rational nature. Notice that some endure for many ages with the quality of blessedness, and others no less complete many ages with the quality of evil. Some of these abide for a short time either in virtues or in evils, others for a rather short time, others for an extremely short time. We human beings, inasmuch as we are burdened down with the weight of a corruptible body,²⁸⁴ are able to receive very scanty knowledge of these natures in detail, or even none. "But he who searches all things, even the depths of God,"²⁸⁵ the Holy Spirit, knows everything, and he himself makes it known to whom he wants to reveal it.²⁸⁶ For chiefly in

280. Cf. 1.18.9.

282. Rom 8.21.

284. Cf. Wis 9.15.

286. Cf. Mt 11.27.

281. Cf. 8.11.4.

283. Cf. 1 Cor 15.40.

285. 1 Cor 2.10.

regard to these things, i.e., in regard to the superintendence of the rational nature, the apostolic words should be spoken, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how inscrutable are his judgments and unsearchable are his ways!"²⁸⁷ So then, each one becomes either a good or a wild olive tree by the power of choice, [M1193] either of Israelite stock or of the other reprehensible nation, so that it may also be said to him, "From the womb sinners are estranged, they have gone astray from the belly; they have spoken lies."²⁸⁸ The result of this is that they are foreigners to the covenants and strangers to the promises of God.²⁸⁹ And others are cast from the womb upon God and they say, "I have been cast upon you from the womb, from my mother's belly you are my God."²⁹⁰ But as we have said, because the freedom of will always abides in this nature, it is possible that, even though someone may belong to the Israelite race and be a branch of the good olive tree, he may fall into unbelief and be broken off; and, on the other hand, someone else who had chosen to belong to the reprehensible and sinful nation and, through this, was being called a branch of a wild olive tree, if he should be converted to the faith—for he has the freedom of his will in himself by which he can be converted to the good—he is engrafted into the good olive tree through faith and becomes a sharer of the root of the fertility of the olive tree.²⁹¹

(8) Now some regard this root to be Abraham, others Seth, others, one of the well-deserving patriarchs. But as for me, I know no other root that is holy and no other holy firstfruits except my²⁹² Lord Jesus Christ. For he is the firstfruits of all, or "first portion," as we have it in the present passage of the Apostle, corresponding to what is said elsewhere about him, "He is the firstborn of all creation."²⁹³ For all who are saved are engrafted into this root, and from this holy, first portion the entire lump of the human race is sanctified. And truly, just as the holy root supplies the fertility of sanctity to the branches that

287. Rom 11.33.

289. Cf. Eph 2.12.

291. Cf. Rom 11.17.

293. Col 1.15.

288. Ps 58.3.

290. Ps 22.10.

292. Cf. 7.11.3 n. 268.

abide in it, as it gives life through its own Holy Spirit to those who cling to it, as it cultivates them by the word, as it produces flowers by means of wisdom, and as it causes them to bear abundant fruit in the fullness of all the virtues, so also as he would say about them, "But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord."²⁹⁴ For if the branches that were broken off have been broken off because of unbelief, and those who stand, stand in faith, who else will there be in whom they stand but Jesus Christ? And who else is it by whom they have been broken off through unbelief but him in whom they did not believe? So then, whatever foreigners were coming to the faith and to citizenship of Israel²⁹⁵ were always being engrafted into Christ, who was the true Israel. But it is chiefly from the time of his advent that many wild olive shoots are being engrafted into this root and into his branches—the apostles and prophets of God, of course—so that those who are engrafted among them might become sharers of the root of the fertility of Christ.

(9) After this [M1194] the Apostle teaches us not to be exalted against the branches that were broken off, the Israelites, nor to insult them; for we do not support the root, but the root supports us. "For we have nothing that we have not received. But if we have received it, why do we boast as if we had not received it?"²⁹⁶ Then next, as if addressing certain people who are arrogantly insulting them and saying, "If the branches were broken off, very well; they were broken off on account of unbelief, so that I who was believing could be engrafted," the Apostle therefore, wanting to restrain them, says: They were indeed broken off through unbelief, and you were engrafted through faith and you stand in faith, but remember that "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,"²⁹⁷ and therefore "do not become arrogant minded"; do not speak such high and haughty things! For although you may stand in the root and you may stand well, nevertheless you ought to be afraid when you consider the fact that the others, whom you are insulting, also stood where you are standing. And you, though you were not

294. Ps 52.8.

296. 1 Cor 4.7.

295. Cf. Eph 2.12.

297. Lk 18.14.

there, were transferred in from elsewhere to the root of this olive tree and it is possible also for you to sin. For even this in itself, that you are haughty and exalted, you are already sinning. And be aware that "if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you."

(10) But after this, the one who is haughty and insults the others who have fallen is filled by the Apostle with impressions of humility, and it is said to him: You who are saying these things, consider the goodness and severity of God; and when you see his severity toward the branches that have been broken off, you yourself should be filled with fear, lest you yourself, as you exalt yourself and insult those who have fallen, should by your sinning also incur the severity of God that distresses sinners.²⁹⁸ For his goodness continues in those who remain in goodness. "Otherwise you also," if you do not abide in goodness, "will be cut off" in the same manner; "and they, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in." For it is not impossible for God to graft them in again, if they desist from the unbelief on account of which they were broken off. After all, it seems much easier to put branches back into the root of their own tree than to graft in foreign ones.

(11) But we ought to interpret the nature of the olive tree and the wild olive tree, in what he said, "by nature a wild olive tree," and again, "in accordance with nature they will be grafted back into their own olive tree," in agreement with what we have explained above.²⁹⁹ The freedom of will makes the nature in each person, either of a wild olive tree or of a good olive tree.

(12) Certainly, it should be observed that those who have fallen away from their own olive tree are said to be broken off, but those who are grafted in from the wild olive tree, if they should sin again, are designated not as those who are going to be broken off, which would obviously be less severe, [M1195] but to be cut off. In this the severity of God is being made known in a very forceful way if anyone who, after he has been led to the root of faith and holiness, having been gathered

²⁹⁸. Cf. 2.4.4.

²⁹⁹. Cf. 8.11.4.

from the forest of sins, since he was a wild olive tree, should once again produce the bitter sap of wickedness.

(13) Nor should it escape our notice in this passage that the Apostle has not given this comparison of the cultivated olive and wild olive trees in accordance with the way done by farmers. For their custom is to graft the cultivated olive branch into the wild olive tree, not vice versa. But Paul, by virtue of his apostolic authority,³⁰⁰ by changing the order, has adapted the realities to his argument rather than the argument to the realities.

12. *For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you may not be wise in your own estimation, that a blindness by a part of Israel has occurred until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "There will come out of Zion one who sets free and turns away impieties from Jacob; and this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."*³⁰¹

(2) He is still speaking to those of the gentiles who believed, as to those who are puffed up and haughty against the branches that were broken off.³⁰² They were imagining that they had attained to their being grafted into the good olive tree after those others had been broken off,³⁰³ even though they were wild olive shoots, not by the goodness of God³⁰⁴ and the ineffable superintendence of his wisdom, but by their own merits. [He says to them], "I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you may not be wise in your own estimation." For to insult those who have fallen and to boast over the branches that were broken off³⁰⁵ is done not through the wisdom of God but through [a wisdom that is] notoriously human and ignorant of the mystery of God. For the one who is wise according to God, who has a sense for the kindnesses of God, does not insult those who have been rejected, but with fear he gives thanks for the mercy of the one who bestowed it.

300. For other statements about Paul's use of apostolic authority, see 1.8.1; 4.7; 5.8.7; 6.9; 8.8.4; 8.10; 8.12.5.

301. Rom 11.25-27.

303. Cf. Rom 11.17.

305. Cf. Rom 11.18.

302. Cf. Rom 11.20.

304. Cf. Rom 11.22.

(3) There is a mystery, then, of which those who were speaking these insults were ignorant, how at the dispersion of the sons of Adam, when the rest of the nations had been distributed according to the number of the angels, Israel became as it were God's portion,³⁰⁶ just as we have recorded both in other places, where it was fitting, and a little further up in this [commentary].³⁰⁷ To [Israel] were made both the promises of good things and the covenants and giving of the law.³⁰⁸ So long as that portion of the Lord was abiding in its status [M1196] it was not possible for us who were Gentiles to enter into the inheritance of God³⁰⁹ and to succeed to the rights of his scepter. On account of this, therefore, God allows blindness to occur to a part, i.e., not to all, but to some from Israel, a blindness, doubtless, inflicted under the pretext of envious jealousy by those angels who had been allotted the ruling sovereignty over the other nations. God allowed this then and, though he was able to hinder it, he was unwilling, in order that in place of those who had slipped, having been deceived by blindness, i.e., by the hardness of heart, God would make his own portion from those [angels] who had deceived these portions; so that, in a certain way, in that by which they had set a trap they were trapped. For, by turning away the people of God unto themselves through the allurements of sin, they made room for the Gentiles to enter into the inheritance of God,³¹⁰ with God holding judgment with them by a sort of common and most equitable right so that, as long as they were oppressing the people of God, in captivity to blindness, the number of the Gentiles was being added in place of those whom the angels, from the beginning, had stolen from the portion of God and from his segregated inheritance. But when the fullness of the Gentiles had been completed and Israel had become jealous of their salvation, she would disperse the blindness of heart from herself and she would behold Christ, the true light, with her uplifted eyes and thus, according to previous prophecies, Israel, having been provoked, would seek the salvation she had lost in her blindness, speaking

306. Cf. Dt 32.8-9.

308. Cf. Rom 9.4.

310. Cf. Ps 79.1.

307. Cf. 2.11.5; 8.9.6.

309. Cf. Ps 79.1.

that prophetic word to herself, "I should return to my first husband, since it was better for me previously than now."³¹¹

(4) That these things were promised to them through the prophets is found in many prophetic books. But let us cite what suffices for the present, a single testimony from Jeremiah containing the following: "If the heaven above be exalted and the earth below be lowered, I shall not reject the race of Israel for everything that they have done."³¹² If, then, in order that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in a blindness has come upon Israel for everything they have done, doubtless, when the fullness of the Gentiles will have entered in, the blindness ceases. But, the Apostle says, if you want to know in what manner Israel is likewise going to be saved after her blindness, listen to how it is written, "There will come out of Zion one who sets free and turns aside impieties from Jacob; and this [M1197] is the covenant from me to them when I shall take away their sins."

(5) One should know, of course, that in the prophet Isaiah, from whom Paul has taken this testimony, in place of what the Apostle said, "he will come out of Zion," it is written, "he will come because of Zion." And, what he says here, "when I shall take away their sins," is not written there at all, not even in the Hebrew manuscripts.³¹³ It has been presumed by the authority of the Apostle.³¹⁴ At some time the Lord, coming from Zion, sets free and turns aside impieties from Jacob.³¹⁵ He will turn aside impieties from him in accordance with what is written, "the Lord has washed away the stains of the sons and daughters of Zion and will cleanse the blood from his midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning";³¹⁶ and this was the covenant to him from God to be done in this way, that thus impieties should be turned aside from them and sins should be taken away.

(6) Who the "all Israel" are who will be saved, and what that fullness of the Gentiles will be, only God knows and his only-begotten and perhaps anyone who are his friends, to whom he

311. Hos 2.7.

313. Cf. 2.13.8 n. 333.

315. Cf. Is 59.20-21.

312. Jer 31.37 LXX.

314. Cf. 8.11.13.

316. Is 4.4.

says, "No longer do I call you slaves but friends, because I have made known to you everything that I heard from the Father."³¹⁷ Yet this can also fall in with our interpretation, that just as Israel cannot attain to salvation as long as it continues to be Israel according to the flesh³¹⁸ and fails to become a true Israelite according to the Spirit,³¹⁹ mentally gazing on God,³²⁰ so, not even the Gentiles can be absolutely saved, but only those that are found within the fullness, whatever it is that the Apostle calls the fullness. So then, the mystery of God is conducted by a certain ineffable superintendence of his wisdom in such a way that, even though a soul may inflict upon itself the condition of evil in itself, he who knows how to dispense all things may turn its rejection and punishment into the salvation of others.

(7) Moreover, it seems to me that in this passage the following point needs to be carefully considered. He does not say that this blindness had occurred to all Israel but only in part. "For there has become a remnant according to the election of grace."³²¹ Even Isaiah had prophesied about this remnant when he said, "Unless the Lord of hosts had left descendants to us."³²² So then, that remnant in blessedness is compared with the fullness of the Gentiles; but the others who have been blinded out of Israel are compared with the Gentiles who cannot attain to the fullness. In this way, then, what is found in the words of the prophets relating to the promises, things written containing blessedness, if these things are about Israel, they pertain to that remnant that was chosen; if about the Gentiles, they have in view the fullness. If, [M1198] on the other hand, grievous things are spoken about Israel, doubtless, they will be referred to the rest who were blinded; but if they are spoken about the Gentiles, they actually deal with those who are outside of the fullness.

(8) But the end brings distress to all, and even those who are blessed, whether they come from Israel or even from the Gentiles, in the present age the word of evangelical doctrine purifies, so that they might be like those to whom the Lord was

³¹⁷. Jn 15.15.

³¹⁹. Cf. Jn 1.47.

³²¹. Rom 11.5.

³¹⁸. Cf. 1 Cor 10.18.

³²⁰. See 7.14.2.

³²². Is 1.9.

saying, "Behold you are already clean on account of the word that I have spoken to you."³²³ But whoever should spurn the purification of the Word of God and of evangelical doctrine reserves himself for sorrows and penal purifications, when the fire of Gehenna purifies with torments the one whom neither apostolic doctrine nor the evangelical word have purified,³²⁴ according to what is written, "And I will purify you with fire leading to purity."³²⁵ But for how long a time and how many ages this purging, which is applied by means of penal fire, exacts torments from sinners only he is able to know to whom "the Father gave all judgment",³²⁶ he who so loves³²⁷ his creation that for its sake he emptied himself from the form of God and took the form of a slave, humbling himself unto the point of death,³²⁸ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.³²⁹ Nevertheless, we should always remember that the Apostle wanted the present passage to be held as a mystery in order that each of the faithful and perfect might silently conceal its meaning within themselves as the mystery of God and not publish these views indiscriminately to the imperfect and to the less receptive. For the Scripture says, "It is good to conceal the mystery of the king."³³⁰

13. *According to the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but according to election they are beloved, for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts are without repentance as the calling of God. For just as you at one time did not believe in God but have now attained mercy by reason of their unbelief, so also they have now disbelieved at your mercy, so that they too may attain mercy. For God has shut up all in unbelief so that he may be merciful to all. O the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and un-*

323. Jn 15.3.

324. For Origen's purgatorial understanding of Gehenna see 2.2.2 n. 22; 7.5.10.

325. Is 1.25.

326. Jn 5.22.

327. Cf. Jn 3.16.

328. Phil 2.6-8.

329. 1 Tm 2.4.

330. Tb 12.7. For other discussions of this theme of concealment, where Tb 12.7 is also quoted, see 2.4.5; 5.1.10; 6.8.2; 8.12.8. Cf. also *Princ* 3.1.17.

*searchable are his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has first given to him, and will be paid back to him in return? For from him and through him and in him are all things; to him be the glory in the ages. Amen.*³³¹

(2) Because [M1199] the Apostle is still pursuing the same matters concerning Israel and the Gentiles and is charging the branches of the wild olive tree that were insulting the broken branches of the olive tree,³³² he adds this as well: Israel according to the gospel has become an enemy to God because it has not believed in Christ; but as far as the honoring of the fathers is concerned, she is chosen and is deemed to be beloved by God. For since his election was given to and his love bestowed on the descendants of the fathers, it is beyond doubt that God preserves the gifts and his calling in respect to the descendants of those to whose merits he had once bestowed them. Nor does repentance ever happen to God, even if those, to whom the blessings promised to the fathers are conferred, seem to be less worthy. But, as we have frequently mentioned, that distinction needs to be observed in the present passage as well, that the Israel that is called the enemy of God is the one that was crying out concerning Christ, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"³³³ For how would they not be called God's enemies who, whether then or now, said or would say these things?

(3) Moreover, what he says, "for your sake" refers, obviously, to those for whose salvation they are jealous, who try to hinder the apostles from speaking to the Gentiles, and who persecute those who proclaim Christ. But according to the remnant that is said will be saved,³³⁴ after whom the election of believers from Israel follow, they are "beloved on account of the fathers"; by following their faith, obviously, they believe "in him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead."³³⁵ And in accordance with this toward descendants of this sort, "the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance."

(4) After this he even uncovers the concealed and very deep causes for their unbelief and he says: Just as you Gentiles once

331. Rom 11.28-36.

333. Jn 19.15.

335. Rom 4.24.

332. Cf. Rom 11.17-18.

334. Cf. Rom 9.27; 11.5.

were not believing in God, and yet God did not on that account completely abandon you, but at a later time you have attained finally unto mercy—yet it was the unbelief of the people of Israel that showed itself to be the occasion for mercy being conferred upon you—so also even those from the people of Israel who now have not believed and have been abandoned for their own unbelief, that God’s mercy might be steered in your direction, they will not be completely abandoned in their unbelief, but after the dispensation of the fullness of the Gentiles has been completed,³³⁶ [M1200] they also will attain mercy. In this, since the Apostle wants to make known the goodness of God³³⁷ by which he makes the unbelief of some salvation for others and the salvation of some unbelief for others, he says, “God has shut up all in unbelief so that he may be merciful to all.” It is not that he himself has infused within them the purpose of unbelief but, out of the purpose of their unbelief, he opened up an access for believing for the others who had themselves previously been unbelievers? In these passages Paul is positioned as one who is more profoundly considering causes of this sort, how God does not immediately cut off and remove the evil purpose, but endures and reserves it. God looks ahead because he is going to do something good for others through the evil purpose of the other. I think that he has directed the eyes of his heart³³⁸ away from those about whom he was speaking, toward the origin itself of evil because, from the beginning, he did not judge it profitable to cut it off. It was sprouting and growing by the freedom of will in those in whom it had arisen, whoever they are. But he permitted them to make use of their own purpose, knowing and taking care that the advancement and benefit of many would arise from the occurrence of the others’ evil. And with the good God the opportunity for virtue is so great that even an evil work, however much it may be destructive for the one from whom it proceeds, nevertheless is superintended in such a way as to bestow a benefit upon him in whom it incites struggles, when it would be overcome.

(5) So then, the holy Apostle is considering how great are

336. Cf. Rom 11.25.
338. Cf. Eph 1.18.

337. Cf. Rom 11.22.

the riches of the goodness of God³³⁹ and how great a work of divine wisdom is being done toward rational natures, and how much “God is rich in mercy”³⁴⁰ and “rich toward all who call upon him,”³⁴¹ and how great are the riches of his goodness and patience and forbearance.³⁴² Suddenly, he beholds these things with the inner eyes of his heart³⁴³ and perceives the infinite greatness of these things. Struck with amazement and, at the same time, fear, he exclaims and says, “O the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and unsearchable are his ways!” For how are the thoughts of the human mind capable of conceiving that, with each one’s freedom of will preserved, one person’s evil work would be turned to salvation for another, and that the evil, which brings ruin to the one who indulges in it, [M1201] could confer the palm of victory to the one who conquers it?

(6) Consequently, when the Apostle perceives these things with as broad a view as is fitting, he exclaims and says that the depth of the riches of God is so great and the depth of his wisdom is so great and the depth of his knowledge is no less so great—for the word “depth” fails [to describe] all these things—that no one is equal to the task of examining his judgments by which he directs each and every soul and rational nature, nor is anyone capable of searching out the ways of the Lord by which providence advances. Now we say “anyone,” not only of human beings but of the entirety of creation.³⁴⁴ For neither the judgments would be called inscrutable nor the ways unsearchable unless there were no creature that is capable either of investigating or of examining. For it is the Son alone who knows the Father,³⁴⁵ and it is the Holy Spirit alone who “examines all things, even the deep things of God.”³⁴⁶ And therefore, he is saying that this depth of God, which he says is inscrutable and unsearchable, is inscrutable and unsearchable to all creation.

339. Cf. Rom 2.4.

341. Rom 10.12.

343. Cf. Eph 1.18.

344. For the identification of “who” and “no one,” see 8.6.2.

345. Cf. Mt 11.27.

346. 1 Cor 2.10.

340. Eph 2.4.

342. Cf. Rom 2.4.

But he could not say this about the Son and the Holy Spirit. For in the Gospel the Son says to the Father, "Father, all that is mine is yours and what is yours is mine";³⁴⁷ and of the Holy Spirit Paul himself declares, saying, "No human being knows what things are in a man except the spirit of man that is in him; so also no one knows what things are in God except the Spirit of God."³⁴⁸

(7) You see then that in the present section, in the things that Paul says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his counselor?" he would speak about created beings; but he would exclude the nature of the Trinity; obviously that has nothing in common with the creation except the work of goodness.

(8) Furthermore, what he says, "Who has become a counselor to him?" would not be declaring, as it were, that, being less capable, he needs the counsel of another, but that no one among the creatures participate in his counsel. [M1202] But for the one who is wise, counsel necessarily consists in his wisdom, which is Christ;³⁴⁹ and in holiness, which is the Holy Spirit. The following should be understood in a similar way: "Who has first given to him and it will be paid back to him?" For no one has first conferred anything upon his Maker, since even the fact that each one exists he received from the Creator.³⁵⁰

(9) "Because from him and through him and in him are all things." You see how in these final words he is showing that in everything he had said above he separated the mystery of the Trinity. For just as, in the present passage, what he says, "Because from him and through him and in him are all things," agrees with the statements made by the same Apostle in other passages when he says, "one God the Father, from whom are all things, and our one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things";³⁵¹ and likewise, he says that all things are revealed in the Spirit of God,³⁵² and by this indicates that the providence of the Trinity is in all things, so also, when he says, "the depth of

347. Jn 17.10.

349. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

351. 1 Cor 8.6.

348. 1 Cor 2.11.

350. Cf. 4.1.14 n. 36; 4.5.2; 10.38.

352. Cf. 1 Cor 2.10.

the riches," he is signifying the Father, from whom he says are all things; and [when he says], "the depth of the wisdom," he is pointing to Christ, who is his wisdom;³⁵³ and [when he says], "the depth of the knowledge," he is making known the Holy Spirit, who knows even the deep things of God.³⁵⁴

(10) Nevertheless, what he says, "from him," points to the fact that we exist; "through him" to the fact that we are being directed in life through his providence; but "in him," that the perfection and end of everything will be in him at that time when God will be all in all.³⁵⁵ And then, "to him be the glory in the ages. Amen." "In the ages" because the perfection of all things is not concluded within one age, but extends over many and scarcely at any time is it hoped to be fulfilled.³⁵⁶ He attaches also "Amen" so that we might understand that one must come to that blessedness through him of whom it is written in the Apocalypse, "He who is the Amen says these things."³⁵⁷

353. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

354. Cf. 1 Cor 2.10.

355. Cf. 1 Cor 15.28. See also 3.10.3.

356. Cf. 8.12.8; *Cels* 4.12; 6.58; *Princ* 2.3.1.

357. *Rv* 3.14.

THE NINTH BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

IN THE ENTIRE PRECEDING TEXT of the epistle the Apostle had shown how the essence of religion has been transferred from the Jews to the [M1202] Gentiles, from circumcision to faith,¹ from the letter to the Spirit, from shadow to truth, from fleshly observance [M1203] to spiritual observance.² Moreover, he showed that these things had been described as going to happen in this way by prophetic voices. Now he sets about to establish the moral conduct and practices of this spiritual observance, to which, he teaches, the services of the worship of God have been transferred. He says, *I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the mercy³ of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice living, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you may test what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.*⁴

(2) We have shown, he says, that we are to refrain from fleshly sacrifices, in accordance with what even the prophet says, “Sacrifices and offering you have not wanted, nor have they been pleasing to you.”⁵ Now, he says, I am teaching you in which sacrifices God takes delight. And I am teaching these things not as one commanding⁶—for the command of the law

1. Cf. Rom 4.12.

2. Cf. Rom 2.29; Col 2.17; Heb 8.5; 10.1. For other thematic summaries of Romans, see Preface of Origen (8); 3.1.3; 10.11.2.

3. Rufinus’s method is well-illustrated in this passage. The lemma contains “mercy” in the singular, as it appeared in the normalized Old Latin manuscript from which he was working. But in the *Commentary* below, he translates it in the plural, keeping with Origen’s explanations, which were based on the Greek, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ (through the mercies of God).

4. Rom 12.1–2.

5. Ps 40.6; Heb 10.8.

6. Cf. 2 Cor 8.8.

was not profitable—but as one who has received the duty of reconciling you to God. “I exhort you, brothers,” and I exhort not through force, but “through the mercy of God.”⁷ For because, as I have shown above, everyone has been shut up under sin,⁸ now human salvation is no longer based upon merits but upon mercy.

(3) But what do I exhort you? “That you should present your bodies as a sacrifice living, holy, and pleasing to God,” so that this might be “your reasonable service.” Here he calls the worship of God “service” because at one time this worship used to consist in the bodies of speechless animals. But now, he says, it should be offered with the body of a rational human being and your bodies, rather than those of animals, should become a sacrifice to God and be placed upon the sacred altars. For those who put to death their own members⁹ from the incentive of lust and rage, and who possess actions in their body that are pleasing to God are offering in a rational manner a sacrifice that is living, holy, and pleasing to God. Moreover, they are fulfilling according to the spiritual understanding the law of the sacrifices contained in Leviticus. For example, it says there that the people were offering, in the first place a calf, second a ram,¹⁰ third a goat,¹¹ fourth turtle doves or even young doves,¹² so that the soul of each person might be purified for the quality of his deeds. Now each person, by purifying these things in his own body, and discerning with the spiritual understanding, has offered a living sacrifice to God as his reasonable service.

(4) We tried to explain each of these things [M1204] to the best of our ability when we discussed some matters of the book of Leviticus,¹³ how each person practices the worship of God by reasonable service. If someone conquers pride in his own body, he sacrifices a calf; if he rises above his anger, he is cutting the throat of a ram; if he vanquishes lust, he is bringing a goat as a burnt offering; if he cuts off his wandering and deceitful thoughts in their flight, he has sacrificed doves and turtledoves.

7. Cf. 2 Cor 5.20.

9. Cf. Col 3.5.

11. Lv 4.23; 9.3.

13. See Origen's *Hom in Lv*.

8. Cf. Rom 3.9; 11.32; Gal 3.22.

10. Cf. Lv 4.3ff.; 16.3; 23.18.

12. Cf. Lv 12.8; Lk 2.24.

But, as I have said, if someone thinks these things are worth knowing, he will find them discussed in greater detail there.¹⁴

(5) But now Paul exhorts believers in Christ to present their “bodies as a sacrifice living, holy, and pleasing to God.” He calls the sacrifice that bears life, i.e., Christ,¹⁵ within itself “living,” and he says, “We carry about the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus Christ might also be revealed in our body.”¹⁶ He calls a [sacrifice] in which the Holy Spirit dwells “holy,” in accordance with what he has said in another passage, “Or do you not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?”¹⁷ [He calls this sacrifice] “pleasing to God” because it has been separated from sins and vices. But all of this is the reasonable worship of God. For rational grounds can be given for worship of this sort, and it can be shown that to offer sacrifices of this sort is worthy of God. But no rational explanation that is straightforward and honest could support offering rams and goats and calves to the immortal and incorporeal God.¹⁸ Paul is not only teaching those who have believed in Christ to do these things in this manner and to worship God in this way, but he even exhorts “through the mercy of God” so that, through this means, he might show to the human race, since it is inclined toward transgressions, that sacrifices of this sort were provided for by the compassion of God, by which a soul can be restored and renewed to salvation if ever a lapse should occur, through the reasonable service and the sacrifices offered in that manner we spoke about above.

(6) That the mercies¹⁹ of God are multiple, Paul also makes known in Second Corinthians when he says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies.”²⁰ You hear that God, just as he is the Father of Christ and the Father of wisdom and the Father of righteousness, all of which things are Christ,²¹ is thus also the Father of mercies. Therefore, just as Christ is all the other things, so also is he mercies, many mercies, many not one; that is, just as the treas-

14. Cf. *Hom in Lv* 2.2-4.

16. 2 Cor 4.10.

18. Cf. 1 Tm 1.17. See also 2.9.1.

20. 2 Cor 1.3.

15. Cf. Jn 14.6.

17. 1 Cor 3.16.

19. Cf. 9.1.1 n. 3.

21. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

ures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, but they are hidden,²² so also the treasure of mercies [M1205] is in him, but it is hidden lest, should it be disclosed all at once and prematurely, it make me, and others who wish to resemble me in my idleness, negligent.²³

(7) Then it is the undefiled body that will chiefly seem to be a sacrifice that is living and holy and pleasing to God. Because, however, we see that not a few of the saints, even apostles, were married, we cannot by any means perceive this of virginity alone, although it could hold the first rank in sacrifices of this sort, just as also in the law there was a sacrifice for the priests, another for the rulers, another for the assembly, and another for the individual soul.²⁴ And although in the Church the first sacrifice, after the apostles, is that of the martyrs, the second would seem to be that of the virgins, and the third, of the continent. And yet I am not convinced that those who are married and who agree to devote themselves for a time to prayer,²⁵ as though they were fulfilling Nazirite vows, are going to be denied to be able to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, provided that in other matters they conduct themselves in a holy and just way.²⁶ On the other hand, if the bodies of virgins or of the continent are polluted by the blemish of pride or by the stains of greed or by the defilement of slanderous speech or lying, they must not be supposed to have offered a sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God solely on the basis of the virginity of the body. For even in the law, when a sacrifice was offered, it was carefully inspected by the priest, not only to see whether it came from the clean animals, but to make sure it did not possess a defect in its eye or ears or feet, lest a lame or one-eyed or plucked animal should be removed from the divine altar.²⁷ So, then, the sacrifice that is living, holy, and pleasing to God, and must be offered in a reasonable manner, is examined and thoroughly scrutinized in all its members.

