

THE LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS

Volume II

ALEXANDRIAN CHRISTIANITY

*Selected Translations
of Clement and Origen
with Introductions and Notes by*

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from the Synoptic Gospels in all its possible forms must seem pedantic and irritating. Nevertheless the work is of high interest, because of the insight it gives us into the spirit of the early Church under the immediate stress of persecution.

Chapters 1-5 are an introduction in the form of an exposition of Isa. 28:9-11. This is followed by a warning against idolatry and apostasy (Chapters 6-10) and an exhortation to stand firm (Chapters 11-21). The example of the Maccabean martyrs, which exercised great influence on early Christian ideas of true martyrdom, is held up in Chapters 22-27. Origen then writes of the value of death by martyrdom, and of baptism of blood as conferring remission of all sins (Chapters 28 ff.). He emphasizes the absolute dividing line between the Christian and the world (34 ff.) which means that there can be no compromise. Chapters 45-46 (cf. 5) deal with the lax views of those who sought to rationalize the attitude of compromise with the State, saying that a mere name is nothing, and that to swear by the *Tyche* of the emperor is not a significant act. This tendency appears in many gnostic sects such as the Simonians (Origen, *contra Celsum*, VI, 11), and the followers of Prodicus (Tertullian, *Scorpiae*, 15). The view that apostasy is a matter of moral indifference is also attributed to Basilides.⁵ The school of Valentine was particularly exercised by the question; Clement of Alexandria⁶ preserves Heracleon's interpretation of Luke 12:11-12. Confession before the authorities, he says, is to be made only "if necessary and if reason demand."

Origen's closing section (Chapters 47 to end) consists of a final exhortation to courage.

Origen's *Exhortation* is an outstanding witness to the dignity which the early Church attributed to martyrdom.⁷ It was the highest ambition of Ignatius of Antioch to be torn to pieces by wild beasts at Rome. No higher reward could be reserved for the Christian than the martyr's crown. No epithet was too exalted for him. Thus for Tertullian the glory of the church at Rome consisted precisely in the fact that Peter and Paul had

⁵ Agrippa Castor in Eusebius, *H.E.*, IV, 7:7; Origen, *Hom. in Ezech.*, III, 4; *Comm. Ser. in Matt.*, 38. Possibly this represents the view of the later followers of Basilides, rather than Basilides himself; at any rate, it is difficult to see how this can be reconciled with the statements of Basilides cited by Clement (*Strom.*, IV, 83).

⁶ *Strom.*, IV, 71.

⁷ For the following, cf. H. Delehay, *Les Origines du Culte des Martyrs* (2nd edition, 1933). E. Lucius, *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults* (1904), remains of high value.

died there during the Neronian persecution. Naturally therefore a martyr's death was accepted with joy. *Deo gratias*, said Cyprian of Carthage as the proconsul pronounced the death-sentence.

Above all, the Gospel saying (Luke 12:11-12) was a guarantee that the martyr before his judges was possessed by the Holy Spirit. It is scarcely surprising that exaggerated claims were made by those who had boldly confessed their faith. As vehicles of the Spirit they surely had power to remit sins to the lapsed, an attitude of mind which caused Cyprian much trouble. Zealots would do all in their power to provoke the authorities, and measures had to be taken by church authorities to deny the title of martyr to the provocative. Such men were regarded as suicides. The confessor in prison could be sure of the assiduous visits of the faithful who would bring him food and kiss his chains. Lucian's satire on *The Death of Peregrinus* is a vivid contemporary caricature of these attentions and the abuse to which they could easily lead.

By death the martyr was assured of an absolute remission of all his sins. Even a catechumen, not yet baptized in water, could have all stain of sin washed away by the baptism of blood,⁸ and could enter Paradise in white robes. There he joined with all other martyrs and confessors in interceding for the Church on earth.⁹

On the anniversary of his "birthday," i.e., the day when he entered the life of the world to come, the faithful would gather at his tomb outside the city, and a sermon would be preached on the theme of his noble witness to Christ. Local churches carefully preserved records of the date of each martyr's "birthday," and the lists they made were the first church calendars. The earliest surviving calendar is that used by the church at Rome in the middle of the fourth century.

It is only natural that sometimes the instinct for revenge took hold of the martyrs, although this is usually sublimated to the next world with the threat of worse punishment for the persecutors there. This psychological reaction seems to have contributed substantially to the lurid nature of some Christian language about hell, and that this is a *vera causa* in Tertullian's

⁸ Cf. Origen, *Exh. Mart.*, 30, 39.

⁹ Cf. Origen, *Exh. Mart.*, 37-38. Tertullian held that while all other Christians remained in Hades till the last judgment, martyrs were at once admitted to paradise. See J. H. Waszink's commentary on Tertullian, *de Anima*, 55.

mind is obvious from the well-known last chapter of his *De Spectaculis*. The idea is implied in the common notion that at the last day the martyr will sit in judgment on those who were his judges on earth (cf. Origen, *Exh. Mart.*, 28).

The particular value of martyrdom consisted in that the martyr knew himself to be in mystical union with his Lord in his passion. Origen, when seventeen years of age, had lost his father in the persecution of Septimius Severus, and was only prevented from going out to martyrdom himself by the fact that his mother concealed his clothes (Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI, 2:5). This experience he never forgot. Origen always prized persecution because it revealed who in the Church were true believers. Writing in the period of peace before the Decian persecution broke out, he looks wistfully back to the days of conflict with the government: "That was the time when Christians really were faithful, when the noble martyrdoms were taking place, when after conducting the martyrs' bodies to the cemeteries we returned thence to meet together, and the entire church was present without being afraid, and the catechumens were being catechized during the very time of the martyrdoms and while men were dying who had confessed the truth unto death. . . . Then we knew and saw wonderful and miraculous signs. Then there were true believers, few in number but truly faithful, treading the strait and narrow way which leads to life. But now when we have become many, . . . out of the multitude who profess piety there are extremely few who are attaining to the election of God and to blessedness."¹⁰ Only the martyr, felt Origen, truly followed Christ and was in union with him. The disciple who takes up his cross and follows Jesus attains, he says, to an immediate knowledge of God whom he sees face to face.¹¹ This is a belief fundamental to Origen's ideas about the nature of the Church and of the spiritual life. It is for this reason that Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* is so moving a document, and tells us so much of the spirit of the early Church.

The *Exhortation to Martyrdom* is preserved in two Greek manuscripts at Paris and Venice: Codex Paris. Suppl. Gr., 616, dated 1339 (of this there are also two copies), and Codex Venet.

¹⁰ *Hom. in Jerem.*, IV, 3.

¹¹ *Exh. Mart.*, 13. The importance of this background for understanding Origen's mystical language is admirably brought out by J. Lebreton, "La source et le caractère de la mystique d'Origène," in *Analecta Bollandiana*, LXVII (= *Mélanges Paul Peeters*, I), 1949, pp. 55-62. The language of "deification" is applied to the martyrs in *Exh. Mart.*, 25.

Marc., 45, of the fourteenth century.¹² The standard critical edition of the text, which is here translated, is that of Paul Koetschau in the Berlin Academy corpus (1899). Koetschau also produced a German translation in 1926, with some valuable textual notes (*Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, Band 48). A French translation by G. Bardy appeared in 1932. Both of these translations I have found useful in revising my own.

¹² The Venice manuscript belonged to Cardinal Bessarion and contains a remarkable note in his hand expressing the fervour of his admiration for Origen which had led him to seek everywhere for copies of his works. See Koetschau's edition, p. xvii.

Exhortation to Martyrdom

THE TEXT

1. "You who have been weaned from milk, who have been drawn away from the breast: expect tribulation upon tribulation, expect hope upon hope; a little longer, a little longer, because of the scorn of lips, by another tongue."¹

And you, most reverend Ambrose, and most religious Proctetus, as being no longer carnal, nor being babes in Christ,² who have advanced in your spiritual age,³ and have no more need of milk but of solid food,⁴ are according to Isaiah's words as "those who have been weaned from milk" and "drawn away from the breast." Hear how the prophet foretells for athletes who have been weaned not merely tribulation but a "tribulation upon tribulation." But he who does not refuse tribulation upon tribulation, but accepts it like a noble athlete, immediately receives also "hope upon hope" which he will enjoy after but a short time of the tribulation upon tribulation. For that is the meaning of "a little longer, a little longer."

2. Even if we are scorned and despised by those who treat us as blasphemers and fools, and who are strangers to the language of the holy scriptures, let us remember that the hope upon hope, which after a little while will be given to us, is to be given "because of the scorn of lips, by another tongue." And who would not gladly receive tribulation upon tribulation if he is at once to receive also hope upon hope, reckoning with Paul that "the sufferings of this present time," by which as it were we buy our salvation, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us"⁵ by God? So much the more, in fact, since "our light affliction which is but for a moment" (light not

¹ Isa. 28:9-11.

² Cf. I Cor. 3:1.

³ Cf. Luke 2:52.

⁴ Heb. 5:12.

⁵ Rom. 8:18.

merely in words, but also in fact for those who are not depressed by the difficulties) "works in us a weight of eternal glory"⁶ which is greater in proportion to the severity of the affliction. This is true if at the very moment when we are attacked by those who afflict us and desire, so to speak, to press down our souls, we turn our mind away from the troubles and fix our gaze not on the tribulations that are upon us, but on the rewards which by God's grace are laid up for those who have striven lawfully⁷ in Christ because they have borne affliction patiently. For God multiplies the benefits and grants far greater favours than are deserved by the distress experienced by the man who fights through it. This is in character for him who makes his gifts not in any miserly fashion, but with generosity and understanding to those who to the best of their ability have shown by their scorn for their "earthen vessel"⁸ that they love him with all their soul.

