

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

LECTURE V.

State of the writings of Origen. Theory of their interpolation by the Romanists untenable. Their testimony against Transubstantiation; Prayers in a tongue not understood by the people; the withholding of the Scriptures; *Disciplina arcani*; the use of Images; Vows of celibacy; the Worship of saints or angels; Purgatory. First instance of Romish interpolation pointed out by James. Neglect of the early Fathers by the Romanists. Remark of Dodwell. The story of Paschasinus insufficient to support the inference drawn from it by Daillé.

FROM various causes, which I shall take another opportunity of dwelling a little upon, the writings of Origen have come down to us very greatly injured: a large part in a Latin translation avowedly unfaithful to the author: other portions, in the Greek, indeed, but whether, as at first penned and published by Origen himself, and not rather as notes taken down at the moment by standers-by, who were listening to this prolific disputant, may be doubted: even those treatises of his, which he certainly committed to paper, often concocted in haste, and seldom, perhaps, reviewed or revised—for he appears to have been very much on the move, and very careless about his manuscripts—and after all, his recorded sentiments not unfrequently maltreated, and his text vitiated by contemporary or all but contemporary heretics. Certainly one or other of these considerations affect many of the works of Origen as we now possess them, and detract from their value by shaking our confidence in their integrity. But this is by no means the case with them all. Some treatises have not been mistranslated, for we have them in the Greek—have not been composed in heat or haste, for they bear internal marks of care and deliberation—have not been meddled with by early heretics, for they are not on subjects

which invite their interference. But, however this may be, assuredly the abuses to which the works of Origen have been subjected, can hardly be supposed to have proceeded from the Romanists—testifying, as those works do, even as they stand, in so many particulars against the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome. Indeed, how distasteful they are to the Romanist may be seen at once, by a perusal of the Preface to the second volume of the Benedictine Edition, and by the notice “caute lege,” so often entered on the margin of the text.

I will lay before you some of the evidence on which I rest the assertion, that Origen cannot have suffered at the hands of Romish interpolators, at least, whatever he may have done at the hands of others; and I beg you once more to consider, whilst I am thus bringing the question to book, the credit due to that vague and indiscriminating charge against the Romanists, of tampering with these early authorities, circulated by Daillé and others of his school down to the present day, and which has the effect, as I have said, of damaging the character of the Fathers, and so neutralizing their testimony on subjects where it is unwelcome.

Thus, on *Transubstantiation*, I find Origen, when expounding the clause in the Lord's Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread,” referring, by way of illustration, to the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, at some length, in confirmation of his view, that the bread is spiritual bread, not material; as also to several texts in St. Paul on meats, which he considers to point to the same conclusion, viz. that when expressing himself thus the Apostle “was not primarily speaking of corporal food, but of the words of God which nourish the soul.”¹ When we recollect how constantly the sixth chapter of St. John is understood by the early Fathers in relation to the Eucharist, it cannot be supposed that Origen would express himself as he does here—and the whole section, of which this paragraph is a part, should be read, in order that the full force of the argument may be perceived—had he believed in the doctrine of the corporal presence. Again, on another occasion he objects to a material interpretation of such phrases as “the heavens were opened,” “the voice of the Lord was heard,” and says, that however some may take them in that

¹ Origen, *De Oratione*, § 27, vol. i. p. 245, Bened. Ed.

light, "those who search deeper will be aware that there is a certain divine perception, which the blessed discover and enjoy—a perception which has several senses—that of sight, which can discern things that are incorporeal; that of hearing, which can receive words not formed by the air; that of taste, which uses the living bread—the *bread which descends from heaven and giveth light unto the world.*"¹ This passage, again, is not conceived in the spirit of one who found the corporal presence in the Eucharist. Moreover, how could that man see the sacrifice of the mass in the Eucharist, who volunteers as a comment on John iv. 24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," the remark, "by which words Jesus taught that we ought not to worship God in the flesh, and with *fleshy sacrifices?*"² Or how, when speaking of the best manner of keeping the feasts, could he employ such language as that it was "by doing our duty, praying, and offering to God in our prayers *unbloody sacrifices;*"³ the last a phrase which could scarcely be irrespective of the Eucharist? How, again, could he talk of the bread after consecration becoming "a certain holy body,"⁴ if he had held it to be the actual Flesh of our Lord? Or how could he be satisfied with saying, "the bread called the Eucharist is a *symbol* of our thanksgiving to God,"⁵ if he maintained that the material was not bread, and that the symbol was lost in the corporal reality? Would passages like these have been suffered to remain in a text which had been modified by a Romanist?

Or again, asserting as the Romanist does, the expediency of having prayer in the Church, and administering the Sacraments in a *tongue not understood by the people*, how could he acquiesce in a paragraph such as this? Origen is defending the language of Scripture against Celsus, who describes many of its maxims as not only common to the Greeks, but as having been better expressed by them—"If a Greek desired to assist those who spoke Egyptian or Syrian by sound teaching, he would first take care to learn the dialects of those who were to be his hearers; and, as the Greeks say, would rather barbarize his own tongue for the sake of improving the Egyptians and Syrians, than be a Greek and speak in a manner that

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I. § 48.

