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LECTURE X.

Use of the Fathers in unfolding the *meaning* of Scripture: I. Their testimony opposed to the Socinian scheme, 1°. In the *spirit* of their expositions, which is evangelical, not rationalistic. Extent to which the Old Testament is applied by them to Jesus Christ. Concurrence of our Church and of our standard divines in this principle of interpretation. The proof of it from the Fathers independent of the merit of their particular expositions. Actual uncertainty as to the extent of symbolical teaching in Scripture. 2°. On the doctrine of the Trinity. Statement of the Racovian Catechism. The Creed of the early Church shown to have been Trinitarian from the exposition of particular texts; from the opinions of early heretics; from primitive practices and formularies; and from the correspondence of the Athanasian Creed with the writers of the first three centuries. Unguarded language of these writers, especially of Origen, accounted for.

IN the last Lecture we discussed the question of the use of the Fathers in establishing the genuine *text* of Scripture. We will now consider the value they are of in helping us to unfold its *meaning*, remembering that they are in a very great degree the depositories of that traditional knowledge in the Church which, descending from the Apostles through a succession of ministers has served to maintain orthodoxy in the interpretation of Scripture on all the great fundamental articles of our faith.¹

No doubt this subject was intimately involved in the last, the purport of Scripture being, of course, closely connected with the correctness of our own readings of the Scripture. Still there is a department of exposition, which the Fathers occupy, quite independent of disputed readings, supplying us, as they often do, with important information as to the *general* spirit which animated the early Church in handling Scripture, with keys to the interpretation of it found in the peculiar circumstances of the early Church, and certainly with many probable expositions of individual texts.

¹ See Origen, De Principiis, IV. § 9.

I.

§ 1. *On the spirit of Patristic Exposition.*

Thus it is a matter of the utmost consequence in the examination of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly of the prophetic parts of it, whether we take for our principle the Evangelical or the rationalistic scheme of interpretation. A tendency to the one or the other has been characteristic of certain theological schools from ancient times to our own. There may be a risk either way in extremes. The one may result in a low, barren, and unworthy view of a most mysterious book—the view, in short of a Socinian; the other in a wild, illogical, and imaginative theory of it, such as may seem to justify any excesses of the fanatic, and enable him to extract from Scripture conclusions of almost any form or fashion. But be the latter danger what it may, the principle of interpretation which the Fathers *encourage* is certainly the Evangelical principle, the principle of making Jesus Christ the focus, as it were, to which the rays of Scripture almost universally tend. “The Son of God is sown everywhere, all through the writings of Moses,” is their dogma¹; and again, “The Law as read by the Jews at this very time is but a fable; for they have not the key to the whole, which is the Advent of the Son of God to man; whereas, read by Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in the field, but revealed to them.”²

Their position, it must be admitted, helped to foster in them this spirit. In contending with the Jews they could approach them by no other channel than the Old Testament: this was the only ground they and their antagonists could occupy in common, and accordingly they certainly do discover the Scriptures of the Old Testament to speak of Jesus Christ of Nazareth in season and out of season. For they hoped to arrive at the heart of the Israelite through the word that was

¹ Inseminatus est ubique in Scripturis ejus (sc. Moysi) Filius Dei.—Irenæus, IV. c. x. § 1. And again, shortly after, Et non est numerum dicere in quibus a Moysse ostenditur Filius Dei.

² Ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων μὲν ἀναγνωσκόμενος ὁ νόμος ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, μύθῳ ἔοικεν

οὐ γὰρ ἔχουσι τὴν ἐξήγησιν τῶν πάντων, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ κατ' οὐρανὸν παρουσία τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὑπὸ δὲ Χριστιανῶν ἀναγνωσκόμενος, θησαυρὸς ἐστὶ, κεκρυμμένος μὲν ἐν ἀγρῷ, αὐτοῖς δὲ ἀποκεκαλυμμένος.—Irenæus, IV. c. xxvi. § 1.

dear to him, and so to persuade him to listen to the Gospel which they had to disclose. Again, in contending with heretics, they had, to a very great extent, to disabuse them of a notion that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the New; that the one was a God of justice, the other a God of mercy; and accordingly, in showing the harmony of the two Testaments, they certainly do push to the utmost the theory of their approximation. At the same time we probably owe it to the existence of this feeling, that lessons both from the Old and New Testament—the new and old things of the instructed scribe¹—were appointed to be read in the same Services of the Church from the very first²; since a practical declaration was by this means made by the Church, that the Law was but the Gospel foreshowed—the Gospel but the Law fulfilled.³

Still, though the character of the sentiments of these several antagonists, with whom the early Fathers had to struggle, might tempt them sometimes to strain the principle of Evangelical interpretation beyond the bounds of discretion, the principle itself was most amply recognised by them, independently of all reference to heretic or Jew, and manifests itself in works of the Fathers which have no peculiar connection with either: the manner in which they used it for the refutation of the Jew and the heretic only falling in with their method of expounding Scripture at all times and under all circumstances. For, indeed, their impression was, that the Scriptures, being the work of the Holy Spirit, are not to be read as ordinary books; and that a mere literal interpretation of them would be derogatory to that Spirit.⁴ “The Spirit of God,” says Origen, when succinctly describing the subjects of prophecy, “the Spirit of God moved the prophets to foretell some things for their own times; others for future times; but above all (*ἐξαιπερώς*) to speak of a certain Saviour of the human race, who was to come and dwell amongst men.”⁵ Accordingly (to name a few instances of a style characteristic

¹ Irenæus, IV. c. ix. § 1.

² Compare Justin Martyr, Apol. I. § 67, with Tertullian, De Præscript. Hæret. c. xxxvi.

³ Quæst. et Respons. ad Orthodoxos, ci. p. 482. Paris Ed. of Justin Martyr. See Hooker, Eccles. Pol. V. c. xx. § 6.

⁴ Ad quam regulam etiam divinarum literarum intelligentia retinenda est, quo scilicet ea quæ dicuntur, non pro vilitate sermonis, sed pro divinitate sancti Spiritus qui eas conscribi inspiravit, censeantur.—Origen, De Principiis, IV. § 27.

⁵ Contra Celsum, III. § 3.

of all the Fathers), so sober a writer as Clemens Romanus finds in the purple thread which Rahab was directed to hang out of her window, a sign, "That there will be redemption for all who believe and hope in God, through the blood of the Lord."¹ Justin Martyr explains the expression, "The government shall be upon *his shoulder*," to have relation to the Cross, against which the shoulder of the Saviour was fixed.² The spit on which the Paschal Lamb was roasted, and which he says was cruciform, he construes into the same emblem.³ The staff by which Moses wrought his miracles, the tree planted by the water-side, the wood cast by Elisha into the Jordan, which raised up the head of the axe,⁴ and many more incidents of the same kind, he still considers significant of the Cross. Theophilus discovers in the three days that elapsed before the creation of the heavenly bodies a type of the Trinity;⁵ and in the blessing which God bestowed on the creatures which were made out of the water, whilst no blessing is recorded with respect to those made out of the earth, man excepted, he perceives a figure of Baptism and its benefits.⁶ Irenæus, by no means a fanciful writer, and indeed chiefly engaged in the refutation of the fancies of others, still furnishes examples of the same method of interpreting Scripture. Jacob held fast by the heel, so Christ came forth conquering and to conquer. Jacob got the birthright; the Gentiles, the younger people, received Christ the first-born. Jacob gained the blessing; the Gentiles a greater blessing, which the Jews, the elder, despised. Twelve tribes were the foundations of the people of Israel; twelve Apostles pillars of the Gospel. Jacob had for his wages *spotted* sheep; Christ, a *variety* of people. Jacob married two sisters, that his offspring might be numerous; Christ begat a numerous race of the two laws. Jacob loved the younger sister best, so did Christ the younger Church. Such is the spirit of Irenæus: "Nihil enim vacuum," says he, "neque sine signo apud Deum."⁷

But the Psalms are the portion of Scripture in which the Fathers trace this secondary meaning in the most lively manner, and in the amplest detail. There they find all the par-

¹ Ad Corinthios, I. § xii.

² Justin Martyr, Apol. I. § 35.

³ Dial. § 40.

⁴ Justin Martyr, Dial. § 86.

⁵ Theophilus, II. § 15. ⁶ II. § 16.

⁷ Irenæus, IV. c. xxi. § 3.

ticulars of the Birth, Life, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension of Jesus, and his final triumph over the world. Did a Psalm say, "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning," or as the Septuagint has it, *ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε*, the early Fathers saw in it the miraculous Conception of Jesus.¹ Did another say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?" they saw in Jesus that light, lighting, as He did, every man that came into the world.² Did another say, "Thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts;" they saw in it the Providence of God, which protected Jesus from Herod, whilst he was yet a babe at Bethlehem.³ Did another say, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed;" they saw in it the combination of Herod and the Jews, of Pilate and the soldiers against Jesus.⁴ Did another say, "My heart also in the midst of my body is even as melting wax;" they saw in it the bloody sweat in which Jesus was dissolved the night before the Passion.⁵ Did another say, "Hold not thy tongue, O God of my praise, for the mouth of the ungodly, yea the mouth of the deceitful is opened upon me;" they saw in it the complaint of Jesus touching the treachery of Judas.⁶ Did another say, "Thou hast heard me also from among the horns of the unicorns;" they saw in the horns of the unicorns the arms of the Cross of Jesus.⁷ Did another say, "I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained me;" they saw in it the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus.⁸ Did another say, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in;" they saw in it the Ascension of Jesus, and his entrance once more into heaven.⁹ Did another say, "He rejoiceth as a giant to run his course;" they saw in it the glorious race of Jesus and his Gospel over all the world.¹⁰ Did

¹ Psalm cx. 3; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 63, *et alibi*.