3. I think that they love God with all their soul who with a great desire to be in union with God withdraw and separate their soul not only from the earthly body but also from everything material. Such men accept the putting away of the body of humiliation⁹ without distress or emotion when the time come for them to put off the body of death by what is commonly regarded as death. Then they may be heard to pray with the apostle saying: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"¹⁰ Who among those who groan in this tabernacle because they are weighed down by the corruptible body¹¹ will not also first give thanks saying: "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He sees that by his confession¹² he has been delivered from the body of death and with holy lips will cry: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹³ If this seems difficult to anyone, it is because he has not been "athirst for the living God, the strong God," nor has he longed for God "like as the hart desires the water springs." Nor has he said: "When shall I come and appear in the presence of God?" Nor has he considered in his mind as the prophet did when it was said to him every day, "Where is thy God?" and he poured out his heart upon himself, and rebuked it because it was still weak, overcome by sadness, and distressed, saying:

⁶ II Cor. 4:17.

⁷ II Tim. 2:5.

⁸ II Cor. 4:7.

⁹ Phil. 3:21.

¹⁰ Rom. 7:24.

¹¹ II Cor. 5:4; Wisdom of Solomon 9:15.

¹² Read with Koetschau's translation: *δυσλογίας*.

¹³ Rom. 7:25.

"For I shall pass through in the place of the wonderful tabernacle as far as the house of God, with a voice of rejoicing and of confession of a festal sound."¹⁴

4. I beseech you, therefore, throughout the present conflict to remember the great reward laid up in the heavens for those who are persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake and for the Son of Man's sake,¹⁵ and that you rejoice and be glad and exult just as the apostles rejoiced when on one occasion they were "counted worthy to suffer insults for his name."¹⁶ And if sometimes you feel anguish in your soul, may the mind of Christ within us speak to the soul, even though desire does everything possible to confuse even this mind of Christ, saying: "Why art thou sad, O my soul? And why do you disquiet me? Put thy trust in God, for I will make confession of him."¹⁷ And again, I pray that our souls may never be troubled, but that, even before the tribunals and before the swords unsheathed to behead us, they may be kept by the peace of God which passes all understanding¹⁸ and may enjoy tranquillity, reckoning that those who are absent from the body are present with the Lord¹⁹ of the universe himself. But if we have not such courage as to remain always without anxiety, at least let the distress of our soul be not displayed nor apparent to the pagan onlookers, that we may be able to defend ourselves to God saying to him: "O God, my soul is vexed within me."²⁰ The Word exhorts us to remember also the words of Isaiah as follows: "Fear not the reproach of men, and be not cast down by their contempt."²¹ Moreover, since God manifestly watches over the movement of the heaven and the stars in it and over that which takes place by his divine arrangement in earth and sea, in the birth and nourishment of all kinds of animals and in the origin and growth of all plants, it would be absurd for us to shut our eyes and not to look to God, but in fear to turn our eyes upon men who will shortly die and be handed over to the punishment they deserve.

5. God once said to Abraham: "Get out of thy land."²² Perhaps it will shortly be said to us: "Get out of the earth altogether." And it will be good to obey the command, so that God may quickly show us the heavens in which is the kingdom of heaven as it is called. We can readily perceive that life is full of conflicts and of men engaged in a struggle concerning the

¹⁴ Ps. 42 (41):2-3, 11-12.

¹⁵ Cf. Matt. 5:10-12; Luke 6:23.

¹⁶ Acts 5:41.

¹⁷ Ps. 42 (41):6, 12.

¹⁸ Phil. 4:7.

¹⁹ II Cor. 5:8.

²⁰ Ps. 42 (41):6-7.

²¹ Isa. 51:7.

²² Gen. 12:1.

various different virtues. Many who do not belong to the portion of God²³ appear to have fought to attain self-control, and some have died a heroic death because of their loyalty to the common Master of all men. Men eminent in philosophical inquiry have been anxious to be prudent; men who have made it their purpose to live rightly have devoted themselves to righteousness. Indeed, each virtue is opposed either by "the carnal mind" or by many attacks from external sources. But the only people to fight for religion are "the elect race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, a people for God's possession."²⁴ The rest of mankind do not even try to make it appear that, if there is persecution of religious people, they intend to die for religion and to prefer death rather than deny their religion and live. And each one of those who wish to be members of the elect race is convinced that at all times, even when he is attacked by those who are supposed to be polytheists but are really atheists, he must listen to God, who says, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me,"²⁵ and "The name of other gods ye shall not remember in your hearts, nor mention with your mouth."²⁶ Accordingly, such people "believe in God with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation."²⁷ They are aware that they are not granted righteousness until they so believe in God that their heart remains unmoved, and that they will not be saved unless their word corresponds to their inner conviction. They deceive themselves who suppose that it is sufficient for the attainment of the end in Christ if with the heart they believe unto righteousness, omitting the words "but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it is better to honour God with lips when one's heart is far from God²⁸ than to honour him with the heart and not to make confession with the mouth unto salvation.

6. God who commands, "Thou shalt not make for thyself an idol nor any image of anything,"²⁹ and so on, appears to distinguish between "Thou shalt not bow down to them" and "Thou shalt not worship them." Accordingly, perhaps he who believes in idols may worship them, but he who does not believe in them, moved by cowardice to make a pretence which he calls accommodating himself,³⁰ so as to seem to be religious like the

²³ Cf. Deut. 32:9.

²⁴ Ex. 19:6; I Pet. 2:9.

²⁵ Ex. 20:3.

²⁶ Ex. 23:13.

²⁷ Rom. 10:10.

²⁸ Isa. 29:13.

²⁹ Ex. 20:4-5.

³⁰ Cf. Origen, *contra Celsum*, VII, 66, with my note thereon. For the attitude of the gnostic sects in time of persecution see above, Introduction, p. 389.

multitude, does not worship the idols, but only bows down to them. And I would say that those who abjure Christianity at the tribunal, or even before arriving there, do not worship the idols, but only bow down to them, taking the name of the Lord and applying the word "God" to vain and lifeless matter. In their matter also the people "defiled with the daughters of Moab"³¹ bowed down to idols but did not worship them. At any rate Scripture says in these very words: "They called them to the sacrifices of their idols, and the people ate of their sacrifices and bowed down to their idols and were initiated into Beelphegor."³² Notice that it does not say, "And they worshipped their idols." For it was impossible that after such remarkable signs and wonders they should be persuaded in an instant by the women with whom they committed fornication to believe that the idols were gods. Perhaps in the same way also at the making of the calf in Exodus they bowed down, but did not worship the calf which they had watched being made.³³

We must therefore regard the present temptation as a trial and test of our love for God. "For the Lord tempts you," as it is written in Deuteronomy, "to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."³⁴ But you, when you are tempted, "will follow the Lord your God and will fear him and keep his commandments," especially noting the precept, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me," and you "will hear his voice and obey him" who takes you from this earthly region and attaches you to himself for "the increase of God"³⁵ in him, to use the apostle's language.

7. But if "every evil word is an abomination to the Lord thy God,"³⁶ what abomination must be the evil word of denial and the evil word that calls upon another god, and the evil oath by the "fortune" of men, a word that corresponds to no reality.³⁷ When this oath is required of us, let us remember him who taught us: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all."³⁸ For if he who swears by heaven insults the throne of God, and if he who swears by earth utters blasphemy by making a god of what is called "God's footstool," and if he who swears by Jerusalem sins even though it is a city of a great King, and if he who swears by his own head³⁹ is doing wrong: how great a sin must we think it

³¹ Num. 25:1.

³² Num. 25:2-3.

³³ Ex. 32:8.

³⁴ Deut. 10:3-4.

³⁵ Col. 2:19.

³⁶ Cf. Matt. 12:36; Prov. 15:26.

³⁷ See Origen, *contra Celsum*, VIII, 65, with my note thereon.

³⁸ Matt. 5:34.

³⁹ Matt. 5:35-6.

to swear by some man's fortune? At that time let us also bear in mind the word: "For every idle word you shall give account in the day of judgment."⁴⁰ For what other word is so idle as the oath of denial?

But it is probable that the enemy wishes to use every argument in his power to make us worship the sun or the moon or all the host of heaven.⁴¹ But we will reply that the word of God "has not commanded this." We ought on no account to worship the creatures in the presence of the Creator⁴² who is sufficient for and anticipates the prayer of all. Nor indeed would the sun himself wish to be worshipped by those who belong to the portion of God,⁴³ and probably not even by anyone else. But he might imitate him who said, "Why do you call me good? There is none good but the one God the Father,"⁴⁴ and, as it were, say to him who desires to worship him: "Why do you call me God? There is one true God. And why do you bow down to me? 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.'⁴⁵ I also am a created being. Why do you wish to worship one who himself offers worship? I also worship and serve God the Father and in obedience to his commands I am made subject to futility on account of him who put me in subjection in hope, and I shall be liberated from the bondage of corruption, even though I am now bound to a corruptible body, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."⁴⁶

8. It is only to be expected that some prophet of impiety (and perhaps not merely one but several) will tell us some alleged "word of the Lord, which the Lord has not commanded,"⁴⁷ or put out as a "word of wisdom"⁴⁸ something quite alien to wisdom, to slay us with the word of his mouth. But we, even at that very moment when the sinner confronts us, should say: "But like a deaf man I heard not, and like a dumb man who opens not his mouth; and I became like a man who cannot hear."⁴⁹ Deafness to blasphemous words is excellent when we have no hope of correcting those whose words are evil.