² VI. § 70.

³ VIII. § 21.

⁵ § 57.

⁴ § 33.

would be useless to Egyptians and Syrians : so, Divine Providence not merely having respect to Greeks of education, but to all others, condescended to the boorishness of the mass of hearers, in order that, making use of such language as they were accustomed to, it might provoke the multitude to listen ; who, after this introduction, would be able to advance from the simple element to the comprehension of the deeper meanings which Scripture contained.”¹ Again, in another passage still more apposite, Celsus having imputed to the Christians, whom he confounds with some other class of worshippers, a practice of invoking angels by certain barbarous names, and so acquiring favour with them, Origen replies, “Be assured that the Christians do not universally use in their prayers even the names which are found in the Holy Scriptures, and are of God’s appointment ; but the Greeks use Grecian names, and the Romans Roman names, and thus each prays to God in his own language, and praises him according to his power. And he who is Lord of all languages hears those who pray in all languages, as though he heard, if I may so express myself, only one and the same voice uttering its meanings in many tongues :”²—this, surely, a sentiment which the Romanist, had he been shaping the text of Origen to suit the purposes of his own Church, would have thought it as well to suppress.

Again, jealous as the Romanist has shown himself of the *free circulation of the Scriptures*, would he have been likely to suffer so many passages to keep their ground in the writings of Origen, which are entirely adverse to this restriction, if he was moulding those writings to his own ends ? Celsus had found in one Cleomedes a person who, like Jesus, was buried and had escaped from the tomb. “But the previous life of this man,” replies Origen, “or that of other men respecting whom similar tales are told, gives no tokens of Divinity ; whereas the assemblies of those who have derived benefit from him testify to that of Jesus, so do the prophecies spoken concerning Him, so do the cures that have been wrought in his name, and so does the wisdom and knowledge, which are according to Him ; and so do the thoughts of the sober-minded, found as they are to rise above a bare belief,

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, VII. § 60.

² VIII. § 37.

and to investigate the real meaning of the Scriptures, agreeably to the command of Jesus, who said 'Search the Scriptures;' and to the will of Paul, who teaches that 'we ought to know how to give an answer to every one;' and to the will of him who says, 'Be ever ready to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason for the faith that is in you.'"¹ And he elsewhere enlarges on the happy effects which flow from this study—effects greatly surpassing those which proceed from application to the writings of even the very chief philosophers. Plato, it is true, may speak of a light suddenly kindled in the soul by long communion with the chief good; "but observe the difference between what is said by Plato, and well said, concerning the chief good, and what is said by the prophets concerning the light of the blessed; and consider that the truth on this subject, as spoken by Plato, neither helps ordinary persons nor even one who philosophizes on the chief good after the manner of Plato, to attain to sincere piety. Whereas the simple speech of the Divine Scriptures imparts a kind of inspiration to those who read them unaffectedly; whereby the light is fed with that oil of which the parable speaks in a figure, the oil which kept alive the lamps of the five virgins."² It is evident that nothing like reserve in communicating the Scriptures to the people, that is to Christians in general, is here inculcated, but quite the contrary: the expression, "the simple speech of the Scriptures" here used, and that of reading them "unaffectedly," being enough in themselves to mark that Origen contemplated *unlearned* readers of them as well as others; which is still more apparent from another passage (one which again the Romanist would have been under a temptation to expunge) where to a cavil of Celsus, that anger and the like terms ought not to be ascribed to God, as they are in Scripture, Origen replies, that "the word of God *economises* the expressions of Scripture, adapting them to the capacity of the hearers, and measuring what is fit in itself by what is profitable to them. Touching which method of communicating the things pertaining to God, we read in Deuteronomy,³ 'The Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son;' as though the Word spake after the manner of men in accommodation to men, for-

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, III. § 33.

² VI. § 5.

³ Deut. i. 31.

asmuch as the multitude at large (*οἱ πολλοὶ*) being what they were, did not require God to address them according to the Majesty of his character ;"¹ and he then proceeds to say that the Scriptures contained deep things for the spiritual, and more simple things for the weak, and that they would be often found by one who knew how to construe them aright, to speak to both these classes under one and the same phrase. It is obvious that in all this there is none of the spirit of the exclusionist.

And thus I am naturally led to the consideration of a kindred subject, the *Disciplina arcani* ; the reserve with which the mysteries of religion should be disclosed ; and which we shall gather from numerous passages of Origen amounted to this, and nothing more, a proper adjustment of your teaching to your audience, a care not to throw your pearls before swine. Thus Celsus taunts the Christians with repelling from them wise and thoughtful men, and canvassing only the silly and servile. To this Origen replies, that on the contrary, if there be any capable of receiving the deepest truths, the Gospel makes provision for them ; even as Paul says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect ;"² and then he continues, "If Celsus with his friends maintains that Paul had no particular wisdom to divulge, we make answer, first explain to us his Epistles, and entering into the meaning of every expression in them, (for instance, in those to the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, the Philippians, the Romans,) satisfy us of both points, viz. that you understand the words of Paul, and that you can prove them to be foolish and weak. For I well know," continues Origen, "that if he devotes himself to reading them with attention," (again observe the layman is invited to this,) "he will either be astonished at the understanding of the man, who conceives mighty thoughts, though he expresses them in homely phrase, or if he does not wonder at him, he will prove himself ridiculous, either by affecting to understand the mind of the man, whilst he did not, or by wishing to contradict and overthrow what he fancied he understood." Origen then proceeds from the case of the Epistles to that of the Gospels, which also have a deep as well as an obvious meaning, "Jesus reserving the full

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV. § 71.