² Psalm xxvii. 1; Origen, Contra Celsum, VI. § 5.

³ Psalm xxii. 9; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 102.

⁴ Psalm ii. 2; Justin Martyr, Apol. I. § 40.

⁵ Psalm xxii. 14; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 103.

⁶ Psalm cix. 1; Origen, Contra Celsum, II. § 11.

⁷ Psalm xxii. 21; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 105.

⁸ Psalm iii. 5; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 97.

⁹ Psalm xxiv. 7; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 85.

¹⁰ Psalm xix. 5; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 69.

another say, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer;" they saw in it the rapid dispersion of the Gospel effected by the short ministry of Jesus.¹ Did another say, "He sent his Word and healed them, and they were saved from their destruction;" they saw in it the mission of Jesus, and the blessed ends it effected.² This is the manner in which the Fathers understood the Psalms, herein not exhibiting their own sentiments merely, but certainly reflecting those of the Primitive Church itself, which caused the book of Psalms, on account of this its Evangelical character, to be read constantly in the congregation. For that it did so seems certain, both from the accuracy with which Justin Martyr quotes the Psalms, as compared with his mode of citing any other book of Scripture, an accuracy apparently derived from constant use³; from the incidental way in which he sometimes touches on a Psalm, as though he presumed that this portion of Scripture was familiar to every Christian worshipper, and only needed to be named in order to be remembered⁴; and from what would seem to be the express testimony of Tertullian⁵—a testimony which, perhaps, we may consider to be confirmed by Pliny, who, when describing to Trajan the principal feature of the devotions of the Christians, tells him that "they sung, or said *hymns to Christ as God*, repeating them by turns."⁶ There were those at that time who would have preferred a more trivial mode of interpretation—who would rather have construed one of the Psalms, for instance, of Hezekiah, or another of Solomon, than either of them of Jesus.⁷ But the early Fathers, and the Church of which they were in this the exponents, had no sympathy with such commentators; neither has our own Church, as we may conclude from her application of particular Psalms to the services on her great Fasts and Festivals; the day itself a sufficient argument of the sense in which she understands them,

¹ Psalm xlv. 2; Origen, De Principiis, IV. § 5.

² Psalm cvii. 20; Origen, Contra Celsum, II. § 31.

³ See Justin Martyr, Dial. § 22. Otto, n. 7; and Thirlby, *in loc.*

⁴ See Justin Martyr, Dial. § 30.

⁵ *Quantam autem castigationem merebuntur etiam illæ, quæ inter Psalmos, vel in quâcunque Dei mentione relectæ perseverant!*—De Virginibus Velandis,

c. xvii. Jam vero, prout Scripturæ leguntur, aut *Psalmi canuntur*, aut adlocutiones proferuntur, aut petitiones delegantur, &c.—De Animâ, c. ix.

⁶ Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem.—Plinii Epistolar. lib. X. ep. xcvii.

⁷ Psalm cx.; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 33. Psalm lxxii.; Justin Martyr, Dial. § 34.

as it also is of her interpretation of the Lessons which she selects on such occasions from the Old Testament, and which must have an Evangelical meaning in order to be appropriate.

Nor have the greatest or even the most sober of our standard divines failed to show their respect for the same principle—those divines who flourished at a period so different from our own, when the writings of the Fathers formed a staple in the study of theology, and imparted to it something of the spirit which breathed forth from themselves. No man, I presume, will class Dr. South with fanatics, or feel that he was a person to be run away with by any vain and visionary system of Scripture interpretation. Indeed, we shall find, perhaps, no one of our Church more sound upon all the great points of theology, as we shall find none bringing to the examination of them more masculine powers of mind, or a more thorough contempt for nonsense of any kind. Look, then, at the view he takes of the principle of Scriptural exposition which I have been setting forth, as recommended by the authority and practice of the Fathers, in his sermon on the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.¹ After exposing in some detail the absurdity of one Rabbi Saadias, in supposing this famous chapter to be spoken of Jeremiah, he proceeds to deal out some heavy blows against a more illustrious name for adopting the same exposition of this particular text, and in general for the tone of his annotations on Scripture, Grotius. “So, then, we have here an interpretation,” says he, “but as for the sense of it, that, for aught I see, must shift for itself. But whether thus to drag and hale words both from sense and context, and then to squeeze whatsoever meaning we please out of them, be not (as I may speak with some change of the prophet’s phrase) to draw lies with cords of blasphemy, and nonsense as it were with a cart rope, let any sober and impartial hearer or reader be judge. For whatsoever titles the itch of novelty and Socinianism has thought fit to dignify such immortal, incomparable, incomprehensible interpreters with, yet if these interpretations ought to take place, the said prophecies (which all before Grotius and the aforesaid Rabbi Saadias unanimously fixed—in the first sense of them—upon the sole person of the Messiah) might have been actually

¹ Vol. ii. p. 472, Oxf. Ed.]

fulfilled, and consequently the veracity of God in the said prophecies strictly accounted for, though Jesus of Nazareth had never been born. Which being so, would any one have thought that the author of the book 'De Veritate Religionis Christianæ et de Satisfactione Christi' could be also the author of such interpretations as these? No age certainly ever produced a mightier man in all sorts of learning than Grotius, nor more happily furnished with all sorts of arms, both offensive and defensive, for the vindication of the Christian faith, had he not in his Annotations too frequently turned the edge of them the wrong way."¹

Now I confess it seems to me a matter of great importance to establish the fact that the early Fathers, in their method of interpreting Scripture, did, as a general rule, embrace this Evangelical principle: that they are thoroughly Anti-Socinian; that the sense in which Scripture was understood by the best-informed Christians, who lived in the times immediately after those of the Apostles themselves, was an Anti-Socinian sense. I am not prepared to defend their interpretations in every case. I will not even deny that a collection of instances of exposition of Scripture might be made from them, where this principle is pushed to a point which might expose them to profane ridicule; but I do say it is a great support to the orthodox faith that a fundamental feature of the primitive exegetical theology is found to be, the persevering manner in which it ceases not to teach and preach Jesus Christ; and this fact we ascertain through the primitive Fathers. Doubtless it may be a question whether the *scarlet* thread which Rahab hung out at the window was a type of the saving nature of the Blood of the Atonement, as the Fathers represent it; yet the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to contemplate a significance of this sort in the scarlet wool of the Law, for "when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water,

¹ Dr. South then adds in a note, "The truth is the matter lay deeper than so, for there was a party* of men whom Grotius had unhappily engaged himself with, who were extremely disgusted at the book *De Satisfactione Christi*, written by him against Socinus, and therefore he was to pacify (or rather satisfy) these men, by turning his pen another

way in his Annotations, which also was the true reason that he never answered Crellius; a shrewd argument, no doubt, to such as shall well consider these matters, that those in the Low Countries, who at that time went by the name of Remonstrants and Arminians, were indeed a great deal more."

and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you.”¹ Or it may be still more a question whether the number ten, that of the Commandments, being expressed by the letter *ι*, indicated Jesus²; yet there is a mystery in the number of the beast. Or it may be disputed whether the breaking of the first set of Tables, and the renewal of the same, intimated that the Law was to be superseded by the Gospel³; yet the veil on Moses’ face indicated the eclipse of the Gospel under the Law.⁴ Moreover, it would certainly have been made a subject of debate, too, had not St. Paul himself resolved the doubt, whether, when in the Levitical Law, God commanded that the ox should not be muzzled which trod out the corn, he was contemplating in that injunction any sanction to a provision for a Christian Priesthood; yet we know he was.⁵ The truth may seem to be, that we are not to *assert* that ritual or historical facts in the Old Testament are symbols of such or such Christian duties or ordinances, except where they are expressly declared to be such by competent authorities in the New Testament; but we may be allowed to *suspect* that God intended us to draw inferences of a similar kind to those he has himself thought fit to put on record, from similar passages for ourselves, as a wholesome exercise of our minds, and an exercise calculated to strengthen our faith in the leading doctrines of Christianity—and this appears from a passage already referred to, to have been the distinction of Origen himself⁶—that it may be a part of God’s scheme of

¹ Heb. ix. 19.

² Clem. Alex. *Pædag.* III. c. xii. p. 305; and compare II. c. iv. p. 194.

³ *Stromat.* VI. § xvi. pp. 807–8.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 13, 16. ⁵ 1 Tim. v. 18.