9. It is well for us to reflect, at the moments when we are tempted to do wrong, upon that which God desires to teach us when he says: "I the Lord thy God am jealous."⁵⁰ In my opinion

⁴⁰ Matt. 12:36.

⁴¹ Deut. 17:3.

⁴² Rom. 1:25.

⁴³ Deut. 32:9.

⁴⁴ Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19. Cf. Origen, *contra Celsum*, V, 11; *de Orat.*, XV, 4. (above, p. 271).

⁴⁵ Matt. 4:10.

⁴⁶ Rom. 8:20-21.

⁴⁷ Deut. 18:20, 22.

⁴⁸ I Cor. 12:8.

⁴⁹ Ps. 38:13-14.

⁵⁰ Ex. 20:5.

just as the husband who is concerned to help his bride to live chastely, to bring all her affection towards her husband and to take every precaution to avoid another man, if he is wise, will show some jealousy and will adopt this attitude to his bride as a precautionary remedy: so also the Lawgiver (especially if it be clear that he is "the firstborn of all creation"⁵¹) says to the soul betrothed to God that he is jealous. His purpose is to separate the hearers from all fornication with daemons and with the supposed gods. It is as a jealous God that he says of those who have in any way gone a-whoring after other gods: "They provoked me to jealousy against that which is not God, they made me wrathful against their idols. And I will provoke them to jealousy with people who are not a nation, I will make them wrathful against a foolish nation. For the fire is kindled from my anger, and it shall burn to the bottom of Hades."⁵²

10. If it is not for his own sake that the husband, wise and without passion, seeks to turn his betrothed from all defilement, it is for her sake; because he sees her defilement and impurity he will do all in his power to cure and convert her. To her free will he will speak words to dissuade her from fornication. What worse pollution for the soul can one imagine than to call upon another God and not to confess the one true and only Lord? I believe that just as "he who is joined to a harlot is one body,"⁵³ so also he who confesses faith in any god, especially at a time of persecution and trial of faith, is mingled and united with the god whom he confesses. He who denies is separated by the very act of denial like a cutting sword, from him whom he denies; he suffers alienation and is severed from him whom he has denied. Consider therefore the scripture: "Whosoever confesses me before men, him shall I confess before my Father in heaven, [and whosoever denies me before men him shall I deny before my Father in heaven.]"⁵⁴ This implies that it necessarily and inevitably follows that he who confesses is confessed and he who denies is denied. The very Logos and very Truth might say both to him who confesses and him who denies: "The measure you apply to others is the measure that shall be applied to you."⁵⁵ You therefore who have measured with the measure of confession of faith in me and have fulfilled⁵⁶ the measure of the confession, will receive the measure of my confession, "shaken

⁵¹ Col. 1:15.

⁵² Deut. 32:21-22.

⁵³ I Cor. 6:16.

⁵⁴ Matt. 10:32-33. The second half (verse 33) is lacking in the manuscripts, but appears to be necessary for the sense of the passage.

⁵⁵ Luke 6:38.

⁵⁶ Cf. Matt. 23:32.

together, pressed down, and running over" which shall be given into your bosom.⁵⁷ But you who have measured with the measure of denial and have denied me shall receive the measure of my denial of you, corresponding to the denial you have made of me.

11. Let us in this way consider how the measure of confession may be filled up or how it may be not filled but left deficient. If throughout the time of trial and temptation we give no place in our hearts to the devil,⁵⁸ who wishes to defile us with evil thoughts of denial or hesitancy or some plausible argument which may tempt us to the very opposite of martyrdom and perfection; and if, furthermore, we pollute ourselves by not a word contrary to our profession, and if we bear all the adversaries' reproach and mockery and laughter and slander, and the pity which they think they have for us, imagining us dupes and fools and calling us deluded; if, moreover, we are not distracted or held even by affection for our children or for their mother or for one of those whom we regard as our dearest friends in this life, so as to value their possession and to prize our earthly life, but turn away from these ties and become wholly dedicated to God and to living in his company and presence that we may share communion with his only-begotten Son and those who participate in him⁵⁹: then I would affirm that we have fulfilled the measure of the confession. But if we fall short even in any one point, we have not fulfilled it, but have defiled the measure of our confession and have adulterated it with something foreign. In that case we shall be lacking, in the same way as those who have built upon the foundation wood, or hay, or stubble.⁶⁰

12. We must also realize that we have received the so-called covenants of God on conditions, set forth in the agreements which we made with him when we first took upon us to live the Christian life. And among the terms of our agreement with God was the entire way of life set forth in the gospel which says: "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it."⁶¹ And often we have been filled with enthusiasm on hearing the words: "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his

⁵⁷ Luke 6:38.

⁵⁸ Eph. 4:27.

⁵⁹ Cf. Heb. 3:14.

⁶⁰ I Cor. 3:12.

⁶¹ Matt. 16:24-25.

Father with his angels, even then shall he render to each man according to his work."⁶²

That it is necessary to deny oneself and take up one's cross and follow Jesus is recorded not merely by Matthew, whose text we have been quoting, but also by Luke and Mark. Hear the words of Luke: "He said to them all, If any man wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, he shall save it. For what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit himself?"⁶³ Mark says: "And calling the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, If any man wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose it for the gospel's sake shall save it. But what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"⁶⁴

Long ago we ought to have denied ourselves, saying, "It is no longer I who live."⁶⁵ Now it is revealed whether or not we have taken up our cross and followed Jesus. This will have happened if Christ is living in us. If we wish to save our soul, so that we may receive it back as better than a soul,⁶⁶ let us lose it even by martyrdom. For if we lose it for Christ's sake, throwing it at his feet in dying for him, we acquire its true salvation. But if we do the opposite, then we shall hear that it does not profit one who gains the whole material world at the price of losing or forfeiting himself. Once a man has lost his own soul or forfeited it, even if he gain the whole world, it will not be possible for him to pay anything in exchange for the soul he has lost. For the soul created in the image of God⁶⁷ is more precious than anything material. One person alone has been able to pay the price of our soul which was previously lost, he who bought us with his own precious blood.⁶⁸

13. With profound meaning Isaiah says: "I gave Egypt for

⁶² Matt. 16:26-27.

⁶³ Luke 9:23-25.

⁶⁴ Mark 8:34-37.

⁶⁵ Gal. 2:20.

⁶⁶ That is, as *nous*. Cf. Origen, *de Principiis*, II, 8:3: "The soul when saved remains a soul no longer." Origen explains that *psyche*, which with other ancient writers he connected with the Greek word for growing cold, is not a suitable term for a rational being that has recovered the warmth of its love for God lost by the Fall. *Hom. in Lucam*, XXXVI (on Luke 17:33): "... let us lose our soul that by cleaving to the Lord we may be transformed into one spirit."

⁶⁷ Gen. 1:27.

⁶⁸ I Pet. 1:19.

thy ransom, and Ethiopia and Syene for thee, for thou wast precious in my sight."⁶⁹ The right meaning of this and other such sayings you will understand if you have a desire for knowledge in Christ and even now wish to surpass that which is seen "through a glass, darkly," and hasten towards him who has called you. Then as never before you will comprehend "face to face,"⁷⁰ as friends of the heavenly Father who is your teacher. Friends know not by obscure hints, or by mere knowledge of sounds and words, symbols and types, but by a real awareness through which they attain to the nature of the intelligible world and to the beauty of the truth. If you believe that Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and was caught up to Paradise and heard unspeakable words which man cannot utter,⁷¹ you will accordingly realize that you will have immediate knowledge of more and greater matters than the unspeakable words revealed to Paul. For after receiving them he descended from the third heaven, whereas after you have acquired this knowledge you will not descend again, if you take up your cross and follow Jesus whom we have as "a great high priest who has passed through the heavens."⁷² And if you do not fall away from those who follow him you yourselves shall pass through the heavens, passing not merely above earth and the mysteries of earth, but even above the heavens and their mysteries. For in God there are treasured up much greater visions than these, which no being with a material body can perceive before it is separated from every contact with matter. For I am persuaded that God is keeping and storing in himself far greater wonders than are seen by sun, moon, and the choir of stars, and even by the holy angels whom God made "spirit" and "flame of fire,"⁷³ so that he may reveal them when the whole creation is liberated from the bondage of the enemy to the liberty of the glory of the children of God.⁷⁴

14. And to those exalted heights⁷⁵ the ascent will be quickly made by one of those first martyrs, who have a Christian love of learning surpassing many others. But you, devout Ambrose, can see by close study of the gospel saying that probably nobody at all, or at any rate only very few, will attain to an exceptional and transcendent wealth of blessedness. You yourself will attain to this if you pass through the conflict without hesitating. The

⁶⁹ Isa. 43:3-4.

⁷⁰ I Cor. 13:12.

⁷¹ II Cor. 12:2, 4.

⁷² Heb. 4:14. On this passage cf. Introduction, p. 391.

⁷³ Ps. 104 (103):4; Heb. 1:7.

⁷⁴ Rom. 8:21.