² 1 Cor. ii. 6.

exposition of his parables for those who had ears more refined than the common, and for his friends in the house." This is a fair specimen of the real nature of the *Disciplina arcani*, as taught by Origen; indeed, he expressly introduces these as examples of the esoteric and mysterious in the Church of God, indignantly marking the contrast they present to the Egyptian *arcana*, which Celsus had pretended bore a resemblance to the Christian.¹ Elsewhere Origen furnishes us with more of these "esoteric" speculations, as he calls them, of the more learned Christians, evidently mere theological imaginations, such as men of curious and mercurial minds might indulge in. He is affirming that the Christians, whatever might be their class, would not tolerate, as the heathens did with respect to their local gods, others to be obtruded on them; nor, worshipping as they did the one God and Christ, whom He hath sent, would yet accept Jupiter and Apollo besides; "some (acting thus) in entire simplicity, not knowing how to give a reason for what they did, but content to cleave in an honest heart to what they had received; but others able to give their reasons, and those not trivial ones but profound, or, as a Greek would say, *esoterical* and mystical, involving notions of God and of those who are honoured by God through the Only Begotten Word of God with a share of Divinity, and even with the name, as well as notions of angels, whether good or such as are adverse to the truth," with more to the same effect.² The character of the questions in which these more advanced members of the Christian community engaged, serves to prove that the simpler sort were not the victims of any systematic suppression of points of faith by their teachers, but that being of a lower and less cultivated class they were not equal to flights which their superiors allowed themselves. And another passage makes this fact yet more clear. Origen is once more defending the Christians against the imputation of Celsus, that they sought out their converts from among the weak and illiterate; and accordingly he shows how greatly Wisdom is commended in the Old Testament, as in the Psalms

¹ Ἄλλ' αὐτάρκη καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς τὴν ἀφιλόσοφον χλεύην τοῦ Κέλσου, ὁμοιοῦντος τὰ ἔνδοξα καὶ μυστικά τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων αἰλούροις, κ.τ.λ.—Origen, *Contra Celsum*, III. §§ 20, 21.

² Ἐτεροὶ δὲ μετ' οὐκ εὐκαταφρονήτων λόγων, ἀλλὰ καὶ βαθυτέρων, καὶ, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις Ἑλληγ, ἑσωτερικῶν καὶ ἐπιοπτικῶν, κ.τ.λ.—Origen, *Contra Celsum*, III. § 37.

and in the writings of Solomon, and then coming to the New Testament he proceeds, you no doubt find “the multitude of the believers listening to parables as uninitiated (*ὡς ἕξω τυγχάνοντες*), and as only capable of exoteric instruction (*ἕξωτερικῶν λόγων*); but you have the disciples learning the exposition of the parables apart, for Jesus explained everything to his disciples apart, honouring those who were destined to be the receptacles of his wisdom above the multitude.”¹ But then he subsequently adds, “We, however, exert ourselves to the utmost to have our assemblies consist of intelligent persons; and in that case we do *not scruple to produce publicly*, having a number of intelligent hearers about us, *our highest and most divine doctrines*; but we certainly conceal by our silence the deeper things of our faith from such congregations as have need of what is figuratively called ‘milk.’ For our Paul writes to the Corinthians—Greeks, to be sure, but not as yet clear of their old customs—‘I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.’ And the same Apostle, knowing what is the more perfect good of the soul, and that the instruction of novices may be compared to the milk which children eat, says, ‘Ye are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat,’ &c. Is it possible, then, for those who regard these passages as well spoken, to *suspect that we should decline communicating the choice things of the Gospel to a congregation of intelligent people*; but, when we meet with children and a mob of mean and senseless men, should produce amongst them our divine and venerable mysteries, and make our boast of them amongst such parties as these?”² It would be very easy to produce many more extracts from Origen to the same purpose, for this happens to be a subject on which he very frequently touches³;

¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, III. § 46.

² Ἡμεῖς γὰρ, ὄση δύναμις, πάντα πράττομεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ φρονιμῶν ἀνδρῶν γενέσθαι τὸν σύλλογον ἡμῶν καὶ τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν μάλιστα καλὰ καὶ θεῖα τότε τοιμῶμεν ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν διαλόγοις φέρειν εἰς μέσον, ὅτ' εὐποροῦμεν συνετῶν ἀκροατῶν ἀποκρούπομεν δὲ καὶ παρασιωποῦμεν τὰ βαθύτερα, ἐπὶ ἀπλοστέροισιν θεωρῶμεν τοὺς συνερχομένους καὶ δεομένους λόγων τροπικῶς ὀνομαζομένων γάλα . . .