22. Cf. Col 2.3.

23. For the theme of the necessity to keep God's mercy hidden, see 2.3.2; 5.1.4; 7.18.5; 8.12.8.

24. Cf. Lv 4.3, 13, 22, 27.

26. Cf. 1 Thes 2.10.

25. Cf. 1 Cor 7.5.

27. Cf. Lv 22.21-25; Dt 15.21.

(8) "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you may test what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect."²⁸

(9) One should be aware that the Greek has, "so that you may test what is the will of God, which [will] is good and pleasing and perfect." But since a single meaning can be seen in both [readings], we follow the tradition of the Latins.²⁹ It says, "Do not be conformed to this world," in which he is showing that there is one form of this world and [M1206] another of the future world; and if there are those who love the present world and the things that are in this world,³⁰ they are being adapted to the form of the present world. But those who do not look to what is seen, but to what is unseen and eternal,³¹ are being transformed and renewed unto the form of the future world. This is the reason why this world does not know them, but hates and persecutes them.³² But the angels of God who are from that world that is to come recognize that form. And this seems to me to be similar to his statement in which he says, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."³³

(10) See to it then lest, when anger enters your heart, it make you conformed to this world. In a similar way evil desire and greed and the other things in which the present world takes delight may imprint the form of the present world upon you.³⁴ But if, instead, gentleness, patience, mildness, self-control, faith, truth, and the other virtues should dwell within your mind,³⁵ they make you conformed to the future world and they would render such a beautiful form to your soul that the Word

28. Rom 12.2.

29. This comment clearly stems from Rufinus and well illustrates his method. In Greek, "good," "pleasing," and "perfect" (*ἀγαθόν*, *εὐάρεστον*, and *τέλειον*) are neuter adjectives modifying the neuter noun, "will" (*θέλημα*). But in the Old Latin translation, the feminine noun "will" (*voluntas*) is modified by a neuter appositional phrase: "what is the good, the pleasing, the perfect" (*quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum*). In contrast with the Old Latin, the Vulgate strictly follows the Greek.

30. Cf. 1 Jn 2.15.

32. Cf. Jn 15.18–20; 1 Jn 3.1.

34. Cf. Col 3.5.

31. Cf. 2 Cor 4.18.

33. 1 Cor 15.49.

35. Cf. Gal 5.22–23.

of God, who has betrothed it to himself in mercy and faith,³⁶ would say to it, "You are altogether beautiful, my love, and there is no flaw in you."³⁷

(11) But consider carefully what he says, "But be transformed by the renewing of your minds," so as to show that every soul possessed a form indeed blameworthy before the form of evil. But from this [passage] the apostolic words exhort us, when we have laid aside that form, to be transformed into the resemblance of each of the virtues and thus only then, when the face of the heart has been unveiled,³⁸ can we behold the Lord's glory, having been transformed by such an image. As to how we may be transformed into these things, he teaches us when he says, "by the renewing of your minds."

(12) Our mind is renewed through training in wisdom and meditation upon the Word of God, and the spiritual interpretation of his law. And to the extent that it makes daily progress by reading the Scriptures, to the extent that its understanding goes deeper, to that extent it becomes continuously new and daily new. I do not know if anyone can be renewed who is lazy in respect to the Holy Scriptures and training in spiritual understanding, by which it becomes possible not only to understand what has been written, [M1207] but also to explain more clearly and to reveal more carefully.³⁹

(13) Yet it is possible that not every mind is capable of being renewed so as to be broadened by the understanding of knowledge. For a mind can be renewed to righteousness, it can be renewed to self-control, mercy, faith, and patience. But consider what the Apostle joins to this renewing of the mind in what follows: "so that you may test what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." And assuredly, unless a mind is renewed to all knowledge and enlightened in all of God's wisdom, it will not be able to test what is the will of God. For the will of God is thought to be in many things, and it is not, in which it is

36. Cf. Hos 2.19–20.

37. Song 4.7. Cf. 5.8.13.

38. Cf. 2 Cor 3.18.

39. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 5:32 n. 17, observes, "The reading of scripture is for Origen the preferred way to make progress in one's Christian life."

certain that he who does not have a renewed mind goes astray and is deceived. But in reality, it does not belong to everyone's mind to test every single thing that we do, speak, and think, if it is the will of God, but of a very renewed mind, and of one, so to speak, already renewed in the image of God.⁴⁰ And in no respect whatsoever, whether in conduct, speech, or thought, does it fail to sense what corresponds to the will of God.

(14) He says, "which is the will of God, what is the good and the pleasing and the perfect." If we should read this in accordance with what we find in the Latin manuscripts, the sense here will be: The will of God is whatever is good and pleasing and perfect; God cannot will anything else except what is good, and assuredly what is good and perfect is doubtless also pleasing to God. But if we follow what we said was found in the Greek [copies], i.e., "so that you may test what is the will of God, which [will] is good and pleasing and perfect," it can seem the same as what we said above, that the whole will of God is good and pleasing and perfect. Yet this sort of thing can also be perceived in these words: The will of God is indeed always good, but we do not always deserve to be directed by his good will or by his pleasing and perfect will.⁴¹

(15) For example, when Saul was anointed king, this was indeed the will of God, but it was neither pleasing nor perfect. For it was because God became angry with the people, who had refused to have God as their king over them, that he commanded that a human king be appointed for them.⁴² Moreover, the prophet says under the *persona* of God, "I have abandoned them according to the desires of their heart, so that they may go after their own longings."⁴³ So, then, the will of God sometimes takes place in these things for which we desire and long; but the one who has been renewed in his mind should test whether this will [M1 208] of God is good and pleasing and perfect and not the kind that prefers rather to indulge our desires rather than reflect upon beneficial things. But let us now turn to what comes next.

40. Cf. Gn 1.27.

42. Cf. 1 Sm 8.7.

41. Cf. 1.11.1-2.

43. Ps 81.12.

2. *For through the grace given to me I say to all who are among you: Do not be wiser than you ought to be, but be wise in moderation, each according to the measure of faith that God has allotted. For as in one body we have many members, but not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.*⁴⁴

(2) First, one should be aware that where we have, “to all who are among you,” the Greek has, “to everyone who is among you.”⁴⁵ Assuredly he is making known that the word comes to those who, though they did not exist previously, have now begun to be. For God, as the Apostle also says, “calls things that are not as things that are.”⁴⁶ But those are not who are not partakers of him who truly is, who said to Moses, “Say to the sons of Israel: He who is, sent me to you.”⁴⁷ Therefore, what Paul says, “For I am speaking to all who are among you,” or, as we have said, the Greek has, “to everyone who is among you,” is as if he were to say: For I say to everyone who is in God⁴⁸ not to be wiser than he ought to be. Nevertheless, one should see that Paul is speaking as he does elsewhere, “not with persuasive words of fleshly wisdom,”⁴⁹ but through the grace given to him. For there is a great difference between one who speaks through grace and [one who speaks] through human wisdom.

(3) After all, even in these matters it has frequently been found that many men eloquent and learned, outstripping others not only in speech but in thought, when they have said a great deal in the churches and received a thunderous applause of approval, did not, however, by the things that have been said move a single hearer to embrace contrition of heart or to make

44. Rom 12.3–5.

45. Latin: *omnibus, qui sunt inter vos; in Graeco habetur: omni qui est inter vos.* The original Greek is: παντι τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν. The only difference in Rufinus’s Latin explanation is that the lemma version is plural, the clarification, singular. Erasmus, CWE 56:327 asks, “I wonder why he thought he should point this out, since it is clear that it makes no difference to the sense.” But the Greek uses a participial form of the verb “to be,” whereas the Latin renders it with finite forms. This may have cued Origen to see deeper significance since the text in Ex 3.14 also uses a participle.

46. Rom 4.17.

47. Ex 3.14.

48. Cf. 4.5.11–12.

49. 1 Cor 2.4.

progress toward the faith or to be spurred toward the fear of God by recalling the things that were spoken. Instead, one goes home having taken into the ears only a certain soothing delight. But often it has been found that men who neither have great eloquence nor strive after composition of speech, by means of simple and badly-composed words have converted a multitude of unbelievers to the faith, have inclined the proud toward humility, and infixed the sting of conversion into sinners. And this assuredly is a sign, as the Apostle says in the present passage, that one is speaking through the grace that has been given to him.

(4) I myself [M1209] think, however, that grace is present in the Word of God, not only for those who teach the Church, if their words are as we have described above, not so much to delight as to prick the hearer and lead him to some degree of advancement in virtue, but you will also discover that it is this way in nearly everything that is done in life. For one person has grace both in what he does and in what he says; and someone else, though he speaks more wisely and behaves with greater diligence and effort from time to time, neither in his words nor in his deeds finds grace. After all, as we have already now said elsewhere,⁵⁰ it is written that even Joseph found grace in the presence of the chief jailor,⁵¹ and Esther found grace before the king.⁵²

(5) But we have discovered that it is written in a certain rather obscure little book that there is a certain angel of grace who even derives his name from "grace." For he is called Anahel, which is interpreted "grace of God."⁵³ That Scripture contained this, that that angel was sent from the Lord to Esther in

50. Cf. 4.5.4-5.

51. Cf. Gn 39.21.

52. Cf. Est 2.17, as well as Origen's earlier discussion about the difference between "called" and "chosen" in 1.2.1.

53. Anahel is a prince of angels in Jewish apocalyptic literature. See *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. Origen is evidently citing a tradition based upon a lost and otherwise unknown apocryphal writing on Esther. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag*, p. 50, noted that Origen's reference here is nowhere given attention by scholars, not even by Schürer. Anahel in Hebrew means "grace of God."

order to give her grace before the king.⁵⁴ So then, there is for speech one power that is said to be through grace; and there is another force, the power of teaching. There is from general erudition another kind of speech that, although it may be elegant and artfully arranged, nevertheless, since it is neither spoken nor written through grace, is unable to lead the hearer to advancement, though perhaps it can delight the reader.

(6) So Paul himself not only says what he says through grace, but he also prays for grace to be given to his hearers; and not only grace but even a multitude of grace. For this is what he writes: "May grace be multiplied to you."⁵⁵ And in all his letters he says, "May grace and peace be with you."⁵⁶ But let us see what it is that the Apostle is saying, through the grace that has been given to him, to all who are among the Romans. He says, "Do not be wiser than you ought to be, but be wise in moderation." He still seems to be applying these words to the branches of the wild olive tree that were haughty and insulting toward the branches that were broken off the good olive tree.⁵⁷ He seems to say to them that they must not be wiser than is fitting to be. This is similar to the phrase he said, "Do not be haughty-minded!"⁵⁸ For that is what it means to be wiser than is fitting.

(7) One should know, however, that other learned men use [M1 210] this definition as well, that the nature and cause of sin is in whether something is added to or subtracted from the virtues.⁵⁹ For example, justice is a virtue; and if anyone does less than justice allows, he is, doubtless, unjust. But if anyone, under the appearance of justice, becomes excessive in respect to vengeance and insists on too fierce of punishments, he has de-

54. Cf. Est 2.17. For a comprehensive study of Origen's use of the book of Esther, see M. Kuyama, "Origen and Esther: A Reflection on the 'Anti-Jewish' Argument in Early Christian Literature," in *SPXXXIV*, eds. M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold with the assistance of P. M. Parvis (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 424-35.

55. 1 Pt 1.2; 2 Pt 1.2. For the same erroneous attribution of Peter's words to Paul, cf. 5.3.8.

56. Rom 1.7; 1 Cor 1.3; 2 Cor 1.2; Gal 1.3; Eph 1.2; Phil 1.2; Col 1.2; 1 Thes 1.1; 2 Thes 1.2; 1 Tm 1.2; 2 Tm 1.2; Ti 1.4; Phlm 3.

57. Cf. Rom 11.17-19, 24.

58. Rom 11.20.

59. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.

volved from justice into cruelty. This is why Solomon says, “Do not be overly just!”⁶⁰

(8) The same thing applies to candidness. If it should be exercised within moderation, it is a virtue; but if it falls short, it is deemed timidity; if it goes too far, it is called temerity. In the same way, prudence, if [it is held] within its measure, is a virtue; but if it lacks something, it becomes imprudence, and if it goes beyond what is fitting, it is called malice. I think this is why the serpent in Paradise was said to be more prudent than the other beasts,⁶¹ that is to say, going beyond the measure of prudence it fell into the region of malice. This is also why the sons of this age are said to be more prudent than the sons of the light.⁶² For they are wiser than is fitting to be. And thus it is possible for someone to be wiser than he ought to be in respect to each of the virtues.

(9) It is even possible for someone to be wiser than he ought to be in respect to chastity, as are those who attend to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons that utter lies in their hypocrisy and that forbid marriage to these, having seared consciences, and have them abstain from foods that God has created.⁶³ They are wiser than is fitting in respect to chastity. But those who practice excess and fornication are less wise than they ought to be.

(10) Yet I say that the heretics are wiser than they ought to be concerning Christ, those who deny that he is the Son of the Creator God, but is of some other better god, who knows what.⁶⁴ Moreover, they who deny that he came in the flesh and was born of a virgin but rather assign to him a heavenly body are wiser than they ought to be in respect to Christ. In all these things, then, Paul wants us not to be wiser than is fitting, but “be wise,” he says, “in moderation.” What is said in Greek as *σωφροσύνη* in our copies, i.e., in the Holy Scriptures, is translated by important men *sobrietas*; other learned men, however,

60. Eccl 7.16.

61. Cf. Gn 3.1.

62. Cf. Lk 16.8.

63. 1 Tm 4.1–3.

64. Marcion and his docetic followers are intended here and in the previous paragraph. That they forbade marriage Tertullian records in *Against Marcion* 1.1.

render it *temperantia*; this *temperantia* is regarded as one of the four general virtues.⁶⁵

(11) Thus, the Apostle's statements in this passage [M1211] would have been clearer if we were to have it written in accordance with the force of the Greek word, "but be wise in moderation [*ad temperantiam*]"; that is to say, in all that we do or say or think, let us preserve moderation. For in the things that we have enumerated above, moderation alone knows how to preserve the measure, that neither more nor less is to be done.

(12) After this he says, "to each according to the measure of faith that God has allotted." This means that each should know and understand what the measure of the grace of God is in himself, the measure that he has merited to attain through faith. For sometimes someone receives from God the gift of being wise in a work of love, or wise in the duty of visiting or showing mercy to the poor, or of caring for the crippled, or of the protection of widows and orphans, or of concern for giving hospitality. God has allotted each of these things to each one in accordance with their measure of faith. But if he who has received the grace that he should be wise in respect to one of these things does not understand the measure of grace that has been given to him but wants to be wise about the wisdom of God, the word of teaching, and meaning of knowledge at a deeper level, in which he has not received grace, and if he wants not so much to investigate these matters as to teach what he does not know, this man, who is in fact less wise, wants to be wiser than is fitting. For he is not being wise in moderation so as to preserve [this]: "to each according to the measure of faith that God has allotted."

(13) Indeed, in order for the Apostle to demonstrate these things even more clearly, he introduces an example and says, "For as in one body we have many members, but not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

65. The four cardinal virtues are wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation. They are enumerated for the first time by Plato (cf. *Politeia* 427e–34d) and then by Aristotle. Origen mentions the cardinal virtues also in *Sel in Ps* 10.6; *Comm in Mt* 12.12. Cf. also *Hom in Lk* 8.4; 35.9; *Hom in Lv* 7.1.

er." Through these things he is arranging in the most orderly way the entire body of the Church. Just as each single member of the body has its own function and each one is devoted to its own duties, and yet it is not possible for them as individual members to fail to yield to one another with one accord, so also in the Church, he says, which is the body of Christ,⁶⁶ we each individually have diverse functions.

(14) For instance, one person directs all his enthusiasm toward the wisdom of God and teaching of the Word and day and night he continues in meditation upon God's law,⁶⁷ and he is an eye of this great body. Someone else, as we said above, applies himself to serving the brothers and caring for those in need, and he is a hand of this holy body. Another is an enthusiastic hearer of the Word of God and is an ear of the body. Another is active in looking after the sick, inquiring about those who are afflicted, and rescuing those who are in distress. Undoubtedly he is called a foot of the ecclesiastical body. [M1212]

(15) And thus you may find that each one is more inclined toward one particular duty and gives more special attention to that duty, but makes the others secondary. For we are not saying this, that one duty ought to suffice, but this accords with the image of the suggested example. For instance, just as the eye has the special duty of seeing, and yet it is one out of all the other members, it is among all other members, and it does everything with each of the others and they do everything with it; so also he who, through grace of faith, has merited to receive one particular, special gift should administer that gift principally; but he is regarded as a comrade and fellow participant with the others in every task. But how that body is in Christ, i.e., in truth and wisdom and righteousness and sanctification, all of which Christ is,⁶⁸ we have already frequently spoken about.

(16) Now in this body whether, for instance, someone is an eye, which is more highly illustrious within the whole body, or a hand, which can be reckoned in the next position, or an ear or tongue or one of the other members that are viewed to be

66. Cf. Eph 1.22-23.

67. Cf. Ps 1.2.

68. Cf. Jn 14.6; 1 Cor 1.30.

more honorable; or, on the other hand, that someone should be some other member, of those that seem less honorable;⁶⁹ I think that it is beyond our comprehension [to ascertain] whether he himself offers some cause, or whether it is by the will of God, without regard to any causes whatsoever, that this one or that one should be constituted this or that member. But lest those who assert that there are different natures of souls and that they have been constituted by different creators⁷⁰ seem to find an opportunity for reinforcing their doctrines, let what we have discussed above about the vessels of honor and the vessels of dishonor suffice even for the present passage.⁷¹ For it should never be conceded that either in the present or in the past or even in the future ages divine providence does not dispense each one in such a way that each one's merit, which is acquired through the freedom of will, furnishes material to the one who dispenses. For God is just and there is no injustice with him.⁷²

3. *But we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, according to the rule of faith; ministry, in ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhorting; he who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, with anxious concern; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.*⁷³

(2) Since he had said that all believers individually are members of the one body of Christ,⁷⁴ now he enumerates the diversi-

69 .Cf. 1 Cor 12.23-24.

70. Cf. Preface of Origen (1); 8.11.2; *Princ* 1.8.2; 3.1.6.

71. Cf. Rom 9.21. See also 7.17.6-7.

72. Cf. Dt 32.4; Ps 92.15; Jn 7.18. This passage has been cited as the basis for charging Origen with semi-Pelagianism, because he seems to make antecedent human merits deriving from free will a prior condition for receiving gifts from God. Even apart from the anti-Gnostic context, it seems that Origen's words can be legitimately interpreted in this way. As Verfaillie, *La doctrine de la justification dans Origène*, p. 105, has observed, however, to take Origen's assertion here in an absolute sense, i.e., that merit acquired through free will is a pre-condition for receiving divine grace and is so in an exclusive manner, would be to resolve the very question declared by Origen above to be beyond human understanding.

73. Rom 12.6-8.

74. Cf. Rom 12.4-5.

ty of work of the diverse members. And for example, as sight [is assigned] to the eye, so he assigns the duty of prophecy to the mind, which is the inner eye; to others [M1213] he ascribes a ministry as to a hand; and to others he bestows teaching, as to a tongue; likewise also the others.⁷⁵ He has resolved that point too that seemed uncertain to us above,⁷⁶ where we were inquiring about whether each of the members came to honorable or less honorable duties of the body by offering some grounds for this from themselves; or whether it is without any causes, by the will of God alone, that each one has been delegated to be an honorable or less honorable member.⁷⁷ What was less clear to us there, here the Apostle has disclosed plainly when he says, “whether prophecy or ministry” or the rest of the gifts of the graces are given “according to the rule of faith,” though that phrase, i.e., *secundum rationem fidei*, seems not to have been translated by the Latins very strictly. For *ἀναλογία* in Greek cannot be said as well by *ratio* [rule], as by *mensura competens* [corresponding measure], because it should be clarified with two words not one. So then, he is declaring that the diversities of the graces are given “according to the measure of faith” of each so that, for example, when grace has been received anyone may become this or that member in the body of Christ.⁷⁸

(3) And indeed, here he has set down the measure of faith as the cause of the graces that are to be received; but when writing to the Corinthians, he says, “But to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for that which benefits”;⁷⁹ and after a few things he adds, “But one and the same Spirit works everything, allotting to each one as he wills.”⁸⁰ This is why to me he appears to be teaching, when writing both to the Romans and to the Corinthians, that there are three ways for grace to be received, in order that he might indicate that something is done even by us in this, but the greater part is based upon the generosity of God. Therefore he records “the measure of faith” as the means through which someone receives grace; and he also

75. Cf. 1 Cor 12.23–24.

77. Cf. 1 Cor 12.23–24.

79. 1 Cor 12.7.

76. Cf. 9.2.16.

78. Cf. Rom 12.4–5.

80. 1 Cor 12.11.

records that it "is given for that which benefits";⁸¹ and the "Spirit allots as he wills."⁸² So then, to whatever extent faith is found within us, to that extent it seems that a higher grace can be earned by our works and our zealous effort. But it is God's judgment whether grace is given for that which benefits and becomes useful to the one who receives it; it is also in him whether he wills it to be given at all. This is also why the same Apostle says elsewhere, "But now God has placed each member in the body as he has willed."⁸³ But God has willed this according to the rule or measure of faith that is in us; or, he has willed this "for that which benefits."⁸⁴ Unless perhaps someone would like to understand this thus, "God has placed each member in the body as he has willed,"⁸⁵ so that "he has willed" is referred to the member; that is to say, as he has willed, as he has chosen, as he has paid attention; [M1214] lest it should seem that the power of choice is taken away from man.

(4) In light, however, of his statement that grace is given "for that which benefits,"⁸⁶ it can also come to pass that even if the measure of faith in someone is great enough to merit receiving a higher grace, if the Holy Spirit, when he looks into the future, judges that it will not benefit the recipient, he inevitably apportioned it to each one as he wills and as is beneficial. After all, we observe that many have received the grace of teaching or exhorting the people and, having become puffed up because of this and having turned to arrogance, have fallen into the judgment of the devil.⁸⁷ Others have indeed received grace but have ruined it through the negligence of their mind and the laziness of their life. It was from this that the man who had received the denarius and wrapped it in a piece of cloth did not want anything to be earned from it.⁸⁸ It was for this reason, after all, that the Apostle also writes, saying to his most beloved son, "Do not neglect the grace that is in you."⁸⁹ He knows that grace can be lost through negligence. But in regard to what he said, "accord-

81. 1 Cor 12.7.

83. 1 Cor 12.18.

85. Cf. 1 Cor 12.18.

87. Cf. 1 Tm 3.6.

89. 1 Tm 1.2; 4.14.

82. 1 Cor 12.11.

84. Cf. 1 Cor 12.7.

86. Cf. 1 Cor 12.7.

88. Cf. Lk 19.20-21.

ing to the rule, or measure, of faith," I think I have already adequately explained above⁹⁰ which is the faith that is demanded from us and which is given by God through grace according to what the same Apostle says, "to others, faith by the same Spirit";⁹¹ and again, as the apostles elsewhere say to the Lord, "Increase our faith";⁹² that the faith that would hope and believe and trust without any doubting is indeed in us; but the rule of that faith and the knowledge and perfect understanding of what we believe is given by God.

(5) Moreover, let us not pass over what seems to be a rather concealed mystery in this passage. For if in the present age God gives grace to each one "according to the measure of faith," doubtless he will also give grace to each one in the future on behalf of the measure of merits. And if God dispenses things in this way in the present age, he will also do so in the future. Why then will it not also be believed that likewise, in the past ages that were before us, God dispensed things in a similar way in respect to all rational creatures?

(6) But now let us see what the gifts are that he enumerates as having been given according to grace. He says, prophecy and ministry and teaching and exhortation and giving—i.e., paying out—and presiding and showing mercy. To these he also joins love, etc.⁹³ Perhaps someone may say of these: If all these things are given through grace, there will be no blame if someone does not prophesy or minister or teach or exhort or give or preside or show mercy or show [M1215] love, [for the one] who has not received the grace for all these things.

(7) To this we shall say: Just as there is a faith that we have taught is within us and, on the other hand, there is a faith that is given through grace,⁹⁴ just as we have said above, it is written, "to others, faith by the same Spirit,"⁹⁵ in the same way, for each of these [gifts] that we have enumerated, [each] is given by God through grace and there is something in us that merits grace according to the measure or rule of each person. For it

90. Cf. 4.5:3; 9.3:2-4.

92. Lk 17:5.

94. Cf. 4.5:3, 6.

91. 1 Cor 12:9.

93. Cf. Rom 12:9-10.

95. 1 Cor 12:9.

should not be interpreted in relation to wisdom alone that what is written, "Though someone is perfect among the sons of men, if he lacks the wisdom that is from you, he will be regarded as nothing."⁹⁶ Accordingly, we can say in the same way: Even if someone should be perfect in faith among the sons of men, if he lacks the faith that is from your grace, he will be regarded as nothing. So also, though someone should be perfect in ministry, if he lacks the grace of ministry that is from God, he will be regarded as nothing. So also, if someone is perfect in teaching and lacks the grace of teaching that is from God, he will be regarded as nothing. And the same thing applies with everything that has been enumerated. Among the sons of men there is a certain perfection that people attain by their own effort and exertions, whether in wisdom or in teaching or in other duties; nevertheless, these things will be nothing if they do not have the grace given by God; for if the grace of the Spirit is absent from them, they cannot be members of the body of Christ.⁹⁷

(8) But in these things the question is asked whether in us or from us a certain kind of prophecy can exist that is not entirely from God but derives even in small measure from human efforts. This will be viewed as totally impossible to other people, but with Paul it is clearly approved when he says, "Be zealous for the greater gifts, but most of all that you should prophesy."⁹⁸ There the Apostle is showing that, just as one is zealous for ministry and teaching and exhortation, etc., through his exhibiting zeal and effort toward these things, in a similar way this should happen for prophecy. This is why this prophecy should be understood [M 12 16] as that which Paul teaches, not that through which one says, "Thus says the Lord."⁹⁹ For that latter was in effect until John, according to what is written in the Gospel, "The law and the prophets were until John."¹⁰⁰ Rather it is that con-

96. Wis 9.6.

97. Von Balthasar, *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, p. 193, cites this passage first in his string of excerpts to illustrate Origen's view of grace and to deny that Origen had Pelagian tendencies.

98. Cf. 1 Cor 12.31; 14.1.

99. Cf. e.g., Is 7.7.

100. Lk 16.16.

cerning which the same Apostle says, "He who prophesies speaks to men for their edification and exhortation and consolation."¹⁰¹ So then, for Paul, "prophecy" is mentioned when anyone speaks to men for their edification and when anyone speaks for their exhortation and consolation; and therefore, it is possible for us to exhibit zealous effort to attain this kind of prophecy, and it also lies within our power that the prophecy that is from God should be added unto us, as we pay attention to it according to the rule or measure of faith by which we do these things.

(9) But according to the Apostle there is also another kind of prophecy that says, "But if you should prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is reproved by all and is judged by all; and the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and then he will fall down on his face and declare that God is really among you."¹⁰² For just as "the Spirit searches all things,"¹⁰³ so also the Word of God thoroughly searches all things, even what is in secret. This is so especially since "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul and spirit, joints too and marrow."¹⁰⁴

(10) For when moral discussion is being carried on in the Church, the conscience of each person is pricked within himself as he acknowledges his own sins as a consequence of the things that are being talked about. And he calls to mind, perhaps, that he has secretly committed some transgression. And sometimes even the appraisal of the wise, who draw conclusions about each person either from his facial expressions or behavior or movements of each one, takes the form of prophecy. Let these things be said about the grace of prophecy.

(11) After this follows: "or ministry, in ministering." We can refer all these things back to the guiding principle [M1217] that was discussed above, i.e., "Do not be wiser than is fitting."¹⁰⁵ Thus, for example, we could say that he who ministers ought not to be wiser than is fitting in his ministering; and whoever

101. 1 Cor 14.3.

103. 1 Cor 2.10.

105. Rom 12.3.

102. 1 Cor 14.24-25.

104. Heb 4.12.

teaches ought not to be wiser than is fitting in his teaching; and he who exhorts ought not to be wiser than it is fitting in his exhortation. For there have been many who have received a ministry or who have received teaching who have become wiser than was fitting, and, having become puffed up in arrogance or set loose into pleasures, have plunged headfirst into destruction.

(12) "He who exhorts, in exhorting." Exhortation is a form of teaching and of the word, by which afflicted souls are relieved when passages of the Holy Scriptures are prudently applied and assembled together. For often a sense of hopelessness comes to a soul through excessive trials; it cannot be repaired or restored easily by whatever kinds of words, no matter how polished and plausible they may be. But if words that have the power of God's grace would be applied, then they penetrate the person's heart and provide consolation. And they recall hope, once the sense of hopelessness has been driven out, according to what was said by the Lord through the prophet, "Priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem!"¹⁰⁶

(13) "He who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, with anxious concern; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." He says that he who gives and pays out to the needy ought to do this with simplicity of heart; that is, lest he should seem to show kindness to the needy, while in his heart he seeks praise from men.¹⁰⁷ Therefore it is not simplicity when one thing seems to be done with the hands and something else is sought in the heart. But whoever presides over brothers or whoever presides over the Church ought to have anxious concern, but not for human matters or secular affairs—for this kind of anxious concern ought to be foreign to those who preside over the Church. Instead they should adopt the kind of anxious concern of which the Apostle speaks: "I am pressed daily by my anxious concern for all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I do not burn?"¹⁰⁸ Then, whoever presides over the churches ought to have this kind of anxious concern, and he should not have that other worldly kind at all.

106. Is 40.2.

108. 2 Cor 11.28-29.

107. Cf. Mt 6.1-4.

(14) "He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." It may appear perhaps to be one and the same thing, what he said above, "He who gives, with simplicity"; and here, "he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." But to me it perhaps seems to be one work, [M1218] yet there is not one disposition of that work. For it is one thing to give to the needy and something else to share a disposition of mercy with the one in need; and therefore, he does not want there to be sadness in such a work. For the one who pays out his money, if he is without faith and despairs over getting it back, he inevitably is grieved like one who has lost it. But he who does this with faith and hope does it cheerfully and joyfully, being assured that this small amount he is spending for the sake of God's command may confer enormous wealth to him in the form of heavenly riches above, but also eternal life.