⁷⁵ Read with Koetschau's translation: ἐπ' ἐκείνα.

words read as follows: Peter once said to the Saviour, "Behold we have left all and followed you. What shall our reward be? Jesus said to them" (that is the apostles) "Verily I say to you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when God⁷⁶ shall sit upon the throne of his glory, shall yourselves sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left brothers or sisters or children or lands or houses for my sake, shall receive manifold reward and shall inherit everlasting life."⁷⁷ On account of these words I pray that even if I possessed as many earthly possessions as you do, or even more than that, I may become a martyr for God in Christ that I may receive manifold,⁷⁸ or as Mark says "a hundredfold,"⁷⁹ which is far more than the little we leave behind, which if we are called to martyrdom is multiplied a hundred times.

Therefore if I am to be a martyr, I would wish to leave children and lands and houses that with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named"⁸⁰ I may be called father of children many times more numerous and holy or, to give an exact figure, of a hundred times more children. If there are fathers such as are mentioned in the words spoken to Abraham, "But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, having lived to a good old age,"⁸¹ someone might say (whether the suggestion is right or wrong I do not know): Perhaps there are fathers who once bore witness and left children, and in exchange for these they have become the fathers of the patriarch Abraham and of other patriarchs; for it is probable that those who have left children by bearing their witness become fathers not of infants but of fathers.

15. If anyone who as it were desires the greatest gifts, and blesses the martyrs as rich men and fathers who will beget a hundred times more children and will receive a hundred times more lands and houses, asks if it is reasonable that they should obtain a far larger inheritance in the spiritual world than those who were poor in this life, my reply to him is this. Just as those who have endured torments and agony have shown a more distinguished virtue by their martyrdom than those who have not been tried in this way, so also those who besides their normal attachment to the material world and for this life have cut free from very strong worldly ties because of their profound love for

⁷⁶ We expect "the Son." Elsewhere Origen quotes this text in the usual form.

⁷⁷ Matt. 19:27-29.

⁷⁸ Matt. 19:29.

⁷⁹ Mark 10:30.

⁸⁰ Eph. 3:15.

⁸¹ Gen. 15:15. Cf. Origen, *Dial. c. Heracl.*, p. 166, Scherer (below, p. 452).

God and true grasp of "the word of God which is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword,"⁸² are enabled by the act of cutting free from these ties to make for themselves wings like an eagle's, and so to "return to the house of their master."⁸³ It is right, therefore, that just as those who have not been tried by pain and agony yield first place to those whose patience has been manifested on the rack and by various kinds of torture and by fire, so also we poor men, even if we are martyrs, quite reasonably yield first place to you who for your Christian love for God trample underfoot the deceitful glory that most men seek after, and your great possessions and affection for your children.

16. Notice at the same time the gravity of the scripture which promises multiplication, even to a hundred times, of brothers, children, parents, lands, and homes. But a wife is not included in this list. For scripture does not say: Everyone who has left brothers or sisters or parents or children or lands or houses or a wife for my sake, will receive manifold reward. "For at the resurrection of the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven."⁸⁴

17. The scripture might say to us now what Joshua said to the people when bringing them to settle in the holy land. The text reads as follows: "Now fear the Lord and serve in truth and righteousness."⁸⁵ If we are being pressed to idolatry the next words also would be applicable: "Destroy the foreign gods whom your fathers worshipped on the far side of the river and in Egypt, and worship the Lord."⁸⁶

At the beginning when you were to be instructed in the Christian faith it would have been reasonable to say to you: "If you do not wish to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your fathers on the far side of the river or the gods of the Amorites, among whom you inhabit the land." And the catechist might have said to you: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, for he is holy." But now it is

⁸² Heb. 4:12.

⁸³ Prov. 23:5.

⁸⁴ Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25. Cf. Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.*, III (Migne, *P.L.*, XXVI, 145 B): "On the ground of this saying [i.e., Matt. 19:29] some believe there will be a thousand years after the resurrection and assert that then we are to be given a hundredfold of all that we have left behind us and everlasting life. They fail to understand that if in reference to other things the promise appears right and proper, yet of wives it is obviously improper, since it implies that if a man has left one for the Lord's sake, he will receive a hundred in the future life."

⁸⁵ Josh. 24:14.

⁸⁶ Josh. 24:14.

not possible to say this to you. For at that time you said: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord and serve other gods. The Lord our God, he is God, who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt and kept us in all the way in which we journeyed." Moreover, in the agreements concerning religion you long ago made this reply to your instructors: "We will serve the Lord, for he is our God."⁸⁷ If, then, he who breaks agreements with men is one with whom no peace can be made and who is alien to salvation, what are we to say of those who by denial abrogate the agreements they have made with God and return to Satan whom they renounced at their baptism? To this we should say the words spoken by Eli to his sons: "If a man sins against a man, prayer may be made for him; but if he sins against the Lord, who shall pray for him?"⁸⁸

18. A great audience is gathered to watch you who are engaged in conflict and are called to martyrdom, such as we might compare⁸⁹ to the vast crowd that gathers to watch the conflict between famous popular wrestlers. As you fight you may say no less than Paul, "We are become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men."⁹⁰ The whole world, then, and all the angels of the right and left⁹¹ and all men, both those who belong to God's portion⁹² and the rest, will be watching us as we fight for Christianity. Either the angels in heaven will rejoice over us, and "the rivers will clap their hands together, and the hills sing for joy," and "all the trees of the plain shall clap their branches,"⁹³ or, which God forbid, those who rejoice will be the hellish powers that delight in evil. It is not inappropriate to see in a passage from Isaiah⁹⁴ what will be said by the powers of Hades to those who have been vanquished and have fallen from their heavenly witness. Their words will make us further tremble at the blasphemy of denial. For I imagine that this will be said to the apostate: "Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee. Risen up for thee are all the giants who have ruled the earth, who have said from their thrones all the kings of the earth. They shall all answer and say to thee." And what shall the vanquished powers say to the vanquished, and those captured by the devil to those captured in apostasy? Shall they not say this: "Even you are captured as we are and you are reckoned one of us." And if a man who has the great and glorious hope

⁸⁷ Josh. 24:15-18.

⁸⁸ I Sam. 2:25.

⁸⁹ Read with Koetschau: λέγομεν.

⁹⁰ I Cor. 4:9.

⁹¹ Cf. my note on Origen, *contra Celsum*, VI, 27.

⁹² Deut. 32:9.

⁹³ Ps. 98 (97):8; Isa. 55:12.

⁹⁴ Isa. 14:9 ff.

in God is conquered by cowardice or by tortures suffered for his faith in God, he will hear it said: "Thy glory is come down to Hell and thy great joy. Beneath thee they shall spread rottenness and a worm shall be your covering." And if one has held distinguished office in the churches, so that he appears to them as the daystar because his good works shine before men, and if after this in fighting the great fight he has lost the crown of such a throne, he shall hear it said: "How has the daystar, which rose at dawn, fallen from heaven? It has been trampled on the earth." And as by his apostasy he has become like the devil this shall be said to him: "He shall be cast upon the mountains like an abominable corpse with many other dead men pierced by swords who are going down to Hell. Just as a garment defiled with blood shall not be clean, so also thou shalt not be clean." For how shall he be pure who is defiled with blood and murder by the abominable sin of apostasy and is polluted by so terrible a crime?

Let us now show that we have understood the saying: "He who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."⁹⁵ Let us take care lest there should even be in us any hesitation whether to deny or to confess, lest the word of Elijah be also addressed to us: "How long will you limp from one leg to the other? If the Lord be God, follow him."⁹⁶

19. Probably we shall be reviled by our neighbours and mocked at by some who come round us and shake their heads at us as if we were blockheads. But when this happens we may say to God: "Thou hast made us a reproach to our neighbours, a mockery and a laughing-stock to those round about us. Thou hast made us a byword among the nations, and the peoples shake their heads at us. All the day long my confidence is before me, and the shame of my face has covered me, from the voice of the reviler and accuser, from the face of the enemy and the persecutor."⁹⁷ Blessed are we if, when all this happens, we can say to God the words which the prophet boldly applied to this situation: "All these things are come upon us, and we have not forgotten thee, and we have not wronged thy covenant, and our heart has not gone back."⁹⁸

20. Let us remember that while we live this life, we are to think of the ways that lie outside this life, saying to God: "Thou hast directed our paths out of thy way."⁹⁹ Now is the time to

⁹⁵ Matt. 10:37.

⁹⁶ I Kings 18:21.

⁹⁷ Ps. 44 (43): 13-16.

⁹⁸ Ps. 44 (43): 17-18.

⁹⁹ Ps. 44 (43): 19.

recall the fact that this earth is a place of affliction for the soul in which we are brought low, so that we may say in our prayers: "Thou hast brought us low in the place of affliction and the shadow of death has covered us."¹ And let us boldly say: "If we have forgotten the name of our God, and if we have stretched out our hands to any strange god, shall not God search it out?"²

21. Let us so fight as to give a perfect witness not merely in public but also in secret, so that we also may say like the apostle: "This is the ground of our boasting, the witness of our conscience, that in holiness and the sincerity of God we behaved in this world."³ We may add to the apostle's words that of the prophet: "He himself knows the secrets of our heart,"⁴ especially if we are brought to death. Then we may say that which only martyrs can say to God: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."⁵ If ever "the mind of the flesh"⁶ leads us to be afraid of the judges who threaten us with death, we can then say to them the word from Proverbs: "My son, fear the Lord and thou shalt be strong. Fear none but him."⁷

22. This text also is helpful for our present theme. In Ecclesiastes Solomon says: "I praised all the dead more than the living, as many as are alive until now."⁸ Who could more justifiably be praised for his death than he who of his own free choice chooses to die for the sake of religion? Such a man was Eleazar "who welcomed death with honour rather than life with pollution and of his own free choice went forward to the instrument of torture." He "with a noble resolution worthy of his ninety years and the eminence of his age and the grey hairs marking the distinction to which he had attained and his noble upbringing since childhood, and even more of the holy laws appointed by God,"⁹ said: "It does not become my age to make a pretence, so that many of the young men will suppose that Eleazar at the age of ninety has gone over to a foreign religion. They would be led astray by my pretence and for the sake of a short and brief period of life, and I should win for my old age pollution and disgrace. Even if at the present time I escape the punishment of men, yet I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty, whether alive or dead. Therefore now I will manfully depart this life and show myself worthy of my old age, leaving

¹ Ps. 44 (43): 19.