ἄρ' οὖν οἱ τοῦτοις ὡς καλῶς εἰρημένους πιστεύοντες ὑπολάβοιεν ἂν τὰ καλὰ τοῦ λόγου, εἰς μὲν φρονιμῶν ἀνδρῶν σύλλογον οὐκ ἂν ποτε λεχθήσεσθαι, ἔνθα δ' ἂν ὀρώσι μεϊράκια, καὶ οἰκοτρίβων ὄχλον καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἀνοήτων ὄμιλον, ἐνταῦθα τὰ θεῖα καὶ σεμνὰ φέρειν εἰς μέσον, καὶ παρὰ τοῖς τοιούτοις περὶ αὐτῶν ἐγκαλλωπίζεσθαι;—*Contra Celsum*, III. §§ 52, 53.

³ See *Contra Celsum*, V. § 29; VI. §§ 13, 23.

but I think enough has been already advanced to prove that the *Disciplina arcani*, as understood by Romish writers, that is, a scheme of mutilated teaching, in which some articles of faith are deliberately withheld, and others announced obscurely, has no support from Origen ; and that if his manuscripts had been overhauled by unscrupulous champions of the Church of Rome, they would scarcely have left so many places in them, as they have done, still to bear testimony against themselves.

Once more, considering *the use of images*, which the Romanist defends, and which he adopts so liberally in his church and in his chamber, is it to be believed that when he was engaged in clearing the text of Origen of its inconvenient evidence, or interpolating it with such as suited him, he would have permitted numbers of paragraphs to stand untouched, which are clearly opposed to such a licence ? Thus in his treatise on Prayer, "He, who is no hypocrite, strips himself of everything which is adventitious and not his own, and studying to satisfy himself in that theatre which is vastly greater than every other of which I have spoken, enters into the chamber of himself ; where, besides any other riches he may have deposited in it, he has enclosed for himself a treasury of wisdom and knowledge, and regarding nothing without, and longing for nothing without, and *shutting every door of the senses, that he may not be drawn away by them, and that no image of sensible things may get admission into his mind*, he prays to the Father, who neither abandons, nor fails a correct worshipper such as this, but makes his abode in him, his Only Begotten accompanying him."¹ And in another of his works—"Though buffeted by the world, we have learned not to faint or to forfeit our love of the God of the universe in Jesus Christ. Moreover, we distinctly avow our origin, and the dignity thereof, by no means, as Celsus insinuates, concealing it : seeing that we impress upon our converts in the very first instance, *a contempt for idols and for all images ;* and elevating their thoughts from serving the creature instead of God, we lead them up to Him who created all things."²

¹ Πᾶσάν τε τὴν θύραν τῶν αἰσθη-
τηρίων ἀποκλείσας, ἵνα μὴ ἔλκεται
ὑπὸ τῶν αἰσθήσεων, μηδὲ ἐκείνων ἢ
φαντασία τῷ νῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπισκρῖνηται,
προσεύχεται, κ.τ.λ.—De Oratione, § 20.

² Ἐπὶ καὶ τοῖς πρώτοις εἰσαγο-
μένους καταφρόνησιν μὲν τῶν εἰδώλων
καὶ πάντων τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἐμποι-
ήσωμεν, κ.τ.λ.—Contra Celsum, III.
§ 15.

Again: "Besides our faith conspires with the dictates of common sense; as, *e. g.* however perverted custom may have put it into the minds of men, that images are gods, and that objects made of gold, silver, ivory, are worthy of worship, still common sense urges us to believe that perishable matter cannot be God; nor can God be shaped out of senseless blocks, as if they could in any way represent him."¹ Neither can the evasion be pleaded, that Origen did not condemn the use of images as incentives to devotion, but only as objects of worship: for thus he expresses himself on another occasion: "God therefore chose the foolish things of the world—the most simple of the Christians, who lead lives more pure and moderate than most of the philosophers—to confound the wise, who do not blush to converse with senseless things as gods, or images of gods. For who that has any understanding would not laugh at him, who after so many fine philosophical speeches about God or the gods, fixes his eye on their images, and either puts up his prayers to them, or *by means of the sight of them, carries his thoughts up to the ideal Being, to whom, as he pictures to himself, they must needs ascend from the visible and symbolical figure.*"² More passages to a similar purport might be quoted from Origen, but let these suffice; for certainly they are enough to show, that if the writings of this Father were submitted to the pruning knife of a Romish critic, it must be confessed that they had a singularly fortunate escape.

Once more: with respect to *marriage*: it cannot be supposed that any class of society whatever was under forced vows of celibacy, when such a paragraph as the following was penned. Origen, in one of his replies to Celsus, finds an argument for the divine character of the Gospel in the courage with which it inspired its converts, and the superior morality it imparted to their lives: and on this latter point he adds, "Some of them animated by a desire of excessive purity, and of rendering their service to God still more holy, do not even

¹ Ἄλλ' ἡ κοινὴ ἔννοια ἀπαιτεῖ ἐννοεῖν, ὅτι Θεὸς οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶν ὕλη φθαρτὴ, οὐδὲ τιματὰ ἐν ἀψύχοις ὕλαις ὑπο ἀνθρώπων μορφούμενος, ὡς κατ' εἰκόνα ἢ τινα σύμβολα ἐκείνου γιγνομένας.—*Contra Celsum*, III. § 40.