4. *Love must be without pretense.*¹⁰⁹ I think that all love that is not according to God is with pretense and is not genuine. For God, the creator of the soul, has implanted the disposition of love as well into it, together with the other virtues, in order that it might love God and the things that God wills.¹¹⁰ So then, because he has put this work for love into the soul, when anyone loves anything besides God and the things that please God the love in him must be called false and with pretense. Moreover, if anyone loves his neighbor,¹¹¹ and fails to warn him and correct him when he sees him go astray, that love must be called a pretense. And therefore, love ought to have no flattery and nothing counterfeit, as the same Apostle also says in another passage, "Let love come from a pure heart and from a good conscience and from a faith that is without pretense."¹¹²

5. *Hate what is evil, cleave to the good.*¹¹³ It may perhaps be surprising that among the rest of the good virtues even hatred is adopted and is recorded by the Apostle as if something necessary. From this it is certain that the disposition of hatred is also

109. Rom 12.9.

111. Cf. Mt 22.39.

113. Rom 12.9.

110. Cf. Mt 22.37.

112. 1 Tm 1.5.

engrafted into the soul; for it is praiseworthy to hate vices, to hate sins. For unless one hates vices, he cannot love or preserve the virtues. For instance, if anyone resolves to guard his chastity, he cannot preserve it intact unless he adopts a certain hatred and abhorrence of unchastity. For that continence is difficult, indeed extremely difficult, when that from which one must abstain is longed for, and when the mind's desire is held in check only by fear of the coming judgment. These things are dangerous, indeed extremely dangerous, unless, in keeping with the Apostle's counsel, by hating evil and by waging relentless wars of hatred, so to speak, against these things we should in this way cleave to the good. It should be observed as well [M1219] that as he says elsewhere, "He who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit,"¹¹⁴ so also he says here: Let us cleave to the good; doubtless, that we might attain to being one with the good.

6. *Love one another with brotherly love.*¹¹⁵ This command, that we should love one another as God has also loved us,¹¹⁶ is the first command after the first. For the first one is to love God,¹¹⁷ and among men this one, in turn, is the first, that we should love one another. Therefore, I do not know how it is spurned as the last and least important among men and how we direct our hatred, which we said was implanted within us so that we should hate evil, against the good and, while we love the vices and sins of the flesh, how we hate our brothers. In no other way does it come to pass that we hate what we ought not to hate but that we love what is not fitting.¹¹⁸ This is why we are commanded to love, not to judge, the brothers. For, if you regard someone as ungodly and for that reason you do not judge him worthy to be loved, listen to this, "Christ died for the ungodly."¹¹⁹ Or if, because your brother is a sinner, for that reason you do not regard him worthy of being loved, hear this, "Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners."¹²⁰ If in fact he is righteous, so much the more is he worthy of love; for "the Lord loves the righteous."¹²¹

114. 1 Cor 6.17.

116. Cf. Jn 13.34; 15.12.

118. Cf. *Comm in Cant* 3.7.

120. 1 Tm 1.15.

115. Rom 12.10.

117. Cf. Mt 22.38.

119. Rom 5.6.

121. Ps 146.8.

7. *Outdo one another in honor.*¹²² This is what the Lord taught when he noticed that the Scribes and Pharisees laid claim to the most important places at the feasts,¹²³ and he teaches that when you are invited to a dinner, you should recline in the last place.¹²⁴

8. *Do not be lazy in respect to anxious concern.*¹²⁵ Above he admonished the one who presides to be anxiously concerned.¹²⁶ But now he gives a general command to everyone lest any of us should hear from the Lord, “You evil and lazy servant.”¹²⁷

9. *Be fervent in spirit.*¹²⁸ This also has in view the one who is energetic and anxiously concerned. For he wants us who live under the law of the Spirit to have nothing remiss about us, nothing lukewarm,¹²⁹ but that we carry out everything with spiritual fervor and burning faith.¹³⁰

10. *Serve the Lord.*¹³¹ The one who is able to say, “For us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom everything exists and we through him,”¹³² serves the Lord. No longer will he be ruled by lust or greed or vainglory. [M1220] Now I am aware that several Latin copies have “serve the time,”¹³³ which does not seem to me to have been appropriately introduced, unless perhaps someone thinks that it was said in the sense in which the same Apostle says elsewhere, “The time is short, it remains that even those who have, should be as if they did not have”;¹³⁴ or as that which has been said, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”¹³⁵

122. Rom 12.10.

124. Cf. Lk 14.10.

126. Cf. Rom 12.8. See also 9.3.13.

128. Rom 12.11.

130. Cf. *Princ* 2.8.3.

132. 1 Cor 8.6.

123. Cf. Mt 23.6; Lk 14.7.

125. Rom 12.11.

127. Mt 25.26.

129. Cf. Rv 3.16.

131. Rom 12.11.

133. In the present sentence Rufinus is addressing his Latin readers, but the variant belongs to the Greek tradition and, therefore, the original discussion probably derives from Origen. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 528. Origen held textual variants in high esteem, often without deciding on which was more correct.

134. 1 Cor 7.29.

135. Eph 5.16.

11. *Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction.*¹³⁶ One rejoices in hope who “does not look to what is seen, but who awaits what is unseen”;¹³⁷ and who knows that “the sufferings of this time are not worth comparing to the future glory that will be revealed to us.”¹³⁸ This same one will also be patient in affliction because “affliction produces patience, patience approved character, and approved character, hope”;¹³⁹ but only if we fulfill the words that follow, i.e.: *Persevere in prayer.*¹⁴⁰ For since human weakness does not suffice, we need to invoke help from God in our prayers.

12. *Share in the needs of the saints.*¹⁴¹ I remember that the Latin copies have, rather, “Share in the remembrances of the saints.” But we should not disturb the tradition or prejudice the truth, especially since both [readings] contribute to edification.¹⁴² For to supply the needs of the saints, sincerely and becomingly, not as if they crave alms, but as those who possess our wealth, so to speak, in common with them, and to remember the saints, whether at church services or instead that we might make progress by the memory of them, seem appropriate and fitting.

13. *Pursue hospitality.*¹⁴³ How worthily has he apprehended the magnificence of hospitality in a single word! For in saying that hospitality is to be pursued, he is showing not only that we should receive the stranger who comes to us, but also that we should inquire after, and be anxiously concerned about, and pursue, and make a diligent search for strangers, wherever they may be, lest perchance they may be sitting in the street or lying somewhere without a roof over their heads.¹⁴⁴ Call to mind

136. Rom 12.12.

137. Cf. 2 Cor 4.18.

138. Rom 8.18.

139. Rom 5.3-4.

140. Rom 12.12.

141. Rom 12.13.

142. See 9.10 n. 133. This variant belongs to the Greek tradition and thus can be traced to Origen. Notice again the high regard for the textual tradition. For a discussion of the origin of the reading, see Sanday & Headlam, *Romans*, p. 362. Westcott, “Origenes,” p. 116, assumes that Rufinus is the speaker in the present passage and observes that the sentence reveals the principal place that the Latin text held in Rufinus’s thoughts.

143. Rom 12.13.

144. Cf. Jgs 19.15.

Lot¹⁴⁵ and you will discover that it was not the strangers who sought for him, but he who looked for strangers; and this was pursuing hospitality.¹⁴⁶

14. *Bless and do not curse.*¹⁴⁷ The Apostle, in pursuing quite extensively moral subject matter, unites conduct, mind, purpose, and even the talk and speech of disciples. [M1221] He does not want those who believe in Christ to send cursing from out of their mouth,¹⁴⁸ but to speak well, talk well, and invoke good upon others, so that as a result of this both the Lord's good servants and the good teachers may be believed to be disciples. One should be aware, however, that this word of blessing is found in different ways in the Scriptures. In fact, even God is found to bless both men and the other things that he has created,¹⁴⁹ and men or other created beings are commanded to bless God.¹⁵⁰ But the blessing of God always imparts some gift to those who are blessed by him; but men are said to bless God because they praise him and offer thanks to him. Here, however, when the Apostle says, "Bless and do not curse," it is as if he warns us that when we are provoked by enemies or when we are enraged by injustices, we are not to pay back curses with curses,¹⁵¹ but we should do what he himself writes concerning himself when he says, "We are cursed and we bless."¹⁵²

15. *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*¹⁵³ Here as well we need to preserve a fitting and appropriate distinction. For it is not with just any joys that the joys of Christians are to be associated, nor should our tears be joined with just any weeping. Surely it is not the case that, when I see someone rejoicing over the acquisition of money or over the extent of his possessions or the greatness of secular honors, I ought to congratulate such individuals. For I know that sorrows and tears will follow joys of this sort. Indeed, so much so are we not to re-

145. Cf. Gn 19.1-2.

147. Rom 12.14.

149. Cf. Gn 1.22, 28.

151. Cf. 1 Pt 3.9.

153. Rom 12.15.

146. Cf. *Hom in Gn* 4.1-3.

148. Cf. Eph 4.29.

150. Cf. Dn 3.57ff. LXX.

152. 1 Cor 4.12.

joyce over such things that the Lord did not even allow his disciples to rejoice that they were seeing demons subjected to them. Instead, he said to them, "Do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you; but rejoice," he says, "that your names have been written in the book of life."¹⁵⁴ We too, then, ought to rejoice with these kinds of people when we see them carrying out deeds of such a nature that are worthy of being recorded in heaven, whether they are works of righteousness or love or peace or mercy, and done in such a way that they deserve to be recorded in the book of life. Moreover, if we see anyone converted from error, and having abandoned the darkness of ignorance, to have come to the light of truth,¹⁵⁵ to have merited the forgiveness of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we ought to rejoice with such persons.

(2) In a similar way, "weep with those who weep": We are not being commanded to weep with those who weep over their own dead¹⁵⁶ or who weep over worldly losses. For we know that "the grief of this world brings about death."¹⁵⁷ Thus, our tears are not to be associated with such people. Instead we are to weep with those of whom the Lord says, "Blessed [M1222] are those who weep, for they will be comforted."¹⁵⁸ If anyone weeps over his own sins, if anyone is converted to repentance after committing transgressions, and washes away his error with tears, if anyone, placed in this habitation, even groans¹⁵⁹ and desires to go back to Christ¹⁶⁰ and alleviates this holy longing with an outpouring of tears, we should join our tears and associate our groans with such persons. For "the grief that is according to God produces a sure salvation through repentance."¹⁶¹

16. *Be of one mind toward one another.*¹⁶² These words have become rather obscure in translation, not in essence.¹⁶³ What he

154. Lk 10.20; cf. Rv 3.5.

155. Cf. Jn 3.21.

156. Cf. Mt 8.22. See also *Hom in Gn* 8.7.

157. 2 Cor 7.10.

158. Mt 5.4.

159. Cf. 2 Cor 5.4.

160. Cf. 2 Cor 5.8.

161. 2 Cor 7.10.

162. Rom 12.16.

163. Rufinus is speaking again. The Greek reads: τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονούντες, literally, "think one and the same thing toward one another."

is saying is that we should be as mindful of our brother as we are of our own selves; and thus we should wish for our neighbor as we also wish for our own selves. As even the Lord said in the Gospel, "Do unto others the same things you wish men to do unto you."¹⁶⁴

17. *Do not set your mind on high things, but be of a common mind with the lowly.*¹⁶⁵ He is teaching that pride must be avoided in everything; for this is what he calls "setting one's mind on high things." And rightly must pride be shunned, seeing that the Scripture says, "For pride is the beginning of falling away from God."¹⁶⁶ He has admirably set forth the principle of humility with a single phrase. For to be of a common mind with the lowly and to love the lowly and to come down to their level means to accustom oneself to imitate him who, "though he was in the form of God, took the form of a slave and humbled himself to the point of death."¹⁶⁷

18. *Do not be wise in your own estimation.*¹⁶⁸ The one who seems to be wise in his own estimation is a fool with arrogance; he cannot know the true wisdom of God who reveres his own foolishness as if it were wisdom. After all, Paul earlier showed that this was the cause of the unbelief for the Jews, saying of them, "Being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they were not subjected to the righteousness of God."¹⁶⁹ So then, also the one who is wise in his own estimation cannot be wise in God's estimation.

19. *Do not repay anyone evil for evil.*¹⁷⁰ If to inflict evil is a sin, also to repay evil is not just, as some think, but is a similar sin or, in my opinion, even worse. For the one who first inflicted evil did not sense that what he was doing was evil. But the one who has repaid evil for that very thing by which he has been moved to vengeance has declared that he has sensed that what

164. Mt 7.12.

166. Sir 10.12 LXX.

168. Rom 12.16.

170. Rom 12.17.

165. Rom 12.16.

167. Cf. Phil 2.6-8.

169. Rom 10.3.

he is repaying is an evil. And therefore, one must always look to [M1223] him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I shall repay, says the Lord."¹⁷¹

20. *Take thought for what is good in the sight of all men.*¹⁷² A person takes thought for what is good in the sight of all men not by pleasing the vices and fashions of each person—otherwise this Apostle's sentence that says, "If I still wanted to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ,"¹⁷³ will be contradictory—but by balancing the conduct and deeds of one's life in such a way that one cannot be reproached by any man. He is the one who takes thought for what is good in the sight of all men. Moreover, we should pay attention to the fact that the Apostle did not say that we should please all men, but that we should take thought for what is good in the sight of all men; that is, we should do good, whether the good pleases them or not.

21. *If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, have peace with all men.*¹⁷⁴ The Apostle knows that the peace that men have among themselves does not depend on one side, but on both sides. Lest another person's mind, if it becomes implacable, seems to prevent us from possessing the good of peace, he has given a very moderate command, that our mind should anyhow always be prepared for peace and that the blame for discord should not lie with us but with the other. But perhaps someone should say, How is it possible for us to have peace with all men? What shall we do about the Scripture that says, "You were watching the thief and were running with him, even when you were throwing in your lot with the adulterers"?¹⁷⁵ This is why the Apostle has admirably added, "so far as it depends on you"; that is to say, so far as it agrees with your purpose and your faith. For to have peace and fellowship with evil men does not agree with our faith and purpose, although a different distinction could be maintained in this passage. For it is one thing to love men,

171. Dt 32.35; Rom 12.19.

173. Gal 1.10.

175. Ps 50.18.

172. Rom 12.17.

174. Rom 12.18.

another to love crimes. He who loves men, loves God's creature; he who loves crimes is pursuing the schemes of the devil.¹⁷⁶ Those who are perfect, then, love men by the very fact that they hate the crimes; and, hating in them the fact that they are sinning, they do not cease to love that which God has created.

22. *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but leave room for wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I [Mt 22:4] shall repay, says the Lord."*¹⁷⁷ It seems to me that there are two ways to understand the sense in which those who do not avenge themselves leave room for wrath. For even through the fact, for instance, that they do not pay back fist for fist or wrangling for wrangling they have left room for the wrath of him who caused the injury to pass away and die down. For no one will be found who is of such a rabid disposition that, when he fails to receive retaliation for the injury he has inflicted, would once again fly into a rage. On the contrary, as if the fit of rage has been poured out and released, it inevitably abates. It is, therefore, also a great gain when both the multitude of the sinner's sins are restrained¹⁷⁸ and the patience of the one who suffered the injury becomes commendable before God.

(2) But there is also this way to leave room for wrath. According to the statement of Paul himself, for these injuries that are inflicted, those who sin are storing up for themselves a treasure of wrath on the day of wrath when God will repay to each one according to his works.¹⁷⁹ If we avenge ourselves, then, it is nothing great that we pay back for an injury received, for example, a slap for a slap, or a stone for a stone, or abusive speech, no less, for abusive speech. But if we reserve these things for the vengeance of God, we leave room in him who injures us for that wrath that, it is scarcely to be doubted, he himself is storing up as a treasure for himself by his own evil actions,¹⁸⁰ wrath that would exact much more grievous punishments from him in the judgment of God than we are capable of inflicting.

176. Cf. Eph 6.11.

178. Cf. Jas 5.20; 1 Pt 4.8.

180. Cf. Rom 2.5.

177. Rom 12.19; Dt 32.35.

179. Cf. Rom 2.5-6.

23. *But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for in doing this you will heap burning coals on his head.*¹⁸¹ Indeed the Lord also commands these things in the Gospels.¹⁸² And although the interpretation is perfectly clear where, according to what we said above,¹⁸³ to the same extent that we not only do not retaliate against enemies and those who injure, but even offer good, to that same extent we heap up their punishments at the judgment of God—for their condemnation is truly just if they are convicted before the Lord for having inflicted evils upon those from whom they have received good things—nevertheless, let us see whether perhaps an interpretation of this command may not contain something more worthy.

(2) For even Jeremiah [Isaiah]¹⁸⁴ the prophet says to the sinful daughter of Babylon, “You have burning coals, sit upon them, they will be a help to you.”¹⁸⁵ Perhaps then here as well these burning coals that are gathered upon the [M1225] enemy’s head are gathered there to be a help to him. For it can come to pass that the savage and barbaric spirit of an enemy, should he sense our kindness and see our humanity, affection, and piety, may be seized with remorse in his heart. He may repent of what he has done and, as a result, a certain fire may be kindled within him that torments and burns him on account of his awareness of what he has done. And these will be the burning coals that are gathered upon his head as a result of our deeds of mercy and piety. “Head” is the name given to the governing part of the heart,¹⁸⁶ and it is rightly called the head since from its intelligence and wisdom all the members are guided.

24. *Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.*¹⁸⁷ They are conquered by evil whoever repays evil when provoked by

181. Rom 12.20; Prv 25.21.

182. Cf. Mt 5.42–44; Lk 6.27–29.

183. Cf. 9.22.1–2.

184. For other mistaken scriptural citations, cf. 1.3.5 n. 55.

185. Is 47.14–15 LXX.

186. *Principale cordis*. Cf. 5.6.3 n. 355. *Principale* renders τὸ ἡγεμονικόν. Cf. Ps 50.12 LXX. For a helpful discussion of this Greek term, see P. A. Lieske, *Die Theologie der Logos-mystic bei Origenes* (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1938), pp. 103–10.

187. Rom 12.21.

evils. But he conquers evil with good whoever returns good things for the evils he has received.¹⁸⁸ For it is certain that this is the nature of evil, that it would increase and grow out of things similar to it. It is as if you are adding fire to fire or combining an overcast sky with the darkness of night. But if you offer good, evil will be extinguished. For contrary things are destroyed by their opposites, just as fire is quenched by water and darkness is banished by light.

(2) But perhaps someone should say that Paul has departed from the proposed subject owing to his lack of skill with words.¹⁸⁹ For he had proposed to speak about the gifts of the graces that are given through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹⁰ And to be sure, what he says, “whether prophecy or ministry or teaching or exhortation,”¹⁹¹ can pertain to these spiritual gifts. Perhaps also what follows, “He who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, with anxious concern; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness,”¹⁹² could be joined to what comes before this. But as for what he enumerates after these things, “love should be without pretense; hate evil; cleave to the good and love one another with brotherly love; outdo one another in honor”;¹⁹³ and other things of this sort, one will say that these are precepts rather than gifts.

(3) But let us consider more carefully whether perhaps because he has undertaken to treat moral subject matter in all these things and to make the Christian equipped, not only stable in the faith of the truth but also immovable in their morals, therefore he likewise adds moral precepts to the gifts of the graces to show Christians that these are likewise given through the grace of God. For there are also many Gentiles with well-ordered morals and with upright customs, yet who fail to attribute what they have to God nor do [M1226] they declare that the grace given to them is from him, but either they ascribe it to their own diligence or they boast over their teachers and founders. But the Apostle is showing us that all that is good is

188. Cf. Rom 12.17.

190. Cf. Rom 12.6.

192. Rom 12.8.

189. Cf. 2 Cor 11.6.

191. Cf. Rom 12.6–8.

193. Rom 12.9–10.

from God and is given through his Holy Spirit, just as the apostle James also says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights";¹⁹⁴ so that "he who boasts should boast in the Lord."¹⁹⁵

25. Now, then, let us see what the Apostle says additionally in what follows: *Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities.*¹⁹⁶ It does not seem very commendable to me here that what he commands to be subject to the authorities he calls the soul. For he would never have said, Let every spirit be subject to authority, but "every soul."¹⁹⁷ We have already frequently spoken about the difference between them, that sometimes a man is identified through the soul, sometimes through the flesh, sometimes through the spirit. And when man needs to be identified by the better aspect, as one who ought to be understood as spiritual, he is called spirit; when, by his inferior aspect he is identified, he is called soul; and when his lowest aspect is being identified, he is called flesh. On repeated occasions we have furnished proofs for these things from the Scriptures.¹⁹⁸

(2) Now then, the Apostle is laying down precepts for believers and he wants us to preserve rest and peace in this present life, so far as it depends on us.¹⁹⁹ And indeed, if we are such that, having been united with the Lord, we are one spirit with him,²⁰⁰ we are said to be subject to the Lord. But if we are not yet that way, but there is still a common soul within us that still possesses something of this world, one that is in someone, a soul shackled by pre-occupations, the Apostle lays down precepts for it and tells it to be subjected to the authorities of the world; for the Lord also said that those who have the inscription of Caesar within themselves should render to Caesar the

194. Jas 1.17.

195. 1 Cor 1.31.

196. Rom 13.1.

197. "Origen's philosophizing here seems to me more clever than true," Erasmus, CWE 56:346. For Origen's treatment of Rom 13, see Schelkle, "Staat und Kirche in der patristischen Auslegung von Röm 13:1-7," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 44 (1952-53), pp. 223-36.

198. Cf. 1.5.3; 1.10.2; 1.18.5; 6.1.5. 199. Cf. Rom 12.18.

200. Cf. 1 Cor 6.17.

things that are Caesar's.²⁰¹ Peter and John used to have nothing to render to Caesar;²⁰² for Peter says, "Gold and silver I do not have."²⁰³ He who does not have this has nothing to render to Caesar nor, therefore, what he should subject to the higher authorities. But he who has money or possessions or any worldly preoccupations should listen up: "Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities."

26. *For there is no authority, he says, except from God.*²⁰⁴ Perhaps someone will say: What then? Is even that authority that persecutes God's servants, attacks the faith, and subverts religion, from God? To this we shall briefly respond. There is no one who does not know that even sight [M1227] is a gift from God to us, as well as hearing and the ability to think. Well then, though we have these things from God, it nevertheless is within our authority to make use of our vision either for good things or evil things.²⁰⁵ In a similar way we use our hearing, the movement of our hands, and the reflection of thought; and in this the judgment of God is just,²⁰⁶ because we misuse these things that he has given for good use, for impious and wicked service. So then, all authority has also been given by God "to punish those who are evil but to praise those who are good";²⁰⁷ just as the same Apostle says in what follows.²⁰⁸ But the judgment of God will be just²⁰⁹ in respect to those who govern the authority they have received in accordance with their own impieties and not in accordance with God's laws.

27. This is why he says: *Therefore, whoever resists authority resists the ordinance of God.*²¹⁰ Here he is not speaking about those authorities that instigate persecutions against the faith; for in such cases one must say, "It is necessary to obey God rather than men."²¹¹ Instead he is speaking about general authorities, which

201. Mt 22.20-21.

203. Acts 3.6.

204. Rom 13.1. Origen refers to this section of the *Commentary* in *Cels* 8.65.

205. Cf. 8.8.6.

207. 1 Pt 2.14.

209. Cf. 2 Thes 1.5.

211. Acts 5.29.

202. Cf. Acts 3.3-5.

206. Cf. 2 Thes 1.5.

208. Cf. Rom 13.3-4.

210. Rom 13.2.

*are not a terror to the good work but to the evil.*²¹² Surely the one who resists them procures condemnation for himself for the quality of his own deeds.

28. *Do you wish, he says, to have no fear of the authority? Do what is good, and you will receive praise from it; for it is God's minister for your good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for no reason; for it is the minister of God, the avenger to execute wrath on him who does what is evil.*²¹³

(2) Paul troubles [me] by these words, that he calls the secular authority and the worldly judgment a minister of God; and he does this not merely one time, but he even repeats it a second and a third time. I would like to endeavor to ascertain the sense in which a worldly judge is a minister of God. We find it written in the Acts of the Apostles that when the apostles had come together they established decrees that we who have believed in Christ from the Gentiles were obligated to observe, among which are contained: "The apostles and the elders, to the brothers in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, to all who have believed from among the Gentiles, greetings. Since we have heard that some have gone out from us and are disturbing you in matters that we have not commanded";²¹⁴ and after a few things is added, "Therefore, it has pleased the Holy Spirit and us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials, that you abstain [M1228] from what is sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication; by keeping yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."²¹⁵ In these precepts, then, in which he says that no further burden is to be imposed upon the Gentile believers except that they should abstain from what is sacrificed to idols and from blood and from strangled things and from fornication, neither murder is prohibited nor adultery nor theft nor homosexuality nor other crimes that are punished by divine and human laws. But if that which he mentioned above alone has to be observed by Christians, it will appear that he has given them license in re-

212. Rom 13.3.

214. Acts 15.23-24.

213. Rom 13.3-4.

215. Acts 15.28-29.

spect to these other crimes. But observe the ordinance of the Holy Spirit; for indeed since the other crimes are avenged by secular laws and since it was deemed superfluous now to prohibit these things by divine law, since they are adequately punished by human law, he decrees only those things concerning which no human law had spoken about but which seemed to be in agreement with the religion. From this it is clear that the worldly judge fulfills the greatest part of God's law. For all the crimes that God wants to be punished, he has willed that they be punished not through the priests and leaders of the churches, but through the worldly judge. And aware of this, Paul rightly names him a minister of God and an avenger of the one who does what is evil.

(3) But it seems to me that what he says about the authority, "Do what is good and you will receive praise from it," needs to be examined more deeply. For there is no tradition for secular authorities to praise those who fail to become criminals. To be sure they punish those who sin, but there is no custom for them to praise highly those who do not sin. But let us consider whether perhaps Paul, even when he appears to be teaching about moral matters, always refuses to bypass the opportunity to insert something about the mysteries. For he knows that "all who have sinned under the law will be judged through the law."²¹⁶ But doubtless that law according to which he lived will convict each one in the judgment. Now we have shown that the Holy Spirit allowed room in many things to human law; therefore, it is certain that on the day of judgment, even on the basis of those laws, the one who has not committed anything against the enacted laws will receive praise in God's presence, when the Lord will say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things; I shall place you over many things."²¹⁷

(4) One should know, however, that "law has not been appointed for the righteous man, but for the unrighteous [M1 229] and insubordinate, for criminals, murderers, for the

²¹⁶. Rom 2.12.

²¹⁷. Mt 25.21.

vile, for perjurers, and others of this sort."²¹⁸ For they are the ones who fear the law. But he who does good, i.e., he who does what is good not out of fear of the law but out of love for the good, no longer lives under the law of the letter but under the law of the Spirit.²¹⁹

29. *Therefore, it is necessary to be subject, not only on account of wrath, but also on account of conscience. For it is for this reason that you also pay taxes; for they are God's ministers who are there for this very purpose.*²²⁰ By these things Paul sets the rule for the Church of God not to oppose secular rulers and authorities. Through the quietness and tranquility of life it should practice the work of righteousness and piety.²²¹ For instance, if we suppose that believers in Christ are not subject to secular authorities, that they do not have to pay taxes, that they are not required to pay out revenues, and that they owe no one fear or honor, would not the weapons of leaders and rulers deservedly turn against them? Would [such Christians] not make them justified persecutors, but themselves guilty? For they would have already seemed to be attacked not because of their faith, but because of rebelliousness. To be sure there would be a case against them that is worthy of death, but it would be a death unworthy of merit.

30. Providing for these things, then, Paul says through his immense wisdom, *Pay to all what is due them; taxes to whom taxes are due; revenue to whom revenue is due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due. You should owe no one anything except that you love one another.*²²² I believe, however, that not even these things that Paul brings forth are without mysteries, customary for his statements. For we have already taught above²²³ that every creature and every spirit, whether the good and the upright or even those of a depraved and evil purpose, serves God and presents itself for suitable ministry. For the Apostle has

218. Cf. 1 Tm 1.9.

220. Rom 13.5-6.

222. Rom 13.7-8.

219. Cf. 4.4-9.

221. Cf. Is 32.17; 1 Tm 2.5.

223. Cf. 7.1.2-3.

made a pronouncement that applies to all of them together where he said, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister on behalf of those who will receive the inheritance of salvation?"²²⁴

(2) So then, all spirits minister to the life of human beings, but each, as we have said, according to its own worth and merit; for even they are called ministers by whose ministry the things that pertain to the world are being accomplished. This is also why the Apostle, who had said of himself, "For the world has been crucified to me and I [M1230] to the world,"²²⁵ also says this: "But we have not received the spirit of this world but the Spirit who is from God."²²⁶ But whoever is still of the world and is mindful of the things that are of the world and seeks the things of the flesh is necessarily subject to the ministers of the world;²²⁷ but he is subjected because of the wrath that he has stored up as a treasure for himself from sins.²²⁸ And it is for this reason it seems to me that he says, "Therefore, it is necessary to be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience."²²⁹ In the conscience too a person is subjected, since he has something in him that will be accused by conscience. Therefore, we pay certain taxes to them, as long as we still live according to the flesh and think on things that belong to the flesh.²³⁰ For if we till the Lord's vineyard and cultivate the true vine, who is Christ,²³¹ within us, we do not pay taxes from that vineyard to the ministers of the world,²³² but we return fruits in time to the Lord himself.²³³ As the Savior himself says in the Gospels, "For he takes the vineyard from the wicked tenants and will give it to other tenants who may return its fruits to him in time."²³⁴

(3) Moreover, what he says, "Pay to all what is due them; tax to whom tax is due; revenue to whom revenue is due," seems to me to be distinct from what he goes on to say in what follows,

224. Heb 1.14.

226. 1 Cor 2.12.

227. Cf. Heb 1.14. "Origen, in his usual way, twists this necessity to apply only to those who are not yet entirely spiritual," Erasmus, CWE 56:351.

228. Cf. Rom 2.5.

230. Cf. Rom 8.5, 12.

232. Cf. Heb 1.14.

234. Mt 21.41.

225. Gal 6.14.

229. Rom 13.5.

231. Cf. Mt 21.41; Jn 15.1.

233. Cf. Mt 21.41.

“fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due,” even regarding those ministers for whom we have said above taxes and revenue are pertinent.²³⁵ For they exact from us taxes from our land and revenues from our business. And why am I saying, “from us”? Tax was exacted even from our Lord Jesus Christ when he was in the flesh; it was on that account that he claims to pay, not in that he is obligated to, but lest he cause them to stumble.²³⁶ But if he who had nothing in himself that belonged to Caesar²³⁷ and in whom there was nothing of his own possession that the ruler of this world, on arrival, found,²³⁸ though he was free, nevertheless pays tax—for he even went to death in order that he would be “free among the dead”²³⁹—how much more necessary is it for us to pay out these taxes of the flesh and to pay revenues for our business through diverse trials²⁴⁰ to the spirits exacting them from us,²⁴¹ but only if we do business with the pearls of the kingdom of heaven?²⁴²

(4) But we ought to refer “fear and honor” more to him who says through the prophet, “Do you not call me Lord and Father? And if I am Lord, where is my fear? And if I am Father, where is my honor?”²⁴³ What he adds later, of course, [M1231] that we should owe nothing to anyone, is certainly to be referred to the ministers to whom one becomes a debtor when he sins.²⁴⁴ For on many occasions we have repeatedly shown that sin is a debt.²⁴⁵ So Paul wants every debt of sin to be paid and absolutely no debt of sin to remain among us, but for our debt of love to abide and never to cease; for paying this debt even daily and owing it at all times is beneficial to us.