² Ps. 44 (43): 20-21.

³ II Cor. 1:12.

⁴ Ps. 44 (43): 21.

⁵ Ps. 44 (43): 22.

⁶ Rom. 8:6.

⁷ Prov. 7:1.

⁸ Eccles. 4:2.

⁹ II Maccabees 6:19, 23.

a noble example to the young to encourage them to die eagerly and nobly for the sacred and holy laws."¹⁰

I beseech you, when you are at the gates of death, or rather of freedom, especially if you are tortured (for it is not to be expected that you will be spared this suffering at the design of the hostile powers), to say this: "To the Lord who has holy knowledge it is known that, though I could have been freed from death, I am enduring cruel bodily pains by scourging, and in my soul I suffer this gladly for fear of him." Such indeed was the death of Eleazar that it was said of him: "He left his death as an example of nobility and a memorial of virtue, not only to the young but also to the nation as a whole."¹¹

23. The seven brothers described in the books of Maccabees,¹² whom Antiochus tortured with "whips and scourges" because of their loyal adherence to their religion, constitute a magnificent example of courageous martyrdom to everyone who considers whether he will be inferior to children who not only endured tortures one by one but also showed how steadfastly they adhered to their religion by witnessing the sufferings of their brothers. One of them, who is called in Scripture their spokesman, said to the tyrant: "Why question us? What will you learn? For we are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of our fathers?" I need not mention what they suffered from heated pans and cauldrons by which they were tortured after each had endured some different torment. For first he who was called their spokesman had his tongue cut out; then his head was scorched, and he endured the scorching as others undergo the circumcision appointed by God's law, believing that even in this way he was fulfilling the intention of the covenant of God.¹³ Not content with this Antiochus had his hands and feet cut off while his other brothers and his mother looked on, wanting to punish his brothers and mother by the sight and supposing that he would move them from their resolve by these terrible torments. Indeed, not content with crippling his body by the first tortures, Antiochus ordered him to be put on the fire, while still alive, and fried in the pans and cauldrons. And as the vapour of the flesh of the noble athlete of piety, roasting by the cruelty of the tyrant, spread abroad, the others

¹⁰ II Maccabees 6:24-28.

¹¹ II Maccabees 6:30-31.

¹² II Maccabees 7.

¹³ Origen seems to be thinking of the Maccabean martyr's death as the Jewish equivalent of the Christian baptism by blood, baptism being the equivalent under the new covenant of circumcision under the old.

exhorted one another with their mother to die nobly, comforting each other with the thought that God was seeing it all. Sufficient to steel them to endurance was the conviction that the eye of God was upon them in their suffering. And the leader of the athletes of piety exhorted them, being himself encouraged and, so to speak, filled with rejoicing by the heroism of their resistance to such fearful agonies. If we were in such a situation we might well repeat the words they said to each other which read as follows: "The Lord God beholds us and in reality is having compassion on us."

24. After the first had been tested in this manner, as gold is proved in the crucible, the second was brought to the torture. After the ministers of the tyrant's cruelty had torn off his skin with the hair, they called upon him to change his mind, asking their victim if he would eat meat offered to idols before his body was punished limb by limb. When he refused to change his mind, he was led to the next torture and remained steadfast to his last gasp. He in no way broke down or yielded to the torments, but said to the blasphemer: "You criminal, you remove us from this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up to everlasting life because we have died for his laws."

25. The third also, counting his sufferings as nothing and for his love to God trampling upon them, when told to put out his tongue, did so forthwith and valiantly stretched out his hands, saying, "Because of God's laws I leave these behind me, but I hope to regain from God the rewards he grants to those who have fought for their religion."

Likewise the fourth was tortured and endured the blows saying: "When we die at the hands of men, it is better to look to the hopes we have of God that we shall be raised up by him in a resurrection the tyrant will not know. For he will rise not to life but to reproach and everlasting shame."

Next the fifth was tormented. Looking at Antiochus he reviled him for that his corruptibility had not lessened his pride, and that he supposed tyrannical power held for a few days was great authority. While being tortured he said that his race had not been deserted by God who would inflict far worse torments on Antiochus and his seed.

After him the sixth at the point of dying said: "Do not deceive yourself. We are paying the penalty of our sins, and are enduring these sufferings willingly, in order that by them we may be purified." And he said to the king that he must not imagine that he would go unpunished for daring to fight against God.

For he who fights against those made divine by the Word is fighting God.

26. Lastly Antiochus took the youngest in his hands and, being persuaded that he was a brother of those who counted such terrible agonies for nothing and that he had the same resolve as they, used other methods. He thought he might be won over by exhortations, and swore oaths promising to make him rich and happy if he would abandon his ancestral laws, and to enrol him among the Friends¹⁴ and to entrust him with imperial offices. But as he had no success whatever and the young man did not even listen to his words as being alien to his resolve, he appealed to his mother, exhorting her to advise the boy to save himself. But she while agreeing to persuade her son to do what he wanted, mocked the tyrant by giving her son many exhortations to endurance, so that the boy did not wait for the punishment to be brought to him, but took the initiative and called to the torturers saying: "What are you waiting for? Why are you so slow? For we obey the law given by God. We must not accept a command contrary to God's words." Moreover like a king pronouncing sentence on those subject to his judgment he pronounced sentence against the tyrant, being judge of him rather than being judged by him. And he told him that for having raised his hands against the children of heaven he would not escape the judgment of Almighty God who sees everything.

27. At that moment one could have seen how the mother of these heroes, for her hope in God, bravely bore the torments and deaths of her sons. For the dew of piety and the cool breath of holiness did not allow to be kindled within her her maternal instinct which in most mothers faced with such severe pains would have been a burning fire. I believe that this story which I have quoted from the Scripture in abbreviated form is most valuable for our purpose. It enables us to see how piety and love for God, in face of the most painful agonies and the severest torments, is far more powerful than any other bond of affection. This love for God and human weakness cannot dwell together in us. Weakness is exiled and altogether driven out of our soul and is rendered entirely impotent where a man can say, "The Lord is my strength and my song" and "I can do all things through Christ Jesus our Lord who strengthens me."¹⁵

28. The value of martyrdom and the boldness it gives us

¹⁴ A title of honour given to the highest royal officials.

¹⁵ Ps. 118 (117):14; Phil. 4:13.

before God we can also learn from this consideration. The saint who possesses a certain ambition and desires to offer something in return for the benefits that come to him from God, asks what he can do to the Lord for all that he has received from him. And he finds that a man with a grateful heart can render to God nothing else capable of being as it were a counterweight to his benefits except a martyr's death. For in the 115th Psalm there is first the question: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he has done to me?" The answer to him who asks what he should render to the Lord for all the benefits he has received from him reads as follows: "I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord."¹⁶ "The cup of salvation" is the usual name for martyrdom, as we find in the gospel. For when those who are ambitious for greater honour desire to sit on the right and left of Jesus in his kingdom, the Lord says to them, "Can you drink of the cup that I drink?"¹⁷ By "cup" he means martyrdom. This is clear from the saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."¹⁸ We learn, besides, that he who drinks of that cup that Jesus drank will sit and rule and judge with the King of kings.¹⁹ This, then, is the cup of salvation, and he who receives it will call upon the name of the Lord. "And everyone that calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."²⁰

29. But perhaps on account of the words "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," someone who did not examine the meaning of Scripture closely might think that, as it were, even the Saviour was afraid in the hour of the passion.²¹ But if he was afraid, one might say, who ever was courageous? In the first place, we will ask those who hold this view of the Saviour if he was inferior to him who said: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men approached me to eat up my flesh, those who persecuted me and my enemies were struck with weakness and fell. If a host should be drawn up against me, my heart shall not be afraid. If war should rise up against me, then will I be full of hope."²² But

¹⁶ Ps. 116 (115):3-4. ¹⁷ Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:38. ¹⁸ Mark 14:36.

¹⁹ Cf. I Cor. 6:2; Hippolytus, in *Dan.*, II, 37; Cyprian, *Ep.*, 6; Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI, 42:5.

²⁰ Joel 2:32.

²¹ Cf. Celsus in Origen, *contra Celsum*, II, 24: "Why then does he utter loud laments and wailings, and pray that he may avoid the fear of death, saying something like this, 'O Father, if this cup could pass by me?'"

²² Ps. 27 (26):1-3.

perhaps these words reported by the prophet are spoken by none other than the Saviour, since by reason of the light and salvation given to him by the Father he fears no man, and because of the protection granted by God he is afraid of none. His heart was in no way fearful when the entire host of Satan was drawn up against him. When war rose up against him, his heart hoped in God, being filled with his holy doctrines. It would not be in character for the same person to say in a cowardly spirit, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and to say courageously, "If a host be drawn up against me, my heart shall not be afraid."