⁶ *De Principiis*, IV. § 9. Καὶ ὅτι μὲν οἰκονομίαι εἰσὶ τινες μυστικάι δηλούμεναι διὰ τῶν θείων γραφῶν, πάντες καὶ οἱ ἀκεραύτατοι τῶν τῷ λόγῳ προσιόντων πεπιστεύκασι· τίνες δὲ αὐταί, οἱ εἰρνώμονες καὶ ἄτυφοι ὁμολογοῦσι μὴ εἶδέναι . . . ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κατασκευὴν τῆς σκηνῆς ἀναγινώσκονται, πειθόμενοι τύπους εἶναι τὰ γεγραμμένα, ζητοῦσιν ἂν δυνήσονται ἐφαρμόσαι ἐκάστῳ τῶν κατὰ τὴν σκηνὴν λεγομένων ὅσον μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ

πειθεσθαι ὅτι τύπος τινός ἐστιν ἡ σκηνή, οὐ διαμαρτάνοντες ὅσον δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ τῷδέ τινι ἀξίως τῆς γραφῆς ἐφαρμόζειν τὸν λόγον οὐ ἐστὶ τύπος ἡ σκηνή, ἔσθ’ ὅτε ἀποπίπτοντες. “That there are certain mystical dispensations indicated by the Divine Scriptures, every Christian, however simple, believes; but what they may be, sensible and modest men confess that they know not. . . . But when the structure of the Tabernacle is read of, those who are persuaded that the description is typical try to find out what they can adapt to several things said of the Tabernacle. Now, so far as they are persuaded that the Tabernacle is a type of something, they

revelation to leave us in some uncertainty with respect to the *extent* of his teaching by types, in order to test the spirit we are of, by the application we are disposed to make of what may, or may not be, hints from him, and thus to elicit tokens of our indifference or our zeal. Our blessed Lord himself seems to point to some such dispensation on several occasions: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," said he to the Sadducees, and yet the proof of their ignorance consisted in their not having perceived the resurrection of the dead to be taught in the words, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:" and again, when the disciples were desponding, as they walked to Emmaus, he charged them with foolishness, because they had not detected all the incidents of the closing scene of his earthly life in Moses and the prophets.

§ 2.

On the Doctrine of the Trinity.

I THINK what has already been said may suffice to prove that the *general complexion* of the theology of the early Fathers is Anti-Socinian. But the question being so vital a one, I will not leave it here, but will pursue the inquiry somewhat further, and show that the primitive Fathers are in spirit thoroughly opposed to the *several leading doctrines* of the Socinians—I say in spirit, because writing as they do before the subtleties of captious religionists had taught the defenders of the faith once committed to the saints, terms of precision in their arguments, it frequently happens that expressions escape them, of which advantage may be taken by those who seek occasion for it, and who are not at the pains, or perhaps have not the necessary reading, to balance those expressions by others less equivocal in the same Father, and by the stream of testimony his works supply, to correct any occasional and incidental obliquity.

The doctrine of the Godhead, as laid down in the Racovian

cannot mistake; but so far as they apply the word of Scripture rightly to this particular or that, they certainly may get into error."

Catechism is this, that "in the essence of God there is but one Person;" and that "inasmuch as the essence of God is but one in number, there cannot be so many Persons therein, since a Person is nothing but an individual intelligent essence."¹

Now, in spite of many unguarded phrases which from time to time fall from the Fathers—unguarded, I say, because entirely at variance with their ordinary teaching—it is not to be denied that the faith of the Sub-Apostolic Church was Trinitarian.

Thus the *casual* language of the very earliest Fathers we have is Trinitarian; even where there is no direct intention of insisting on the doctrine. I allude to such passages as the following: in Hermas,² "The farm is the world: the Son of the owner is the Holy Spirit: the servant is the Son of God."—In Clemens Romanus,³ "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sceptre of the Majesty of God, did not come in the pomp of splendour and pride, although having this within his reach, but in humbleness of mind, as the Holy Spirit speaks concerning him." And here I may observe that the Holy Spirit, when thus introduced, is certainly understood as a Person; for in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians,⁴ when a similar use of the name occurs, τὸ Πνεῦμα is coupled with a masculine particle, τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων, as is the case in the Gospel of St. John,⁵ and in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians⁶; a similar construction is found in Justin Martyr,⁷ and in Clemens Alexandrinus.⁸ And it may be further remarked, in support of this inference, that "verbum," as used in the early translation of Irenæus, is frequently joined to a masculine adjective, where "verbum" stands for the second Person of the Trinity.⁹ But to return—In Ignatius,¹⁰ "Our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary according to the

¹ Racovian Catechism, Of the Knowledge of God, c. i. The Racovian Catechism was drawn up by Socinus, and is accounted the common creed of the whole sect, to which he gives a name.—Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Cent. XVI. Sec. III. Pt. II. c. vii. § 12.

² Lib. III. Similitud. V. § 5.

³ Ad Corinth. I. § xvi.

⁴ Ad Philadelph. § vii.

⁵ Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας.—John xvi. 13.

⁶ Ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ Πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ ὃς ἐστὶν ἄρραβὼν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν.—Ephes. i. 13, 14.

⁷ Dial. § 25.

⁸ Pædag. II. c. iv. p. 193; Stromat. II. § xx. p. 495.

⁹ Idoneus est et sufficiens ad formationem omnium proprium ejus Verbum.—Irenæus, II. c. ii. § 5. Si autem Verbum Patris, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit.—I. c. ix. § 3.

¹⁰ Ignatius, Ad Ephes. § xviii.

dispensation of God (*i. e.* the Father) of the seed of David, and of the Holy Ghost ;” and again,¹ “ Give all diligence, therefore, to confirm yourselves in the doctrine of the Lord and of the Apostles, that in whatever ye do ye may prosper both in body and soul, by faith and love, in the Son, and the Father, and the Spirit ;” and once more,² “ Be obedient to the Bishop and to one another, even as Jesus Christ in the flesh was obedient to the Father, and the Apostles to Christ, and the Father, and the Spirit.” The martyrdom of Polycarp furnishes evidence of the same unobtrusive but most satisfactory character for the Trinitarian creed of the early Church. We cannot, I think, read that authentic and most interesting document without feeling that such form of faith transpires through it, as in undisputed possession of the Church in Polycarp’s time. This is some of the language of the martyr’s prayer. “ O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy blessed and beloved Son Jesus Christ. . . . I bless thee for that thou hast counted me worthy of this day and of this hour, that I should have part in the number of thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, unto the resurrection of life everlasting, of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost. . . . For this, and for all things else, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee together with Jesus Christ, the Eternal, the Celestial, thy beloved Son ; with whom be glory to thee and the Holy Ghost now and ever.”³ The Liturgical fragment of the Ter-Sanctus, here, no doubt, quoted by the martyr, itself running in a triplet, is still a subordinate ingredient in the proof.

Then the manner in which the early Fathers interpret certain texts as appertaining to the Trinity, even where it may be matter of question whether those texts strictly bear such meaning, is very satisfactory, though still oblique, testimony to the doctrine being settled and dominant in their minds. Such is the exposition Irenæus gives of Ephes. iv. 6. “ One Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.” “ The Father is above all, and he is the head of Christ ; the Word is through all, and he is the head of the Church ; the Spirit is in us all, and he is the living water which the Lord vouchsafes to all who rightly believe in him

¹ Ad Magnes, § xiii.

² Ibid.

³ Martyrium Polycarpi, § xiv.; Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. iv. § 15.

and love him."¹ And Hippolytus understands the text in the same way.² Who but a member of a Trinitarian Church would have ventured to propound this comment, without the slightest misgiving or apology? Of a similar character is the comment of Theophilus on an incident in the Mosaic history of the creation.³ "The three days," says he, "which elapsed before the lights in the firmament were made, are types of the Trinity, of God, of his Son, and of his Wisdom." It is incredible that a casual remark of such a nature as this should have been dropped, except the doctrine of the Trinity had been generally known and acknowledged. And the same conclusion would seem to follow from the adoption of the term "holy trinity," as a metaphor, which we find as early as Clemens Alexandrinus, who applies ἡ ἁγία τριὰς to the three virtues, faith, hope, and charity.⁴

Again, the heresy of Simon Magus supplies us with another argument to the same effect, quite independent of these last, but of the like incidental kind; the more valuable, too, as being the unintentional witness of an enemy. Simon Magus is always represented as the first of the heretics, being, indeed, the contemporary of the Apostles themselves. Whatever light, therefore, his proceedings may serve to cast upon the orthodox faith, is from a quarter entitled to the utmost attention; the date of the testimony considered. Now Simon Magus gave himself out as the most High, who appeared amongst the Jews as the Son; in Samaria as the Father; and amongst the Gentiles as the Holy Ghost.⁵ But it is scarcely possible to suppose that he would have made this representation of himself, unless the orthodox doctrine of the Church (of which that of the heretics was in general a caricature) had furnished him with some pretence for it; and unless the Godhead of the Son, of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, and their Unity, in some shape had been an article of belief familiar to men's minds. So great is the force which Mr. Wilson ascribes to the argument, that "from this historical fact," says he, "without any reference to the New Testament, had the Gospels even never been written, we might conclude, with some probability, that Christ himself had claimed Divinity,

¹ Irenæus, V. c. xviii. § 2.

² Hippolytus, Contra Noetum, § xiv.

³ Theophilus, Ad Autolyicum, II. § 15.

⁴ Stromat. IV. § vii. p. 588.