31. Finally, he asserts how great of a virtue love is in what comes next. He says, *For whoever loves his neighbor has fulfilled the*

235. Cf. Heb 1.14; Rom 13.6.

237. Cf. Mt 22.19, 21.

239. Cf. Ps 88.5.

241. Cf. Heb 1.14; Rom 13.7.

243. Mal 1.6.

244. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 5:104 n. 70, observes that these ministers must be demons who are helpers of death and of the devil and are employed in God's service. Cf. 7.1.3; 1 Enoch 66.1.

245. Cf. 4.1.15; 5.3.3. See also *Hom in Lk* 23.6; 35.10–11, 15.

236. Cf. Mt 17.24–27.

238. Cf. Jn 14.30.

240. Cf. Jas 1.2.

242. Cf. Mt 13.45–46.

law. For “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false testimony,” “You shall not covet,” and if there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*²⁴⁶ And briefly tying to this ultimate definition of such a great good, he says, *The love of one’s neighbor works no evil; love, then, is the fulfillment of the law.*²⁴⁷ Above he had said, “For the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law”; and because it seemed difficult how anyone could fulfill the entire law, he rendered an extremely rich definition in a single expression when he says, “The love of one’s neighbor works no evil”; and therefore, “love is the fulfillment of the law.” In fact, put love in for each of the commandments of the law and see how easily they can all be fulfilled. Can the one who loves his neighbor murder him? Certainly no one would kill the one he loves. Love, therefore, is the means by which what is commanded, “You shall not murder,”²⁴⁸ is fulfilled. And again, does a man who loves his neighbor commit adultery with his wife? Certainly not. If you love your neighbor, then, you will not commit adultery.²⁴⁹ In a similar way as well the one who loves his neighbor does not steal his possessions; and he who loves his neighbor does not bear false testimony against him.²⁵⁰ The same thing applies to the other commands of the law. If there is love toward one’s neighbor, they are kept without any effort.

(2) I believe, however, that the Apostle wanted us to learn something even more advantageous in this. For, if you very carefully ask who is our neighbor, you will learn in the Gospel that our neighbor is the one who came along while we were lying on the ground, wounded by thieves and stripped naked by demons. He put us on the beast of his own body, and led us to the stable of the Church, and for our care and attention he gave the innkeeper—either Paul himself or all who preside over the Church—the two denarii of the Old [M1232] and New Testaments. He promised to supply the expenses for our

246. Rom 13,8–9.

248. Cf. Ex 20.13.

250. Cf. Ex 20.15–16.

247. Rom 13.10.

249. Cf. Ex 20.14.

care.²⁵¹ Therefore, if we love this neighbor, we are fulfilling the entire law and all the commandments by his love. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe."²⁵² It is absolutely impossible for one who loves Christ with his whole heart and with all his inner being²⁵³ to do anything displeasing to Christ. For the one who loves him not only does not commit murder, which is prohibited by the law, but he does not become angry with his brother²⁵⁴ because he whom he loves takes delight in this. And not only does he not commit adultery, but he does not look at a woman in order to desire her.²⁵⁵ But instead he says to him, "My soul desires and faints for the living God."²⁵⁶ When would one who loves Christ, who has even abandoned everything he owns to follow Christ, think about stealing?²⁵⁷ On what occasion does the one who loves Christ bear false testimony, when he knows that the one he loves was betrayed by false testimony?²⁵⁸ He who loves Christ inevitably loves his neighbor as well.²⁵⁹ For a disciple is marked as belonging to Christ by this proof alone, if he loves his neighbors.²⁶⁰ For it is certain that he who does not love his neighbor does not know Christ.²⁶¹

32. *And this, knowing the time, that the hour is already here for us to rise from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we believed. The night has advanced, but the day has drawn near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the weapons of light. Let us walk honorably as in the day.*²⁶²

(2) Since, after the Apostle had conducted all the discussions either about the Gentiles or about the Jews, he introduced moral subject matter as well in order to incite his hearers more and more to conversion, now he likewise introduces the pressing matter of the time that is of the highest importance in

251. Cf. Lk 10.29-37. For a slightly different treatment of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, cf. *Hom in Lk* 34.2f.

252. Rom 10.4.

253. Cf. Dt 6.5; Mt 22.37.

254. Cf. Ex 20.13; Mt 5.21-22.

255. Cf. Mt 5.27-28.

256. Cf. Ps 84.2.

257. Cf. Mt 19.27; Lk 5.11, 28; 14.33.

258. Cf. Ex 20.16; Mt 26.59.

259. Cf. 1 Jn 4.20-21.

260. Cf. Jn 13.35.

261. Cf. 1 Jn 4.8.

262. Rom 13.11-13.

all matters. For there is no one who is so sleepy and apathetic that the brightness of an approaching day does not wake him up and for whom the inpouring of the sun fails to afford sight to his eyes. There is also, then, what one might call the sleep of the soul. It is, as we have already said on repeated occasions, that the soul has its own eyes, ears, hands, and feet, each of which are to be conceived of as subsisting within it not so much as bodily members but as operations by means of which it is moved and incited in each one.²⁶³ Then doubtless a sleep befalls [a soul] as well, corresponding to its having eyes. For it will deservedly be said to be sleeping if it fails to do things that belong to God at the right time but dozes off through lethargy.

(3) It is for that reason, then, that Paul, the herald of Christ, [M1233] by traveling around the world, which was fast asleep in its lethargy, announces that the light has already come and that it is time to wake from sleep, and that the night, i.e., that time when ignorance ruled over human beings, had now passed, and the day of knowledge is already impending,²⁶⁴ as the advent of the sun of righteousness²⁶⁵ draws near and as the darkness vanishes. This is also why he sounds the wake up call, lest anyone through laziness experience the night while it is light, and he calls for the works of darkness to be laid aside and for the weapons of light to be put on. The works of darkness are those actions that are estranged from God; the weapons of light, on the other hand, are the reception of the virtues. And as we have said that it is disgraceful to sleep when the day is already pressing upon us, it is much more disgraceful to carry out the works of darkness at a time of light and day.

(4) Yet one should know that the coming of this light and day should be interpreted in two ways: both in a general way that applies to everyone and in a specific way to each individual. Light and day will come to everyone universally when the time of the future age arrives; in comparison with that age, the period of this present world is called darkness. For time is daily

263. Cf. 8.5.5-7; 8.8.2, 6-7.

264. Cf. 5.8.9; *Hom in Gn* 1.5; *Cels* 6.66-67.

265. Cf. *Mal* 3.2; *Wis* 5.6.

hastening onward, as the days pass; and as the periods that are added to the past are doubtless being diminished from the future. This is why he says, "Our salvation is nearer now than when we believed," and every day it draws nearer; just as the Lord also identified the signs of the consummation of the age when he said, "When you see all these things, lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near."²⁶⁶ Yet the arrival of this day can also take place within each individual. For if Christ is within us in the heart; if he causes it to be day in us; if the meaning of knowledge should put our ignorance to flight and we, by turning away from unworthy actions, then pursue what is holy and honorable, then we are found to be in the light and we are, as it were, walking honorably in the day.

33. What the works of darkness are that must be laid aside, he enumerates consequently and says, *Not in revelry and drunkenness; not in fornications and debauchery; not in strife and jealousy.*²⁶⁷ These are the works of darkness that are also called the works of the flesh²⁶⁸ in those who surrender their flesh to excess and debauchery, neither to holiness nor to the Lord. For what else will follow revelry, i.e., disgraceful and extravagant feasts at which the utterly shameful drunkenness is inevitably a companion, if not fornication and debauchery? "Fornications"²⁶⁹ have received their name from filthy acts of lying down together, [M1234] which seem more befitting of wild animals and beasts than rational human beings.

(2) "Not in strife and jealousy." Those things that he spoke about above are vices of the flesh; now these are vices of the spirit as well; though all of them together may be called works of the flesh and works of darkness since, in reality, strife and jealousy are among the evils of those who live according to the flesh and who walk in darkness.²⁷⁰ But he who is in the light and

²⁶⁶ Lk 21.28.

²⁶⁷ Rom 13.13.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Gal 5.19.

²⁶⁹ Lit. "beds" or "lairs," i.e., the resting place used by humans or animals. This reproduces the Greek κούτη, "bed," which is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Rom 8.12; 1 Jn 1.6.

who walks honorably as in the day carries out nothing through strife or through vain conceit.²⁷¹ Thus, in this way a person lays aside what he calls above the works of darkness.

34. But how what he said, “Let us put on the weapons of light,”²⁷² must be done, he now explains. *But put on, he says, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will make no provision for the flesh, with its lusts.*²⁷³ Repeatedly we have said that Christ is at the same time wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, truth, and all the virtues.²⁷⁴ Assuredly the one who has received these is said to have put on Christ. For if Christ is all these things, the one who has them necessarily has Christ as well. Now the one who possesses these things “makes no provision for the flesh, with its lusts.” The Apostle practices his customary moderation,²⁷⁵ he does not forbid provision for the flesh to be made through all things. For certainly it must be provided with necessities. But with respect to pleasures and excess and every kind of lust, provision is to be absolutely excluded.

35. *Receive the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. One believes that he can eat all things; he who is weak eats vegetables.*²⁷⁶

(2) Above, as well, the Apostle has mentioned weakness of faith where he says of Abraham, “Though he was nearly one hundred years old, he was not weak in faith.”²⁷⁷ In those passages we explained this weakness of faith with whatever was able to occur to us.²⁷⁸ But also, now he speaks about one who is weak in faith, whom he says is weak in that he does not believe he can eat all things, but his faith is so small that he considers that the only food appropriate for him is vegetables. This can seem to have been said to those who had believed from the Gentiles who were exalting themselves in the freedom of faith, whereby they were not believing that anything was common or unclean, in opposition to those who believed from the circumcision who

271. Cf. 1 Jn 1.7; Phil 2.3.

273. Rom 13.14.

275. Cf. 3.2.2; 6.14.2.

277. Rom 4.19.

272. Rom 13.12.

274. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6.

276. Rom 14.1-2.

278. Cf. 4.6.4ff.

were still observing the distinction of foods according to the tradition of the law, [M1235] so that he would seem to be rebuking and admonishing them, to prevent them from insulting those for whom the long held custom of observing the distinction between foods was still causing a certain degree of hesitation.

(3) He is, therefore, commanding him who is weak in this faith in this way to be received instead and not to be rejected nor to be judged as an unbeliever. For it is one thing to be an unbeliever and something else to be weak in faith. For one who does not have faith is called an unbeliever; but one who hesitates in some aspect of the faith is weak in faith.

36. So then, the Apostle brings the body of the Church together in peace and says: *Let not him who eats despise the one who does not eat; and let not him who does not eat judge the one who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? He stands or falls to his own master; but he will stand; for the Lord is able to make him stand.*²⁷⁹ Obviously he is saying through this that there should be no dissension among believers on account of foods. But Paul seems to have uttered these things with a still profounder meaning. For to those who come from the circumcision, the law did not command anything about eating vegetables that would seem to fit what he says, "He who is weak eats vegetables." From this it is established that he is discussing these matters with respect to the food of the Word²⁸⁰ and he calls "weak in faith" him who is not so perfected in his senses that he can take in every kind of food of the Word of God, as the Apostle also says elsewhere, "Solid food is for the perfect, for those who have the senses trained for the ability of taking in, for distinguishing good from evil."²⁸¹ And again, he says to others, "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet capable of it."²⁸² And shall we be so inept as to think that the Apostle, who was sent to proclaim the Word of God, carried milk with him that he was giving to the Corinthians to drink?

279. Rom 14.3-4.

281. Heb 5.14.

280. Cf. 2.14.14; 4.6.4.

282. 1 Cor 3.2.

But obviously he is declaring these things about the quality of the Word and therefore says: If anyone is weaker in senses and thus is not of perfect faith so that he would grasp the Word concerning the more concealed mysteries, he ought not be provoked to quarreling over opinions through these matters, which he cannot understand.

(2) He says, "For one believes he can eat all things." Through these things Paul is not urging disciples to eat everything, nor is he a master of palate and throat. Instead he is doubtless speaking about those whose faith is perfect and is not hindered by any distinctions in the Word of God, about those whom elsewhere the same Apostle calls spiritual, when he says, "The spiritual man examines all things."²⁸³ He, then, is the one concerning whom he says here, "One believes he can eat [M1236] all things." After all, the Lord was saying even to the apostles before they received the Holy Spirit, "I still have much to say to you; but you are not capable of hearing these things now. But the Paraclete will come, the Spirit of truth, and he will teach you all things."²⁸⁴ These, then, are the "all things" that one who, because of the perfection of faith, has shown himself capable of the more concealed Word through the grace of the Holy Spirit believes he can eat.

(3) Nevertheless, even the weak has something to take in from the Word of God and it is a certain form of the Word that the Apostle has here called "vegetables," which does not so much render the sense of the hearer robust and strong as sustain and keep from dying. For in many passages Holy Scripture speaks of the inner senses of the soul as of outer members of the body; and just as we have repeatedly taught that the inner man²⁸⁵ is described as seeing, hearing, and walking, so also now the inner man himself is said to be able to perceive in every food, if he is perfect,²⁸⁶ or to eat vegetables, if he is weak.²⁸⁷

(4) But in order to create harmony between the perfect and the imperfect in the Church, between, as it were, the dishonor-

283. 1 Cor 2.15.

285. Cf. Rom 7.22.

287. Cf. Rom 14.2.

284. Jn 16.12-13.

286. Cf. Heb 5.14.

able and the honorable members in the body,²⁸⁸ and that there might not be any dissension among them, he says, "Let not him who eats despise the one who does not eat; and let not him who does not eat judge the one who eats." This is what he also says elsewhere, "For the eye cannot say to the hand: You are not necessary to me; and the head to the feet: I do not desire your service. But, the members of the body that appear to be less honorable are much more necessary."²⁸⁹ And therefore, he is instructing those whose faith is so great that they could eat all things and receive every form of the Word not to become arrogant and despise those who are inferior; and on the other hand, he commands those who are incapable of more perfect doctrine not to judge those whose sense is more capacious and whose intellect is more eminent. For, by a perverse arrangement, those who are inexperienced make it their habit to judge those who are experienced, and the lazy judge those who are zealous. But sometimes even those who have received certain initial stages of knowledge become puffed up and exalted over against those who seem to be less capable.

(5) On that account, then, with a rebuke stemming from his apostolic authority, Paul reprimands the insolence of both parties and says, "Who are you to judge another's servant? He stands or falls to his own master." What he says, "he stands or falls," he says according to the thought of the one whom he is rebuking. For even the less experienced, if he sees anyone sensing something more profound, and that he himself is unable to take hold of it, he judges him to have fallen away from the state of faith. And on the other hand, those who are puffed up because of knowledge²⁹⁰ and who do not [M1237] behave with love, as Paul commands, imagine similar things concerning those who are less experienced. And that is why he has taken away the right of a brother to judge his brother. He admirably says, "another's servant," for the Lord says, "You are all brothers."²⁹¹ "All," that is, all creatures; and there is only one Lord, Christ Jesus, who is "Lord of all, rich toward all."²⁹² At the same

288. Cf. 1 Cor 12.23-24. See 9.2.16.

290. Cf. 1 Cor 8.1.

292. Rom 10.12.

289. 1 Cor 12.21-22.

291. Mt 23.8.

time he also reveals the ineffable goodness of God when he says of him who seems to have fallen away,²⁹³ even if he may have truly fallen away, “God is able to make him stand.” For “the Lord raises up those who have been dashed down.”²⁹⁴

37. *The one judges alternate days; but another judges every day. Let each one be convinced in his own mind.*²⁹⁵ We have said above that, according to the sequence of the apostolic letter, these things appear to be dealing with self-control and freedom in respect to foods. Because the calling that is in Christ acknowledges no foods as common or unclean,²⁹⁶ but thought of self-control persuades one to abstain even from things that are lawful. For it is not, as he himself says elsewhere, that because all things are lawful they are, therefore, likewise all beneficial or all edifying.²⁹⁷ Yet the reason for abstinence is diverse owing to a vow and the purpose of one who takes the vow. For one judges and distinguishes among the spirits²⁹⁸ in such a way that he demands abstinence every day, that is, during the continuous period of his life. But another pledges a certain period, as by the profession of a vow, in which he gives according to the senses of each one free opportunity, whether one should take up permanent or temporary abstinence. But he promises that both are borne and accepted by the Lord, and for this reason he goes on to say:

38. *He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord; and he who eats, eats for the Lord; for he gives thanks to God; and he who does not eat, does not eat for the Lord and gives thanks to God.*²⁹⁹ Thanks are returned to God by both; by the one on account of the benefit of self-control, by the other on account of the freedom to eat. But we showed previously³⁰⁰ that the Apostle’s meaning is found, by using a spiritual exposition, to be profounder than an account of material foods holds. In accordance with what we have dis-

293. Cf. Rom 11.22.

294. Ps 145.14. Here there seems to be another hint of Origen’s belief in a universal restoration.

295. Rom 14.5.

297. Cf. 1 Cor 6.12; 10.23.

299. Rom 14.6.

296. Cf. Acts 10.28.

298. Cf. 1 Cor 12.10.

300. Cf. 9.36.1; 9.37.

cussed above, concerning those for whom one judges every “day,” but the other judges alternate days, we can perceive the following: Every chapter in the Holy Scriptures [M1238] in which the doctrine of piety and faith is contained may be called “day.” For it truly is day, because it enlightens the mind; because it puts the darkness of ignorance to flight; because it contains within itself Christ, who is the sun of righteousness.³⁰¹ If there is anyone, therefore, who expends so much effort and study in the books of Holy Scripture that he investigates and distinguishes every “day” and every sense of Holy Scripture so that not a single jot or tittle of the law³⁰² passes over him, he will seem to judge every day. But the one who is not so great in ability will grasp alternate senses, that is, a few from the many, and if not those that are sufficient for the fullness of knowledge, at least those that are adequate for the essence of faith. Both, then, should give thanks to God according to the Apostle’s counsel: the one because he regards every day and because he eats all things, i.e., because he recognizes and understands all things; and the other because, although he may not eat all things and grasp all knowledge, nevertheless he is saved by the brief confession of faith.³⁰³ And this is why even the one who does not eat all things and does not take in knowledge of everything is still said to give thanks to God.

39. *For none of us live to himself, and no one dies to himself; for if we live, we live to the Lord; if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived, so that he might be Lord of the dead and the living.*³⁰⁴

(2) In the exposition of this epistle, we have repeatedly spoken about what it means to live in Christ and what it means to die in Christ. We did this especially in that passage where we at-

301. Cf. Mal 3.20; Wis 5.6.

302. Cf. Mt 5.18.

303. In Origen’s theology, the brief confession of faith is absolutely indispensable to attain salvation, complete faith is more, complete knowledge is still more. Cf. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 5:126 n. 84, and Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer*, p. 78.

304. Rom 14.7–9.

tempted to explain the Apostle's words in which he says, "But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with him."³⁰⁵ If, then, we call to mind what was said in that passage, from those things the words the Apostle has set forth in the present passage will become clearer and more lucid, how none of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself. For no one provides a pattern of death for himself, but he takes it up from Christ, who alone has died to sin,³⁰⁶ so that he too, by imitation of him, can become estranged from sin and dead to it. Moreover, we do not have the pattern of life from ourselves, but we have received it from the resurrection of Christ, as the same Apostle says, "In order that, as Christ rose again from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also you might walk in newness of life."³⁰⁷ [M1239] So then, the newness of life by which we live in Christ through faith in his resurrection is attributed to the Lord, since it receives a commencement from him, not from us. And for that reason, "whether we live, we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." He calls "death" that by which we have died to sin, as we have said, having been buried together with Christ and baptized into his death.³⁰⁸ And he calls "life" that by which we have become estranged from this world and, as he himself says, we who are alive from the dead live not to ourselves, i.e., to the flesh, but to God,³⁰⁹ in accordance with what he adds in what follows. "For to this end," he says, "Christ died and lived, so that he might be Lord of the dead and the living."

(3) He says that Christ has died, doubtless by the dispensation of suffering; but he lived through the mystery of the resurrection. Whence also he has left a pattern for us, first of suffering and mortification, then later, as well, of resurrection and newness of life.³¹⁰ But it may possibly trouble someone that the Apostle has said that the reason Christ died and lived was in order that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the liv-

305. Rom 6.8. Cf. 5.10.2f.

307. Rom 6.4.

309. Cf. Rom 6.13.

306. Cf. Rom 6.10.

308. Cf. Rom 6.2-4.

310. Cf. 1 Pt 2.21; Rom 6.4.

ing, as if the one who gave this meant that unless he had died he would not have had lordship over the dead, and unless he had lived again after death he would not have held dominion over the living. But I think the following must be said in response to this. It is accepted that Christ's dominion is over all creation in two ways. First, as the Creator of all things and bearing authority over all things, he holds all things under subjection by the force of his majesty and by the compulsion of power. In this way he exercises lordship not only over good and holy minds and spirits, but also over bad and apostate [spirits] and over those whom Holy Scripture has designated as evil angels.³¹¹ For it is on this account that he is also called "all-controlling," or "Almighty," according to what John depicts in the Apocalypse when he says, "These things says he who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."³¹² This, then, is one way in which Christ has dominion over all.

(4) But there is another by which, as the good and the Son of the good Father, he does not want to influence rational spirits toward obedience to his law by compulsion, but he waits for them to come of their own accord, to seek the good willingly and not by compulsion. And he would rather persuade by teaching than [M1240] by commanding, by inviting rather than compelling. It is for this reason, after all, that he thinks it worthy to go to death, so that he might leave behind a pattern of obedience and a type of dying for those who are willing to die to sin and to the vices.³¹³ And it is on this account that the Apostle writes in the present passage that the reason he died and lived was that he might be Lord over both the living and the dead; of the living, actually, those who, by the pattern of his resurrection, lead a new and heavenly life on earth; of the dead, doubtless, those who carry around the mortification of Christ in their own body³¹⁴ and who put to death their own members that are on the earth.³¹⁵

311. Cf. Ps 78.49; Lk 8.2.

313. Cf. Phil 2.8; 1 Pt 2.21.

315. Cf. Col 3.5.

312. Rv 1.8; 4.8; 11.17.

314. Cf. 2 Cor 4.10.

40. But if these things are so: *As for you*, he says, *why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother?*³¹⁶ Though a mortification of the flesh and the vices has taken place within you,³¹⁷ this has not arisen from yourself, but has been given by the death of Christ; if there is newness of life in you,³¹⁸ and though you walk on earth you have your conversation in heaven,³¹⁹ you merited this from the resurrection of Christ. He has admirably expressed the disgrace of the vice of both with a vernacular designation, saying to the one, “Why do you despise?” and to the other, “Why do you judge your brother?” For those who seem to have advanced a little in knowledge customarily despise and regard as nothing those who are less capable of higher understanding. On the other hand, those who are inexperienced and unteachable are accustomed to judging, i.e., to finding fault with and condemning those who research matters higher and deeper than they themselves are capable of grasping or reaching. And this is why the Apostle, wanting to cut off the fault arising from both sides, commands the one group not to despise and look down at the inferior; but he orders the others not to judge themselves superior, since they lack the skill of judgment. So then, although he rebukes both, both the one who despises the inferior brother and the one who judges the superior, still, in order to show that the one who passes judgment is sinning more seriously than the one who despises a brother, he leaves behind the fault of contempt and emphasizes the presumption over a brother who is judged.³²⁰ And this is why in what comes next he adds:

41. *For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, because every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will confess [MI241] to God.” So then, each of us will render an account for himself to God. Let us, therefore, no longer pass judgment on one another; but judge this instead, not to put a stumbling block or a hindrance³²¹ to a brother.³²²*

316. Rom 14.10.

317. Cf. Col 3.5.

318. Cf. Rom 6.4.

319. Cf. Phil 3.20.

320. The Migne text reads, “brother who judges.”

321. *Offensio vel scandalum.*

322. Rom 14.10–13.

(2) Taking up the reasons why those who are judging their brothers are not judging rightly, he introduces the model of God's judgment, which is right and just,³²³ and he says, "For we must all stand before the judgment seat of God," in order, obviously, that the one who is judging his brother might know what a great crime of arrogance he is falling into, that he should seem to assume the judgment seat of God and to forestall the judgment of the Only-Begotten. But let us see why the Apostle decides [to use] what he speaks of as "the judgment seat of God" and how it should be interpreted.

(3) For not only in this passage, but also when writing to the Corinthians, no less, he mentions the judgment seat of God where he says, "Therefore, let us strive, whether present or absent, to please him. For all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive for what he has done through the body, whether good or bad."³²⁴ Moreover, in [the book of] the prophet Daniel we find certain things recorded concerning the kind of judging [it will be]. "I was watching," he says, "and behold, seats were set in place, and the Ancient of Days was sitting and his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like clean wool. His throne was a flame of fire, his wheels a burning fire. A stream of fire was flowing before him. A thousand thousands were serving him, and ten thousand ten thousands were attending before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."³²⁵

(4) Also in the book of the Twelve Prophets it is said under a mystery that in the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will judge his people.³²⁶ Shortly after this he calls the valley of Jehoshaphat the valley of judgment.³²⁷ But to discuss each of these things that we have brought forward for the sake of comparison would seem lengthy. Yet when we compare what we have said the Apostle has written to the Corinthians with the present passage, or with the other things we have recalled written in the prophets, from all these things we see that the judgment of God is

323. Cf. 2 Thes 1.5.

325. Dn 7.9-10. Cf. 1.4.1.

327. Cf. Jl 3.14.

324. 2 Cor 5.9-10.

326. Cf. Jl 3.2, 12.

certainly declared to come. So that its form might become more familiar to human beings, the model of judgment has been adopted from those matters that take place among human beings, obviously, in order that we might know that just as the earthly judge ascends to a certain higher place, which is called the judgment seat, so that from there [M1242] he might be higher and more eminent than the others who are to be judged, lest the supplications of the defendants or the legal petitions of the innocent escape his notice; thus we should understand also that Christ, the judge of all, by nature and majesty more eminent than all else, looks into the hearts and consciences of each one and manifests secrets and reveals things that are covered up,³²⁸ both so that he may bestow praise for good actions and so that the evil might receive the punishment they deserve.

(5) But if there remains a future judgment of God, and a judgment of such a nature that not only will each receive for his own actions, but also according to the Lord's declaration an account will be rendered for every idle word,³²⁹ even the evil thoughts will be put to silence by the accusing conscience,³³⁰ and in all these matters each of us will render an account for himself to God. "Let us therefore," he says, "no longer pass judgment on one another"; as he also says elsewhere, "And so, do not judge anyone before the time, until the Lord comes, who will bring to light the secrets of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then each one will have praise from God."³³¹ For in my opinion our heart will be laid bare before the entire rational creation, and its secrets will be revealed, or even manifested.

(6) For there is a difference. For what is revealed seems to pertain to evil persons, concerning whom it is said, "For it will be revealed with fire."³³² The things that are manifested, on the other hand, pertain to the good. And that is why it is said, "For everything that is manifested is light."³³³ And like books that

328. Cf. Lk 8.17; 12.2.

330. Cf. Rom 2.15. See also 2.10.2.

332. 1 Cor 3.13.

329. Cf. Mt 12.36.

331. 1 Cor 4.5.

333. Eph 5.13.

have been written on tablets that have been inscribed, containing the written records of our actions and thoughts, they will be read, as we have said, by every rational creature.³³⁴ And I believe that this is what is indicated by Daniel when he says, "And the books were opened";³³⁵ namely, those that are now rolled up and covered in our heart, containing the writings of what we do. They are etched in a certain alphabet of the conscience, yet are fully known to no one except God alone. So then, these books of our soul or pages of our heart will be opened in the presence of the throne of fire and the wheels of blazing fire and the river of fire that flows before the Ancient of Days.³³⁶ Even the angels will see these things and read them, and the thousand thousands of angels and the ten thousand ten thousands of attendants.³³⁷ And so, for our crimes in which now we are disconcerted to allow even one witness, [M1243] then we shall have to endure the innumerable throngs of the heavenly powers as witnesses.

(7) But since Paul says, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God"; and since he associates himself with those who will stand before God's judgment seat, who then is so self-deceived and misled that he imagines that he is not going to come to the judgment of Christ and to the judgment seat of his knowledge? Or who would not think that, for what he has done, whether rightly or even less rightly, he is going to be manifested? Personally, I do not think there is any difference between what he calls, in the present passage, "the judgment seat of God" and what he has recorded, when writing to the Corinthians, "the judgment seat of Christ."³³⁸ The "judgment seat of Christ" and the "judgment seat of God" are identical terms, according to what the Savior says in the Gospels, "All that the Father has is mine",³³⁹ and again, "Father, all that is mine is yours and all yours is mine."³⁴⁰

(8) If, however, someone thinks that the reasons for this variation in the words of Paul need to be investigated, since his

334. Cf. 2.10.1.

336. Cf. Dn 7.9.

338. Cf. 2 Cor 5.10.

340. Jn 17.10.

335. Cf. Dn 7.10.

337. Cf. Dn 7.10.

339. Jn 16.15.

writings do not contain one syllable that is superfluous,³⁴¹ he could possibly say something like this: The name “Christ” is a designation pertaining to his unique character as the Word who was placed in flesh,³⁴² and is a sign of the one who reconciles the world to God,³⁴³ just as the same Paul says, “For in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”³⁴⁴ But the postponement of our conversion and the negligence of our amendment lengthen out the periods of this reconciliation and make them longer. And until he renders all rulers and powers null and void and places the enemies under his feet and destroys the last enemy, death, he has to reign,³⁴⁵ in this way so that he might bring into effect the mystery of the dispensation he has taken up in the flesh and manifest the good on the one hand, and the blameworthy, that they may receive, each according to his own works.³⁴⁶ But when he will have handed over the kingdom to God, even the Father,³⁴⁷ i.e., when he has presented all who have been converted and amended as an offering to God and has completely fulfilled the mystery of the reconciliation of the world, at that time, they are now said to stand before the judgment seat of God, so that what follows might be fulfilled, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee will be bowed before me and every tongue will confess to God.”³⁴⁸

(9) Now every creature will bow its knee before God at the name of Jesus, through whom it has been reconciled to him, according to what the same Apostle says, “For at the name of Jesus will bow every knee of the heavenly, earthly, and infernal [beings].”³⁴⁹ Obviously the Apostle has taken the statement that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to God from the words of the prophet Isaiah.³⁵⁰ [M1244] Yet this is not to be interpreted in a fleshly way, so that we should imagine that even the heavenly beings that he says bow their knee should be believed to do this with fleshly limbs. Are we to think, for instance, that the sun and the moon and the stars, and even the

341. Cf. 1.8; 2.6.1; 5.10.18.

343. Cf. 2 Cor 5.19.

345. 1 Cor 15.24–26.