Lest we miss some point in the passage, notice the express designation of "the cup" in the three evangelists. According to Matthew the Lord said: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Luke has: "Father, if it be thy will, take this cup away from me." Mark has: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; take this cup away from me."²³ Consider, then, seeing that any martyrdom by death suffered for any cause whatever is called a cup, whether you could affirm that it is not martyrdom in general that he is putting from him when he says, "Let this cup pass from me" (otherwise he would have said, "Let the cup pass from me"), but perhaps only this particular kind. Consider also the possibility that the Saviour had in mind the various kinds of cup, so to speak, and the possible results of each one, and, because by a certain very profound wisdom he understood the differences, asked that this kind of martyr's death might be avoided, while secretly he made request for another which would have been even more of an ordeal, so that by a different cup he might achieve an even wider diffusion of benefits which would reach more people. This, however, was not the will of the Father who with a wisdom greater than the will of his Son and a vision wider than the Saviour's was controlling events to follow an ordered path. It is at any rate clear that in the Psalms the cup of salvation is the death of the martyrs. That is why "I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord" is followed by the words: "Precious in the Lord's sight is the death of his saints."²⁴ To us, then, as God's saints who are not unworthy, there comes a precious death, in that our death is of some special significance if it is endured for the sake of Christianity and piety and holiness.

30. Let us also remember the sins we have committed, that remission of sins cannot be obtained without baptism, that

²³ Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42; Mark 14:36.

²⁴ Ps. 116 (115):13, 15.

according to the laws of the gospel it is not possible again to be baptized with water and the Spirit for remission of sins, and that a baptism of martyrdom has been given to us. That this name is given to it is clear from the fact that after the saying: "Can you drink of the cup that I drink?" there follow the words "Or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"²⁵ And elsewhere it is said: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished."²⁶ Consider whether, just as the Saviour's death brought purification to the world, the baptism of martyrdom may also by the service of those who undergo it bring purification to many. Just as those who attend at the altar according to the Law of Moses thought they obtained remissions of sins for the Jews by the blood of bulls and goats,²⁷ so the souls of those "who have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus"²⁸ do not attend in vain at the heavenly altar, but mediate remission of sins to those who pray. At the same time we know that, just as the high priest, Jesus Christ, offered himself in sacrifice,²⁹ so the priests, whose high priest he is, offer themselves in sacrifice and therefore appear by the altar in their proper place. Those priests who are blameless and offer blameless sacrifices used to serve the worship of God; but those who were at fault, as Moses set out in Leviticus,³⁰ were banished from the altar. Who then is the blameless priest who offers a blameless offering other than he who holds fast the confession and fulfils every requirement made by the doctrine of martyrdom? This point we have discussed above.³¹

31. Let us not be surprised that the wonderful blessedness of the martyrs who enjoy deep peace and calm and rest has to be begun in apparently dark and, so to speak, wintry weather. It is by journeying in this life on the strait and narrow way³² in winter that each one of the blessed will have to show what ability he has gained for following the right road; so that after this life there may be fulfilled the word in the Song of Songs spoken to the bride who has come through the winter: "My beloved, she says, answers and says to me, Arise, come my friend, my lovely, my dove. Behold, the winter is past, the rain has dispersed and gone away."³³ You also should remember that you cannot hear that "the winter is past" unless you have battled bravely and manfully with the present winter. After the

²⁵ Mark 10:38.

²⁸ Rev. 20:4; 6:9.

³⁰ Lev. 21:17-21.

³³ S. of Sol. 2:10-11.

²⁶ Luke 12:50.

²⁹ Heb. 5:1; 7:27; 8:3; 10:12.

³¹ Chapter 11.

²⁷ Heb. 9:13; 10:4.

³² Matt. 7:14.

winter is past and rain has gone away and dispersed the flowers will appear. "Planted in the house of the Lord they shall flower in the halls of our God."³⁴

32. And this we know, that if we have been persuaded by Jesus to forsake the idols and polytheistic atheism, the enemy cannot persuade us to commit idolatry, but he wants to compel us. And on this account he brings this pressure to bear on those over whom he has power, and either makes martyrs or idolaters of those who are tempted by him. Frequently even now he says: "All these things will I give you if you will fall down and worship me."³⁵ Let us therefore take heed lest we commit idolatry and subject ourselves to daemons. "For the gods of the heathen are daemons."³⁶ What a terrible thing it is when a man forsakes Christ's easy yoke and light burden³⁷ and again subjects himself to the yoke of daemons, and bears a burden of the gravest sin after we have known that the heart of idol-worshippers is ash, and their life more worthless than dust,³⁸ and after we have spoken the words "How false are the idols our fathers possessed; and there is none among them that can make it rain."³⁹

33. It was not merely in ancient times that Nebuchadnezzar set up the golden image, nor merely then that he threatened Ananias, Azarias, and Misael that if they would not bow down, he would cast them into the fiery furnace.⁴⁰ Even now Nebuchadnezzar is saying the very same thing to us, the true Hebrews, whose home is in the next world.⁴¹ But we, that we may experience the heavenly dew which quenches all fire in us and refreshes our mind, let us imitate those holy men lest even now Haman may wish you Mordecais to bow down to him, and you reply to him, "I will not place the glory of men higher than the glory of the God of Israel."⁴² Let us destroy Bel by the word of God and kill the dragon with Daniel,⁴³ that when we draw near to the mouths of lions we can suffer no harm from them, and that only those responsible for our present conflict may be eaten up by the lions which cannot consume us. Let us be encouraged by the fact that among the good deeds of Job we read these words: "If⁴⁴ I laid my hand on my mouth to kiss, let this also be

³⁴ Ps. 92 (91):13.

³⁵ Matt. 4:9.

³⁶ Ps. 96 (95):5.

³⁷ Matt. 11:30.

³⁸ Wisdom of Solomon 15:10.

³⁹ Jer. 16:19; 14:22.

⁴⁰ Dan. 3:1 ff.

⁴¹ Philo. *Migr. Abrah.*, 20, similarly explains the word "Hebrews"; also Origen, *Comm. in Matt.*, XI, 5.

⁴² Esth. 4:17 (LXX), in English Apocrypha, 13:14.

⁴³ Bel and the Dragon, 22 ff.

⁴⁴ Read with Koetschau: <ἐ> ἐμὸς.

reckoned to me as the greatest crime.”⁴⁵ For it is probable that they will require us to put our hand on our mouth to give a kiss.

34. This also let us notice, that the Saviour’s prophecies about martyrdom do not occur in the words he addressed to the multitude, but to the apostles. For after Scripture has first said: “Jesus sent out these twelve commanding them, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles” and so on, there follow these words: “Beware of men; for they shall deliver you to the councils, and shall beat you in their synagogues. And you shall be led before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles. But when they give you up, do not be anxious how or what you should speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of the Father speaking in you. Brother shall betray brother to death, a father his child, and children shall rise up against their parents and have them killed. And you shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. When they persecute you in one city flee to the next, and if they chase you out of that, escape to another. Verily I say to you, you shall not complete all the cities of Israel before the Son of man come.”⁴⁶

And Luke writes as follows: “When they bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, do not be anxious how you should reply or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say.” And after other sayings: “Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate beforehand how to answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or gainsay. But you shall be delivered up even by parents and brethren and kinsfolk and friends, and some of you they shall cause to be put to death, and you shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake. And not a hair of your head shall perish. In your patience possess your souls.”⁴⁷ This is Mark’s account: “When they lead you to judgment and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand or meditate beforehand; but speak that which is given you in that hour. For it is not you that speak but the Holy Spirit. And brother shall deliver up brother to his death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake. But he that endures to the end shall be saved.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Job 31:27–28. The kiss required is an act of loyalty to the heathen god.

⁴⁶ Matt. 10:5, 17–23.

⁴⁷ Luke 12:11–12; 21:14–19.

⁴⁸ Mark 13:11–13.

The following exhortations to martyrdom in Matthew are not addressed to any but the twelve. We too must hear them, and by so doing we shall be brothers of the apostles who heard them and be numbered with the apostles. The passage reads as follows: "Fear not those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; fear rather him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." And after this the Lord teaches us that it is not without divine providence that anyone comes to face the conflict of martyrdom. For he says: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Yet not one of them will fall to the earth without the Father who is in heaven. The hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone who confesses me before men will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."⁴⁹ Luke's words are to the same effect: "This I say to you, my friends. Fear not those who kill the body and after that have power to do nothing further. I will show you whom you shall fear. Fear him who after killing you has power to cast you into Gehenna. Yea, I say to you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows. And I say to you: Everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of man will also confess before the angels of God. But he who denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."⁵⁰ And in another place: "Whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and in that of the Father and the holy angels."⁵¹ In the same sense Mark also wrote as follows: "Whosoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels."⁵²

Those who destroy us kill the life of the body. That is the meaning of the saying: "Fear not those who kill the body," which Matthew and Luke have in identical wording. For after they have killed the body, even if they wish they have no power to kill the soul. Nor have they power to do anything further. For how is it possible to destroy a soul which by the very act of confession is given life? Witness to it is given by him who exhorts us to martyrdom in Isaiah, and by his Son, according to the

⁴⁹ Matt. 10:28-33.

⁵⁰ Luke 12:4-9.

⁵¹ Luke 9:26.