⁵ Irenæus, I. c. xxiii. § 1.

and taught the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity in some sense or other.”¹

The truth, no doubt, was, that the perpetual recurrence of formularies that embodied this doctrine kept it constantly before the eyes of Christians. Baptism, for instance, was notoriously administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, from the first—even trine immersion is a practice attending it so early, as to be lost in antiquity—and a public confession of faith was made at it, expressive, as we know, of the three Persons of the Godhead; a confession directly affirmed to have commenced with the very Gospel itself²—*nec meus hic sermo*—Basil, a Father of the fourth century, expressly asserts, when writing on the subject of the Holy Spirit, that such was the *force of custom*, such the *strength of tradition* on this question, that the speculations of private individuals were controlled by it, and that they would not venture to set up their own opinions against an authority, which bore them down.³

So many elements, then, of evidence for a Trinitarian creed—(I have only given examples of whole classes)—are afloat in patristic theology from the most primitive times; and these, again, insensibly as it were, give place to distinct and technical expressions of such a creed, as heresies spring up, and controversies with them, calculated to call forth such manifestoes, and to bring ideas previously existing to a point—and all this, before the more formal symbols of faith which we now possess, agreed upon in Councils, had made their appearance, as far as we know—though these latter, again, are still to be regarded simply as exponents of the truth as it was held from the beginning, and not as any new discoveries of it, and are probably very much more ancient in substance than the dates formally assigned to them. It will be convenient, then, to show the further development of the question by taking the more prominent clauses of the Athana-

¹ Illustration of the method of explaining the New Testament by the early opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ, p. 230. Cambridge, 1838.

² *Hanc regulam ab initio evangelii deincepsurrisse. Tertullian, Adversus Praxeam, c. ii.*

³ Πλὴν ἀλλὰ πολλαχοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς τῆς συνηθείας τὸ ἰσχυρὸν δυσωπούμενος, εὐσεβείας φωνὰς ἀφήκε περὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος . . . οὕτως, οἶμαι, τὸ τῆς παραδόσεως ἰσχυρὸν ἐνήγε πολλὰκις τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς οἰκείους ἐαυτῶν δόγμασιν ἀντιλέγειν.—Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, c. xxix.

sian Creed, those, I mean, which relate more particularly to the metaphysical qualities of the Deity, and demonstrate that the raw material of them is discoverable in the writings of the first three centuries; thus antedating Dr. Waterland's valuable illustrations of the same document, who draws his vouchers almost altogether from Augustine, a Father whose phraseology, no doubt, being more dressed by theological rule, comes closer to that of the Creed.¹

Irenæus, IV. c. xxxiii. § 7.—“Moreover he” (*i. e.* the true believer, § 1) “will condemn all those

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

Spirit of God, who supplies a knowledge of the truth, and expounds the dispensations of the Father and the Son throughout all generations of men, according to the pleasure of the Father.”²

Cyprian, Ep. lxxiii.—“How then can some who are without the Church, nay against the Church, maintain, that provided a Gentile be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in any way whatever, he will obtain remission of sins? whereas

¹ I have contented myself with quoting a limited number of authorities under each clause. It would have been easy to have accumulated them to almost any extent, as may be seen by turning to Mr. Bailey's *Rituale Anglo-Catholicum*, which by no means exhausts them—a most useful work to all who study the elements of our Prayer Book—from which indeed, and from Dr. Burton's *Ante-Nicene Testimonies* to the doctrine of the Trinity, I have occasionally borrowed a reference, where one happened to present itself, more apposite, as I thought, than any which my own notes supplied.

² *Iudicabit autem et omnes eos qui sunt extra veritatem, id est qui sunt extra ecclesiam; ipse autem a nemine iudicabitur. Omnia enim ei constant: εἰς ἓνα Θεὸν παντοκράτορα, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, πίστις δλόκληρος: καὶ εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ τὰς οἰκονομίας αὐτοῦ, δι' ὧν ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, πεισμονῇ βεβαία: καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, qui præstat agnitionem veritatis, τὸ τὰς οἰκονομίας Πατρός τε καὶ Υἱοῦ σκηνοβατοῦν κατ' ἐκάστην γενεάν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, καθὼς βούλεται ὁ Πατήρ.*

Christ himself commands the nations to be baptized in the name of the *full and united Trinity*.”¹

Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. iii.—“Why then should God seem to suffer *division* and *dispersion* in the Son and the Holy Ghost, who have the second and third places allotted them, *consubstantial* as they are with the Father; when He suffered no such thing in the angels who are many in number and are not of the same substance as himself?”²

Justin Martyr, Dial. § 128.—“And that that Power which the prophetic word calls also God, as hath been in like manner shown at large, and Angel, is not nominally different only, as the light is nominally different from the sun” (in allusion to a previous illustration), “but is *numerically different*, I have briefly shown already, when I said that this Power is begotten of the Father, by his power and will, *not however by division, as though the substance of the Father was separated*, even as all other things when separated and divided are not the same as they were before such division. And I took as an example this fact, that from one fire we see other fires lighted; the fire, from which many may be lighted, suffering no diminution, but still continuing the same.”³

Origen in Joannem, tom. ii. § 6, vol. iv. p. 62. (When commenting on the text, “All things were made by him,”⁴ Origen volunteers to discuss whether the Holy Ghost is in-

¹ Quomodo ergo quidam dicunt foris extra Ecclesiam immo et contra Ecclesiam, modo in nomine Jesu Christi, ubicumque et quomodocumque gentilem baptizatum remissionem peccatorum consequi posse, quando ipse Christus gentes baptizari jubeat in plenâ et adunatâ Trinitate.

² Quale est ut Deus divisionem et dispersionem pati videatur in Filio et in Spiritu Sancto, secundum et tertium sortitis locum, tam consortibus substantiæ Patris, quas non patitur in tot angelorum numero, et quidem tam a substantiâ alienis.

³ Καὶ οὗτις δύναμις αὕτη, ἣν καὶ Θεὸν καλεῖ ὁ προφητικὸς λόγος, ὡς διὰ

πολλῶν ὡσαύτως ἀποδέεικται, καὶ ἄγγελον, οὐχ ὡς τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς ὀνόματι μόνον ἀριθμεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀριθμῶ ἕτερον τι ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς προειρημένοις διὰ βραχέων τὸν λόγον ἐξήτασα, εἰπὼν τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην γεγενῆσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς δυνάμει καὶ βουλῇ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ ἀποτομήν, ὡς ἀπομεριζομένης τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας, ὅποια τὰ ἄλλα πάντα μεριζόμενα καὶ τεμνόμενα οὐ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐστὶν ἃ καὶ πρὶν τμηθῆναι καὶ παραδείγματος χάριν παρελήφειν τὰ ὡς ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἀναπτόμενα πυρὰ ἕτερα ὄρωμεν, οὐδὲν ἐλαττουμένον ἐκείνου, ἐξ οὗ ἀναφθῆναι πολλὰ δύνανται, ἀλλὰ ταυτοῦ μένοντος.

⁴ John i. 3.

cluded, and proceeds), "There will still, however, be a third opinion besides the two which maintain, one of them that the Holy Ghost was made by the Word, the other that it was uncreated; and this third opinion is, that the Holy Ghost is not by itself a Person, distinct from the Father and the Son We, however, are persuaded that there are *three Persons*, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and believing that there is nothing unproduced, besides the Father, we accept it as the more pious notion and as the true one, that whereas all things were made by the Word, the Holy Ghost is of more honour than them all, and in rank higher than all things that were made by the Father through Christ. And this, perhaps, is the reason why he is not called the very Son of God; the Only Begotten alone being by nature the Son from the beginning; of whom the Holy Ghost seems to have stood in need, as having ministered to his Hypostasis (or Personality), not merely as to his existing, but as to his being wise, and rational, and just, and all that one ought to think Him to be, as the sharer of those qualities which we have already described to belong to Christ."¹

Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. xi.—"Thus briefly, but evidently is the distinction of the Trinity set forth. For it is the Spirit himself, who speaks; the Father, to whom he speaks; the Son, of whom he speaks. In like manner, other things which are spoken, sometimes to the Father of the Son, or to the Son; some-

¹ Ἔσται δέ τις καὶ τρίτος παρὰ τοὺς δύο, τὸν τε διὰ τοῦ Λόγου παραδεχόμενον τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον γεγενῆσθαι, καὶ τὸν ἀγέννητον αὐτὸν εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνοντα, δογματίζων μηδὲ οὐσίαν τινα ἰδίαν ὑφεστάναι τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἑτέραν παρὰ τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸν Υἱόν . . . ἡμεῖς μένουσι τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις πειθόμενοι τυγχάνειν, τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ τὸν Υἱόν, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, καὶ ἀγέννητον μηδὲν ἕτερον τοῦ Πατρὸς εἶναι πιστεύοντες, ὡς εὐσεβέστερον καὶ ἀληθές προσείμεθα τὸ, πάντων διὰ τοῦ Λόγου γενομένων, τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα πάντων εἶναι τιμωτέρον, καὶ τάξει πάντων τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ Χριστοῦ γεγεννημένων. Καὶ τάχα αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία τοῦ μὴ καὶ αὐτὸ υἱὸν χαρακτηρίζειν τοῦ

Θεοῦ, μόνον τοῦ Μονογενοῦς φύσει Υἱοῦ ἀρχῆθεν τυγχάνοντος, οὐ χρήσειν ἔοικε τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, διακονούντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει, οὐ μόνον εἰς τὸ εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφὸν εἶναι καὶ λογικὸν καὶ δίκαιον, καὶ πᾶν ὀτιποσοῦν χρῆσιν αὐτὸ νοεῖν τυγχάνειν, κατὰ μετοχὴν τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν Χριστοῦ ἐπινοιών.