² Τίς γὰρ νοῦν ἔχων οὐ καταγελάσεται τοῦ μετὰ τοὺς τηλικούτους καὶ

τοσοῦτους ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ περὶ Θεοῦ ἢ θεῶν λόγους ἐνορῶντος τοῖς ἀγάλμασι, καὶ ἤτοι αὐτοῖς ἀναπέμποντος τὴν εὐχὴν, ἢ διὰ τῆς τούτων ὄψεως, ἐφ' ᾧ φαντάζεται δεῖν ἀναβαίνειν ἀπὸ βλεπομένου καὶ συμβόλου ὄντος, ἀναφέροντός τε ἐπὶ τὸν νοούμενον;—*Contra Celsum*, VII. § 44.

marry as the law allows."¹ Suppose such had been the condition of every ecclesiastic, would there have been no intimation of it here? Still more might the same question be asked after reading another of the objections of Celsus and Origen's answer to it: for on the former affirming, that if the Christians are not prepared to do honour to those demons which preside over the affairs of life, they ought to abstain from taking part in those affairs—neither marry, nor have children, but reduce the world to a solitude—Origen observes, "but God has commanded us to marry, seeing that all are not able to receive that which is more excellent, *i. e.* total purity; and having married, to support the children which may be born to us, and not destroy those whom Providence has given us. And this does not interfere with the duty of abstaining from all obedience to demons that occupy the earth. For, armed with the panoply of God, we stand as godly wrestlers against the race of demons that plot our overthrow. And though Celsus by his argument would utterly drive us out of the world, that so our race might become altogether extirpated from the earth, still we shall persist in living according to the laws of God in the precepts of our Creator, by no means content to serve the laws of sin; and *shall marry wives*, if we choose; and take care of the children which are given us of such marriage."² Here Origen talks of "God commanding *us* to marry;" "*we* shall marry wives if *we* choose," &c. Is it then to be believed, that if so considerable a body of persons as the Priesthood were prohibited from marriage, Origen, who was one of their number himself, would have afforded us no hint of so important an exception? For it must be remembered, that we must be content with negative evidence on a question of this kind; since, if no such rule obtained in Origen's days, as the celibacy of the Clergy, it would be impossible that passages should be found in him containing direct objections to such a rule.

Once more; on the subject of the *worship of saints and angels*, there is evidence in Origen against the lawfulness of such a practice much too plain to be overlooked by a

¹ Ὡς τινὰς αὐτῶν διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης καθαρότητος, καὶ διὰ τὸ καθαρώτερον θρησκεύειν τὸ θεῖον, μὴδὲ τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ὄψεσθαι ἀφροδισίων.—Contra Celsum, I. § 26.

² VIII. §§ 55, 56.

Romanist, who was reducing his writings to the standard of his own Church. It is true, that in one place where he is distinguishing different kinds of prayer, he says, "It is not improper to offer supplication (*δέησιν*), intercession (*ἐντευξιμ*), and thanksgiving (*εὐχαριστίαν*) to saints: and two of these, I mean intercession and thanksgiving, not only to saints, but to ordinary men; but supplication to saints only—if any Peter or Paul can be found—that they may help us; making us worthy to enjoy the licence granted to them of forgiving sins" (*i. e.* I apprehend, as Priests do, by absolution): "nay, although a man be not a saint, still if we do him an injury, it is lawful for us, on being made sensible of our offence towards him, to pray (*δεηθῆναι*) even such a man, that he would forgive us who have injured him."¹ It may be doubted whether Origen in this passage had in his eye any but living saints, to whom supplication was to be addressed; the parenthesis, "if any Peter or Paul can be found," seeming to point to such limit: at the same time, I am disposed to think from other parts of this same tract, that abstractedly he does contemplate the lawfulness of asking for the good offices of saints who are dead; but only in the same sense as the request might have been made to them when alive. It may be, that in these doctrines there proved to be the seeds of an abuse: but Origen could not foresee that: certainly the abuse itself, as it afterwards discovered itself in the practice of the Church of Rome, he would have denounced, as some passages in his works, which I shall now proceed to cite, clearly testify—"Let us next see," says Origen, "how this all-knowing Celsus slanders the Jews; affirming, as he does, that they worship angels, and apply themselves to magic, in which Moses first instructed them. Now where in the writings of Moses," he continues, "did he find him teaching that we ought to worship angels?"²—a paragraph utterly inconsistent with the practice of angel-worship in the Church in Origen's time. But decisive as this is, I can bring another yet more so. For to an inquiry of Celsus, what the notion of the Christians might be with respect to angels, whether they were gods or beings of some other

¹ De Oratione, § 14.