⁵² Mark 8:38.

Scripture: "Be my witnesses and I will be your witness, saith the Lord God, and the Son whom I have chosen."⁵³

Notice this also, that it is not to Jesus' servants but to his friends⁵⁴ that he gives this commandment: "Fear not those who kill the body and after that have power to do nothing further." We must fear, therefore, him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. He alone, after killing us, has power to cast into Gehenna. Indeed he will cast there those who are terrified by those who kill the body and those who do not fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna, and who, after killing us, has power to cast us into Gehenna. If anyone's hairs are numbered, this is obviously true of those who are executed for Jesus' sake. We, then, will make confession in the Son of God even before those who are men and not gods, so that he whom we confess may reply to us by confessing us before his God and Father, he himself confessing in heaven the man who has confessed him on earth.

35. Who on considering this will not cry out with the apostle: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us"?⁵⁵ Is not confession before the Father much greater than confession before men? And is not the confession made in heaven by him who is confessed far superior to the confession on earth of the Son of God made by the martyrs? Let anyone who thinks of denying him before men bear in mind the words of him who does not err: "I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew's text has: "I also will confess him before my Father who is in heaven," while Luke has: "The Son of man will also confess him before the angels of God."⁵⁶ I ask, therefore, whether the firstborn of all creation, the image of the invisible God,⁵⁷ will confess the man who confesses him before his Father in heaven, while he who was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh,"⁵⁸ and is therefore Son of man, and was born of a woman⁵⁹ who was herself human, and on this account is given the title of Son of man, whom we understand to be the humanity of Jesus,⁶⁰ will confess those who confess him before the angels of God. We might say the corresponding thing of those who deny.

⁵³ Isa 43:10.

⁵⁴ Cf. John 15:15.

⁵⁵ Rom. 8:18.

⁵⁶ Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8.

⁵⁷ Col. 1:15.

⁵⁸ Rom. 1:3.

⁵⁹ Gal. 4:4.

⁶⁰ The Greek phrase is common in Origen for the human nature of Christ; cf. my note in *Harvard Theological Review*, XLI (1948), p. 100, n.30.

We must further consider this point. He who confesses the Son before men, so far as in him lies, commends Christianity and the founder of Christianity before those to whom he makes his confession. But he who is confessed by the firstborn of all creation and the Son of man is commended by the confession of the Son of God and the Son of man to the Father in heaven and the angels of God. But if "it is not he who commends himself who is approved, but he whom the Lord commends,"⁶¹ must we not think him approved who is judged worthy of commendation to the Father in heaven and the angels of God? But if he is approved with those like him whom the Lord has tested by tortures and examinations "as gold in the crucible," and has accepted "as a whole burnt-offering,"⁶² what must we say of those who have been shown up in the furnace of persecution and have denied? These, as not being true Christians, are denied before the Father in heaven and before the angels of God by him who denies everyone who deserves it.

36. We have to strive not merely against denial but also lest we feel any shame when the enemies of God suppose that we are suffering shameful indignities. This is particularly applicable to you, holy Ambrose. Honoured and respected by a vast number of cities, you are now, so to speak, walking in the procession bearing the cross of Jesus and following him who leads you before governors and kings, that he himself may go with you and give a mouth and wisdom to you his companion in the fight, Protocetus, and to those who bear witness with you, who make up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.⁶³ He will be with you on the way to the paradise of God and will show you how to pass by "the cherubim and the flaming sword which turns and guards the way of the tree of life."⁶⁴ Though both of these guard the way of the tree of life, they do so to prevent anyone unworthy from passing through and reaching the tree of life. For the flaming sword will lay hold of those who have built upon the established foundation, Jesus Christ, "wood or hay or stubble,"⁶⁵ and the wood, so to speak, of denial which is quickly kindled and burns rapidly. The cherubim will receive those who cannot be caught by the flaming sword because they have built with nothing inflammable, and will conduct them to the tree of life and to all that God

⁶¹ II Cor. 10:18.

⁶² Wisdom of Solomon 3:6.

⁶³ Col. 1:24.

⁶⁴ Gen. 3:24. Gregory of Nyssa (*Orat. in XL mart.*, II, Migne, P.G., XLVI, 772 AB) likewise explains that the flaming sword does not exclude everyone, but only the unworthy.

⁶⁵ I Cor. 3:11-12.

planted in the east and caused to rise up from the earth.⁶⁶ Since Jesus journeys with you to paradise scorn the serpent vanquished and bruised by Jesus' feet, and through him by yours as well,⁶⁷ for he has "given you power to trample on serpents and scorpions and on every power of the enemy that nothing should harm you."⁶⁸

37. We must not, therefore, deny the Son of God or be ashamed of him or his servants or his words, but listen to the saying, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven," and to the saying, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and mine, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels," and to the words, "For whosoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels."⁶⁹

Jesus once "endured the cross and despised the shame" and therefore "sat down at the right hand of God."⁷⁰ His followers also who despise the shame will sit with him and reign in heaven with him who came to bring peace not on the earth but in the soul of his disciples, and to bring on the earth a sword.⁷¹ For since "the word is God is living, and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and penetrates to the separating of soul and spirit, the joints and the marrow, and is a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart,"⁷² he rewards our souls, particularly at this present time, with the peace that passes all understanding,⁷³ which he left to his apostles.⁷⁴ But he has thrust a sword between the image of the earthy and the image of the heavenly,⁷⁵ so that now he takes the heavenly part of us that afterwards, if we no longer deserve to be divided into two parts, he may make us entirely heavenly.

And he came to cast not merely a sword on the earth but also fire. Of this he said: "I wish it were already kindled."⁷⁶ Let this fire, therefore, be kindled in you, consuming every earthly and carnal thought. Show all zeal to be baptized now with the baptism concerning which Jesus was "straitened until it be accomplished." And you [Ambrose], since you have wife and children and brothers and sisters, remember the words: "If any

⁶⁶ Gen. 2:8-9.

⁶⁹ Matt. 10:33; Luke 9:26; Mark 8:38.

⁷¹ Matt. 10:34.

⁷⁴ John 14:27.

⁶⁷ Rom. 16:20.

⁷² Heb. 4:12.

⁷⁵ I Cor. 15:49.

⁶⁸ Luke 10:19.

⁷⁰ Heb. 12:2; 8:1.

⁷³ Phil. 4:7.

⁷⁶ Luke 12:49-50.

man comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple."⁷⁷ Both of you [Ambrose and Protocetus] remember the saying: "If any man comes to me and does not hate his own soul," in addition to those already mentioned, "he cannot be my disciple."⁷⁸ So hate your own soul that by your hatred you may preserve it to everlasting life. "For," he says, "he who hates his own soul in this world shall preserve it to everlasting life."⁷⁹ Accordingly, hate your soul for the sake of everlasting life in the sure conviction that it is a good and valuable hatred which Jesus teaches us to have. Just as we have to hate our soul to preserve it to everlasting life, so also must you [Ambrose], who have wife and children and brothers and sisters, hate them. You will thus help those you hate, since by the very act of hating them you become a friend to God and receive the freedom to benefit them.

38. But at the same time remember him who prays in spirit for the children left by the martyrs for the sake of their love for God, and said: "Redeem the children of those condemned to death."⁸⁰ Only realize that it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God,⁸¹ and that, just as it is said to the descendants of Abraham: "I know that you are Abraham's seed"⁸² and "if you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham,"⁸³ so also it will be said to your children: I know that you are Ambrose's seed, and if you are Ambrose's children you will do the works of Ambrose. No doubt they will do them, for you will help them more after dying a martyr's death than if you had remained with them. For then you will love them with greater knowledge and pray for them with deeper understanding if you find that they are your children and not merely your seed. Take now upon your lips the words: "He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me," and "He who finds his soul shall lose it, and he who loses his soul for my sake shall find it."⁸⁴

39. By your readiness for martyrdom give place to the Spirit of your Father who speaks in those delivered up for the sake of religion.⁸⁵ If you know yourselves to be hated and reviled and

⁷⁷ Luke 14:26.

⁷⁸ Luke 14:26

⁷⁹ John 12:25.

⁸⁰ Ps. 79 (78):11.

⁸¹ Rom. 9:8.

⁸² John 8:37.

⁸³ John 8:39, similarly quoted in *Hom. in Ezech.*, IV., 8, where Origen attacks fools who say, "In the future each one of us will be able by our prayers to deliver from Gehenna anyone he likes," forgetting that a martyr only benefits me if I live rightly.

⁸⁴ Matt. 10:37, 39.

⁸⁵ Matt. 10:20.

thought to be blasphemers, then take to heart the words: "On this account the world hates you, because you are not of this world. If you were of this world, the world would love its own."⁸⁶ Already you have endured many reproaches and many dangers for Christ's sake since the time when you first believed. Advance by enduring to the end. For "he who endures to the end shall be saved."⁸⁷ Know that according to Peter you will rejoice "though now for a short time, if need be, you are grieved by various temptations, that the testing of your faith, which is far more valuable than perishable gold which is tried by fire, may be found to deserve praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ."⁸⁸ Understand the word "grieved" to mean suffering physical pain, as is clear from the words "In grief shalt thou bear children."⁸⁹ For a woman giving birth to a child suffers no grief whatever, but physical pain.