In which passage it must be borne in mind that οὐσίαν means Person; the parties Origen had in his eye being the disciples of Noetus, the precursors of the Sabellians; and that ὑποστάσεις has the same signification; the argument continuing to glance at the same heresy which confounded the Persons. See Bull, Def. Fid. Nic. sec. 2, c. ix. § 11, p. 117, fol.

times to the Son of the Father, or to the Father; sometimes to the Spirit; *establish each Person in his own proper self.*"

c. xii.—“But if the number of the Trinity stagger thee, as if the Trinity were not, therefore, knit together in *simple Unity*, I ask, how does the one single Being speak in the plural, where he says, Let us make man after our image and likeness; instead of saying, I will make man after my image and likeness, as being himself one and singular?”¹

Irenæus, IV. c. xx. § 1.—“For there is ever present with him” (the Father), “the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom he made all things freely and of his own accord; and to whom he speaks when he says, Let us make man after our image and likeness.”²

III. c. viii. § 3.—“But that he made all things freely and as he pleased, David again asserts, ‘Our God is in heaven above, and in earth he doeth all things according to his pleasure.’³ Now the things constituted differ from him who constitutes them, and the things made from him who made them. For he is himself *not made*, and is without beginning and without end, and has need of nothing, himself sufficing for himself, and for all other things, imparting to them, indeed, the very privilege of existing. But the things which have been made by him had a beginning; and the things which had a beginning may have an end, and are in subjection, and have need of him who made them: it is altogether necessary, therefore, that they should be distinguished by a different term, by all who have any moderate sense of discrimination; so that he, who made all things, together with his Word should be justly called God and Lord

¹ His itaque paucis tamen manifeste distinctio Trinitatis exponitur. Est enim ipse qui pronuntiat Spiritus, et Pater ad quem pronuntiat, et Filius de quo pronuntiat. Sic et cætera quæ nunc ad Patrem de Filio, vel ad Filium, nunc ad Filium de Patre, vel ad Patrem, nunc ad Spiritum pronuntiantur; unamquamque personam in suâ proprietate constituunt.

Si te adhuc numerus scandalizat Trinitatis, quasi non connexæ in unitate simplici, interrogo quomodo unicus

et singularis pluraliter loquitur: Faciam hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram; cum debuerit dixisse, Faciam hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem meam, utpote unicus et singularis?

² Adest enim ei semper Verbum et Sapientia, Filius et Spiritus, per quos et in quibus omnia libere et sponte fecit, ad quos et loquitur, dicens: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram.

³ Psalm cxv. 3.

alone : but that *the things which are made* should not be expressed by the same term, nor have a word applied to them which belongs to the Creator.”¹

Clemens Alexandrinus, Pædag. I. c. vi. p. 123.—“ O mysterious wonder ! The Father of the universe is one ; and the Word of the universe is one ; and the Holy Ghost is one and the *same everywhere*.”²

Irenæus, IV. c. iv. § 2.—“ And well he spake who said, that the measureless Father is measured in the Son, for the Son is the measure of the Father, since he contains him.”³

c. xx. § 3.—“ That the Word, that is the Son, *was ever* with the Father, we have demonstrated at length : and that Wisdom, which is the Spirit, was with him *before all worlds*, it saith by Solomon.”⁴

Origen, Comment. in Genes., vol. ii. p. 1.—“ For *God did not begin to be a Father*, having been hindered from being so for a time, like human fathers, who must wait to be fathers ; for if God was always perfect, and his power of being a Father was always present with him, and if it was good for him to be the Father of such a Son, why should he defer it, and deprive himself of the good from time to time, so to speak, when he might have been the Father of a Son, and was not ? *And the same may be said concerning the Holy Ghost*.”⁵

¹ Quoniam autem ipse omnia fecit libere et quemadmodum voluit, ait iterum David : Deus autem noster in cœlis sursum et in terrâ, omnia quæcunque voluit, fecit. Altera autem sunt, quæ constituta sunt, ab eo qui constituit, et quæ facta sunt, ab eo qui fecit. Ipse enim infectus, et sine initio et sine fine et nullius indigens, ipse sibi sufficiens, et adhuc reliquis omnibus, ut sint, hoc ipsum præstans ; quæ vero ab eo sunt facta initium sumserunt. Quæcunque autem initium sumserunt, et dissolutionem possunt percipere et subjecta sunt et indigent ejus, qui se fecit ; necesse est omnimodo, ut differens vocabulum habeant apud eos etiam, qui vel modicum sensum in discernendo talia habent : ita ut is quidem, qui omnia fecerit, cum Verbo suo juste dicatur Deus

et Dominus solus ; quæ autem facta sunt, non jam ejusdem vocabuli participabilia esse, neque juste id vocabulum sumere debere, quod est creatoris.

² Ω θαύματος μυστικοῦ· εἰς μέν ὁ τῶν ὄλων Πατήρ· εἰς δὲ καὶ ὁ τῶν ὄλων Λόγος· καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐν, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πανταχοῦ.

³ Et bene, qui dixit ipsum immensum Patrem in Filio mensuratum : mensura enim Patris, Filius, quoniam et capit eum.

⁴ Quoniam Verbum, id est Filius, semper cum Patre erat, per multa demonstravimus. Quoniam autem et Sapientia, quæ est Spiritus, erat apud eum ante omnem constitutionem, per Salomonem ait.

⁵ Οὐ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς Πατὴρ εἶναι ἤρξατο, κωλυόμενος ὡς οἱ γινόμενοι πατέρες

De Principiis, IV. § 28.—“But this very expression of ours, that there never was a time when (the Son) was not, must be received with allowance (for the imperfection of language). For these very words ‘never’ and ‘when’ are significant of a temporal duration; but those things, which are predicated of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, must be understood as above all time, above all ages, and above all eternity. For that only is the Trinity, which exceeds not only all meaning of a temporal nature, but even of an eternal. But other things which do not belong to the Trinity are to be measured by ages and times.”¹

Athenagoras, Legatio pro Christianis, § 10.—“Who then would not be perplexed on hearing us called *atheists*: confessing as we do, God the Father, and God the Son, and the Holy Ghost; discovering their power in their unity, and their distinction in their order?”²

§ 24.—“We acknowledge God, and the Son his Word, and the Holy Ghost, united in power, being Father, Son, and Spirit: for the Son of the Father is Mind, the Word, Wisdom; and the Spirit is an emanation, as light from fire.”³

Hippolytus, Contra Noetum, § xii.—“Wherefore we behold the Word incarnate; and we know the Father through him; and we believe in the Son; and we worship the Holy Ghost.”⁴

ἄνθρωποι, ὑπὸ τοῦ μη δύνασθαι πω πατέρες εἶναι· εἰ γὰρ αἰεὶ τέλειος ὁ Θεός, καὶ πάρεστιν αὐτῷ δύναμις τοῦ Πατέρα αὐτὸν εἶναι, καὶ καλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι Πατέρα τοῦ τοιοῦτου Υἱοῦ, τί ἀναβάλλεται, καὶ ἐάντων τοῦ καλοῦ στήρισκε, καὶ, ὡς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ἐξ οὗ δύναται Πατὴρ εἶναι Υἱοῦ; τὸ αὐτὸ μέντοιγε καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος λεκτέον.

¹ Hoc autem ipsum quod dicimus, quia nunquam fuit quando non fuit, cum veniā audiendum est. Nam et hæc ipsa nomina temporalis vocabuli significationem gerunt, id est quando vel nunquam; supra omne autem tempus, et supra omnia sæcula, et supra omnem æternitatem intelligenda sunt ea quæ de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto dicuntur. Hæc enim sola Trinitas est quæ omnem sensum intelligentiæ non solum temporalis verum etiam æter-

nalis excedit. Cætera vero quæ sunt extra Trinitatem in sæculis et temporibus metienda sunt.

² Τίς οὖν οὐκ ἀπορήσει, λέγοντας Θεὸν Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν Θεὸν καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, δεικνύοντας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν, καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν, ἀκούσας ἀθέους καλουμένους;

³ Ὡς γὰρ Θεὸν φημὲν, καὶ Υἱὸν τὸν Λόγον αὐτοῦ καὶ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ἐνούμενα μὲν κατὰ δύναμιν, τὸν Πατέρα, τὸν Υἱὸν, τὸ Πνεῦμα, ὅτι νοῦς, λόγος, σοφία, Υἱὸς τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ ἀπόρροια, ὡς φῶς ἀπὸ πυρὸς, τὸ Πνεῦμα.

⁴ Οὐκοῦν ἔνσαρκον Λόγον θεωροῦμεν, Πατέρα δὲ αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν, Υἱὸν δὲ πιστεύομεν, Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσκυνοῦμεν.—Apud Routh. Opusc. tom. i. p. 68.

Origen, Comment. in Joannem.—“The laver of water is a symbol of the purification of the soul, which has all the filth contracted by sin washed away: nevertheless, for him who gives himself up to the *Divinity of the adorable Trinity*, through the power of invocations, it has of itself the beginning and fountain of graces.”¹

Comment. in Epist. ad Romanos.—“The sacred powers are capable of being the receptacles of the Only Begotten, and of the *Divinity of the Holy Spirit*.”²

De Principiis, II. c. vii. § 3.—“But those (heretics), such is the slowness of their understandings—for they are not only unable to explain what is right, but cannot even lend an ear to the things which are said by us—thinking more lowly than they ought of *his Divinity* (*i. e.* the Divinity of the Holy Ghost), have abandoned themselves to errors and deceptions.”³

Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. xiii. (Praxeas had objected that if it was God who gave the command for the creation, and as John says, the Word who executed the command was God, there must be two Gods. In the course of Tertullian’s reply to this, there occurs,) “We never give utterance to the expression two Gods or two Lords; not, however, as though the

Like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

Father were not God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and each of them God.”⁴

Irenæus, III. c. viii. § 3.—“For he (the Father) is *not made*, and is without beginning, and none: neither created, without end, and is in need of nothing, nor begotten.