347. Cf. 1 Cor 15.24.

349. Phil 2.10.

342. Cf. Jn 1.14.

344. 2 Cor 5.19.

346. Cf. Rom 2.6.

348. Is 45.23; Phil 2.10.

350. Cf. Is 45.24.

angels and whatever heavenly beings there are that might be named, worship while they are stooped over on their bodily knees? Or are we to suppose that they likewise confess to God with tongues of flesh and with that organ with which we humans speak; these beings of whom it is said that they are spirits and fire according to what the prophet says, "He makes his angels spirits and his ministers burning fire"?³⁵¹ And what knees are we to believe spirits have, or what tongue is to be looked for in the form of fire? Instead, "to bow the knee" is declaring that all things are subjected and are obedient to the worship of God.

(10) Still, I am troubled by these things that we have taken from the letter to the Corinthians, where he says, "So that each might receive his own for what he has done in his body, whether good or evil."³⁵² Has he said that each one would receive both good things for his goods and evil things for his evils because in all human beings it is necessary for there to be some good and some evil? Nor are any found among the good who do not have some evil as well, or alternately, among the evil who do not have something good as well, on account of the Scripture that says, "For an incorruptible spirit is in all things."³⁵³ Or is he calling the good those to whom no evil should be ascribed, and the evil those to whom absolutely nothing good should be owed? But if we should think the latter, we shall appear to run contrary to plain reason. For as I have said, no one will be found who is so good that there is no unjust act of evil in him, as seems to be quite easily concluded from the examples of many saints. And, on the other hand, there is no one so bad, even if Judas himself be considered, who was impious beyond all impiety, that even he seems not to have some good. For when I overlook the things he was doing while he was among the apostles, as one of them, although even there even the evils were already mixed with his good deeds—for he was greedy for money³⁵⁴—nevertheless the very fact that he was led by penitence to return the thirty silver pieces to the priests and

351. Ps 104.4.
353. Wis 12.1.

352. 2 Cor 5.10.
354. Cf. Jn 12.6.

said, "I have sinned by betraying just blood,"³⁵⁵ was something good.

(11) From all of which it seems to me that one and the same person cannot receive goods and evils simultaneously—for neither can anyone be sent at the same time to paradise, or into the kingdom of heaven, and into Gehenna—[M1 245] only in those in whom the evils had weighed excessively heavier is the reckoning of good not held; and in those in whom good deeds had weighed heavier, and in whom the repentance of conversion has obliterated the traces of the evils is the reckoning of evil not received.

(12) But that we may go back to the end and conclusion of the proposed section, since, he says, the truth of the judgment before God and before his Christ is so great, since the dragnet of the future examination will be so great he says, "Let us, therefore, no longer pass judgment on one another; but judge this instead, not to put a stumbling block or hindrance to your brother." "Judge this," that is, Resolve this, not to create stumbling blocks or hindrances for brothers through observance of foods. We have already spoken above about a stumbling block, or a hindrance.³⁵⁶ A hindrance³⁵⁷ is something found lying on the road on which one is traveling, against which the feet of the those climbing³⁵⁸ or going along strikes. This, then, is what they suffer who have only recently entered upon the road of faith. They stumble by the contentions, acts of negligence, contempt, and pride of those in front of them and, having been battered by their examples, they are turned away from the faith.³⁵⁹

42. *I know and am confident in the Lord Jesus that nothing is common through itself except to him who thinks something is common, to him it is common. For if your brother is grieved for the sake of food, you*

355. Mt 27.3-4. For other statements denying Judas's total depravity, cf. *Cels* 2.11; *Comm in Jn* 32.12; *Comm in Cant* 3.15.

356 Cf. 7.19.8-9, where stumbling block is interpreted in a positive sense, as something that comes through Jesus Christ and hinders men (like Paul) from continuing on the wrong road.

357. *Scandalum*.

358. *Scandentium*.

359. Cf. 1 Tm 4.1.

are no longer walking according to love. Do not by your food cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. Do not, therefore, let your good be slandered. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For the one who serves Christ in this is pleasing to God and has been approved by men. And so, let us follow what pertains to peace and what pertains to edification among one another. Do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God.³⁶⁰

(2) We have said in other passages as well³⁶¹ that in the Holy Scriptures what is not holy or clean is called common by a kind of vernacular designation. This designation, however, is more frequent in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament I do not recall if it is recorded anywhere.³⁶² In the Gospels, for example, the Savior says, "For from the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, fornications, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies; and these are what make a man common. But to eat with unwashed hands does not make a man common."³⁶³

(3) Although in many copies the Latins have rendered *communicare* [make common] with *coinquinare* [defile], and granted that the force may be the same, nevertheless the strict rendering of the word has "make common." Moreover, in the Acts of the Apostles the Lord says to Peter, "What God has cleansed, you should not call common."³⁶⁴ I think, then, that the source from which this usage of the word has been derived is, for example, that the vessels of the temple that were set apart for service were called, doubtless, vessels of the Lord.³⁶⁵ [M1246] But the other vessels were called common to distinguish them from these.³⁶⁶ In a similar way, in order to distinguish the foods that Scripture has set apart as clean and lawful to be eaten, all the rest have been called common. The Jews, however, being ignorant of the force of the word as to why a man whom they were accustomed to name as common should be called com-

³⁶⁰ Rom 14.14-20.

³⁶¹ Cf. *Comm in Mt* 12 on Mt 15.10.

³⁶² Cf. 3.2.6; 8.8.3 n. 189. The LXX consistently uses βέβηλος, "profane" or "unhallowed," not κοινός, "common," for things that are unholy and impure, as in Lv 10.10. Cf. *TDNT* 3:791.

³⁶³ Mt 15.19-20.

³⁶⁴ Acts 10.15.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Nm 4.12; Heb 9.21; Is 52.11.

³⁶⁶ Cf. Nm 7.85.

mon, have held fast to the usage of the word with no understanding of its significance. For foods that God has created, when consumed either in ignorance or simplicity, were not able to make a human being common and unclean.³⁶⁷ But that human mind that has been set apart to God alone may deservedly be called clean; but the one that is estranged from God, because it is possessed not by one spirit but by many, on that account such a man is called common,³⁶⁸ as one who is a slave to many vices or demons, according to him who, when he was asked, "What is your name?" answered, "Legion; for we are many";³⁶⁹ and according to what is said by the Savior, "When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it wanders through waterless places looking for rest. And finding none it returns and when it finds the house vacant, swept, and cleaned, it takes along seven other spirits more wicked than itself; and they enter and live in him."³⁷⁰ It is hardly to be doubted that a man of that sort is called common, obviously because he has become a slave of all those evil spirits that live in him.

(4) Justly, then, knowing that this is the meaning of this word, Paul says, "I know and am confident in the Lord Jesus that nothing is common through itself." For none of the things God has created is unclean of its own nature—for it is an established fact that everything created by the good God is good and clean. "But to him," he says, "who thinks something is common, to him it is common"; that is, he who thinks something to be unclean as he reflects upon it in his heart and who admits the observance of the distinction, as he also says in what comes next, "But he who makes distinctions is condemned if he eats, because it is not from faith. For everything that is not from faith is sin."³⁷¹ Yet in these things, he has not excluded the distinction of the law, as though he were saying categorically that nothing of those things that the law has designated as unclean is common or unclean. For he has first told the reason why nothing should be called common through itself. "I know," he

367. Cf. 1 Tm 4:3.

369. Mk 5:9.

371. Rom 14:23.

368. Cf. Lk 8:30.

370. Mt 12:43-45.

says, "and am confident in the Lord Jesus." In the Lord Jesus, then, nothing is said to be common "through itself," that is, of its own nature; [M1247] "but to the one," he says, "who considers and who thinks something is common, to him it is common."

(5) And you should not be surprised that the reflection of the mind makes food defiled that, of its own nature, is neither common nor defiled, though, on the contrary, simplicity of mind and the absence of scrupulosity of reflection, once every suspicion of contamination has been cast aside, absolves truly defiled food—for what is sacrificed to idols is truly defiled. And, again, even if the food is clean, nevertheless someone may come under suspicion, as would be the case when what has been sacrificed to idols is said to be defiled on account of a scrupulous conscience. "For if your brother is grieved for the sake of food, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not by your food cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died."

(6) Though he had defined by an apostolic dogma through the Lord Jesus that nothing should be considered common or unclean of its own nature, and though he had granted absolute freedom to the faithful in respect to the use of foods, on the other hand he trims back the license of freedom toward the edification of brotherly love and he says: Even though nothing is common and the use of all foods is freely conceded, nevertheless, if, for the sake of food that you consider to be lawful to eat, you cause your brother to stumble, who is not yet capable of this knowledge, you are no longer walking according to love nor are you showing in yourself the disposition of brotherly love. For what harm does it do you if, in order not to grieve your brother, you should abstain even from what is lawful? Surely there is no crime in your abstaining from what is lawful; but to him who makes distinctions in these matters and who considers them unlawful, use is defiled. "For the one who makes distinctions is condemned if he eats." But if you should do [such a thing], assuredly you cause the ruin of your brother for whom Christ died, and you procure the causes for his destruction.

(7) But this same Paul speaks more eminently of these matters when writing to the Colossians: "Therefore, do not let any-

one judge you in matters of food or drink or in the matter of festivals, new moons, or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of future things, but the body is Christ's. Do not let anyone seduce you, insisting on self-abasement of heart and the religion of angels that he has seen, while being vainly exalted, being puffed up by his fleshly mind and not holding fast to the head."³⁷² And after a few words, "If then you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as those who live in this world, do you make distinctions: Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch? [M1248] All these things lead to corruption by their very use in accordance with the precepts and teachings of men, which have indeed a reckoning of wisdom in the observance of religion and in the self-abasement through the severe treatment of the body, [but they are] not with any honor for the gratification of the flesh."³⁷³ It is not a matter for the present work to discuss all these things in detail; for we are now attempting to explain what the Apostle is writing to the Romans.

(8) Nevertheless, what is being asserted in the present instance as well is a pattern: In connection with food or drink or outward observances of this sort, which are reckoned among the Jews as the religion of angels, we should not be judged by anyone. For they exalt themselves in these things that are seen, and they are puffed up over visible things.³⁷⁴ But this elation does not accord with the wisdom of the Spirit but with the sense of the flesh. It is not concerning fleshly matters that it has been commanded, "Do not handle, do not touch, do not taste."³⁷⁵ For all these things, i.e., fleshly things, have been given for this corruptible use,³⁷⁶ and what observance of purity can consist in corruption? The law prescribed these things concerning rational matters that, if they are unclean, truly are not to be touched or tasted, lest they should make us partakers of sin and of its uncleanness, abandoning the precepts of men and of doctrine.³⁷⁷ Yet they have transferred this spiritual sense to these fleshly and bodily matters that have a reckoning of wisdom in

372. Col 2.16–19.

374. Cf. Col 2.16–18.

376. Cf. Col 2.22.

373. Col 2.20–23.

375. Col 2.21.

377. Cf. Col 2.22.

the observance of religion and the self-abasement of the body,³⁷⁸ but not when, on the occasion of observance of this sort, some honor among men and pleasures of the flesh are sought,³⁷⁹ while many select foods are sought out, for the sake of abstaining from a few.

(9) But true observance exists when food is consumed in such a way and when all things are done in such a way that it may not be said of such persons, "Whose God is the belly."³⁸⁰ For it is fitting to abstain from every food that desire and lust employ, that pleasures procure, that excess contrives. For we must not only pay attention to what sort of foods we use but also how much and at what time and how sparingly we use them. For this is how all things are clean to clean minds; but to the defiled, as the Apostle says, and to the unbelieving nothing is clean.³⁸¹

(10) In this he is showing that even in respect to the foods that are named clean among the Jews, if anyone is defiled and unbelieving, they could not be clean to him. It will therefore follow that if [M1249] things that are clean become unclean to those who are defiled, even things that are called unclean may become clean to the holy and to believers. "For they are sanctified through the Word of God and prayer, since all of God's creation is good and nothing is to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving."³⁸² But they are not sanctified through the prayer of anyone, but of those who lift up "pure hands without wrath and argument."³⁸³ Would you like to be taught more eminently still concerning clean and unclean things, that they are not said about bodies but about spirits and minds? Listen to the statement of the Lord and Savior himself in the Gospel when he says, "It is not what enters the mouth that makes a man common, but what proceeds from the mouth; because from within, out of the heart, come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc."³⁸⁴ Therefore, it is the thought and the mind that fail to perceive correctly what defiles the man, not the kind of foods,

378. Cf. Col 2.23.

380. Phil 3.19.

382. 1 Tm 4.4-5.

384. Mt 15.11, 19.

379. Cf. Col 2.23.

381. Cf. Ti 1.15.

383. 1 Tm 2.8.

which may be of whatever kind and with one and the same outcome will satisfy a use [M1250] of corruption.³⁸⁵ And no wonder if he sanctifies for saints food that he consumes with the Word of God and prayer,³⁸⁶ seeing that even the garments with which he is clothed are holy. After all, Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons had received such great sanctification from his purity that when they were brought to sick bodies they were expelling diseases and restoring health.³⁸⁷ Now what should I say of Peter? Even the shadow of his body bore so much sanctification that whomever not he himself but only his shadow touched as he walked by was immediately alleviated from every infirmity.³⁸⁸

(11) But we have digressed rather extensively from the discussion about clean and common foods in order to consider the Apostle's meaning more deeply, as far as this is possible. But being mindful of the brevity we stipulated,³⁸⁹ let us bring this ninth book to its conclusion and commence the opening of the tenth and last book.

385. Cf. Col 2.22.

387. Cf. Acts 19.12.

389. We recall that it was Rufinus's intention to abbreviate the *Commentary*. Cf. Preface of Rufinus (2).

386. Cf. 1 Tm 4.5.

388. Cf. Acts 5.15.

THE TENTH BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS



HEREFORE DO NOT LET *your good be reviled. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For whoever serves Christ in this is pleasing to God and approved by men.*¹

(2) I ask how our good can be reviled. It is good to understand the law spiritually and to avoid as unclean and defiled foods the godless and absurd doctrines of the heretics and of those who are zealous for false philosophy. For this is what is decreed by the spiritual law.² But suppose, for example, anyone from the Jews or those called the Encratites³ would like to believe in Christ, but he thinks that it is a matter of no small importance to observe self-control either in respect to their foods, which are prohibited by the law, or those that, as many think, must be rejected even by the authority of the Scriptures since they are opposed to chastity. Now if you put pressure on such a person to [take] foods that are common to everyone, and you tell him that otherwise he cannot be saved and cannot attain to the faith and grace of Christ, unless he consumes these foods from which he has fled, then truly the good of spiritual knowledge will be reviled, as he whom you are pressuring thinks that this faith is held among us, that we believe that [M1250] no one can be saved except the one who eats swine flesh or other common and neutral foods of this sort.

1. Rom 14.16–18.

2. Cf. Rom 7.14.

3. The word is transliterated from the Greek ἐγκρατής, “self-controlled.” According to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.28.1 (ANF 1:353), the Encratites rejected marriage and the eating of flesh; they also denied Adam’s salvation. Their originator was Tatian (110–72), a disciple of Justin (110–65) who evidently fell into this heresy after his master’s death. Cf. *Cels* 5.65; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.

(3) But to these things he adds, "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Once again I passionately admire the wisdom of Paul, who keeps in check the faults of the present time by the authority of the future mystery and, as he establishes a model for the Church, he reveals the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. He says, therefore: What need is there to disturb fraternal peace and love so greatly for the sake of foods and the kinds of things we eat since the kingdom of God, for the sake of which we labor and strive, is established neither through foods nor through drink but these things are foreign to the kingdom of God and to that future way of life? For there, just as "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels of God,"⁴ so they consume neither food nor drink, but they are like the angels of God. Consequently, by an absolutely clear dogma and by an unambiguous declaration from the Apostle, it has been settled that in the kingdom of God bodily food and drink have no place, but righteousness and peace in the Holy Spirit. And he therefore urges that we train ourselves in these things and prepare here and now to have these goods and to possess that substance that [M1251] can pass with us into the kingdom of heaven: peace and righteousness and if there are things of this sort that are procured through the Holy Spirit.

(4) These will be our food and substance in the kingdom of God. And, therefore, through these things he is teaching that care must not be exhibited over matters of bodily foods, which will be null in the future, but over the virtues, which would continue with us both in the present life and in the future kingdom of God.⁵ And this is why he says, "For the one who serves Christ in this is pleasing to God and approved by men." This is what he says in another passage about himself, "Just as I also please everyone in everything, not seeking what is useful to myself, but what [is useful to] many."⁶ For it is for this reason, even though he was an Apostle of Christ,⁷ that he became a Jew to the Jews, no doubt in order that by pleasing the Jews he might save

4. Mt 22.30.

6. 1 Cor 10.33.

5. Cf. 1 Tm 4.8.

7. Cf. 1 Thes 2.7.

them;⁸ and to those who were without law, he himself also became without law, so that by pleasing them he might save them.⁹

(5) Now he speaks of pleasing men not thus, by falling in with their vices, but by enduring their weaknesses with patience.¹⁰ But let us not leisurely pass over even this that he says, "For he who serves Christ in this," i.e., in the Holy Spirit, "is pleasing to God and approved by men." To serve Christ in the Holy Spirit he is saying in accordance with what he also says elsewhere, "No one says, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit."¹¹ Paul himself serves Christ in the Spirit,¹² then, since, having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, he serves God the Word,¹³ he serves wisdom, he serves righteousness and all the virtues at the same time, which Christ is declared to be.¹⁴ And therefore whoever fulfills the will of God according to the word that he himself pronounced saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, listen to him!"¹⁵ is said to please God in these things. Whoever, therefore, listens to God and serves Christ, in whom God is pleased, pleases God and is approved by men.

2. *And so, let us pursue the things of peace and the things of mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God on account of food.*¹⁶

(2) He said above, "Pursue hospitality,"¹⁷ and here in a similar way, "Let us pursue the things of peace and the things of mutual edification." And just as we showed there¹⁸ the manner in which hospitality is to be pursued,¹⁹ so [M1252] also here we should understand how peace is to be pursued. For David too in like manner says, "Seek peace and pursue it."²⁰ Though the Latin manuscripts have "follow it,"²¹ nevertheless "pursue"²² is

8. Cf. 1 Cor 9.20; 10.33.

10. Cf. Rom 15.1.

12. Cf. Phil 3.3.

14. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

16. Rom 14.19-20.

18. Cf. 9.13.

20. Ps 34.14.

22. *Sectari*. These two verbs have the same stem: *sectari* is the intensive form of *sequi*.

9. Cf. 1 Cor 9.21; 10.33.

11. 1 Cor 12.3.

13. Cf. Jn 1.1.

15. Lk 9.35. Cf. Mt 3.17.

17. Rom 12.13.

19. Cf. Rom 12.13.

21. *Sequere*.

also written there. To me what appears to be made known in this is the following. Peace, he says, flees from human beings, as it were, when it has been disturbed and driven out by many who behave insolently and disruptively;²³ in contrast, those who have learned Christ²⁴ and serve him should pursue the peace that is fleeing and to call it back by every possible means. But he pursues peace who guards the things by which peace can be established, even with his own effort, with loss, with reproach too and, if necessary, even with danger to life and reputation. For these things preserve not only peace but also mutual edification. For he is edified who sees you seeking not merely what is beneficial to yourself but also what is beneficial to others.²⁵ And in this way the edifice of the faith grows and the temple of God rises up from living stones, through the construction of love.²⁶ And this is why he adds, "Do not destroy the work of God on account of food." For he destroys the work of God and demolishes the edifice of love who, on account of immoderation with foods, places a stumbling block before brothers.²⁷

3. *All things are clean, but it is evil to the man who eats through an offence. It is good not to eat flesh and not to drink wine nor in what your brother is offended.*²⁸

(2) What he has said, "All things are clean, but it is evil to the man who eats through an offence," is similar to what he said above: "for nothing is common through itself, except to him who thinks something is common, to him it is common."²⁹ So then, according to their nature and the definition of creation, where everything that exists has been made by God, all things are clean, and there is nothing unclean or what is called common.³⁰ He set down two reasons for which things that are clean may become unclean or things that are good may become evil. For in the present passage he says, "But it is evil to the man who eats through an offence." Therefore, what is good of its own nature becomes evil because of the offence, i.e., be-

23. Cf. 2 Thes 3.11.

25. Cf. 1 Cor 10.24.

27. Cf. Rom 14.13.

29. Rom 14.14.

24. Cf. Eph 4.20.

26. Cf. Eph 2.21; 1 Pt 2.5.

28. Rom 14.20-21.

30. Cf. Rom 14.14.

cause the brother is offended [M1253] when you use these foods in which he experiences a stumbling block.³¹ There is another reason why that which of its own nature is not unclean becomes common or unclean: If anyone who deems it so in his own eyes thinks that it is common.³² So then, only to the one who thinks it so, does it become common or unclean. Clearly from these things the Apostle is teaching that uncleanness and defilement consist not in things or in essences, but in actions and thoughts less right. Although the law of Moses indicated that certain things were clean and certain things were unclean,³³ in which he wanted to lay down certain distinctions so that the people who were being assessed under the law would seem to be distinguished from the other nations through observances of this sort, as long as that people was considered to be holy and separated from the other nations a distinction of clean and unclean things seemed likewise necessary, a distinction that would separate and distinguish God's special people from the nations that the ignorance of God and the worship of idols were making unclean.

(3) But when the door of faith is opened to the nations³⁴ and all are invited to God, all four-footed beasts and creeping and flying creatures are shown to Peter exposed in a sheet that had been let down from heaven³⁵ and it is said to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat!"³⁶ Because he was mindful of legal observance, he responded to the Lord and said, "Never, Lord, because never has a common or unclean thing entered my mouth."³⁷ But by a heavenly pronouncement it is declared, "What God has cleansed, you should not call common."³⁸ So then, where all nations are cleansed from defilement through the knowledge of the faith, there also all food is purified by the word of the Lord and prayer.³⁹ And on this account the Apostle says, "All things are clean",⁴⁰ only that that should be avoided whereby he records in what follows that the things that are

31. Cf. Rom 14.13.

33. Cf. Lv 11.2ff.

35. Cf. Acts 10.11-12.

37. Cf. Acts 10.14.

39. Cf. 1 Tm 4.5.

32. Cf. Rom 14.14.

34. Cf. Acts 14.27.

36. Cf. Acts 10.13.

38. Acts 10.15.

40. Cf. Ti 1.15.

clean should not once again become unclean to the one who eats through offending a brother.

(4) But what he now appends, "It is good not to eat flesh and not to drink wine," would possibly seem contrary to what he had said earlier, had he not added, "nor in what your brother is offended." For he has taught that eating or not eating flesh, or drinking or not drinking wine, is deemed neither evil nor good but neutral and indifferent.⁴¹ For even an evil man or a stranger to the faith is able not to eat flesh and not to drink wine, as it is certain many frequently do for the sake of idols. Occasionally it is reported that such an observance is kept even in the evil arts.⁴² Certainly, to observe these things is customary for not a few of the heretics, and we shall not immediately say: It is good for them that they do not eat flesh or drink wine. But clearly it truly is good not to eat flesh and not to drink wine that is no longer neutral or indifferent in that manner in which he has set forth in what follows, [M1254] "in what the brother is offended." For it is good not to put an offence or stumbling block before a brother.⁴³ For on this account he also says elsewhere, "Be without offense, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the Church of God."⁴⁴ And let them see, therefore, if they are acting properly who, by every means, compel those who, for whatever reason, abstain from tasting flesh and wine, obviously in order for the suspicion to seem to be removed through this, [a suspicion] by which they are scrupulously thought to be clinging to the distinctions of foods.

(5) For surely they should pay attention to the fact that the Apostle has not said: It is good to eat flesh and to drink wine, but not to eat flesh and not to drink wine, if a brother is offended in this. So then, he did not want that, for the sake of those who judge that something is to be eaten, one who is offended by this should be compelled to eat; but, for the sake of the one who does not think something should be eaten, he orders even those who judge that it should be eaten to abstain. For surely it has to be feared lest perchance, once the wall of self-control has

41. Cf. 4.9.3.

43. Cf. Rom 14.13.

42. Cf. *Hom in Nm* 16.7.

44. 1 Cor 10.32.

been broken down and license has been adopted, one might be sunk in the storm of gluttony and in the depths of excess and the shipwreck of chastity might follow in like manner. Therefore, everything ought to be done so that the work of God is not destroyed; and for that reason as well, one should eat if a brother is edified in this; and one should not eat if the work of God grows by this means; and one should drink, if by this means a brother makes progress in the faith; and one must not drink if, on this account, either you should incur a loss of love, or your brother, a forfeiture of faith.

4. After these things he says: *The faith that you have, have as your own before God.*⁴⁵ Here he is referring to that faith by which someone believes he can eat all things, as he said above, "One person believes he can eat all things";⁴⁶ doubtless, he who believes that nothing in God's creation is common, that nothing is unclean. But it is sufficient for you, he says, to have such faith before God. Another person, however, even a stranger, must not on that account be compelled so that he would eat all things, he who does not yet have such faith that he believes that all things are to be eaten. But what he says, "Have it as your own," curtails boasting, lest what we believe should lead to ostentation rather than virtue. But he has added, "Have it before God," in order to show that it is enough for us to act, not that our faith be slandered among men, but that it be approved before God. It is much to have a faith that is approved before God. For before God even the faith of the apostles is judged small; this is why it is said to Peter, "[Oh you] of little faith, why did you doubt?"⁴⁷ On that account, then, he is truly great whose faith is approved before God. [M1 255]

5. *Blessed is the one who does not judge himself in what he approves. But he who makes distinctions is condemned if he eats because this is not from faith. But all that is not from faith is sin.*⁴⁸

(2) Anyone is called blessed not merely if he does things that

45. Rom 14.22.

47. Mt 14.31.

46. Rom 14.2.

48. Rom 14.22-23.

are appropriate, but also if he does not do things that are inappropriate; as, for example, he is called blessed “who does not depart to the advice of the wicked”;⁴⁹ and he is no less blessed “who walks in the law of the Lord.”⁵⁰ The one is blessed then because “he does not walk in the way of sinners,”⁵¹ the other because he walks in the way of God.⁵² So also in the present passage the Apostle says, “Blessed is the one who does not judge himself in what he approves.”

(3) But let us consider of whose work that blessedness might be. There are many who approve to do something good; for instance, those who, when they hear about the rewards for chastity, approve and resolve to live chastely; but with the passing of time, as either negligence sneaks in unawares or as lust gains the upper hand, that which they had approved as something to be observed is defiled and corrupted. And he is wretched, who was conquered in what he had determined to observe, and he judges and condemns himself. But blessed is the one who continues so fixed and constant in what he approves and has resolved upon, that in no respect he judge himself and in nothing does he find fault. But he is saying this even in the observance of foods, according to the rule that he had composed above, that if anyone who, through the knowledge of the spiritual law,⁵³ approves all things to be eaten and that all things are clean,⁵⁴ he should not once again judge himself and hesitate as to whether he ought to consume or not. For the one who makes distinctions in this manner, i.e., the one who doubts whether what he is consuming is truly clean or unclean, he himself on the basis of the very doubt of his own mind, is condemned, as his conscience accuses. He sets forth the reason for this condemnation too, when he says: because it is consumed not out of faith but out of doubt. And after these things he makes a general pronouncement over all [situations] when he says, “But all that is not from faith is sin.”

(4) With this statement he binds the negligent and slothful

49. Ps 1.1.

51. Ps 1.1.

53. Cf. Rom 7.14.

50. Ps 119.1.

52. Cf. Ps 119.1.

54. Cf. Rom 14.20.

souls of these believers with a shorter chain, that they should do nothing without faith, [M1256] say nothing apart from faith, and think nothing apart from faith; for you are sinning whether you have done, or spoken, or even thought something without faith. This is precisely what he says elsewhere, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever else you do, do everything for the glory of God."⁵⁵

(5) But someone may ask whether even the heretics should be believed to do the things they do from faith, since they do it according to what they believe; or, since the faith among them is null, all that they do should be pronounced to be sin, because it is not from faith. And I think what they possess is to be called credulity rather than faith. For just as false prophets are occasionally called prophets, by a false name, and false knowledge is called knowledge, and false wisdom is improperly called wisdom, so also the credulity of the heretics is called faith by a false name.⁵⁶

(6) For this reason one should consider whether perhaps even if what seems to be done among them as a good work is converted into sin, since it is not from faith, as was also said concerning a certain someone, "Let his prayer become sin."⁵⁷ Sometimes there is even a chastity that is not from faith, namely that of those "who pay attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons, speaking by false hypocrisy, having a seared conscience, forbidding marriage and abstaining from foods, which God created."⁵⁸ Then false also is the faith of those who have "suffered a shipwreck in respect to the faith."⁵⁹ There is also a false wisdom, namely, that of this world and of the rulers of this world, a wisdom that will be destroyed.⁶⁰

(7) For just as during the dark of night pirates make it their custom to kindle lights in shallow places at sea, among hidden

55. 1 Cor 10.31.

56. For the linguistic distinctions referred to here, cf. 4.9.6 n. 322. Cf. *Princ* 1.2.13; *Comm in Cant* Prologue 2.

57. Ps 109.7.

58. 1 Tm 4.1-3. Marcion's followers are intended. Cf. 9.2.10 n. 64.

59. 1 Tm 1.19.