To Christ's disciples this word was helpful: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away and its lust."⁹⁰ Accordingly, do not love that which is transitory, but by doing God's will become worthy to be one with Son and Father and Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Saviour's prayer "that they also may be one in us as I and thou are one."⁹¹ How many days of life can one gain by loving the world or the things that are in the world, while losing or destroying one's own soul and carrying a conscience burdened by a heavy load and weighed down by the guilt of apostasy? Let us each remember how often we have been in danger of dying in the ordinary way, and reckon that we may have been preserved in order that baptized in our own blood and washed from all sin we may dwell beside the heavenly altar with our comrades in the fight.⁹²

40. If, however, any man is led to yield by a great love for this life or by lack of courage in face of the torments or by the seemingly persuasive arguments used by those who would persuade us to choose the evil course, and denies the one God and his Christ, and confesses the daemons or "fortunes,"⁹³ let him realize that when he prepares "a table for the daemon," and "fills the cup to fortune," he "forsakes the Lord and forgets his

⁸⁶ John 15:19.

⁸⁹ Gen. 3:16.

⁹² Rev. 6:9.

⁸⁷ Matt. 10:22; 24:13.

⁹⁰ I John 2:15-17.

⁹³ Cf. Chapter 7, above.

⁸⁸ I Pet. 1:6-7.

⁹¹ John 17:21-22.

holy mountain." These charges against him are set forth by Isaiah as follows: "Ye who forsake me and forget my holy mountain and prepare a table for the daemon and fill the cup to fortune, I will deliver you to the sword, ye shall all fall slain. For I called you and ye did not listen. I spoke and ye disobeyed and did evil before me and chose that which was not my will. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall be glad, but ye shall be ashamed. Behold, my servants shall rejoice with gladness, but ye shall cry out for the pain of your heart and shall groan for the distress of your spirit. For ye shall abandon my name for the satisfaction of my elect, but you shall the Lord destroy."⁹⁴ Moreover, if we understand what the table of the Lord is, and desire to partake of it, let us know this: "You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of daemons."⁹⁵ Further, if we understand the meaning of the words "I shall not henceforth drink of the fruit of this vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of heaven,"⁹⁶ and if we wish to be found in the company of those who drink with Jesus, let us pay heed to this: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of daemons."⁹⁷

John the son of thunder says: "He who denies the Father and the Son: everyone who denies the Son has not the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also."⁹⁸ Who that understands this truth will not be afraid to say that he is not a Christian, and thus deny the Son, since by his denial he will not have the Father? And who would not be led to confess himself a Christian by words and deeds, so that he might have the Father also? For those who make such a confession have the Father.

41. If we have passed from death to life⁹⁹ by our transition from unbelief to faith, let us not be surprised if the world hates us.¹ For no one who has not passed from death to life, but remains in death, can love those who have passed from the dark house of death, so to speak, to the buildings full of the light of life built of living stones.² For us Jesus laid down his life.³ Let us therefore lay down ours, I will not say for his sake but for our own, and I think also for those who will be edified by our

⁹⁴ Isa. 65:11-15.

⁹⁶ Matt. 26:29.

⁹⁸ I John 2:22-23 (Mark 3:17).

¹ John 15:18.

³ I John 3:16.

⁹⁵ I Cor. 10:21.

⁹⁷ I Cor. 10:21.

⁹⁹ John 5:24; I John 3:14.

² John 8:12; I Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20-22.

martyrdom. For us Christians the time of boasting is at hand. For the apostle says: "Not only so, but we also make our boast in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation effects patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope is not put to shame; only let the love of God be poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."⁴ While Paul may say, "If after the manner of men I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus,"⁵ we could say, "If after the manner of men I have been executed in Germany."⁶

42. If "as the sufferings of Christ overflow, so through Christ consolation also overflows,"⁷ let us gladly accept the sufferings of Christ so that they overflow in us, if at least we desire the abundant consolation which is received by all who mourn,⁸ though probably not in equal measure. For if the consolation were equal for all, Scripture would not have said: "As the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also our consolation overflows." Those who share in sufferings will also share in consolation in proportion to the sufferings that they share with Christ. This you learn from him who with full conviction said: "For we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings so also do you share in the consolation."⁹

God says by the prophet: "In an acceptable time have I heard thee and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee."¹⁰ What other time is so acceptable as that when, for our faith towards God in Christ, we are brought in procession under arrest in the world, and are led away to die, though the triumph is ours rather than theirs? For the martyrs in Christ put off with him the principalities and powers and join in his triumph¹¹; as they share in his sufferings, so also they share in the benefits of his sufferings. These include triumphing over principalities and powers which shortly you shall see vanquished and put to shame. What is the day of salvation so much as the day we are delivered from this life? But I beseech you, "Give no offence in anything"¹² lest through you the presbyterate or the diaconate be found at fault, "but in all things commend yourselves as the ministers of God." "In much patience," say, "And now what is my patience? Is it not the Lord?"¹³ "In tribulations" be persuaded that "many are the tribulations of the righteous."¹⁴ "In

⁴ Rom. 5:3-5.

⁵ I Cor. 15:32.

⁶ The emperor Maximin was in Germany at the time of writing.

⁷ II Cor. 1:5.

⁸ Matt. 5:4.

⁹ II Cor. 1:7.

¹⁰ Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2.

¹¹ Col. 2:15.

¹² II Cor. 6:3 ff.

¹³ Ps. 39 (38):7

¹⁴ Ps. 34 (33):19.

necessities" let us ask for blessedness as a necessity for us. "In afflictions" let us unfailingly walk upon the strait and narrow way that we may attain to life.¹⁵ If it is needful, let us also commend ourselves "by scourgings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labours, by watchings, and by fastings." For behold the Lord is here with his reward in his hand to render to each man according to his works.¹⁶

43. Let us now show that we have desired "knowledge" for the sake of the works befitting that knowledge. Let there be manifested in us complete "purity" from all defilement by any sort of sin. As sons of a longsuffering God and brethren of a longsuffering Christ let us be "patient" in all misfortunes. "For a longsuffering man has much to think about; the pusillanimous man is a prodigious fool."¹⁷ If one must commend oneself "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," and if we have commended ourselves by "honour" and have not been made proud by it, let us now even endure "dishonour." And if we have behaved worthily to deserve a "good reputation" and if we have enjoyed such a reputation, let us now tolerate the "evil report" of the impious. Moreover, if as "true" men we have been admired by lovers of truth, now let us laugh if someone says we are "mistaken." Because we have been delivered from many dangers many have said that we were "known of God." But now let anyone say that we are "unknown," when probably we are in fact even better known. Bearing whatever comes, we are afflicted but not put to death, and while rejoicing are likened to men who are grieved.¹⁸

44. Paul somewhere says to those who have endured suffering at the first, exhorting them to be patient under the second attack of danger for the sake of the word, as they were under the first: "Remember the former days when after you were enlightened, you endured a severe struggle of suffering, being partly an object of public ridicule and affliction, and partly being associated with those who were being thus treated. Moreover, you sympathized with those in prison, and gladly accepted the plunder of your property, knowing that you have a better possession that lasts. Do not, then, abandon your confidence which carries with it great rewards. For you need patience."¹⁹

¹⁵ Matt. 7:14.

¹⁶ Isa. 40:10; 62:11; Ps. 62 (61):12; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23; 22:12.

¹⁷ Prov. 14:29.

¹⁸ The language of this, as of the preceding chapter, is drawn from II Cor. 6:3-10.

¹⁹ Heb. 10:32-6.

Let us also now endure a severe struggle of suffering, being an object of public ridicule and affliction, and accepting gladly the plunder of our property. For we are convinced that we have a better possession, not earthly nor even material, but invisible and immaterial. For we make our aim not the things that are seen, seeing that they are transitory while the immaterial things are eternal.²⁰

45. Some do not consider the truth concerning daemons, namely that if they are to remain in this gross air near the earth they need food from sacrifices and so keep where there is always smoke and blood and incense.²¹ Accordingly, they hold it a light and indifferent matter to offer sacrifice. To this we would say that if those who provide food for thieves and murderers and barbarian enemies of the great king are punished as offenders against society, how much more would they be most justly punished who by sacrificing to the ministers of evil give them food which maintains them in the region near the earth; and particularly so if they have learnt that "he who sacrifices to other gods except to the Lord alone shall be destroyed"²² and nevertheless sacrifice to those responsible for the evils upon earth. Indeed, I think that because of the misdeeds committed by the daemons who work against mankind those who feed them with sacrifices are no less responsible than the daemons who commit wicked deeds. For both the daemons and those who keep them on earth have injured men in like degree, since without the smoke and sacrifices and the food thought to be suited to their bodies the daemons would not be able to subsist.

46. Some, again, think that names are given by an arbitrary convention and have no natural attachment to the things they describe.²³ They think it is of no consequence if a man says, "I worship the supreme God whether his name is Zeus or Zen," or if he says, "I honour and venerate the sun or Apollo, and the moon or Artemis, and the spirit in the earth or Demeter,

²⁰ II Cor. 4:18.

²¹ For sacrifices as the food of daemons, cf. my note on Origen, *contra Celsum*, III, 28; for the view that they cause earthly disasters such as famine, drought, flood, and earthquake, cf. *contra Celsum*, VIII, 31.

²² Ex. 22:20 (19).

²³ The arguments of this chapter recur in *contra Celsum*, I, 24; V, 45. Aristotle held that names were given by an arbitrary human determination. The Stoics held that names were given "by nature," "the first utterances (of the first men) being imitations of the things described and so becoming their names." Probably the view combated by Origen was advanced by gnostic sects who wished to provide a rational justification of yielding to authority in time of persecution.