The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.

¹ Τὸ τοῦ ὕδατος λουτρὸν σύμβολον τυγχάνει καθαρσίας ψυχῆς, πάντα ῥύπον τὸν ἀπὸ κακίας ἀποπλυναμένης· οὐδὲν δὲ ἦττον καὶ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ, τῷ ἐμπαρέχοντι ἑαυτὸν τῇ θεότητι τῆς προσκυνητῆς Τριάδος, διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως τῶν ἐπικλήσεων, χαρισμάτων ἀρχὴν ἔχει καὶ πηγὴν.

² Αἱ ἱεραὶ δυνάμεις χωρητικαὶ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς, καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος θεότητος. These passages of Origen are preserved in Basil, De Spiritu Sancto, c. xxix.

³ Isti vero pro imperitiâ sui intellectus, quia non solum ipsi quod rectum est consequenter non valent exponere,

sed ne his quidem quæ a nobis dicuntur, possunt audientiam commodare, minora quam dignum est de ejus divinitate sentientes, erroribus se ac deceptionibus tradiderunt.

There is reason to think this passage correctly rendered, from the correspondence of its expression with that of the two last quotations, which are in the original Greek.

⁴ Duos tamen Deos et duos Dominos nunquam ex ore nostro proferimus: non quasi non et Pater Deus, et Filius Deus, et Spiritus sanctus Deus, et Deus unusquisque.

and sufficeth for himself, and furnishes moreover to all other things this property, viz. that they exist.”¹

Justin Martyr, Dial. § 129.—“You will have perceived then, O hearers, if you have paid any attention at all, that Scripture declares this offspring to have been *begotten of the Father absolutely before all worlds*; and

The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.

every one must confess, that that which is begotten is numerically different from that which begets.”²

Irenæus, II. c. xxviii. § 6.—“If any one then shall say to us, How is the Son produced by the Father? We reply to him, that no one knows his emission, or generation, or nuncupation, or revelation, or by whatever other name you may call his ineffable generation; neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor angels, nor archangels, nor princes, nor powers, but God only who begat him, and the Son who was begotten.”³

Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. iv.—“But when I derive the Son from no other quarter, than from the substance of the Father; when he does nothing without the Father’s will, and derives all power from the Father; how can I be said to be driving the Monarchy of God out of the Creed; that

The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

Monarchy, which as it was committed to the Son by the Father, so do I preserve it in the Son? And let me add this as to the third order, that I do not consider the Spirit to be derived from any other quarter, than from the Father through the Son.”⁴

¹ Ipse enim infectus et sine initio et sine fine et nullius indigens, ipse sibi sufficiens et adhuc reliquis omnibus, ut sint, hoc ipsum præstans.

² Νοεῖτε, ὃ ἀκροαταί, εἴ γε καὶ τὸν νοῦν προσέχετε, καὶ ὅτι γεγενῆσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦτο τὸ γέννημα πρὸ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν κτισμάτων ὁ λόγος ἐδήλου, καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον τοῦ γεννῶντος ἀριθμῶ ἕτερόν ἐστι πᾶς ὁστισοῦν ὁμολογήσειε.

³ Si quis itaque nobis dixerit: Quomodo ergo Filius prolatus a Patre est? dicimus ei, quia prolationem istam, sive generationem, sive nuncupationem, sive adaptionem, aut quolibet quis nomine

vocaverit generationem ejus inenarrabilem existentem nemo novit; non Valentinus, non Marcion, neque Saturninus, neque Basilides, neque angeli, neque archangeli, neque principes, neque potestates, nisi solus qui generavit Pater et qui natus est Filius.

⁴ Cæterum, qui Filium non aliunde deduco, sed de substantiâ Patris, nihil facientem sine Patris voluntate, omnem a Patre consecutum potestatem, quomodo possum de fide destruere monarchiam, quam a Patre traditam in Filio servo? Hoc mihi et in tertium gradum dictum sit, quia Spiritum non aliunde puto, quam a Patre per Filium.

c. viii.—“Whatever proceeds from another must be second to that from which it proceeds, yet it is not on that account separated from it. But where there is a second there must be two; and where there is a third, there are three. For the Spirit is a third from God and the Son; as the fruit is third from the branch and from the root; the river third from the stream and from the fountain; the sparkle from the ray and from the sun. Nothing, however, assumes a nature alien to that from which it derives its properties. Thus, the Trinity, proceeding through close and connected gradations from the Father, is not opposed to the Monarchy, and leaves the condition of the economy undamaged.”¹

Adv. Hermogenem, c. vii.—“For the Godhead has not degrees, forasmuch as it is One.”²

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other: none is greater or less than another.

Origen, De Principiis, I. c. iii. § 7.—“Lest, however, any one should think that, because we say the Holy Ghost is given to the saints only, whilst the blessings and operations of the Father and the Son are experienced by the good and bad, the just and unjust, we hereby set the Holy Ghost before the Father and the Son, or affirm his dignity to be greater; this is by no means a consequence. For we have simply been describing the peculiar character of his grace and agency. But *in the Trinity nothing must be said to be greater or less*, since the fountain of the one Godhead grasps the world by his Word and Reason, and sanctifies by the Spirit of his mouth whatever is worthy of sanctification.”³

¹ Omne quod prodit ex aliquo, secundum sit ejus necesse est de quo prodit, non ideo tamen est separatum. Secundus autem ubi est, duo sunt. Et tertius ubi est, tres sunt. Tertius enim est Spiritus a Deo et Filio, sicut tertius a radice fructus ex fructe. Et tertius a fonte, rivus ex flumine. Et tertius a sole, apex ex radio. Nihil tamen a matrice alienatur, a qua proprietates suas ducit. Ita Trinitas per consertos et connexos gradus a Patre decurrens, et monarchiæ nihil obstrepat, et œconomie statum protegit.

² Divinitas autem gradum non habet, utpote unica.

³ Ne quis sane existimet nos ex eo quod diximus Spiritum sanctum solis sanctis præstari, Patris vero et Filii beneficia vel inoperationes pervenire et bonos et malos, justos et injustos, prætulisse per hoc Patri et Filio Spiritum sanctum, vel majorem ejus per hoc asserere dignitatem; quod utique valde inconsequens est. Proprietatem namque gratiæ ejus operisque descripsimus. Porro autem nihil in Trinitate majus minusve dicendum est, quum unius

Contra Celsum, VIII. § 12.—“ We then *worship* the

So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

Father of truth; and the *Son* who is truth, being two in Person, but one in unanimity, in symphony, in identity of will.”¹

Tertullian, De Oratione, c. xii.—“ Nor ought earnest prayer merely to be clear of all angry feeling, but even of every commotion of mind; for it should be sent forth from a spirit like unto that *Spirit unto whom it is sent*. For a spirit that is defiled will not be acknowledged by the *Holy Spirit*, nor the sad by the cheerful, nor the bond by the free.”²

Justin Martyr, Dial. § 71.—“ I would have you to know, that they have altogether expunged many passages from the translation of the Septuagint, wherein it might be clearly shown that this same (Jesus) who was crucified, was both God and man.”³

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world;

Dial. § 87.—“ Now confessing that these things were spoken of Christ, you still affirm that he pre-existed as God, and that he took flesh according to the will of God, and was made man of a virgin.”⁴

Origen, Contra Celsum, I. § 60.—“ And they brought gifts such as they might offer symbolically to a Being, so to speak, compounded of God and mortal man; gold, as to a king; myrrh, as to one about to die; incense, as to God.”⁵

Divinitatis fons Verbo ac Ratione sua teneat universa, Spiritu vero oris sui que digna sunt sanctificatione, sanctiflet.

¹ Ἐρησκέουμεν οὖν τὸν Πατέρα τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τὴν ἀληθειάν, ὅσα δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὁμοιοῖα, καὶ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ, καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τοῦ βουλήματος.

² Nec ab irā solunnmodo, sed omnino omnino confusione animi libera debet esse orationis intentio, de tali spiritu emissa, qualis est Spiritus, ad quem mittitur. Neque enim agnosci poterit a Spiritu Sancto spiritus inquinatus; aut tristis a læto, aut impeditus a libero.

³ Καὶ ὅτι πολλὰς γραφὰς τέλειον περιείλον ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξηγήσεων τῶν γεγεννημένων ὑπο τῶν παρὰ Πτολεμαίῳ γεγεννημένων πρεσβυτέρων, ἐξ ὧν διαρρήδην οὗτος αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ὅτι Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος καὶ σταυρούμενος καὶ ἀποθνήσκων κεκρυμμένος ἀποδείκνυται, εἰδέναι ἡμᾶς βούλομαι.

⁴ Καὶ ὁμολογήσας ταῦτα . . . εἰς Χριστὸν εἰρησθαι, καὶ Θεὸν αὐτὸν προϋπάρχοντα λέγεις, καὶ κατὰ τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντα αὐτὸν λέγεις διὰ τῆς παρθένου γεγεννησθαι ἄνθρωπον.