60. Cf. 1 Cor 2.6.

rocks, so as to invite sailors to the shipwrecks of destruction under the hope of taking refuge in a safe harbor;⁶¹ so also the light of false wisdom and false faith is kindled by the rulers of this world and by the spirits of this air,⁶² not through which men might escape, but through which they perish, as they navigate the waves of this world and the sea of life. It was concerning these pirates, I think, that even Job was saying, "The arrows of his pirates have come over me."⁶³ And surely it was also on this account that the Apostle himself says, "For even Satan himself transforms himself as an angel of light."⁶⁴ For that reason, then, those of us who navigate the waves of this life ought not to believe every light, i.e., every [kind of] wisdom; but, as the Apostle warns, [we ought to] test which [M1257] spirits are from God.⁶⁵ And this is why we ought to implore the Lord's help unceasingly and to hope that he will rescue us from the snare of the hunters⁶⁶ so that we might also say, "Our soul has been snatched like a bird from the snare of hunters; the snare was smashed and we were set free. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."⁶⁷

6. *We who are stronger ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of you should please your neighbor in the good leading to edification. For even Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For whatever was written down beforehand was written for our instruction, so that through the patience and consolation of the Scriptures we might have hope.*⁶⁸

(2) Paul seems to be declaring himself to be strong in these things, just as he also says in First Corinthians, "For I have become weak to the weak in order that I might gain the weak."⁶⁹ For even there he does not claim to be weak, but to *become*

61. The port of Alexandria, Origen's home city, was well known for its submerged rocks that made for a narrow and difficult passage for mariners. On one side of the harbor was an island called Pharos, on which was built the famous lighthouse. Cf. Josephus, *War of the Jews* 4.10.5.

62. Cf. Eph 6.12; 2.2.

64. 2 Cor 11.14.

66. Cf. Ps 124.7.

68. Rom 15.1-4.

63. Jb 16.10 LXX; cf. Jb 6.4.

65. Cf. 1 Jn 4.1.

67. Ps 124.7-8.

69. 1 Cor 9.22.

weak. And obviously, if he had been weak, he would not have been able to become weak.

(3) But from this you should not interpret him to be speaking as one who has forgotten that command in which it is said, "Let your neighbor praise you and not your own mouth; the foreigner and not your own lips."⁷⁰ He declares himself strong, then, not for the sake of his own praise but for the sake of consistency with the facts. For if he had refused to be counted among the strong under the guise of humility, would anyone of those who ought to carry the infirmities of others have dared to undertake that duty so as to make an effort, like a strong man, to bear the frailties of the weak? But for that reason he makes it a universal duty so that each of us, in what he is able, even if not in everything, nevertheless in what one seems to be stronger than his neighbor, should carry his weakness. Just as he also says elsewhere, "Carry your burdens mutually."⁷¹ But he seems to have termed "burdens" for bodily necessities so that, if someone has greater resources, he ought to carry the burden of the one who is poorer, and abundance should relieve poverty.

(4) But where he says that the stronger should bear the weaknesses of the weak, this cannot be understood other than that each of those who are stronger should bear patiently the things in which others commit faults through weakness and they should not immediately spurn them, cast them aside, shrink back from them, should they be conquered by some vice of weakness; nor should they, under the pretext of a purer life, expel them from the assembly [M1258] of the brothers and from the fellowship of the Church. For the one who does this is no imitator of him concerning whom Isaiah says, "He carries our weaknesses and grieves for us; and we were esteeming him to be in grief, and in suffering, and in affliction."⁷² But if Christ carries our weaknesses and God patiently bears our faults, how do even we not tolerate at all the faults and acts of negligence of those who seem a little inferior? Surely this is to turn away Christ himself from this disposition so that he would not want

70. Prv 27.2.

71. Gal 6.2.

72. Is 53.4.

to carry our weaknesses. For no one is so perfect who would not be found weak before God in some respect and carried by Christ. And therefore he is teaching more *συμπάθεια* in this, that is, to suffer with and grieve with one another, just as he also writes elsewhere, "Forgiving your faults mutually, just as also God in Christ forgave you."⁷³ Now he is not giving this command in order to foster those who commit faults and to release those who are weak into greater indulgence. But he knows that if the weak is carried, either he is ashamed of being carried any longer and he corrects the offending vice, or, if he is not strong enough to amend himself, there will at least be that benefit to the one who carries him, that the weaker person does not become progressively worse nor make himself worse by that one, just as those of whom the Apostle says, "But evil men and deceivers will become progressively worse, deceiving and going astray."⁷⁴

(5) To our carrying the weakness of the weak, we should add even this, that we should not please ourselves, but the neighbor, moreover, for the good and unto edification. Elsewhere the prophet also finds fault with the vice of self-love, i.e., of pleasing oneself, when he says, "Woe to those who are wise in their own estimation and learned in their own sight."⁷⁵ In a similar way, therefore, we can say here: Woe to those who please themselves and seem good in their own sight. For one ought to be pleasing, first of all, in God's sight, and in the second place, also to neighbors. For just as it is primary to love the Lord God and in the second place, the neighbor,⁷⁶ so also it is primary to be pleasing to God, and second to neighbors.

(6) But suppose someone should say that Paul is contradicting himself when he commands us to please our neighbors, he who has said elsewhere, "If I were pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ."⁷⁷ Surely to that statement it appears to be contradictory that each one of us should please the neighbor, and what he says elsewhere, "Just as I please all men in all

73. Eph 4.32.

75. Is 5.21.

77. Gal 1.10.

74. 2 Tm 3.13.

76. Cf. Mt 22.37-39.

things, [M1259] not seeking what is useful to myself but what is useful to many, in order that they might be saved.”⁷⁸ To these things it should be said that it is one thing to have a zeal for pleasing men to seek praise from them; but it is something else to have a zeal for pleasing men so that one’s life be blameless among men and that all who see or hear such a man might make progress. One should not please men, then, in the situation where the person is pleased by what is contrary to the faith, contrary to uprightness, contrary to religion. This is why he says, “For if I were pleasing men,” i.e., unbelieving and faithless Jews, “I would not be a servant of Christ.”⁷⁹ For if Paul had wanted to please the Jews, assuredly when he had been sent to Damascus with letters, he would have dragged men and women back to Jerusalem in chains, and he would have by no means believed the vision revealed to him on the road and the voice from heaven.⁸⁰ Moreover, if anyone demands that we do something contrary to justice, contrary to holiness, and contrary to the Christian standard, and if he even threatens hatred and enmity unless we do this thing, at that time we need to remember the words of him who says, “If I wanted to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”⁸¹

(7) Now when it is said, “Each of you should please your neighbor,” a necessary distinction is shared that shows plainly in what one ought to please the neighbor when he says, “for the good leading to edification.” So then, when we behave well and teach well we please the neighbor and we edify him. For he is not advising that glory from men be sought,⁸² but that edification to our neighbors by our deeds and words be given, as in that place where the Savior also says, “Let your light shine before men and when they see your good works may they glorify your Father in heaven.”⁸³ Through this surely he is not exhorting the disciples to seek glory from men;⁸⁴ but that, as they live honestly and uprightly,⁸⁵ they should bestow edification to those who see, and God, who has disclosed to men the way of amendment and salvation, may be glorified.

78. 1 Cor 10.33.

80. Cf. Acts 9.2-4; 23.5; 26.19.

82. Cf. 1 Thes 2.6.

84. Cf. 1 Thes 2.6.

79. Gal 1.10.

81. Gal 1.10.

83. Cf. Mt 5.16.

85. Cf. Ti 2.12.

(8) "For even Christ did not please himself; but as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.'" In this he seems to make known that even Christ, not pleasing himself nor thinking it robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself;⁸⁶ but wanting to please men, i.e., to save men, he endured the insults of those who insult, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you [M1260] have fallen on me."⁸⁷ This will become clearer if we call to mind what is written in the Gospels how, in order that he might help men and save them, he was eating and drinking with sinners and tax collectors⁸⁸ and the Jews were insulting these things and were saying, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"⁸⁹ Or again, when he was not forbidding the sinful woman from touching his feet and wetting them with her tears and wiping them with her hair and anointing them with myrrh,⁹⁰ even for this the Jews were insulting and rebuking him, saying, "If this man were a prophet, he would certainly know who and what kind of woman this is that touches him, that she is a sinner."⁹¹

(9) Now if you ask why the example that he had brought forth from the Psalm should state that the insults by which God was being insulted have fallen upon Christ,⁹² we can explain it this way: Just as he has said, "Whoever receives me receives him who sent me,"⁹³ so also this can be understood, whoever insults me insults him who sent me. The example then that he has taken was written in the Sixty-eighth Psalm in this way: "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's sons. For zeal for your house consumes me and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."⁹⁴

(10) "For whatever was written down beforehand, was written for our instruction." This is similar to what he says elsewhere, "Now they were written for our sake, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."⁹⁵ Now if it be asked in what sense what was written has been written for our sake, consider that for our sake it was written, "You shall not muzzle the mouth of

86. Cf. Phil 2.6-7.

88. Cf. Mt 9.11.

90. Cf. Lk 7.38.

92. Cf. Ps 69.9.

94. Ps 69.8-9.

87. Ps 69.9.

89. Mt 9.11; Mk 2.16.

91. Lk 7.39.

93. Lk 9.48.

95. 1 Cor 10.11.

an ox while it is treading; for God does not care about oxen, but he says this concerning us";⁹⁶ and for our sake it was written, "For Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman";⁹⁷ so that we might know that these things are allegorical and these are the two covenants.⁹⁸ It was also for our sake that it was written that the people ate manna in the wilderness and drank water from the rock,⁹⁹ so that we would understand that they "ate spiritual food and drank spiritual drink, drinking from the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."¹⁰⁰ And these and other things of this sort were mysteries that have been hidden in eternal times,¹⁰¹ but have now been manifested through the prophetic Scriptures and the coming [M1261] of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.¹⁰²

(11) But that this might become plainer still, how what was written down beforehand has been written for our sake,¹⁰³ the prophet says of the first people, "For with your ears you will hear and you will not hear; and seeing you will see and you will not understand."¹⁰⁴ But of us it is said, "For those to whom it was not announced concerning him will see; and those who have not heard will understand."¹⁰⁵ Consider then, from this, for whose sake what was written seems to have been written. For what is being written doubtless is being written for the sake of those who are going to understand,¹⁰⁶ not for the sake of those who are said to be going to neither see nor understand.¹⁰⁷ Now those who understand what has been written will doubtless find that which is added subsequently: "so that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures, we might have hope in God."¹⁰⁸ For surely it is not he who neither believes nor understands,¹⁰⁹ but he who both believes and understands,¹¹⁰ who receives consolation from the Scriptures.

96. Dt 25.4; 1 Cor 9.9-10.

98. Cf. Gal 4.24.

100. 1 Cor 10.3-4.

102. Cf. 2 Tm 1.9-10.

104. Is 6.9.

106. Cf. Rom 15.21; Is 52.15.

108. Rom 15.4. "In God" is added here, whether by Rufinus or Origen, though it does not appear in the lemma or in the original Greek text.

109. Cf. Is 6.9.

110. Cf. Rom 15.21; Is 52.15.

97. Gal 4.22.

99. Cf. Ex 16.35; 17.6.

101. Cf. Col 1.26; Rom 16.25-26.

103. Cf. 1 Cor 10.11.

105. Rom 15.21; Is 52.15.

107. Cf. Is 6.9.

7. *Now may the God of patience and consolation grant you to be of one mind towards one another, according to Jesus Christ, so that with unanimity you may with one mouth honor the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Receive one another, therefore, just as Christ also received you, for the honor of God.*¹¹¹

(2) If patience is a virtue, but every virtue is from God, patience too is from God. Since then he is called the God of patience, what seems to be shown is that God is with those who have the virtue of patience within themselves; just as when he is called the God of righteousness, God is shown to be in those who preserve righteousness.¹¹² “The God of truth” and “the God of wisdom” will be understood in a similar way.¹¹³ Moreover, when he is also called the God of consolation, God is shown to be with those who receive the consolation of the Spirit out of the Holy Scriptures through spiritual understanding.

(3) He says, “So then, may the God of patience and consolation grant you to be of one mind towards one another, according to Jesus Christ.” Here, by a custom deriving from the patriarchs and prophets, whose written blessings are alluded to, Paul bestows blessings to the Romans,¹¹⁴ praying that God may grant them to be of one mind towards one another. That is a great blessing, that all should be of one mind and should sense one thing, and that each one should will for his neighbor as he wills for himself.¹¹⁵ Would you like to know how effective the grace of unanimity can be? In the Gospels the Savior declares, “For if two or three agree together on any matter, whatsoever they should ask of God, it will be done for them”;¹¹⁶ and again he says concerning himself, “For where there are two or three gathered together in my name,” [M1262] i.e., who sense one and the same thing in the name of Christ, “there,” he says, “I shall be in their midst.”¹¹⁷

(4) Would you like to have another example as well how Christ is in the midst of those who are of one perception?¹¹⁸ Consider in the Acts of the Apostles how, after the Lord’s ascen-

111. Rom 15:5-7.

113. Cf. Eph 3:10.

115. Cf. Mt 7:12.

117. Mt 18:20.

112. Cf. Rom 10:3.

114. Cf. 1.8.1.

116. Mt 18:19.

118. Cf. Mt 18:20.

sion, when it says the eleven apostles together with the others had raised their voice and prayed with unanimity, the place where they were standing was shaken and they merited the presence of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ So that the great power of unanimity and the great extent of grace might become still clearer, I do not think it will seem absurd if we even bring forth what has been handed down to us in a rational manner from the fathers, that is to say, from those from the Hebrews who came to faith in Christ, even in the Old Testament.

(5) So they were speaking of those three sons of Korah whose names we find in Exodus,¹²⁰ i.e., "Asir," which is translated "learning"; and "Elchan," which means in our language "God's possession"; and "Abiasa," which in Latin speech signifies "congregation of the father." When their father Korah had sinned, together with Dathan and Abiram¹²¹ and all who had agreed with them, and when the destruction of divine vengeance was prepared for them, these men, having sequestered themselves away from the godless conspiracy, separated themselves from that abominable crowd and unanimously poured out a prayer of repentance to God. And having been heard by God, they merited not only remission of punishment but also the grace of prophecy. And this too was offered by God to them when they asked, that they would not be commanded to prophesy anything grievous or destructive; and this is why all the Psalms that are recorded bearing their names in the title contain nothing grievous or bitter against sinners.¹²²

(6) Now we have brought this forward so that it might be understood more magnificently how great is the power of unanimity and of being of one sense and of being of one mind among one another. I also do not think Paul's practice in certain epistles is without significance, where he joins the names of others to his own and says, "Paul and the brother Sosthenes";¹²³ and elsewhere, "Paul and Sylvanus and Timothy."¹²⁴ But through

119. Cf. Acts 4.24, 31.

120. Cf. Ex 6.24.

121. Cf. Nm 16.1-2.

122. This passage has its background in current Judaism. Cf. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, p. 46.

123. 1 Cor 1.1.

124. 1 Thes 1.1.

this he is showing that where two or three were found as one,¹²⁵ the Holy Spirit had elicited one sense between them and one speech; so that those who were desiring to teach the churches all to say one thing and to be of one mind, might themselves first demonstrate that they say and think one thing, and that they might, with one mouth, honor God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹²⁶ For "one mouth" is uttered where one and the same understanding and speech proceeds through the mouths of diverse people. [M1263] Where the Apostle says, "be of one mind among one another," he admirably added, "according to Jesus Christ." For it could come to pass that some would agree unanimously in respect to evil and would be of one mind in respect to what is bad. On that account, then, he has added, "according to Jesus Christ." Doubtless, he who thinks according to Jesus Christ is mindful of all that is good.

(7) After these things he says, "Receive one another, therefore, just as Christ also received you, for the honor of God." What he says, "Receive one another," must be referred to what he had previously set forth where, on the occasion of clean and unclean foods, they were disagreeing with one another by thinking different things, and he says, "Receive one another just as Christ also received you." For he shrank back from no one's uncleanness and did not reckon to anyone their transgressions.¹²⁷ You then should not make judgments in connection with the uncleanness of animals, in the same way that he did not reckon the acts of uncleanness of believers. And he who had said above, "Let not the one who eats judge the one who does not eat; for God has received him,"¹²⁸ has said here, "because Christ has received you," in order to show that it is one and the same thing to be received by God and by Christ. Now he says additionally that to be received by Christ is God's honor. For he is teaching those whom Christ has received that they should act in such a way that when men see their good works, they may glorify the Father in heaven."¹²⁹

125. Cf. Mt 18.20.

127. Cf. 2 Cor 5.19.

129. Cf. Mt 5.16.

126. Cf. 1 Cor 1.10; Phil 2.2.

128. Rom 14.3.

8. *For I say that Christ has become a minister of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises of the fathers; but the Gentiles honor God for his mercy, as it is written, "Therefore I shall confess you among the Gentiles and sing to your name." And again it says, "Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and let all the peoples magnify him." And again Isaiah says, "He will be the root of Jesse and the one who will rise to rule the Gentiles. In him the Gentiles will hope."*¹³⁰

(2) How Christ became a minister of the circumcision in order to confirm the promises of the fathers can be understood in two ways. Either, [first] because he himself received circumcision in his own flesh,¹³¹ so that it would be most openly recognized that by coming from the seed of Abraham, to whom God had promised that in his seed all Gentiles would be blessed,¹³² he fulfilled in his very self the things that had been promised to the fathers. And in order that through this, according to the arranged theme of the entire epistle, [M1264] to keep in check and restrain at one time those who had believed from the circumcision, at another time those as well who had believed from the Gentiles, being puffed up against one another,¹³³ he teaches that those who are detained in the observances of the law are not to be completely judged, seeing that even Christ has shown himself to be a minister of circumcision in his own flesh.

(3) Or [there may be] another manner that Christ may be said to have become a minister of that circumcision, concerning which the same Apostle says, "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something visible in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one in secret and by the circumcision of the heart, who is one in the spirit, not the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God."¹³⁴ And the same Apostle also speaks in accordance with this in another passage, "In whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not done with hands by the depriving of the body of flesh, but in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism."¹³⁵ It is

130. Rom 15.8-12.

132. Gn 22.18.

134. Rom 2.28-29.

131. Cf. Lk 2.21.

133. Cf. 3.1.2.

135. Col 2.11-12.

certain that the promises of the fathers are fulfilled through this kind of circumcision.

(4) Now he declares which promises these were in the appended examples in which he says, "Therefore I shall confess you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." This seems to be taken from the Seventeenth Psalm with minor changes, not of the sense, but of the words. For there it says, "Therefore I shall confess you among the Gentiles, Lord, and sing a Psalm to your name."¹³⁶ But what he says, "Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people" is written in the same words in the song of Deuteronomy.¹³⁷ But "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles, and magnify him, all peoples" is read in the One hundred sixteenth Psalm,¹³⁸ only in place of "magnify" is found "praise together." Paul himself says that the last testimony has been taken from Isaiah, in whose corpus it is written as follows: "And on that day there will be a root of Jesse and he who will arise to reign over the Gentiles. In him the Gentiles shall hope. And his rest will be honor."¹³⁹ Having omitted two expressions, one at the beginning and one at the end, i.e., "on that day" and "his rest will be honor," he cited the rest in the same words that the seventy translators have published.¹⁴⁰

(5) From this one should know that in almost all passages the Apostle adheres to the edition of the seventy translators, except when, perchance, they seem less necessary to him than the argument that he is pursuing, or when he wants to make use of not so much the words of the translators as the sense of the Scripture, brought forth with his own expression.¹⁴¹ [M1265] But it seemed better for these words about the root of Jesse to

136. Ps 18.49.

137. Dt 32.43 LXX.

138. Ps 117.1.

139. Is 11.10.

140. Intended is the LXX, which for Origen is the Christian Bible. Cf. 8.6.2 n. 116.

141. Cf. 5.8.7. Hammond Bammel, *Römerbrieftext*, p. 236, suggests that in these words one has the impression that Rufinus has used the text-critical references he found in Origen as ammunition for his own dispute with the views of Jerome over the authority of the LXX. For, in Origen's other writings, Origen mentions Hebrew readings not merely in those passages that fail to agree with the New Testament citations. But Rufinus consistently omits the latter type of discussions from his translations, which would not be helpful in his quarrel with Jerome.

be discussed in the explanation of the prophet Isaiah himself. Even in the present passage, however, it will be said that "Jesse" translates into our language, "To me, he is." So then, at the coming of Christ, all who believed in him appropriately said: To me, he is; for Moses himself said of him, "He who is has sent me to you."¹⁴² To me, he is; that is, I believe in him who is, not who was made from nothing, as pleases the godless, but he who is and always is,¹⁴³ and this is his name. And he is the very one who rose from the root of Jesse, and in him the Gentiles will hope. For the sake of the mercy that they have attained from him, when he who always was, was born from the root of Jesse in order to give salvation to the Gentiles, for the sake of this mercy, I say, that has been bestowed upon them, the Gentiles honor and magnify God.

9. *For may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.*¹⁴⁴ He who had said above that it was written in Isaiah, "And in him the Gentiles shall hope,"¹⁴⁵ has rejoicingly added, "Now the God of hope," so that if it had been written: In him the Gentiles will believe, doubtless, he would have added, "Now the God of faith"; so that from the hoping he now invokes the God of hope upon those nations who hope in him from whom he pleads for the gift of blessing to be increased to them. The blessing is of this sort: that they might be filled with all joy and with all peace. Now in a similar way as well the prophet says in a certain passage, "And there will be righteousness in his days and a multitude of peace, until the moon is removed."¹⁴⁶

(2) But since these things are being said concerning Christ, we can rightly refer the multitude of peace to him, in view of the fact that he has made peace through the blood of his own cross, not only with the things on earth but also with things in heaven.¹⁴⁷ It seems difficult to me to explain how the Apostle's

142. Ex 3.14.

143. Many scholars think this is Rufinus's polemic against Arianism; the thought, however, derives essentially from Origen. Cf. 1.5.1.

144. Rom 15.13.

145. Rom 15.12; Is 11.10.

146. Ps 72.7.

147. Cf. Col 1.20.

prayer could be fulfilled in human beings, that they should be filled with all joy and with all peace, especially when the Apostle himself even claims in respect to the things he has attained through the grace of the Spirit to know in part and to prophesy in part.¹⁴⁸ But I think that believers can have a fullness of peace in him when they are reconciled to God the Father through faith in accordance with the word of Paul, who says, "We entreat you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God";¹⁴⁹ and when they return to peace with the Son of God through the blood of his cross¹⁵⁰ and when they are united with the Holy Spirit, [M1266] when they have cleansed themselves of all filth and have become holy vessels;¹⁵¹ so that only then would someone seem to be filled with all peace, if he believes in the fullness of the Trinity. On this account, after all, the Apostle includes and says, "May he fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit." For if the one who believes is fortified by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is certain that he would always have the fullness of joy and the fullness of peace.

10. *Now I am certain, brothers, even I, concerning you, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, so that you are able even to admonish others.*¹⁵²

(2) By the same account by which, we said above, believers are filled with all joy and with all peace,¹⁵³ here as well he confirms that those to whom his words are addressed are filled with goodness and with all knowledge. When writing to the Corinthians as well, he says in a similar way, "In everything you have become rich in him, in every word, and in all knowledge."¹⁵⁴ This is he who, as we said above, also declares in respect to himself that he does not have all knowledge or all prophecy, but in part.¹⁵⁵ I recall that we have indeed spoken repeatedly about this in other passages.¹⁵⁶ And now, we shall

148. Cf. 1 Cor 13.9.

150. Cf. Col 1.20.

152. Rom 15.14.

154. 1 Cor 1.5.

156. Cf. e.g. 3.2.13; 3.11.4; 5.1.11.

149. 2 Cor 5.20.

151. Cf. 2 Tm 2.21; 2 Cor 7.1.

153. Cf. Rom 15.13.

155. Cf. 1 Cor 13.9.

nonetheless say that Paul and if there are those who are like him are said to be perfect in comparison with others; but no human being can be called or be perfect¹⁵⁷ in comparison to the highest knowledge or to the perfection that exists among the heavenly orders.

(3) It is as if we were to say: A master is called a perfect elementary teacher in comparison with the one who is being freshly taught in the studies of youth and who is receiving the first elements of reading and writing; but he is not as perfect as the one who teaches grammar. And however perfect the grammarian himself may be, nevertheless, the perfection of the orator is superior; and the perfection of philosophical doctrine is far more eminent than all of these. And although the instruction of literature is in all of these, nevertheless the degree of perfection and of teaching authority is considered to be different in each one. So then, it is possible that even when Paul says, "Not that I have attained or am already perfect,"¹⁵⁸ he should seem to be writing this with regard to the summit of heavenly perfection. But when he says, "Let those of us then who are perfect think this,"¹⁵⁹ he has in view only the degree of human perfection.¹⁶⁰

(4) So then, in the present passage as well, either the Romans or the Corinthians are to be understood to be filled with peace or joy,¹⁶¹ or even with goodness or [M1 267] knowledge, to the extent that it is possible for those to be filled who are being taught in the Church and who are active under perfect teachers. Now he also indicates the measure of that knowledge when he says, "So that you are able even to admonish others." By this he is showing that each one ought likewise to admonish another in what he has learned, and ought to have with fellow disciples the kind of discussions by which they can admonish and edify one another. For mutual exchange can confer a great amount of instruction if it is done with love and if it awaits an insight concerning each of the deeper and more concealed

157. Cf. 1 Cor 2.6.

158. Phil 3.12.

159. Phil 3.15.

160. Cf. Preface of Origen (3); *Princ* 1.4.1.

161. Cf. Rom 15.13.

matters from those who are learned and perfect, according to what even Moses says, "Ask your fathers and they will declare it to you; your elders, and they will tell you."¹⁶²

11. *But I have written to you rather boldly in part, as one who is reminding you through the grace given me by God that I should be ministering to Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, sanctifying the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles may be accepted, sanctified in the Holy Spirit.*¹⁶³

(2) It is as if he is aware throughout the entire text of the epistle,¹⁶⁴ as he was discoursing, sometimes to those who are of the circumcision, sometimes to those who had believed from the Gentiles,¹⁶⁵ that he had touched upon several things even of the more concealed and profound mysteries and, in his zeal for offering a rational explanation, he uncovered many things that were being held among the concealed things, although in each instance he guarded through cautious moderation the dispensing of the word.¹⁶⁶ And while revealing in part some, yet he covered up the greater part of these things, so he says, "I have written to you rather boldly in part, as one who is reminding you through the grace that has been given to me." Do you hear the Apostle as he says, "I have written in part"? Let no one then be incensed with us if we are not capable enough to elucidate the matter of the divine mysteries with clarity, since one hears that he who hands down these things to us has handed them down in part. And let no one, under the banner of knowledge, go forward so puffed up, as if he knows everything,¹⁶⁷ since Paul himself, from whom the words of knowledge have been transmitted to us, claims to write in part and to know in part.¹⁶⁸ Personally, however, I think that even though Paul himself may confess to know in part, [M1268] nevertheless he knew more, even far more than he wrote. For as one who knew many things yet would not dare to publish many things, he claims that there was

162. Dt 32.7.

164. Cf. 9.1.1.

166. Cf. the parable of the king's palace in 5.1.9.

167. Cf. 1 Cor 8.1.

168. Cf. 1 Cor 13.9.

163. Rom 15.15-16.

165. Cf. 3.1.2.

a boldness in him so that at least he would commit some things to writing.

(3) But what he says, “reminding you through the grace given me,” indicates that indeed there have already been words in him about such things and that he had repeatedly discussed the mysteries, but because forgetfulness could easily snatch away things that had been expressed in a single phrase, through these few things that I have written, he says, and through the grace given to me, I am calling back to your recollection those things that have already repeatedly been discussed quite extensively. Concerning the grace that Paul recalls has been given to him, we have already spoken above.¹⁶⁹ He says that this grace was given to him for this reason: “that I might be ministering to Christ Jesus among the Gentiles, sanctifying the gospel of God.” What we have as “sanctifying the gospel of God” the Greeks express more excellently as *ιερουργῶν*, which could be said by us, though not completely, as, “sacrificing the gospel of God,” through which it is being made known that proclaiming the gospel is a high priestly work.

(4) Therefore he adds finally, “in order that the offering of the Gentiles may become accepted, sanctified in the Holy Spirit.” So then, just as when the high priests were offering sacrifices, it was necessary for them to make sure that there was no blemish on the victim, nothing blameworthy, no fault, so that it could be accepted and pleasing to God,¹⁷⁰ so also he who sacrifices the gospel and proclaims the Word of God ought to take care in every way that there should arise no blemish in his preaching, no fault in his teaching, no blame in his instruction, but that if possible he should, so to speak, first sacrifice himself, he should first cut his throat to vices, he should first put to death his own members to sin,¹⁷¹ so that not only by teaching but also by the example of life, he might make the salvation of disciples his own offering accepted by God.¹⁷² “Sanctified,” he says, “in the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is the fount of sanctification and therefore the offering of the Gentiles that is of-

169. Cf. 1.7.1.

171. Cf. Col 3.5.

170. Cf. Lv 22.21; Dt 15.21; 17.1.

172. Cf. 9.1.4, 7.

ferred as Paul sacrifices is said to become accepted by God not through the observance of the law but through the Holy Spirit.

12. *Therefore, in Christ Jesus I have glory¹⁷³ before God. For I do not venture to speak of anything of what [Mt 269] Christ has not accomplished through me in the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deeds, through the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem in a circuit reaching to Illyricum I have completed the gospel of Christ. But I would so preach this gospel, not where Christ has been named, lest I should be building on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those to whom it has not been proclaimed about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."*¹⁷⁴

(2) True boasting before God is indeed only that which is in Christ Jesus. But to boast in God without Christ is thus as if someone should say he has glory before God without righteousness, without wisdom, without truth. For Christ is all these things;¹⁷⁵ and therefore true boasting before God is in Christ alone. This is similar to what he says elsewhere: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."¹⁷⁶ We have already discussed quite extensively above¹⁷⁷ how all boasting that is outside of Christ is blameworthy, for example, in wealth or secular honors or worldly wisdom or in other skills that are outside of Christ. Of course one should know that the Latins have recorded here *gloria* ["glory"] instead of *gloriatio* ["boasting"].

(3) He says, "For I do not venture to speak of anything of what Christ has not accomplished through me in the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deeds, through the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." What I speak, he says, are not words about someone else's work, nor am I made a eulogist for the accomplishments of others; but that which I know Christ has accomplished through me I am writing to you, that which he has fulfilled in me, in word and deed, for the obedience of the Gentiles, in the word of preaching and in

173. *Habeo gloriam*. See 10.12.2.

175. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30; Jn 14.6.

177. Cf. 3.9.6-7; 4.9.1-5.

174. Rom 15.17-21.

176. 1 Cor 1.31.

the deed of signs and wonders. What the difference is between signs and wonders, we have already spoken about quite extensively even in other passages¹⁷⁸ and we shall explicate it in an abridged form in the present passage.