² Ἰδωμεν δὲ τίνα τρόπον συκοφαντεῖ Ἰουδαίους ὁ πάντ' ἐπαγγελλόμενος εἰδέναι Κέλσος, λέγων αὐτοὺς σέβειν ἀγγέλους, καὶ γοητεία προσκείσθαι,

ἧς ὁ Μωϋσῆς αὐτοῖς γέγονεν ἐξηγητής. ποῦ γὰρ τῶν γραμμάτων Μωϋσέως εἶρε τὸν νομοθέτην παραδίδόντα σέβειν ἀγγέλους;—*Contra Celsum*, I. § 26.

nature, Origen replies, " We say and confess, that they are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ; that they ascend, taking with them the prayers of mankind, to the purest celestial places, or to the super-celestial, still purer than these, and that they descend again, bringing down to every one the benefit which God ordains should be ministered to mankind by their hands. These we learn to call angels (messengers) from their employment ; and on account of their being divine we find them called in Scripture gods ; but not in such a sense as that we are commanded to reverence and worship them in God's stead, being ministers unto us, and bearing to us matters of God. For every supplication, and prayer, and intercession, and thanksgiving, we must send up to God who is over all, through the High Priest, who is above all angels, the living Word, and God : we shall offer our supplications also to the Word himself, and our entreaties, and intercessions, and thanksgivings, and our prayers, if we are capable of understanding what is prayer *properly* so called, and what improperly. But to invoke angels, when we have not received a knowledge of them, such knowledge being above the reach of man, is not reasonable. Even supposing, however, a knowledge of them, wonderful and ineffable as it is, to be comprehended by us, this very knowledge, whilst it informs us of their nature and of the purposes for which each of them is ordained, will not allow us to have the audacity to pray to any other being besides God, who is over all, and sufficient for all things, through our Saviour, the Son of God."¹

¹ Ὁμολογουμένως μὲν γὰρ ἀγγέλους φαρὲν λειτουργικὰ ὄντας πνεύματα, καὶ εἰς διακονίας ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν, ἀναβαίνειν μὲν προσαγόντας τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐντεύξεις, ἐν τοῖς καθαρωτάτοις τοῦ κόσμου χωρίοις ἐπουρανίοις, ἢ καὶ τοῖς τούτων καθαρωτέροις ὑπερουρανίοις, καταβαίνειν δ' ἐκείθεν, φέροντας ἐκάστῳ κατ' ἄξίαν τῶν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ τι αὐτοῖς διακονεῖν τοῖς ἐδεργетуμένοις προστασσομένων. τούτους δὲ ἀγγέλους ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔργου αὐτῶν μεμαθηκότας καλεῖν, εὐρίσκομεν αὐτοὺς, διὰ τὸ θεῖους εἶναι, καὶ θεοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς ποτε ὀνομαζομένους γραφαῖς· ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥστε προστασσεσθαι ἡμῖν τοὺς διακονοῦντας καὶ φέροντας ἡμῖν τὰ τοῦ

Θεοῦ σέβειν καὶ προσκυνεῖν ἀντὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. πᾶσαν μὲν γὰρ δέησιν, καὶ προσευχὴν, καὶ ἐντεύξιν, καὶ εὐχαριστίαν, ἀναπεμπτέον τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ, διὰ τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀγγέλων ἀρχιερέως, ἐμφύχου Λόγου καὶ Θεοῦ. δευρόμεθα δὲ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου, καὶ ἐντευξόμεθα αὐτῷ, καὶ εὐχαριστήσομεν, καὶ προσευξόμεθα δὲ, ἐὰν δυνώμεθα κατακοῦεν τῆς περὶ προσευχῆς κυριολεξίας καὶ καταχρήσεως. ἀγγέλους γὰρ καλέσαι μὴ ἀναλαβόντας τὴν ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπους περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιστήμην, οὐκ εὐλογον. ἴνα δὲ καθ' ὑπόθεσιν ἢ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιστήμην θαυμάσιος τις οὐσα καὶ ἀπόρρητος, καταληφθῆ· αὕτη ἢ ἐπιστήμη, παραστήσασα τὴν φύσιν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐφ' οἷς εἰσιν ἕκαστοι τεταγμένοι,

I think the doctrine of *Purgatory* would be the only one of the doctrines which are characteristic of the Church of Rome, that would receive countenance from Origen; and even this very little. The passages in him, which bear upon this subject, are many of them obscure, nor is it always easy to determine whether they relate to purgation in this life or a future one; herein, as in other respects, having much in common with the corresponding ones of Clemens Alexandrinus, to which reference has been made already. The fire, however, of which Origen speaks is metaphorical; and consists of the pain inflicted by the consciousness of sins past, which accumulate, till they, as it were, ignite¹: and it is corrective, so that having done its office it ceases, all being eventually purified and saved²; even those, it should seem, who have been so bad as to have sunk in the successive stages of their existence—for such stages Origen contemplates—into actual evil spirits³; the devil himself, however, the author of all evil excepted.⁴ Meanwhile, the good are exempt from these purgatorial sufferings; the pains of that estate taking no effect on them; the fire finding in them no pabulum on which to feed. And they are removed to Paradise, where having been furnished with suitable instruction and prepared for heaven, instruction which will fit them in a less period or a greater for a higher estate according to their respective purity, they will at length ascend thither and follow Jesus Christ to his dwelling-place.⁵ Purgatory, therefore, as thus understood, is equivalent to the doctrine of temporal as opposed to eternal punishment; and whatever it may be, it has not the least appearance of having been introduced into Origen's writings by Romanists, identified with those writings as it is in such various ways, transmitted through other Fathers to him, and derived in the first instance, there can be little doubt, from heathen philosophy.