⁵ Φέροντες μὲν δῶρα, ἃ (ἢν οὕτως ὀνομάσω) συνθέτω τινὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ καὶ

Melito, De Incarnatione Christi.—“The same being God and also perfect man.”¹

Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

Hippolytus, Contra Beronem et Helicem, p. 226.—“Being and thought to be at once the Infinite God, and circumscribed man, having the perfect being of both perfectly.”²

Origen, De Principiis, II. c. vi. § 3.—“This substance then of the soul mediating between God and flesh (for it was not possible that the nature of God should be mingled with body without a mediator), there is born, as we have said, God-man; that substance being the medium, its nature not being opposed to the assumption of a body.”³

§ 5.—“But if it should appear to any one to be a difficulty, that we assign a reasonable soul to Christ, and in all our arguments represent the nature of the soul as capable of good and evil, that difficulty may be thus explained.”⁴

Ignatius, Ad Ephesios, § vii.—“There is *one* physician fleshly and spiritual, made *and* not made, God born in the flesh, true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first capable of suffering, and then incapable.”⁵

Who although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ.

Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. xxvii.—“We must inquire about this; how the Word was made flesh; whether as transfigured into flesh, or as putting on flesh? Certainly he *must have put on flesh*. For we must consider God to be immutable and incapable of taking shape, as being eternal. But transfiguration is the extinction of the previous estate.

One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God;

ἀνθρώπου θητοῦ προσήνεγκαν σύμβολα μὲν, ὡς βασιλεῖ τὸν χρυσόν, ὡς δὲ τεθηξομένῳ τὴν σμύρναν, ὡς δὲ Θεῷ τὸν λιβαντόν.

¹ Θεὸς ὢν ὁμοῦ τε καὶ ἄνθρωπος τέλειος ὁ αὐτός.—Apud Routh. Reliq. Sacr. vol. i. p. 115.

² Θεὸν ἄπειρον ἐμοῦ καὶ περιγραπτὸν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα τε καὶ νοούμενον, τὴν οὐσίαν ἑκατέρου τελείως τελείαν ἔχοντα.

³ Hęc ergo substantiā animæ inter Deum carnemque mediante (non enim possibile erat Dei naturam corpori sine mediatore misceri) nascitur, ut diximus, Deus homo, illā substantiā mediā exis-

tente, cui utique contra naturam non erat corpus assumere.

⁴ Quod si alicui difficile videbitur, pro eo quod rationabilem animam esse in Christo supra ostendimus, quum utique animarum naturam boni malique capacem per omnes disputationes nostras frequenter ostendimus, hoc modo rei hujus explanabitur difficultas.

⁵ Εἰς ἰατρός ἐστιν, σαρκικός τε καὶ πνευματικός, γεννητός καὶ ἀγέννητος, ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος Θεός, ἐν ἀθανάτῳ ζωῇ ἀληθινή, καὶ ἐκ Μαρίας καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ, πρῶτον παθητός καὶ τότε ἀπαθής.

For whatever is transfigured into something else, ceases to be what it had been, and begins to be what it was not. But God cannot cease to be, nor can he be different from what he was."¹

Origen, *Contra Celsum*, III. § 41.—“Let those, however, who accuse us know, that he whom we believe and are persuaded to have been God from the beginning and the Son of God, the same is the very Word, very Wisdom, and very Truth. And we say that his mortal body, and the human soul within it, not merely by communion with him, but by union and commixture, acquired the highest gifts, and that *sharing his Divinity they passed into God.*”²

Tertullian, *Adv. Praxeam*, c. xxvii.—“The Word was no other than God: the flesh no other than man. . . . It is a double estate, *not by confusion*, but *by conjunction in one Person*, of God and the man Jesus.”³

One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by Unity of Person.

Such is the clear complexion of the testimony borne by the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the doctrine of the Trinity. Such the impression which their writings convey in the gross to the careful reader of them. He would rise from them with the conviction fixed in his mind that they held substantially the faith set forth in the Athanasian Creed; however particular phrases may have presented themselves to him, from time to time, which seemed repugnant to it—a circumstance which he will account for partly from the loose mode of expressing themselves, which untutored theologians were content to adopt, partly from the extreme difficulty of finding words exactly adapted to the ideas, and such as should not impart defective

¹ De hoc quærendum, quomodo Sermo caro sit factus; utrumne quasi transfiguratus in carne, an indutus carnem? Immo indutus. Cæterum, Deum immutabilem et informabilem credi necesse est, ut æternum. Transfiguratio autem interemptio est pristini. Omne enim quodecunque transfiguratur in aliud, desinit esse quod fuerat, et incipit esse quod non erat. Deus autem neque desinit esse, neque aliud potest esse.

² Ὅμως δὲ ἴστωσαν οἱ ἐγκαλοῦντες, ὅτι ὄν μὲν νομίζομεν, καὶ πεπεῖσμεθα

ἀρχῆθεν εἶναι Θεὸν καὶ Υἱὸν Θεοῦ, οὗτος ὁ αὐτολόγος ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ αὐτοσοφία καὶ ἡ αὐτὸ ἀληθεία· τὸ δὲ θνητὸν αὐτοῦ σῶμα, καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἐν αὐτῷ ψυχὴν, τῇ πρὸς ἐκείνον οὐ μόνον κοινωνία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει τὰ μέγιστα φαιμεν προσειληθέναι, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος κεκοινωνηκότα εἰς Θεὸν μεταβεβηκέναι.

³ Quia neque Sermo aliud quam Deus, neque caro aliud quam homo Videmus duplicem statum non confusum, sed conjunctum in unâ personâ, Deum et hominem Jesum.

notions of the Godhead, owing to the material sense in which they were ordinarily used: but, above all, from the mystery of the subject itself, one so far surpassing the capacity of man. The whole question, therefore, had to be filtered in Councils, even as the question of the circumcision of the Gentiles was debated and the decree issued accordingly in those remarkable terms, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."¹ In the meantime we must be prepared to see the doctrine in the ore, if I may so speak, encumbered with dross. Hence the several expressions which Arians and other schismatics press into their service, deriving from them, taken singly and alone, arguments for their dogmas the most plausible, and which sciolists in these matters repeat with triumph; but which, upon minds thoroughly imbued with the spirit of these authors and intimately conversant with their works, produce no effect at all.

Thus, in spite of the substance of the Athanasian Creed manifested as I have shown it to be in the writings of the Primitive Fathers, you will find it nevertheless said by one or other of them, on one or other occasion, that the Son has the second place, the Holy Ghost the third²; that the Son ministers to the Father³; that God was the Author of the power, divinity, and even salvation of the Son⁴; that he was Wisdom, the second person *created*, in allusion to Proverbs viii. 22 (LXX)⁵; that he was first created by God to plan, then generated to execute⁶; that there was a treatise written by one of them, "Concerning the Creation and Generation of Christ"⁷ that the Father is known by himself more intimately than he is known by the Son⁸; that we are not to pray to Christ, but only to God the Father through Christ⁹; that God the Father rules the Saviour¹⁰; that the Son was the oldest of created things¹¹; and much more to the like effect. These latter passages are all of them from Origen, from whom alone might be collected more expressions of this unguarded kind than from any other Ante-Nicene Father, or, perhaps, all

¹ Acts xv. 28.

² Justin Martyr, Apol. I. § 13.

³ Dial. § 60.

⁴ §§ 102. 129.

⁵ Tertullian, Adv. Praxeam, c. vi.

⁶ c. vii.

⁷ Melito, ap. Routh. Rel. Sacr. vol. i. p. 114.

⁸ Origen, De Principiis, IV. § 35.

⁹ De Oratione, § 15.

¹⁰ Contra Celsum, VIII. § 15.

¹¹ Πρεσβύτερον γὰρ αὐτὸν πάντων

the Ante-Nicene Fathers put together. And yet it would be easy to produce others from him (often scores of them, many I have produced already) diametrically opposed in meaning to that which any or all of these seem to bear; and it may be observed as a very frequent argument on this subject, that throughout his book against Celsus, Origen evidently considers that every objection which Celsus can raise against Christianity, founded on difficulties resulting from the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, was a legitimate objection, and required an answer; a line of defence which he would never have adopted had he felt himself in a condition to dispute or to deny the premises; and a great number of such objections Celsus actually does advance.¹

It would seem, therefore, that in the instance of Origen more than the usual causes to which I have adverted must have operated to produce so large a proportion of blemishes; that there must have been more disturbing forces acting on his theology, as it has reached us at least, than appears at first sight. We may trace several such from evidence contained in his own writings. First, it appears that he was much resorted to by philosophers and heretics; that he held conferences with them and studied their works.² It is possible that this communication left some tokens of itself behind on his book. Secondly, it is clear that he often wrote in haste, and on the move, both time and place against him; that under such disadvantages, for example, he penned his Epistle to Africanus on the authority of the history of Susanna, which he composed, he says, at a short notice, when sojourning for a few days at Nicomedia, and for the defects of which he begs his correspondent's indulgence on this very ground; and it may be added, that the history which he here defends in his haste as canonical, he elsewhere in his haste seems disposed to abandon.³ And when speaking of a certain diagram of which Celsus had made use, he avers that he could find no key to it anywhere, many as were the parts

τῶν δημιουργημάτων ἴσασιν οἱ θεοὶ λόγοι.—V. § 37. This is the passage apparently referred to by Dr. Clarke, and overlooked by Dr. Burton. See Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ, p. 300,

2nd Ed.