(4) They are called "signs" in which is indicated that there is something miraculous or something will be. Wonders, on the other hand, refer to those things in which merely something miraculous is shown. He has said, "signs and wonders," then, which would include both, as it were. Now Holy Scripture sometimes retains these peculiarities, but sometimes, by an improper use,¹⁷⁹ it records "wonders" for "signs" and "signs" for "wonders." Paul, then, through the power of signs and wonders, which signs and wonders, however, he was doing by the power of the Holy Spirit, has completed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum. [M1270] God had given Moses and Aaron the power of signs and wonders,¹⁸⁰ as it is written, "He placed among them the words of his signs and wonders in the land of Ham,"¹⁸¹ in order that they might set the sons of Israel free, after Egypt had been punished. But they were scarcely able to convert even a few from the nation of the Egyptians. But when Paul received the power of signs and wonders, he converted not one nation to the mysteries of Christ, not two or three peoples, but all nations and peoples from Jerusalem in a circuit as far as Illyricum, by the preaching of the word and by the power of works and powers.¹⁸² Yet he preached this gospel in such a way that he would not have to append his own words to the efforts of others or to the preaching of someone else, lest he should be building the edifice of his own preaching upon the foundations of faith that had been laid by others and would seem to be stealing the glory of someone else's work. These things should be observed by the leaders of the churches and preserved with diligent intention, that they not seem to speak of what Christ has accomplished through them and not seem to disfigure the efforts and endeavors of others.

178. Cf. *Comm in Jn* 13.63.

180. Cf. Ps 105.26.

182. Cf. 2 Cor 10.16. See also 8.9.6.

179. *Abusive*. See 4.9.6 n. 322.

181. Ps 105.27.

(5) A person speaks of things that Christ has not accomplished through him if anyone should speak and teach about self-control when he himself is not self-controlled; or if anyone speaks about sobriety or about justice or about giving away wealth and despising material resources for the kingdom of God and, in the one who is teaching these things, Christ has accomplished none of these things. And therefore, the Apostle offers himself as a model and says that what he speaks and preaches to others is what Christ has first fulfilled through himself.

(6) “But as it is written,” he says, “Those to whom it has not been proclaimed about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.” The Apostle then has carefully observed that, according to the prophetic utterances, he would proclaim Christ to those to whom he had not been proclaimed by anyone and that they who had not previously learned from anyone would understand about him. And in my opinion this was the reason that frequently hindered him from his purpose of going on to Rome, as he says, “On account of which as well I was hindered many times from coming to you”;¹⁸³ not that he was hindered by Satan, as he says elsewhere,¹⁸⁴ but detained in founding churches and of founding them in locations where no foundation of the faith had previously existed.¹⁸⁵ Now the testimony has been taken from Isaiah and is recorded completely in the same words that are read in the prophet.¹⁸⁶ [M1271]

13. *But now, having no further room in these regions, having the desire to come to you now for many years previous, when I set out for Spain, I hope to see you when I pass through and to be launched in that direction by you, when I have first enjoyed your company even in part.*¹⁸⁷

183. Rom 15.22.

184. 1 Thes 2.18.

185. He discusses the reasons why Paul was hindered from going to Rome in 1.13.2-3.

186. Cf. Is 52.15.

187. Rom 15.23-24.

(2) He seems to be saying these things while at Corinth, in Achaia, as we have already demonstrated to the best of our ability in the first part of the epistle.¹⁸⁸ Achaia, of course, is the neighbor of Macedonia and borders it. While spending time in those locations, since he had traveled through each region preaching the gospel in just those borders where Christ had not previously been preached, and had filled every place with the knowledge of God,¹⁸⁹ he says that he has no further room in those regions, that is to say, no place remains for him that is unfilled with the proclamation of Christ, and he indicates that the time has now arrived when he ought to fulfill his own desire to see those who are in Rome.¹⁹⁰ He had conceived of this for many years, but it had been postponed and kept secret until he could fill every place in which Christ had not been preached with the knowledge of his gospel.

(3) Now what he has said, "When I set out for Spain, I hope to see you when I pass through," should not be understood as if Paul was bearing so little love for the Romans that he had decided only to see them in passing while traveling in another direction. For look at what he subsequently adds, "when I have first enjoyed your company in part." Certainly by this he seems to place under their power [the question of] when he should be released by them for the proposed journey. And through this he somehow invites and fosters their love for himself, so that if they should be held fast by an insatiable affection for the Apostle, they should know as well that he has resolved not to depart from them or to set out in another direction before the grace of their love is fully enjoyed. Yet he senses in advance that this love is going to be so great that it will not be possible to satisfy it entirely, but, "in part," he says. The necessity of preaching the gospel to all, which should take precedence, defends him in advance.¹⁹¹ Now it is admirable that to those whom he had not yet seen according to the flesh and to whom he had not yet come in the body he promises his own presence and stay very moderately. For we receive with more longing good things that

188. Cf. Preface of Origen (7).

190. Cf. Rom 1.11.

189. Cf. Rom 15.20.

191. Cf. 1 Cor 9.16.

we fear will quickly be taken; on the other hand we are rather carefree and negligent toward what we believe will be retained among us for a long time. [M1272] But so much so does he foster the affection of the Romans for himself and put [the length of] his stay at their discretion that he says that he is to be launched toward Spain by them and launched at that time when he has first made satisfaction with them in love. In which surely, if they show themselves more favorably disposed, they will give the Apostle reasons for staying longer.

14. *Now, however, I should set out for Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to take a collection for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. For they were well pleased, and they are their debtors; for if they have become sharers in their spiritual matters, the Gentiles ought also to minister to them in fleshly matters. So, when I have completed this, and have assigned to them this fruit, I should set out through you to Spain. For I know that when I come to you, I will come in the abundance of Christ's blessing.*¹⁹²

(2) That Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to take a collection for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem we can also learn more fully from the Second Letter to the Corinthians, in which he writes in this manner, "I make known to you, brothers, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia; for with much testing of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty abounded to the wealth of their simplicity. For I bear witness for them, according to their power and beyond their power, of their own accord, with many pleadings, they begged us for the grace and sharing that is among the saints,"¹⁹³ and so on. And just as in these things he is testifying to the Macedonians, so again he is urging even the Corinthians, saying, "But just as you abound in all things, in faith and in word and in knowledge and in our love for you, so also you should abound in this grace,"¹⁹⁴ and so on. Moreover, elsewhere praising the Corinthians because they were prepared to share with the poor who are in Jerusalem, he

192. Rom 15.25-29.

194. 2 Cor 8.7.

193. 2 Cor 8.1-4.

says, "And in this matter I am giving advice: for it is beneficial to you who began last year not only to do but even to want to; but now finish even in the doing of it."¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, in the remaining section he pursues this same sharing with the saints, and after a little bit he adds, "Now it is superfluous to write you about the ministry that is among the saints. For I know that your will is ready, for which I rejoice about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year; and your zeal has stirred up many."¹⁹⁶ [M1 273]

(3) Now, that the Apostle had resolved to see Rome as well after this kind of ministry in Macedonia and Achaia for the saints who are in Jerusalem is indicated in the Acts of the Apostles in this manner: "Now after these things had been accomplished, Paul resolved in his spirit that when he had gone through Macedonia and Achaia, he would set out for Jerusalem, saying, 'After I have gone there, it is necessary for me also to see Rome.'"¹⁹⁷ From all these words one concludes not only that First Corinthians, but also Second Corinthians was written before these things to the Romans that we have in hand.¹⁹⁸ At the same time the following is observed, that to the extent that Paul is found to be older in each letter, to that degree he is also more perfect. Thus those words of his are true in which he said, "For forgetting what lies behind, I strain forward to what lies ahead of me, following after the prospective prize of the upward calling."¹⁹⁹

(4) Now what he says, "Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to take a collection for the poor among the saints," subtly and modestly exhorts the Romans while praising the Corinthians. For minds are more easily invited to be devoted to well-doing through examples than words. Moreover, in what he adds, "For they were pleased, and they are their debtors," what else does he want the Romans to feel if not that, if the Achaians and Macedonians are debtors to the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem, by the same reckoning, by which the Romans likewise hold fast to one and the same faith in Christ, they

195. 2 Cor 8.10-11.

197. Acts 19.21.

199. Phil 3.13-14. Cf. Preface of Origen (3).

196. 2 Cor 9.1-2.

198. Cf. Preface of Origen (3-5).

should take heed that they too also have become debtors to these same persons? For it is not merely the Macedonians and Achaians who have become sharers in spiritual things with the saints who are in Jerusalem, so that they also ought to minister to them in fleshly things, but the Romans too. And therefore, they are debtors in the same condition; but he declares this only concerning the one group, in order that the others might know that they are subject to this purpose. Let these things be said as pertaining to the common, literal interpretation.

(5) But let us endeavor to ascertain the customary magnificence in Paul's letters. For I do not think that he thought in such a way that he would have limited the poor among the saints, whom he had also called "spiritual," to within Jerusalem alone, only one city in Palestine, [M1274] whereas he has called the rest "Gentiles," who are all over the earth, who are responsible for ministering in fleshly things to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as if they were the only spiritual ones. For assuredly it should be taken for granted that the spiritual are found even outside of Jerusalem whom not location but holy manner of life and the perfection of faith and knowledge make spiritual. As Paul himself says when writing to the Corinthians [Galatians],²⁰⁰ "Brothers, even if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in a spirit of gentleness."²⁰¹

(6) What then is suitable for us to discern in these things? That everyone who is spiritual, i.e., whoever serves God in spirit²⁰² and lives not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit,²⁰³ he is in Jerusalem, that is, he dwells in the place of peace and stands in the Vision of Peace.²⁰⁴ And, he is poor among the saints, namely, from those blessed poor to whom it is said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."²⁰⁵ This then is a blessed poverty that says, "Gold and silver I do not have; but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk."²⁰⁶ A poor man of this

200. For other mistaken scriptural citations, see 1.3.5 n. 55.

201. Gal 6.1.

203. Cf. Rom 8.4.

205. Mt 5.3.

202. Cf. Phil 3.3.

204. Cf. 3.5.2 n. 143.

206. Acts 3.6.

sort always dwells in Jerusalem while possessing spiritual riches. His gold is wisdom and his silver is words of knowledge.²⁰⁷ His clothing is Christ;²⁰⁸ his banquets and riches are the table of wisdom, and his abundant food is in the Word of God.²⁰⁹ He drinks the wine of gladness, which wisdom has mixed in her bowl,²¹⁰ and he eats solid food from the sacrificial beasts of his understanding, even the Word that was made flesh.²¹¹ These are the spiritual riches that the Gentiles hasten to share while they are still in the flesh. It seems to me that by those whom he names Gentiles he is indicating certain souls that are less perfect and require the instruction of the perfect. And if perchance they should become worthy to become sharers with them in understanding and spiritual knowledge, they would be responsible to minister to them in fleshly things; that is, when their spirit begins to be steeped in loftier knowledge, the flesh likewise, taking the reins of self-control and chastity, ought to minister by spiritual commandments lest, perhaps, if it is still indulging in fleshly things, it should throw off its rider, the Word of God, having become heedless and unbridled.²¹²

(7) Moreover, [M1275] the difference of phrasing that Paul has used for each side does not seem superfluous to me. For in relation to spiritual things he has recorded "sharing" or "participation," but for fleshly things, "ministering"; and he says that the one is owed, but the other is to be shared in order to show that the more perfect things, whatever they are, as heavenly things, are not so much owed to the earthly as bestowed; but earthly and fleshly things are exacted as for a debt. For we have become debtors according to him who originally lost the income he received of immortality and incorruptibility in Paradise by the serpent's persuasion. And for that reason we all become debtors, however many in the likeness of Adam become implicated in the fate of transgression.²¹³ For that reason, then, commands are given, that we may pay off the debts. After all, even the Savior says the following in the Gospel: "But when you

207. Cf. Acts 3.6.

208. Cf. Rom 13.14.

209. Cf. Prv 9.1-2.

210. Cf. Prv 9.2, 5.

211. Cf. Heb 5.12, 14; Jn 1.14; Cf. Jn 6.51.

212. Cf. *Comm in Cant* 2.6; *Hom in Ex* 6.2.

213. Cf. Rom 5.14.

have done all these things that I have commanded you, say: We are useless slaves; for we have done what we owed doing.”²¹⁴ But the things we do beyond what is owed, we do not do as commands. For example, virginity is paid out not as a debt; for it is not demanded by a command but is offered as something beyond what is owed.²¹⁵ After all, listen to Paul saying, “But concerning virgins, I do not have a command of the Lord.”²¹⁶ So then, he has said “sharing” of the spiritual and more perfect, but of the inferior and fleshly he has termed the obligation “ministering.”²¹⁷

(8) I myself think that, through ministering of this sort, what is said in the Psalms should also be taken into consideration: “He who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire,”²¹⁸ as he has obviously named the good angels “spirits,” as if they are spiritual; but those who preside over the ministries of punishments and prepare the flames for sinners he has identified as ministers of a burning flame.²¹⁹ Although these things may appear to have been spoken as a digression, we have nevertheless not omitted them since the passage had suggested these things.

(9) After these things he says, “So, when I have completed this, and have assigned to them this fruit, I should set out by way of you to Spain. For I know that when I come to you I will come in the abundance of Christ’s blessing.” Behold with what great caution he promises that he is going to seal the fruit of the offerings. With what kind of seal²²⁰ do you think the Apostle seals the fruit of a holy work? I think that it is that by which the image of God is expressed, that is, that in completing the work there should be no admixture of thought of another, no praise from men should be sought,²²¹ but that with simplicity of heart, he who distributes should distribute,²²² and not out of grief; for God loves a cheerful giver.²²³ [M1276] And in the work of God,

214. Lk 17.10.

216. 1 Cor 7.25.

218. Ps 104.4; Cf. Heb 1.7.

220. *Assignare* (to assign) and *consignare* (to seal) are derived from *signum* (seal), just as in Greek *σφραγίζειν* derives from *σφραγίς*.

221. Cf. Rom 2.29.

223. Cf. 2 Cor 9.7.

215. Cf. 3.3.1.

217. Cf. 1.12.1.

219. Cf. 7.1.3.

222. Cf. Rom 12.8.

whoever observes even other matters similar to these is signing his work with the seal of the divine image.

(10) He says, "So, when I have completed these things, then I should set out by way of you to Spain." He is of course promising a magnificent gift to the Romans and he says, "For I know that when I come to you, I will come in the abundance of Christ's blessing," which he promises by no other means except through the Holy Spirit and through the grace of prophecy. For surely to know these things about the future, that he is going to come to them not only in Christ's blessing but also in the abundance of blessing, is beyond man. Here both the grace of the one who is coming and the merits of those who are receiving are equally indicated.

15. *Therefore I appeal to you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to assist me in prayers to God, that I may be freed from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry may be accepted by the saints in Jerusalem, so that with God's will I may come to you in joy and find rest in your company.*²²⁴

(2) Although in what precedes he said, "For I know that when I come to you I shall come in the abundance of Christ's blessing,"²²⁵ yet he was nevertheless knowing, even in these things that he had known were manifestly future, that prayer is necessary; if, for example, this [prayer] had not been supplied, what had been prophesied would doubtless not be fulfilled. Thus, who is it that can read what Paul appeals to his brothers in Rome, to pray for him, and despise or devalue the requesting of the prayers of the Church, even if those from whom prayer is requested appear to be inferior in merits? For behold Paul, a man endowed with apostolic merits, not only exhorts the Romans to pray for him, but also the Corinthians.²²⁶

(3) But consider also how he binds them with powerful religious obligations. He says, "That you assist me in prayers to God through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit." What ours recorded as "that you assist me in prayers" is read

224. Rom 15.30-32.

226. Cf. 2 Cor 1.11.

225. Rom 15.29.

more eminently among the Greeks as, συναγωνίσασθαι, in which what is being indicated is this: "that you assist me in the struggle of prayers to God," making known that he himself is engaged in a struggle, as it were, and a prayer-battle with those who oppose him, doubtless, those concerning which he was saying, "For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and authorities, against the leaders of this world of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in [M1 277] the heavenlies."²²⁷ And it is certain that just as they all oppose the faith and resist piety, just as they are contrary to righteousness and truth and everything good, so they, no doubt, resist and are opposed to prayer.²²⁸

(4) And for that reason Paul makes known that there is no less a battle in prayer as well, since indeed he believed that even the assistance of those who are in Rome had to be implored in this battle. For demons and contrary powers truly fight against prayer, first of all to prevent anyone from being found who sweats in the struggle of prayer, so that he lifts up pure hands without anger.²²⁹ But even if anyone is able to attain to this, to be without anger, it is seldom that he escapes being without contention,²³⁰ i.e., without superfluous and vain thoughts. For you will rarely find that no unprofitable or inappropriate thought occurs to the one who is praying, and it turns aside and shatters the concentration by which the mind is directed to God, and it snatches it away through what is inappropriate. And therefore, the struggle of prayer is great, that, as enemies besiege and snatch into distractions the thoughts of the one praying, with steadfast concentration the fixed mind should always strive after God, that it deservedly be able itself likewise to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have completed the race."²³¹

(5) Now, then, the Apostle prays to be assisted in the struggle of prayers so that he might be freed from unbelievers in Judea, from whom he is not so much afraid of suffering or of enduring the things that belong to the glory of his apostleship,

227. Eph 6.12.

229. Cf. 1 Tm 2.8.

231. 2 Tm 4.7.

228. Cf. 2.5-3.

230. Cf. 1 Tm 2.8.

as he fears being impeded, having been detained too long by their obstacles, or that he should offer a less pleasing ministry to the saints, which itself requires prayers in order to become accepted, or else that the desire he has to see the Romans²³² might be postponed for too long a time. For if, he says, it so happens that my ministry becomes accepted by the saints in Jerusalem, and if, having been rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, I am not hindered from coming to you, by the will of God, I shall immediately also come to you really rejoicing over these admirable events, and I shall find rest in your company. Surely Paul is not seeking bodily rest but that kind that possesses encouragement from God, as he himself also said in the first part of this epistle, "to be mutually encouraged among you by each other's faith, both yours and mine."²³³

16. *Now the God of peace be with all of you.*²³⁴ He is rewarding the Romans with an immense blessing, [M1 278] that the God of peace be with them, that is, that the peace of God, which surpasses every mind, guard their hearts in Christ Jesus,²³⁵ who is our peace.²³⁶

17. *Now I commend to you your sister Phoebe, who is in the ministry of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever she may require from you. For she too has assisted many, myself included.*²³⁷

(2) And this passage teaches with apostolic authority that women are likewise appointed to the ministry of the Church.²³⁸ With great praise and commendation Paul honors Phoebe, who was placed in this service in the church in Cenchreae, as he enumerates as well her illustrious accomplishments and says:

232. Cf. Rom 1.11.

234. Rom 15.33.

236. Cf. Eph 2.14.

237. Rom 16.1-2. Westcott, "Origenes," p. 117, draws negative conclusions from Origen's discussion in this final section of Romans: "His silence, no less than his rash conjectures as to the persons named in the sixteenth chapter, is a singular proof of the complete absence of any authoritative tradition as to the persons of the early Roman church."

238. Cf. 10.20.

233. Rom 1.12.

235. Phil 4.7.

She has assisted everyone to such an extent, that is, in her being at hand for necessities, that she even gave assistance to me in my necessities and apostolic labors with the complete dedication of mind. I would call her work similar to the hospitality of Lot, who, while he received strangers at all times, one time even merited to receive angels in hospitality.²³⁹ In a similar way Abraham too, while he was always meeting strangers, merited even to have the Lord, together with angels, turn aside to his tent.²⁴⁰ So also this devout Phoebe, while she stands near everyone and accommodates everyone, merited to assist and to accommodate the Apostle as well. And therefore, this passage teaches two things at the same time: As we have said, women are to be considered ministers in the Church, and the kind who have assisted many and who through good services have merited attaining unto apostolic praise ought to be received in the ministry. He exhorts even this, that those who look after good works in the churches should receive, in turn, recompense and honor from the brothers, so that in whatever things there is a need, whether in spiritual or even fleshly services, they should be held in honor.

18. *Greet Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; and [greet] their house church.*²⁴¹

(2) They seem to me to be ones concerning whom it is written in the Acts of the Apostles as follows: "After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth, and when he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy, and his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome, he went to them; and, because [M1279] he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they were working together; for by trade they were tentmakers,"²⁴² that is, stitchers.

(3) It is no wonder that Paul writes "Prisca" in the epistle of the one written as "Priscilla" in Acts,²⁴³ since the other things

239. Cf. Gn 19.1; Heb 13.2. See also *Hom in Gn* 5.1.

240. Cf. Gn 18.1-2. See also *Hom in Gn* 4.1ff.

241. Rom 16.3-5.

242. Acts 18.1-3.

243. Cf. Acts 18.2.

are in agreement. Now it is possible that they are greeted by Paul because, even though, at that time when the Jews had been expelled from the city by Caesar's command, they had gone to Corinth, when the severity of the edict had let up again they had returned to Rome. It appears, however, that they exposed themselves to the plots of the Jews when Paul was in danger, so that he could depart a free man. For this is also what a certain Jason is reported to have done in the Acts of the Apostles.²⁴⁴ And the Apostle is not silent about this praise of theirs but hands it down to be admired by all the churches. And this is why he says, "To whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." From this it is clear that they had shown themselves to be dutiful and hospitable toward all the faithful brothers, not only those who had believed from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. For great grace is found in the service of hospitality,²⁴⁵ not only before God but also before men.²⁴⁶ Yet because this matter consists not merely in the will and purpose of the masters but also in the gracious and faithful ministry of the servants, on that account he has called everyone who was fulfilling this ministry faithfully with them "their house church."

19. *Greet my beloved Epaenetus who is the beginning of Asia in Christ.*²⁴⁷ It appears to me that this Epaenetus was the first of all to believe from Asia. This is why he named him the beginning of the Church, or as it is rendered in Greek, "the firstfruits of Asia." Unless these words signify something more profound, that we are to understand the angels of God who preside over the churches²⁴⁸ as offering each individual as the firstfruits to God from those who believe.²⁴⁹ But among them it is not those who are first in time who would be judged as the firstfruits, but those who excel in virtues and merits. Knowing through the Spirit their choice of Epaenetus, that out of the entire number of the faithful who were in Asia, the choice of the angels had

244. Cf. Acts 17:5-6. See 10:39.1.

246. Cf. Lk 2:52.

248. Cf. Rv 1:20.

245. Cf. Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2.

247. Rom 16:5.

249. Cf. Mt 13:30, 39, 41.

found him, Paul called him “the firstfruits of Asia.” Moreover, in another epistle he says of certain ones, “For they are the firstfruits of Achaia.”²⁵⁰ No doubt he beholds in them as well the same reckoning of the mystery.

20. *Greet Mary, who has labored much among you.*²⁵¹ He is teaching even in this that women likewise [M1280] ought to labor for the churches of God.²⁵² For they labor both when they teach young women to be modest, to love their husbands, to raise children, to be pure and chaste, to govern their homes well, to be kind, to be submissive to their husbands,²⁵³ to receive in hospitality, to wash the feet of the saints,²⁵⁴ and all the other things written that are recorded concerning the services of women to do with all purity.²⁵⁵

21. *Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives and my fellow-captives, who are noble among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*²⁵⁶

(2) It is indeed possible that they were Paul’s relatives even according to the flesh and that they believed in Christ before him and were held to be noble among the apostles of Christ. It can also be understood that perhaps they were of the seventy-two, who themselves were also named apostles,²⁵⁷ and on that account he would call them noble among the apostles,²⁵⁸ even among those apostles who were before him. But what he says, “my fellow-captives,” troubles me. For which captivity of Paul was there in which he testifies that Andronicus and Junias are likewise fellow-captives? Unless if, perhaps, by a deeper mystery we should look back to that captivity that Christ came to release, concerning which it is written that he came and granted this remission to the captives and sight to the blind.²⁵⁹ It seems

250. 1 Cor 16.15.

252. Cf. 10.17.2.

254. Cf. 1 Tm 5.10.

256. Rom 16.7.

258. “Apostle,” i.e., ἀπόστολος means “one sent” and, therefore, can refer generally to everyone who is sent out by the Lord.

259. Is 61.1; Lk 4.18.

251. Rom 16.6.

253. Cf. Ti 2.4–5.

255. Cf. 1 Tm 5.2.

257. Cf. Lk 10.1.

that they are in this captivity by one and the same reckoning by which Paul was as well. For if, for instance, we should say: When the people of Israel were captive among the Assyrians or the Babylonians, everyone, to be sure, seemed to be captives, but there was one reason for the captivity of the others, another reason for Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.²⁶⁰ For the former were captives on account of their sins, whereas the latter were likewise themselves captives for the sake of the consolation of the captives. And therefore, if Daniel were to call one of the people "my fellow-captive," it did not seem to be said as fittingly as if he were to call Hananiah and Azariah and Mishael "my fellow-captives." For with them there is reason for the captivity, which is far different from the reason for the rest of the people. So then, Paul, also beholding some similar thing concerning himself and Andronicus and Junias according to the reason of a rather concealed token, names them his fellow-captives in this world and noble among the apostles.

22. *Greet Ampliatus, my beloved one in the Lord.*²⁶¹ Although he seems to ascribe nothing to this man that is exceptional beyond others in praise, still the fact that [M1281] he is Paul's beloved one is commendable and becomes worthy of a greeting.

23. *Greet Urbanus, my helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved one.*²⁶² He also includes these men in the greeting but he gave precedence to Urbanus in praises. For he named him a helper in Christ, but Stachys merely beloved to himself, like Ampliatus.²⁶³ Now a helper of an apostle in Christ means nothing else than a sharer of apostolic work.

24. *Greet Apelles, tested in Christ.*²⁶⁴ I think that this Apelles had passed through many afflictions that were sustained patiently and bravely and was therefore declared by the Apostle "tested," according to what he said elsewhere, "affliction produces pa-

260. Cf. Dn 1.6.

262. Rom 16.9.

264. Rom 16.10.

261. Rom 16.8.

263. Cf. Rom 16.8.

tience, and patience produces testing, and testing hope.”²⁶⁵ Of course it should be seen whether perhaps he is the one identified as Apollo in the Acts of the Apostles, the Alexandrian learned in the Scriptures.²⁶⁶

25. *Greet those who are of Aristobulus.*²⁶⁷ Because nothing superfluous is either added to or diminished from the letters of the Apostle, it is not in vain that he calls those who are of the household or family of Aristobulus neither beloved nor tested nor helpers in Christ; but perhaps because they were possessing no such merits, on that account he has honored them with the bare token of a greeting.

26. *Greet Herodion, my relative.*²⁶⁸ Similar to Andronicus and Junias,²⁶⁹ this man is also called a relative of Paul, but he is not identified either as a fellow-captive like them or as noble among the apostles, among those who were in Christ before Paul. Therefore, one should understand that even among those whom Paul designates as his own relatives, in my opinion a great difference exists according to the reckoning that we tried to disclose above.²⁷⁰

27. *Greet those who are from Narcissus who are in the Lord.*²⁷¹ It seems that there were many indeed from the household, or family, of Narcissus, but not all were in the Lord; and therefore he added that those who are in the Lord are to be greeted.

28. *Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who are laboring much in the Lord.*²⁷² He gives a good testimony concerning these [women], whose labor is testified to be neither of this world nor of the common life, but in the Lord. For many labor, but the fact is that not everyone’s labor is in the Lord. [M1282]

²⁶⁵. Rom 5.3-4.

²⁶⁶. Cf. Acts 18.24. Origen was, of course, himself an “Alexandrian learned in the Scriptures.”

²⁶⁷. Rom 16.10.

²⁶⁸. Rom 16.11.

²⁶⁹. Cf. Rom 16.7.

²⁷⁰. Cf. 10.19; 10.21.2.

²⁷¹. Rom 16.11.

²⁷². Rom 16.12.

29. *Greet dearest Persis, who has labored much in the Lord.*²⁷³ She seems to be praised more than Tryphaena and Tryphosa; for he says that they had labored in the Lord, but this [woman], to whom he also added “dearest,” had labored much in the Lord.

30. *Greet Rufus, who is chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*²⁷⁴ In these salutations I do not think that the distinction of praise and greeting in each detail is done in vain. For whoever knows that Christ is speaking in Paul²⁷⁵ is certain that it is for merit that one person is called by him “tested,” another “dearest,” another “laboring in the Lord,” another “laboring much in the Lord,” another “chosen.”²⁷⁶ And here, then, Rufus, of whom we are now speaking, is greeted as “chosen in the Lord.” I believe that Paul would have known that he belonged to the number not of the many who are called but of the few who are chosen,²⁷⁷ whose mother also possessed such great merit that Paul named her his own mother; with whom as well, like Jesus with John,²⁷⁸ he himself shares one affection for his mother.

31. *Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and any brothers who may be with them.*²⁷⁹ Concerning these there is a simple greeting, and no exceptional praise is said additionally of them. But I think that Hermas is that writer of that book called “The Pastor,”²⁸⁰ a scripture that seems to me very useful and, in my opinion, divinely inspired.²⁸¹ I think he has ascribed no

273. Rom 16.12.

275. Cf. 2 Cor 13.3.

277. Cf. Mt 22.14. See also 1.2.

279. Rom 16.14.

280. Cf. *Princ* 1.3.3; 4.1.11; *Hom in Lk* 35.3. Hermas says that he received an order from Pope Clement to write the book. This would place the writing in the year 90. On the other hand, the Muratorian Canon records that the *Shepherd* was written at Rome under Pope Pius, about 140. J. Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine, Volume 1: The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, tr. and ed. John A. Baker (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), p. 39, proposes the solution that the book was a product of several editions. In its first form the book does reach back to the first century and gives very important information about the early Roman community. But Origen’s conjecture about the identity of Hermas is improbable.

281. Cf. 2 Tm 3.16. “Inspired by God” was not necessarily synonymous with “canonical.” It meant that the writing was authorized to be used and read freely

274. Rom 16.13.

276. Cf. Rom 16.8, 10, 12.

278. Cf. Jn 19.26.

praise to him because, as that writing declares, he seems to have been converted to repentance after many sins. And therefore he has written no reproach to him. For he had learned from Scripture not to reproach a man who is converting himself from sin.²⁸² Nor has he bestowed any praise upon him because he was still placed under the angel of repentance,²⁸³ by whom he was obligated to be offered in return to Christ at the opportune time. Now it is understood that those with whose greeting he has been associated lived together.

32. *Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.*²⁸⁴ It is possible that Philologus and Julia were married, the others were members of their household; to whom a simple greeting is directed.