οὐκ ἔσσει ἄλλω θάρρειν εὐχεσθαι, ἢ τῷ πρὸς πάντα διαρκεῖ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ, διὰ τοῦ Σωτήρος ἡμῶν Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

—Contra Celsum, V. §§ 4, 5.

¹ De Princip. II. c. x. § 4.

² III. c. v. § 7.

³ III. c. vi. § 3.

⁴ Quidam eorum, qui libenter contentiones reperiunt, ascribunt nobis et nostræ doctrinæ blasphemiam, super

quâ ipsi viderint, quomodo illud audiant: "Neque ebriosi, neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt;" licet patrem malitiæ et perditionis eorum qui de regno Dei ejicientur, dicant posse salvari, quod ne mente quidem quis captus dicere potest.—Epist. ad Amicos Alexandrinus, vol. i. p. 5, Bened. Ed.

⁵ De Princip. II. c. xi. § 6.

It may be remarked, that by far the greater part of the passages which I have quoted as bearing testimony against the peculiar opinions and practices of the Church of Rome, are found in Origen's treatise against Celsus; much the most valuable of all his works; and which probably has commanded at all times many more readers than any other: indeed the integrity in which the original text has reached us, shows that it was a book always appreciated. It was, in fact, perhaps the first regular anti-infidel publication the world saw: indeed, I may say, it is the only one of that character of the early Church, and thus from its nature was sure to excite the curiosity of after ages, of which infidelity was the badge. If, therefore, the Romanists were under a temptation to corrupt any of Origen's writings, it must have been this; it was a very excellent channel through which to disperse their opinions; whilst any evidence which a popular work of this kind might happen to furnish against them, must have been felt to be doubly dangerous; yet we have seen how prolific in such evidence it is.

I have pursued this argument throughout at greater length, and in more ample detail, than I should have otherwise done, because, whilst it serves to qualify Daillé's assertion, that the works of the early Fathers have been dressed by the Romanists, it serves also to show what the sentiments of these Fathers were on some of the leading articles of the Romish Creed; and will accordingly render it unnecessary at a future stage of these Lectures, and when I shall treat of the *interpretation of Scripture*, and the protection which a knowledge of the Fathers affords against warping that interpretation to uncatholic purposes, to deal again with the case of the Romanists, their opinions and practices having been already proved, though by this incidental process, to be at variance with early patristical testimony, and therefore their peculiar understanding of Scripture to be probably erroneous. Such is the internal evidence against Daillé yielded by Origen; and such are some of the grounds for exercising caution in admitting this same Daillé's *vague* and *indefinite* charge of Romish adulteration of the early Fathers.

Indeed, James, the learned keeper of the Bodleian Library, "the most industrious and indefatigable writer against the Papists," says Wood, "that had been educated in Oxford

since the Reformation,"¹ and who had investigated the subject of the corruptions of the Fathers, effected by the Romanists, with infinite pains, adduces no instance of any Father so treated before Cyprian,² whose case I will consider presently. And a very good reason why the *early* Fathers should have escaped any taint from that quarter, suggests itself in the simple fact, that those Fathers were very little read or regarded by the Romanists.³ Hence the few manuscript copies of the Fathers which have come down to us; hence the original texts often almost or altogether lost, and even those of the translations frequently imperfect. For, as Dodwell observes in a passage of his Dissertation on Irenæus, which I have brought to your notice on other occasions, "These men of more modern days took, forsooth, for their rule of orthodoxy the Fathers of the fourth and following centuries, inasmuch as they who lived after the Councils observed with more exactness the language and phraseology of the Councils; the ancient Fathers, who spoke more loosely and with greater simplicity, they were so far from being accustomed to produce as witnesses, that they rather held them in suspicion if they chanced to make use of words foreign to the received language of their favourite centuries. Accordingly Photius often animadverted severely on the most ancient Fathers, and on that account is very properly reprov'd by our illustrious Bull. And as often as the more modern Councils confirm their decrees by the testimony of the more ancient writers, as their custom is, we constantly, in the Greek Councils, find the names of Athanasius, Basil, both the Gregories, and Chrysostom, but not the names of Clemens Romanus or Alexandrinus, nor of Barnabas, nor of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Dionysius of Corinth or him of Alexandria, Musanus, Miltiades, Melito, Apollinarius of Hierapolis, or of the other Ante-Nicene Fathers, whose names and works Eusebius has made a catalogue of, and after him Jerome. So in the Latin Councils we read of Hilary, and Jerome, and

¹ See p. xvii. of the new edition of James's Treatise of the Corruptions of Scripture, Councils and Fathers, by John Edward Cox, 1843. James died, 1629, aged 58.