¹ See especially II. § 17, *et seq.*

² Ex Origenis Epistolâ, vol. i. p. 4.

³ Fragm. ex libro decimo Stromatum Origenis, vol. i. p. 40.

of the earth over which he had travelled, as though it was his habit to prosecute his studies on the wing.¹ And in the construction of his work against this same Celsus, he discovers in a still more remarkable manner this habit of precipitation ; for though he eventually took more pains, perhaps, with this work, than with any other he composed, or, at least, any other that has descended to us, yet having commenced it on one plan, and soon finding it expedient to continue it on another, he could not prevail on himself to recast the beginning, but retained it as it was, for the sake of expedition and economy of time ; and apologized in a preface to his readers for the incongruity it would occasion.² We may detect similar marks of hurry in the opening of the second book against Celsus, as compared with that of the third. For, whilst in the opening of the second, he professes to confine himself in that book to the charges which Celsus, in the fictitious character of a Jew, brings against the *Jews* who believed in Jesus ; in the opening of the third, where he recapitulates the subjects of the two former books, he overlooks this limitation of the argument of the second, and says, “In the second we met, as well as we could, all the objections made against *us* who believe in God through Christ, by Celsus as a Jew.”³ Accordingly, it would seem that, in writing the second book, he did in fact forget the prospectus with which he started ; the reasoning not having an exclusive reference to the Jewish believer ; and in no single instance founded peculiarly on Hebrew criticism. Thirdly, it is plain that Origen propounded a great many of his notions as pure speculations, in which he had himself no particular confidence, the freaks of a mercurial mind, and represented by himself as little else. Thus he introduces his chapter “concerning the end,” in his “*De Principiis*” with the remark, that what he was about to suggest “would be said with great fear and caution, rather in the spirit of one who discusses and debates a subject, than of one who ventures to affirm on it.”⁴ So in the next chapter, “concerning things corporeal and incorporeal,” when launching into a disquisition on the nature of the heavenly bodies, or on the probability of their being ani-

¹ *Contra Celsum*, VI. § 24.

² *Pref. ad libros contra Celsum*, § 6.

³ Compare II. § 1, and III. § 1.

⁴ *Quæ quidem a nobis cum magno*

metu et cautelâ dicuntur, discutientibus magis et pertractantibus quam pro certo ac definito statuentibus.—De Principiis, I. c. vi. § 1.

mated, he adds: "Although to institute such an inquiry as this may seem to have in it a certain audacity, still, since we are impelled by the desire of laying hold of truth, it does not seem absurd to examine and try such matters as it may be possible to attain unto, according to the grace of the Holy Spirit."¹ Again, "concerning the Incarnation of Christ," we find him preparing his readers for his remarks by the following appeal: "Touching which, we will produce as briefly as possible, not with any temerity, but simply because the course of our subject calls for it, the things which our faith rather holds than those which human reason dogmatically asserts for itself; rather advancing our own suspicions than making any positive assertions."² Again, in the same chapter, "Meanwhile this is what has occurred to us at present, whilst discussing so difficult a subject as the Incarnation and Divinity of Christ. If, however, any one can discover anything better, and confirm what he says by clearer arguments from the Holy Scriptures, let his conclusions be received rather than ours."³ Again, in another chapter "concerning the soul," "However, as to what we have said touching the *νοῦς* (mens) of man, when changed for the worse, becoming a *ψυχῆ* (anima), or aught else pertaining to the same question, let him who reads diligently discuss the matters in his thoughts, and conclude on it; but let not what we have just put forward be understood as spoken dogmatically, but rather as produced in the way of discussion and inquiry."⁴ Again, in another chapter "concerning human temptations," Origen starts various theories to account for "the flesh lusting against the spirit," and then concludes, "The reader may choose which theory he likes

¹ Quamvis hoc inquirere audaciæ ejusdem videatur, quoniam tamen captandæ veritatis studio provocamur, quæ possibilia nobis sunt, secundum gratiam Spiritus sancti scrutari et pertentare non videtur absurdum.—De Principiis, I. vii. § 3.

² De quo nos non temeritate aliquâ, sed quoniam ordo loci deposcit, ea magis quæ fides nostra continet, quam quæ humanæ rationis assertio vindicare solet, quam paucissimis proferemus, suspensiones potius nostras quam manifestas alias affirmationes in medium proferentes.—II. c. vi. § 2.

³ Hæc interim nobis ad præsens de rebus tam difficilibus disputantibus, id est de incarnatione, et de deitate Christi occurrere potuerunt. Si quis sane melius aliquid poterit invenire, et evidentioribus de scripturis sanctis assertionibus confirmare quæ dicit, illa potius quam hæc recipiantur.—II. c. vi. § 7.

⁴ Verum tamen quod diximus, mentem in animam verti, vel si qua alia in hoc videntur aspicere, discutiat apud se qui legit diligentius et pertractet: a nobis tamen non putentur velut dogmata esse prolata, sed tractandi more ac requirendi esse discussa.—II. c. viii. § 4.

best.”¹ -And once more, in a chapter “concerning the end of the world,” Origen closes his lucubrations, “Having thus far discussed the system of corporeal nature or spiritual body, we leave the matter to the judgment of the reader, that he may choose whichever theory he likes best; and so we make an end of our third book.”² These passages, though taken from the “De Principiis,” I have no doubt are correct versions of the Greek; for besides being of a kind to provoke no meddling of Rufinus, they are perfectly consistent with other places still existing in the Greek. Thus he ends a comment on the question of ecclesiastical Digamy as follows: “It is probable that other notions will be started by persons much wiser than ourselves, and better able to see into such things, whether as relates to the law touching the writing of divorcement, or whether as to the Apostolical precepts, which forbid Digamists to have any rule in the Church, or to preside over it in any post of honour: we, however, have expressed what has occurred to ourselves on this subject, waiting till something better can be made out, and something which, by the superior lustre of knowledge, may eclipse what has been said by us.”³ I have multiplied these quotations, because I think they throw a light on the character of Origen’s writings; and supply a key to much that is otherwise perplexing in them.

All these circumstances, then, taken into account, we might expect that the works of Origen, even as they came fresh from his pen, would exhibit many of those symptoms of heat and confusion which certainly appear in them at present, and we might be disposed to think that there never was a time, even from their first publication, when they could be adopted as safe and consistent guides from beginning to end; however particular treatises might justly be thought such; and however cognisable, after all, the fundamental features of the truth and of the Church might be, and indeed still are, throughout them as a whole.

But even these drawbacks to the implicit reception of them

¹ Et nos quidem prout potuimus ex singulorum personis quæ dici possunt disputationis modo de singulis dogmatibus in medium protulimus: qui autem legit, eligat ex his quæ magis amplectenda sit ratio.—III. c. iv. § 5.

² Hactenus nobis etiam corporeæ na-

turæ vel spiritalis corporis ratione discussâ, arbitrio legentis relinquimus, ex utroque quod melius judicaverit eligendum. Nos vero in his finem libri tertii faciamus.—c. vi. § 9.

³ Origen, Comment. in Matt. tom. xiv. § 22, vol. iii. p. 646.

are aggravated by other considerations. We have not, in many cases, the work as Origen composed it—if the original concoction had its alloy, the mixture which has resulted from subsequent vitiation of it is much more debased. In the first place, the text is corrupt; how much so, and how much might be done to correct it, may be perceived by comparing that of the treatise “*De Oratione*,” as revised by Bentley, with that which he found it. But the grievance lies deeper even than this. Origen was himself careless about his manuscripts. On one occasion he tells us of a heretic who, having held a dispute with him, availed himself of the notes of it which had been taken down by the bystanders, and then dressing them up to suit his purpose, gave them circulation as a treatise of Origen’s. Meanwhile, his friends, shocked at the publication, apply to him for the authentic copy, which, says Origen, though it had never been read over by him or revised, but had been thrown aside, so that it was with difficulty recovered, he at length found and sent them.¹ It is possible that several of his treatises, as we now possess them, are not the deliberate penning of Origen himself, but memoranda of oral addresses, committed to paper by his hearers, in the manner here alluded to; a process sure to misrepresent him more or less.² And it is certain, that in the very earliest times his writings were tampered with by heretics. His “*De Principiis*,” which is said to have suffered in this way above the rest, underwent further manipulations at the hands of Rufinus (as he himself confesses³) in his translation of it, in which alone the greater part of it has been preserved to us; and which must be estimated accordingly: for though the substance of it is, no doubt, Origen’s; and may often be confirmed as being so by a reference to similar opinions expressed in other of his works; yet the liberties taken with it may sometimes involve Origen in contradictions, which are not really to be laid at his door. And in the Comment on the Epistle to the Romans, which also has descended to us only in the Latin version of Rufinus, the translator tells us in his Preface that he made bold with his author in the same way.⁴ I have entered into these details for the purpose of

¹ Ex Epist. Origenis, vol. i. p. 5.

² See Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. vi. c. 36.

³ Origen, Prologus Rufini in libros *περι ἀρχῶν*.

⁴ Vol. iv. p. 458.

accounting for the number of expressions occurring in Origen's writings, as we now have them, which jar with the general tone of his teaching; a number much greater in proportion than those of a like kind, which present themselves to us in any other of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.