33. *Greet one another with a holy kiss.*²⁸⁵ Based upon these words and several other similar expressions,²⁸⁶ the custom has been handed down to the churches for brothers to welcome each other with a kiss after the prayers. [M1283] The Apostle calls this kiss holy. By that designation he is teaching, first, that they should be chaste kisses that are given in the churches; next, that they should not be feigned as were those of Judas, who offered a kiss with the lips and was contemplating betrayal in the heart.²⁸⁷ But let the kiss of the faithful be first of all chaste, as we have said; then, let it have peace and sincerity in itself with unfeigned love.²⁸⁸

34. *All the churches of Christ greet you.*²⁸⁹ Is Paul not writing these things while in one church? And how is it true that he sends the greetings of all the churches together to the Roman

in the Church, but it could not be invoked as authoritative for doctrine. See J. Kelly in Rufinus, *A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*, ACW 20 (London: Newman Press, 1955), pp. 20–26. Origen was aware that many people despised this writing and he repeatedly apologized for quoting from it.

282. Cf. Sir 8.5.

284. Rom 16.15.

286. Cf. 1 Cor 16.20; 2 Cor 13.12; 1 Thes 5.26; 1 Pt 5.14.

287. Cf. Mt 26.47–49.

289. Rom 16.16.

283. Cf. Hermas, *Vision* 5.7.

285. Rom 16.16.

288. Cf. 2 Cor 6.6.

[church]? But we ought to understand either on account of the fact that there was one spirit in Paul and in all the churches of Christ, or that to offer a greeting, he would say, is to be united through faith and the Spirit.

35. *I urge you, brothers, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and little stumbling blocks, in opposition to the doctrine that you have learned, and keep away from them. For such people do not serve Christ our Lord, but their own belly; and by sweet words and blessings they deceive the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience has been spread abroad everywhere. Consequently I rejoice over you.*²⁹⁰

(2) One should believe that Paul is writing these things both to those who preside over the churches and to all who believe through the Holy Spirit, that they very carefully consider and discern who they are who generate dissensions and little stumbling blocks in the churches and who are estranged from that blessedness that the Lord promised saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."²⁹¹ For you have learned this, he says, from the Lord through the Gospel that you should be peacemakers; but to stir up dissensions or scandals is contrary to the doctrine that you have learned; and therefore, he should be an alien to you; nor should anyone by any means be received among you, who stirs up fights and who sows quarrels, who encourages disputes and cultivates parties of contention. For such people are not serving Christ our Lord, who is our peace,²⁹² but their own belly. Moreover, aroused by the divine Spirit he uncovers part of the reason why quarrels and disputes are stirred up in the churches. He says on account of the belly, that is, on account of profit and greed. That is the source of some people's practice of going around to homes²⁹³ and speaking with every form of flattery and deception in order to win favor, not to build up souls in virtue through the Word of God, but to encourage them with sweet and flattering words to continue or even to advance them further in vices. They praise and call things good that are worthy of reproach,

290. Rom 16.17-19.

292. Cf. Eph 2.14.

291. Mt 5.9.

293. Cf. 1 Tm 5.13.

“putting light for darkness and [M1284] darkness for light, sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet.”²⁹⁴ And in these things they seduce the hearts of the innocent.

(3) And therefore, it is necessary to consider carefully with what prospect one who teaches is teaching, whether he is seeking favor and honor from the hearers or hoping for a reward from the Lord for the instruction and progress of those who are learning. With subtlety, to be sure, Paul reprimands the indiscriminate and facile obedience of the Romans and asserts not that it was praised everywhere, but spread abroad. But lest on the other hand, should he castigate them too openly for this, he make them disobedient, he adds, “Consequently, I rejoice over you.” But you will say: How is he reprimanding their commonplace obedience when he says that he rejoices over them?

(4) In the first place it is one thing to reprimand vice, another, men. For it is possible that he would rejoice over those in whom he had discovered many other good things, but would reprimand the vice that had displeased him, lest it be imagined that it too had pleased him along with the other things. But it is also possible that the Apostle had said that he rejoices over them because whoever is disobedient cannot be drawn either to evil or to good, but he who is obedient, if indeed he would be drawn to unprofitable things, it would be inexperience to blame. For he does not know that these things to which he offers his obedience are not profitable; in fact, when he has learned what things are profitable, having prepared the good of obedience, immediately he ascends through [that obedience] along the road of virtue.

(5) Consequently, Paul rejoices over the obedient, being certain that, when he has taught them that they ought not to use the commonplace obedience that they incautiously exhibit to everyone, but only that [obedience] by which one must obey God rather than men,²⁹⁵ then they will use only that [obedience] and will leave the others. For in truth, it is a matter of no

294. Is 5.20.

295. Cf. Acts 5.29.

small discretion, but of a tested and extremely experienced judgment, to know which word and which deed is to be obeyed and which is to be resisted. After all, the Lord himself says in the Gospels, "Beware of those who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."²⁹⁶ And therefore, vigilant thought and an attentive mind is required, which know how to test either the open sincerity of the sheep or the latent rapacity of the wolf. Whence, behold how near to danger they come who neglect being trained in the Holy Scriptures, from which alone²⁹⁷ the discretion in such an examination is to be known. So then, he immediately and succinctly makes known the idea of the proposed distinction and says: Because your obedience is facile and indiscreet, learn what you ought to keep and what you ought to avoid.

36. He says, *I want you to be wise in good and simple in evil.*²⁹⁸ This is similar to that statement [M1285] he writes to the Corinthians when he says, "Be infants in evil so that you may be perfect in thinking."²⁹⁹ Moreover, what the Lord says, "For the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in their own generation,"³⁰⁰ agrees with this statement. For the sons of this age are more prudent in evil, in view of the fact that they are always finding something more profound and subtle in which they may do more harm and inflict more serious injury.

²⁹⁶. Mt 7.15.

²⁹⁷. Cf. *Princ* 1.3.1. Based on (non-programmatic) passages like this one, R. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, pp. 182, 191; and even the Roman Catholic theologian H. Vogt, *Kirchenverständnis*, p. 298, find in Origen an advocate of the doctrine of the material sufficiency of Scripture, i.e., the belief that there is no source of faith, doctrine, and morals independent of the Bible. To defend this claim, Hanson, at least, is forced, dubiously, in my view, to reject (as Rufinus's additions) all the statements in Origen's writings that speak of apostolic succession, for example, *Princ* Pr 2: "But the Church's proclamation should be preserved, handed down through orderly succession from the apostles and remaining in the churches until the present: that truth alone is to be believed which in no respect dissents from the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition." The very fact, however, that Origen repeatedly receives variant textual readings of Scripture without rejecting them shows that he recognized a twofold authority: Scripture and tradition. Cf. J. Daniélou, *Origen*, p. 136.

²⁹⁸. Rom 16.19.

²⁹⁹. 1 Cor 14.20.

³⁰⁰. Lk 16.8.

But in good, they are fools; for seldom do they find anything good to do. In contrast, however, Paul wants us to be wise in good, that is, always to find something more, to search for more, and to think more deeply upon any good we might do; so that even if we are impeded from a good work through someone's evil, if we are wise, we would think up how, if we cannot do a good work, we may perhaps express a good word; but if not even that is possible, we should at least demonstrate goodwill and a good spirit.

(2) So then, we ought to be wise in good but simple in evil, so that if we are struck by evil, if we are struck by an injury, we should not become crafty, seeking crafty stratagems and arguments by which we ought to pay back evil for evil and wickedness for wickedness.³⁰¹ Instead, in such a situation we should call to mind that statement that says, "If anyone wants to be wise before God, let him become a fool in this world."³⁰² We should be fools, then, by receiving injury and not repaying it, so that we might be wise before God, who said, "Vengeance is mine, I shall repay, says the Lord."³⁰³ For even Jeremiah says of the wicked, "They are wise in doing evil; but they do not know how to do well."³⁰⁴ What the Lord said, that we ought to be as simple as doves and as prudent as serpents, also had this in view.³⁰⁵ But if some unbeliever cleverly objects to us and says: How can the same person be both wise and foolish? we shall answer him: Consider those arts that men practice, how a man who as a grammarian is most adept because of language is found to be most foolish in the sculptor's craft; or, again, how the wisest sea-captain is found to be foolish in the art of medicine. In this way, then, it is possible to be wise in matters that pertain to God and foolish in matters that pertain to the world.³⁰⁶ [M1286] One should know, of course, that where he says, "For such people are not serving Christ our Lord,"³⁰⁷ it is not that they themselves profess that they are not serving Christ the Lord, but

301. Cf. Rom 12.17; 1 Thes 5.15; 1 Pt 3.9.

302. 1 Cor 3.18.

304. Jer 4.22.

306. Cf. 1 Cor 3.18.

307. Rom 16.18.

303. Dt 32.35; Rom 12.19.

305. Cf. Mt 10.16.

that, because they are deviating from the standard of his service, they show themselves in very reality not to serve Christ the Lord. For it does not seem possible for someone to serve both Christ and the belly simultaneously, or to be equally a lover of pleasure and of God; just as no one can serve both God and mammon at the same time.³⁰⁸

37. *But the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet swiftly.*³⁰⁹ It is asked in this passage of which Satan was he speaking who is to be swiftly crushed by God under the feet of those to whom he is writing. For if it is referred to one person, namely, that one concerning which it is said in the Gospel, "Behold I see Satan falling like lightning from heaven,"³¹⁰ and who is disclosed as Satan, the adversary of the human race, it will certainly seem, if Paul speaks truthfully when he says that he is to be swiftly crushed under the feet of those to whom he was writing at that time, that Satan no longer exists, he who stirs up struggles and battles and persecutions for believers, which assuredly the reliability of the facts does not admit.

(2) But it seems to me that in this passage he has called every spirit that is opposed to believers a "satan." For *satanas* is translated into our language, "adversary." So then, whatever opposes and is adverse to a soul that is striving after God, and whatever is contrary to its peace, this is named a "satan" to it.³¹¹ After all, this is the reason he introduced it by saying, "the God of peace"; that is, the God to whom peace is pleasing, will crush him who is contrary to peace and who produces dissensions. In this way, after all, we also read in the Books of Kingdoms, that "God raised up a satan to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite,"³¹² that is, to Solomon, who was a peacemaker, he raised up an adversary, who is the contrary of peace.

(3) But just as to those whom the Apostle is teaching, if they behave thus and exhibit themselves such as his words have described, for the amendment of life, he promises that Satan will swiftly be crushed under their feet by the God of peace, thus

308. Cf. Mt 6.24.

310. Lk 10.18.

312. 1 Kgs 11.14.

309. Rom 16.20.

311. Cf. *Cels* 6.44.

the God of peace no less raises up a “satan,” i.e., an adversary, to the one who does not preserve his peace with a pure heart and clean conscience;³¹³ that whoever has neglected the good of peace may endure the bitterness of assaults, [M1287] and thus only then, while placed in the fight, would he call to mind the sweetness of the peace that he had defiled. So then, let us be edified by both passages of Holy Scripture, either that God is said to raise up a “satan”³¹⁴ to the negligent or to crush and to subdue one for the zealous, that he might spur the former on to struggles [and] to the latter that he might grant the palm of victory from a defeated adversary and might give out rewards of virtue. Through each of the individual struggles, if we fight according to the rules,³¹⁵ we can say that God will crush a “satan” under our feet swiftly.

(4) For example, if anyone takes up the struggle for chastity, if he holds out with a stainless conscience until the end, it can be said of him that God has crushed a “satan” under his feet, i.e., the spirit that was contrary to chastity. Likewise, as well, anyone who takes up the struggle of faith, if he, while standing before kings and rulers,³¹⁶ should faithfully confess the Lord Jesus Christ³¹⁷ and should endure until the end in the confession,³¹⁸ God has crushed a “satan” under his feet when he has conquered the spirit of infidelity. Moreover, anyone who cultivates concord perseveringly will crush the demon of dissension under the feet; anyone who preserves gentleness tramples upon the “satan” of wrath with the footsteps of patience. This is certainly what the Lord says in the Gospel, “Behold, I have given you authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy.”³¹⁹

38. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*³²⁰ The grace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ should be taken to be one and the same grace. For just as the Father gives life to whom he wills and the Son gives life to whom he wills, and just

313. Cf. 1 Tm 1.5.

315. Cf. 2 Tm 2.5.

317. Cf. Phil 2.11.

319. Lk 10.19.

314. Cf. 1 Kgs 11.14.

316. Cf. Mk 13.9.

318. Cf. Mt 10.22; 24.13.

320. Rom 16.20.

as the Father has life in himself and he has granted to the Son to have life in himself,³²¹ so also the grace that the Father gives, this the Son also gives. One should know, of course, that all that human beings have from God is grace.³²² For they have nothing as a debt. For who has first given to him and it will be paid back to him?³²³ Therefore, whatever he who was not and is has, by receiving it from him who always was and is and will be forever, is of grace.

39. *Timothy my helper and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives, greet you.*³²⁴ It seems to me that he thought more of these men whom he separated off from the entire list of salutations. After all, [M1288] he calls Timothy his helper and all of them together his relatives. And indeed, it is reported very fully about Timothy in the Acts of the Apostles, that he was a citizen of Derbe, the son of a faithful Jewish woman and from a gentile father.³²⁵ It was of him as well that Paul himself says that he asked him to remain in Ephesus that he might warn certain people not to teach other doctrines and not to pay attention to fables and endless genealogies.³²⁶ Moreover, some maintain that this very Lucius is Luke, who wrote the Gospel, since it is customary for names to be given sometimes in accordance with the native declensions, sometimes even according to the Greek or Roman declension.³²⁷ Now Jason is the man of whom it is written in the Acts of the Apostles that, at Thessalonica, he offered himself for Paul and Silas when the mobs had provokeded an uproar, to give the apostles freedom to depart.³²⁸ As for Sosipater, who is joined to these others, I surmise that he is the man who is written in the Acts of the Apostles as Sopater, of Pyrrhus of Beroea.³²⁹

321. Cf. Jn 5.21, 26.

323. Cf. Rom 11.35.

325. Cf. Acts 16.1.

327. Cranfield, *Romans* 2:805, says of Origen's report: "Λουκᾶς is a possible equivalent of Λούκιος; and also . . . Acts 20.5ff. implies that the author of the 'we' passages of Acts was with Paul at the appropriate time. But a definite decision about this seems to be impossible."

328. Cf. Acts 17.5-9.

329. Cf. Acts 20.4.

322. Cf. 4.1.14; 4.5.2.

324. Rom 16.21.

326. Cf. 1 Tm 1.3-4.

(2) But he who considers Paul's letters with more curiosity, as though Christ is speaking in him,³³⁰ will undoubtedly be troubled by how Paul, who has declared that he was born a Hebrew of Hebrews in Tarsus of Cilicia,³³¹ should now be said to be a relative or related by blood to Timothy, a citizen of Derbe from a gentile father,³³² or to Jason of Thessalonica, or to Sospater of Beroea.³³³ But if anyone should say that it was because those men came from the group of the circumcision, then it was not fitting to be said of them in particular that they were relatives to Paul, but of all who were from the Jews. But now, since he by no means concedes this designation to the others, but he does assign it to these and to several others, it is certain that he is identifying another kind of relationship that is held in common with himself, Timothy, and Luke³³⁴ and with a few others like them. He would doubtless know that this relationship, or consanguinity, between himself and them derives from that fatherhood about which he says in another passage, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named."³³⁵ Knowing, therefore, that there is a certain fatherhood in heaven, just as it is also on earth, it is certain that he knew that those who are united with him by no means according to the relationship of earthly fatherhood [M1 289] are to be united with himself, according to the relationship of the heavenly fatherhood. And for this reason he calls them both relatives and fellow-captives and helpers,³³⁶ inasmuch as by the lot of being born to preach the gospel and of enduring the Babylonian captivity of this world, he has received one relationship with them.

(3) Or if anyone does not allow these things to be explained by such a tropology,³³⁷ let him lay out to us how Timothy and

330. Cf. 2 Cor 13.3.

331. Cf. Acts 22.3; Phil 3.5.

332. Cf. Acts 16.1.

333. Cf. Acts 17.5; 20.4.

334. Origen has evidently accepted the view that identifies Lucius with Luke, recorded in 10.39.1 as the opinion of "some."

335. Eph 3.14-15.

336. Cf. Rom 16.7, 9.

337. Heither in Origenes, *Commentarii*, 5:276 n. 79, notes that this term, τροπολογία, derives from rhetoric and refers to a figurative or metaphorical

Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, who were citizens not merely of vastly different cities, but even provinces, could be relatives and consanguineous to Paul according to the flesh; and not only these men but also Andronicus, Junia, and Herodion, all of whom he calls his own relatives and fellow-captives.³³⁸

40. *I Tertius, who wrote the epistle in the Lord, greet you.*³³⁹ As one who is regarded as worthy to write down the Epistle to the Romans as Paul dictates, he inserts his own name as well into it, not that he gave in to temerity or boasting but because he was knowing not only that he had offered a service as a writer, but that he had written in the Lord. For indeed, everything that a just man does, he does to the glory of God.³⁴⁰ And therefore, if he writes, he writes to the glory of God, and therefore he writes "in the Lord." On that account also it was worthy that he should insert a mention of his own name into the apostolic epistle. Or at least, because he had taken in the force of Paul's thoughts as he dictated them, and because he had understood that what he was writing was not of man, but of the Lord, for that reason as well he relates that he had written in the Lord.

41. *Gaius, host to me and the whole church, greets you.*³⁴¹ Gaius is understood to be the man concerning whom he relates when writing to the Corinthians saying, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius."³⁴² He seems therefore to be indicating about him that he was a hospitable man who had received in hospitality not only Paul and each of the individuals who had come to Corinth, but he also offered his own house as a meeting place for the entire church. It is of course related in the tradition of the elders that this Gaius was the first bishop of the church of Thessalonica.³⁴³

manner of speaking. Where the literal interpretation of a passage led to an error, Origen often turned to the allegorical or figurative interpretation, here called tropology.

338. Cf. Rom 16.7, 11.

339. Rom 16.22.

340. Cf. 1 Cor 10.31; Col 3.17.

341. Rom 16.23.

342. 1 Cor 1.14.

343. I am grateful to D. A. Carson for the information that some have speculated that this tradition depends upon the western reading of Acts 20.4, where

42. *Erastus, the treasurer of the city, and the brother Quartus, greet you.*³⁴⁴ I think that this is the very Erastus who he says had remained in Corinth,³⁴⁵ and who seems to be shown to be the steward of the city. But I do not think that Paul would have mentioned him in his epistle chiefly because of this service, unless perhaps if he sensed something greater in him and called him a treasurer, i.e., a steward, of that city whose builder and founder is God.³⁴⁶ [M1290] And therefore he did not put down the name of the city, but merely identified him as treasurer of the city. Whether then it should be interpreted in such a manner, or in fact more literally, and nothing deeper should be looked for in Paul's letters, let you who read consider.

43. *Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept in silence for the times of ages, but has now been disclosed through the prophetic Scriptures according to the command of the eternal God for the obedience of faith, having been disclosed to all the Gentiles, to the only wise God be the splendor through Jesus Christ, in the ages of ages. Amen.*³⁴⁷

(2) Marcion, by whom the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures have been interpolated,³⁴⁸ completely removed this section from this epistle; and not only this but he also cut up everything from the place where it is written, "But all that is not from faith is sin,"³⁴⁹ to the end.³⁵⁰ But, in other copies, i.e., in

Gaius is said to be Δουβ[ή]ριος, a citizen of a Macedonian town. If the καί is altered to δέ after Δουβ[ή]ριος, Gaius would then be a Thessalonian along with Aristarchus and Secundus. See F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951, Reprint 1986), p. 371.

344. Rom 16.23.

345. 2 Tm 4.20.

346. Cf. Lk 19.17, 19; Heb 11.10, 16.

347. Rom 16.25-27.

348. For another use of *interpolare*, cf. Preface of Rufinus (2).

349. Rom 14.23.

350. This passage has been misread by many textual critics, not least, by F. C. Baur, who think that Origen is saying that Marcion entirely deleted the last two chapters of Romans. That reading of the passage would make Origen's statements redundant. On the contrary, Origen makes a distinction and reports that Marcion completely removed (*penitus abstulit*) the doxology (Rom 16.25-27) and he cut up (*desecuit*) everything from Rom 14.23 to the end. Cf. M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul épître aux Romains* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1916), p. 381.

those that have not been desecrated by Marcion, we find this section itself placed in different locations. For in several manuscripts, after the passage we cited above, that is, "All that is not from faith is sin,"³⁵¹ immediately joining this is rendered, "now to him who is able to strengthen you." But other manuscripts contain it at the end, as it now stands.

(3) But now let us come to the explanation of this section. It seems to me that Paul is making known two ways in which those who are strengthened in the faith of the gospel are given strength, one by which Paul's proclamation, which is also Christ's proclamation, makes known to them; and the other by which is revealed to them the mystery that was kept in silence for the times of ages but has now, that is, at the advent of Christ and his bodily presence, it has been disclosed and opened and proclaimed, as far as regards supporting witnesses, not without its own, but with the prophetic Scriptures. For thus the command of the eternal God became known that indeed, through the proclamation of the gospel the Gentiles were called to the obedience of faith; but from the revelation of the mystery of God made known, the wisdom, glory, and splendor would be rendered to the only wise God in the ages of ages.

(4) But let us once more go back and consider how it has been said, "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, kept in silence for the times of ages." It does not seem to me [M1291] that this strengthening of each type pertains to everyone; but at any rate Paul's gospel and the proclamation of Christ indeed pertain to everyone who believes. But the revelation of the mystery kept in silence for the times of ages pertains not to many but to the few and chosen who could be capable of the wisdom and knowledge of God.³⁵² Of them it is said, "Many are called, but few are chosen."³⁵³ Moreover, it should be asked concerning what he says, "of the mystery kept in silence," whether he says that it was kept in silence in such a way that absolutely no one knew it, not even

351. Rom 14.23.
353. Mt 22.14.

352. Cf. Rom 11.33.

the prophets who were announcing it; or whether some sort of deeper reason for the silence should be understood. To me it seems very absurd indeed that we should say that the prophets had written concerning the divine mysteries in such a way that they did not understand the very things they were speaking about, when the Scripture says, "A wise man will understand what proceeds from his mouth, and he bears understanding on his lips."³⁵⁴ Well then, if the prophets did not understand what was proceeding from their own mouth, they were not wise men. But if it is foolish to confess them to be prophets and to deny that they were wise men, it remains that because they were wise men, they understood what was proceeding from their own mouth, and they had understanding on their lips.³⁵⁵

(5) What then is the reason for the silence? Let us see whether it might be that about which Paul also gave thorough instruction, that which was handed down to him for the sake of the dispensation of the mysteries,³⁵⁶ where he says that he was caught up to the third heaven and from there in paradise he heard words that are not to be spoken, that are not permissible for a man to speak.³⁵⁷ In which assuredly he is not making known that he himself does not know what he had heard, but that it is not permissible to bring forth to others and to open to men the things that have been made known to him. In this way, then, [M1292] also in this passage it can seem to be said that the mystery was kept in silence for the times of ages—which the prophets indeed knew—for it is disclosed out of the prophetic Scriptures—but they did not disclose it or make it known to men, i.e., publicly, but they covered it up in silence according to the command of the eternal God, until the time should come and the Word should become flesh and dwell among us³⁵⁸ and it be disclosed to all Gentiles for the obedience of faith.

354. Prv 16.23.

355. For Origen's high regard for the wise men of the Old Covenant, see 2.14.7; 4.4.8; 6.7.7.

356. Cf. Eph 3.2-3; Col 1.25-26.

357. Cf. 2 Cor 12.2-4.

358. Cf. Jn 1.14.

(6) But what he says, “to the only wise God,” you should not take “wise God” thus, as if wisdom made someone wise, as it is held among men. For among men each is called wise by participation in wisdom. But God is called wise not as one who is made wise by wisdom, but as the one who is himself the author and begetter of wisdom. For, as we have said, the wise God does not proceed from wisdom, but wisdom proceeds from the wise God. Now deservedly [it is said], “to the only wise God.” For God alone is so wise that it is that he has begotten wisdom,³⁵⁹ rather than that he has been made wise by wisdom. And rightly is splendor through Jesus Christ referred to him, because God alone is so wise that he himself,³⁶⁰ Christ Jesus, who is the power of God, has begotten wisdom and the wisdom of God³⁶¹ has made it known.

(7) Now through what he says, “in the ages of ages,” it is customary in Holy Scripture to designate the immensity of time.³⁶² He has recorded “Amen” at the end as a confirmation of everything that was written above. Through this, by a vernacular word of the Hebrews, he signified that what had been written was true and reliable.

359. Cf. Sir 1.1.

361. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

360. Cf. Sir 1.1.

362. Cf. *Comm in Cant* Prologue 4.

EPILOGUE OF RUFINUS

IN DICTATING UP TO THIS POINT as we were able on the Epistle to the Romans, there has been expended a great deal of effort and time.¹ In fact, I must confess, most loving brother Heraclius, that while I desire to satisfy your wishes, I have nearly forgotten the command where it is enjoined, "Do not lift a burden that is beyond your strength,"² although in the others that we have translated into Latin at your insistence, or rather, at your exaction of a daily work quota, there was no lack of very great effort, as we sought to supply things that were discussed by Origen extemporaneously in the lecture hall of the Church, his intention being not so much commentary [M1293] as edification. This is what we did in the homilies, or brief sermons, on Genesis and on Exodus, and especially in those on the book of Leviticus that were dictated by him in a hortatory style, but translated by us into the form of a commentary.

(2) This was the reason we took the trouble of filling in things that were missing, lest the investigations he strikes up and abandons frustrate the Latin reader, since in the homiletical style of speaking this is frequently customary for him. For what we have written on Joshua son of Nun, and on Judges, and on the Thirty-sixth, Thirty-seventh, and Thirty-eighth Psalms, we translated just as we found them, literally and without great effort.³

1. For the epilogue, the Hammond Bammel edition adopts the text of M. Simonetti, *Tyrannii Rufini Opera*, CCL 20 (1961), pp. 276-77.

2. Sir 13.2.

3. J. Daniélou, in *Origen*, tr. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955) p. xi, observes that this is a very valuable passage and shows exactly what Rufinus did when he translated the homilies. "His translations of the homilies on Judges and Josue can be relied upon, but in the other cases he filled out Origen's text, perhaps with the help of commentaries now lost. He also added

(3) So, though even in the other [translations] mentioned above we expended effort by supplying things he had omitted, in this work on the Epistle to the Romans, however, an immense and extremely complex effort lay upon us for the reasons we recounted in the Preface.⁴ But it was a pleasure to have indulged in the efforts, if only malicious minds would not repay our vigils with insults, as we have experienced in other efforts; if they would not remunerate studies with detractions, and efforts with conspiracies. In their eyes we of course enter into a new kind of fault. For they say to me, "In what you write, since in them there is a great deal of your own work, put your own name in the title and write, for instance: *The Books of the Commentary of Rufinus on the Epistle to the Romans*, as also [is done] among secular authors," they tell us. "The title contains the name not of the one who has been translated from Greek, but of the one who translated."⁵ They confer all this upon me not because they love me, but because they hate the author.⁶

(4) But I, who defer more to my conscience than to my name, even if I seem to add some things and fill in what is missing and abbreviate what is too long,⁷ do not think it right, however, to steal the title from him who laid the foundations of the work and supplied the material for the construction of the

explanations as would be needed by the Latin-speaking public the translations were made for."

4. See Preface of Rufinus (2).

5. Very many Latin authors, including Quintilian, Cicero, and Pliny the Elder, made substantial Latin translations of Greek authors and incorporated them into their own books without always crediting the Greek author.

6. The principal reference in this paragraph is Jerome, the ringleader of the anti-Origenist party whom Rufinus, in his magnanimity, does not name. Jerome evidently wanted to see Rufinus's name on the title page of the *Commentary* in order to implicate him for Origen's alleged heretical opinions. The "new kind of fault" is to make a translator responsible for the alleged errors of the author. Elsewhere Rufinus denied the validity of such a practice. Compare *Apology to Anastasius* 7 (= NPNF2, 3:431): "If there is any offensive statement in the author, why is this to be twisted into a fault of the translator? I was asked to exhibit in Latin what stands written in the Greek text; and I did nothing more than fit the Latin words to the Greek ideas. If, therefore, there is anything to praise in these ideas, the praise does not belong to me; and similarly as to anything to which blame may attach."

7. See Preface of Rufinus (2).

building.⁸ Of course let it be left to the reader's discretion, when he has tested the work, to ascribe the work's merit to whom he wants. For our purpose is not to seek the readers' applause but a harvest of those who make progress.

(5) After this, of course, a work is calling us that was long ago enjoined upon me, but now is being pressed even more insistently by the blessed bishop Gaudentius,⁹ namely, to translate into Latin the books, *De Recognitione*, by Clement, the Roman bishop, companion and successor of the apostles.¹⁰ In this work I am well aware that effort will receive effort, since the assignment has been multiplied. In this case, I shall really satisfy my friends: I shall put my name in the title while the author's identity no less remains. For it will be written: *Rufinus's Clement*.

(6) But if the Lord permits me to complete this, I shall return again even to your longings, that, God permitting, we should say some things either on the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy (for these alone are missing from our Hepta-teuch); or we shall dictate what we are able to on the remaining epistles of the Apostle Paul, as the Lord directs.

8. Hammond, "Last Ten Years," p. 404, elucidates Rufinus's intentions in this passage: "Rufinus' stand against such plagiarism, which seemed more surprising to his contemporaries than it does to us, was an implied criticism of Jerome's methods in his biblical commentaries. The procedure that he refuses here . . . is similar to that for which he had attacked Jerome and those like him earlier. By directly translating Origen, he himself will reveal to Latin readers the source of Jerome's vaunted learning as a biblical commentator." For a detailed examination of Jerome's plagiarism of Origen's Pauline exegesis, see C. Bammel, "Origen's Pauline Prefaces," pp. 495-513, in: *Origeniana Sexta: Origène et la Bible/Origen and the Bible*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Alain Le Boulluc (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995).

9. St. Gaudentius was bishop of Brescia from 387 to 410. He warmly supported John Chrysostom when the latter had been condemned to exile. In the dedication of pseudo-Clement's *De Recognitione*, Rufinus praised the intellectual gifts of Gaudentius and said that even his extemporaneous speaking was worthy of publication and preservation by posterity.

10. Until the Reformation, this apocryphal work of ca. 250, on which F. C. Baur, the founder of the "Tübingen School" of NT criticism, rested his ideas about the NT, was thought to be written by Clement of Rome (d. 100). An English translation appears in ANF 8 under the title *Recognitions of Clement*.

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