² See p. 75, "The second part, Corruption of the true Fathers. The *first*

notorious corruption out of St. Cyprian's De Unitate Ecclesie," and p. 104, "The second place corrupted, in the 49th Homily of the Author of the imperfect work upon Matthew."

³ See quotations from Erasmus in Daillé, p. 80.

Ambrose, of Augustine most of all, and of those later than Augustine ; but not of Irenæus, or Tertullian, very rarely of Cyprian, not of Arnobius, Lactantius, Victorinus of Petavio the martyr. Thus it came to pass that the old Ante-Nicene Fathers, being in the first instance neglected and seldom cited, by degrees, in most cases, dropped almost out of sight. For these people were not used to test their decrees (as they ought to have done) by the old Ante-Nicene Fathers, but, on the contrary, indulged themselves in the most harsh censure of the most ancient Fathers, on the strength of modern decrees and established dogmas.”¹ And Bishop Bull, you will remember, is as much concerned in defending the authority and orthodoxy of the primitive Fathers against Petavius or Petau, a Jesuit, as against Zuicker, a Socinian, or Sandius, an Arian.² And in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, or running comment on Scripture used in the Romish Church in the middle ages, the references to the Fathers are almost always to those of a later date. And the effect of old habits may be seen even in our Homilies, for whilst in the second book, which came out when the principles of the Reformation had been more examined, the Ante-Nicene Fathers are frequently quoted ; in the first book, if I mistake not, there are but two references to Origen, and one to Cyprian, and not one to any other before the Council of Nice.

Of course, I do not contend that the line of argument which I have been pursuing with respect to the corruptions of the Ante-Nicene Fathers is conclusive as to their purity, or can be taken as an answer to any particular cases of adulteration which can be alleged : if such cases can be found, they must stand upon their own merits ; but I have urged it as proper to neutralize the effect of those *vague and indefinite insinuations* of interpolation or mutilation cast out against these Fathers by Daillé, and by the Puritan and Calvinistic party generally, by which it is their intention so far to undermine their credit and bring them into general suspicion, as to check all curiosity about them, and divert people from a course of study which would not be favourable on many accounts to the class of opinions they are disposed to support and propagate. The argument I am urging at least goes to

¹ *Dissert. in Irenæum*, V. pp. 408, 409. | 258, Oxf. Ed. and Def. Fid. Nic. sect.

² *Life of Bishop Bull*, pp. 243-246. | 2. c. iv. § 9, and sect. 3. c. v.

show this, that the *general* aspect of the writings of these earliest Fathers does not bear token of having been submitted to the revision of *Romish* authorities, or of having taken material harm at any rate from *Romish* custody—what damage there was being incurred rather from neglect than from interference. Even if the Romanists had been restrained by no scruples from debasing the manuscripts, they were in a great measure saved from the temptation by their ignorance of their contents.

The particular case of fraud which Daillé adduces (for in this instance he is precise¹), as attempted to be practised by the Pope's legate so early as the Council of Chalcedon, in interpolating a canon of the Council of Nice, which he had occasion to quote, does not support the disproportionate conclusions he draws from it. It appears that in citing the sixth canon of the Council of Nice, the legate Paschasinus, instead of reading it τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατεῖτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῶ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν, κ.τ.λ. "Let the ancient customs prevail; those in Egypt, and in Libya, and in Pentapolis; to wit, that the Bishop of Alexandria have authority over them all, for the same thing is usual at Rome with respect to her Bishop;" it appears, I say, that instead of reading the canon so, he ventured to cite it thus, ἡ ἐκκλησία Ῥώμης πάντοτε ἔσχε τὰ πρωτεία, κ.τ.λ. "The Church of Rome hath everywhere had the primacy," &c. But it is by no means clear that there was any attempt at fraud in this transaction. The legate was probably meaning merely to give the substance and not the words of the canon, which was to this effect, that as the Bishop of Rome had the primacy everywhere in the province of Rome; so the Bishop of Alexandria should have the primacy throughout his province; in short, that metropolitan Bishops should everywhere have the primacy over their suffragans in their own provinces, the word πάντοτε simply meaning everywhere in his own province, not everywhere in the world, which made the case parallel to the one under consideration, as it was intended it should be. Moreover, it seems probable that Paschasinus being a Latin was quoting from an ancient Latin version or free interpretation of the canons of the Council of Nice, and was misled by it, so far

¹ Daillé, p. 71.

as misled he was. And at all events, the correct copy of the canons was produced, and the error, whether wilful or accidental, put to rights, so that if there was artifice in the world, there was vigilance to counteract it too.¹ On the whole, therefore, how inordinate must we consider the conclusion which Daillé draws from this single case of Paschasinus, that “when the legates of the holy Pontiff did not scruple to corrupt so venerable a canon by such ill-treatment as this, we can no longer believe anything to be sound, anything unadulterated, which antiquity hath left us, unless it be what is of no moment, or else what could not be contaminated without the greatest infamy and universal reprobation.”²

¹ See Routh, *Scriptor. Ecclesiasticor.* | ² Daillé, p. 71.
Opusc. tom. i. p. 404.