

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



Origen:
Philosophy of
History
& Eschatology



P. TZAMALIKOS

BRILL

Origen:
Philosophy of History
&
Eschatology

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to
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by

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Ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς,
καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι

Rev. 1, 18
(*commJohn*, 1, XXII)

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PREFACE

To study Origen it will not suffice to study Origen's works. His name is in fact not simply that of a specific author, but a watchword marking a radical Christian transformation of the world effecting to the present day. To peruse critically his challenging experience amidst philosophical and theological ideas takes much more than reading his theology. Terms and notions did not arrive at the pen of authors in vacuum. Theorists read them somewhere, they discussed them with others, they reflected and debated upon them and expressed themselves to the degree and manner they found them articulate of their own philosophical thrust. To study Origen then takes more than just reading one's texts. It takes perusal of the interplay of ideas and attitudes during eighteen centuries at least—from Homeric texts to 12th century A.D. In this line, there is a rich tradition of illuminating exchanges, debate, rebuffs, misrenderings, misunderstanding, fruitful conceptions of new ideas in old forms, neologisms, fertile alterations and productive advances through fresh approach to old notions. Unless this multifarious process is taken into account, it is hard to follow a *dilettante* of Greek such as Origen in the precarious adventure he took upon himself.

In Antiquity there were differences on tenets, viewpoints and attitudes, but the actual people were parleying with each other. In Late Antiquity they often studied in common classes, despite being of different backgrounds and aiming at different purposes: pagans, Christians, agnostics, sceptics, eclecticists, atheists at least *knew* each other.

Today there is a hardly bridgeable chasm between theology and philosophy, and a parallel one between philosophy and science. Philosophers despise theological assumptions on grounds afforded by modern Epistemology. Theologians are barely interested in detailed acquaintance with philosophy, whereas they pay some anxious attention to modern Cosmology, just in case theological doctrines might be vindicated (or, compromised) by modern science. Scientists, nonetheless, are wont to ignore philosophical reflection, even though there is no *scientific* method which is not in fact a *philosophical* method since the times of the Presocratics and Socrates himself. A sheer dissent on the epistemological premises of constructing a theory is nevertheless there. Thus, the least one should do in aspiring to writing a book such as this is to be alert to the wider context possible regarding not only the theories expounded, but also the import of technical terms, and their alterations, if any, in the course of time. However hard the work, this is the real context for studying Origen.

Modern scholarship on Origen contents itself too much with commenting on modern scholarship, that is, on itself, rather than plunging into the huge

(frequently conflicting) streams of thought which formed thinkers such as the Alexandrian. Sundry schools or individual approaches, both before and after him, are normally left out of serious consideration, with ancient and modern claims about his theology holding sway, although anemophilously reproduced and despite history and documents attesting to a sheer different reality.

Since 1986, I argue for the unpopular thesis that Origen is an anti-Platonist in many respects. This was received with suspicion and distrust within a mindset where branding him a 'Christian Platonist' was (and still is) a matter of course. To be sure, *Hellenism* in theological reflection is a detraction, appearing as a phantasm to be exorcized. I advance my thesis of anti-Platonism in this book, too, but only in respect of points related to my topic. Although these points are numerous in number and diverse in content, it has been out of my scope to afford a comprehensive account of Origen's anti-Platonism. Besides, since in theological orthodoxy *Platonism* is regarded as an obloquy, I should state that I set out to be not Origen's defender, but simply an accurate scholar. This is all about scholarship, not allegiance to persons, schools, or religious denominations. I argue for historical truth about Origen rather than for my personal philosophical convictions, which do not matter too much in this specific book. One point should be made, however: although Origen was a theologian, not a philosopher, philosophy is indispensable for studying his thought. Thus, I feel closer to those who consent to my *methodology* and presuppositions of research, rather than to anyone simply going along with my theses, still on premises of research unacceptable to me. I am utterly uninterested in attempts which make points agreeing to ones of mine (let alone those making *De Principiis* the main source of investigation, which can lead nowhere), once Greek texts of all kinds are not first-hand witnessed and only second-hand assertions by Greek philosophy scholars are selectively upheld to suit one's personal convictions.

It is therefore always useful for any prospective reader, before setting out to study a book, to have a look at its Bibliography, provided this is actually used by the author, not simply supposed to have been consulted with. To aspire to telling others *what* happened, or *how* things stand, is a very serious proposition. A bibliography actually used (that is, put in instrumental use in specific considerations) in the project, is an indicator of how the task was understood by the author, how seriously this was taken, and what the means for its implementation are.

I shall refrain from making claims about 'orthodoxy' or 'non-orthodoxy' in Origen, since I approach his thought from neither a 'polemical' nor a 'sympathizing' point of view. Between being a defender or a detractor of Origen, I have opted for assiduous comparative study of facts, documents and streams of thought, even of detached thinkers, in the widest context possible to me. I wonder, however: it is a coincidence that great and erudite minds, such as Origen, Didymus, Evagrius and John Philoponus, were cast off by bishops backed

by emperors (or, emperors sanctioned by bishops)? History shows that there is an episcopal distrust for secular thinkers, probably because some of the latter were incomparable in learnedness and unmatched in argument with any high office-holder. Ecclesiastical men of the cloth hardly tolerated outstanding minds. It was felt, it seems, that the authority of the doctrine should stem only from the pulpit. This authority, upheld by mainstream modern scholarship, charged Origen with letting history evaporate into thin ideas and lacking any eschatology whatsoever. My proposition is that the Alexandrian formed a distinctly Christian Philosophy of History, faithfully following Paul in making the Cross the midpoint of all history. He also formed an Eschatology, which (although obscure in the Latin of *De Principiis*) is crystal-clear, no matter how putative orthodoxy might receive this.

I wish to thank Professor Jan den Boeft, Editor of the *Supplements to the Vigiliae Christianae* series, for his kind undertaking to read the manuscript and make helpful suggestions. I also thank Mrs. Louise Schouten, Senior Editor, for her congeniality, Mr. Ivo Romein, Editor, for offering to me an excellent collaboration during the entire process of publication, and Mrs. Wilma de Weert, the conscientious and kind editor, who secured transformation of the manuscript into this book, according to the standards of this eminent publishing company.

P. T.

ABBREVIATIONS

1. *Origen's works*

<i>Cels</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Dial</i>	<i>Dialogus cum Heraclide</i>
<i>epAfr</i>	<i>Epistula ad Africanum</i>
<i>epGr</i>	<i>Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum</i>
<i>homGen</i>	<i>Homiliae 1–16 in Genesim</i>
<i>commGen</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Genesim</i>
<i>selGen</i>	<i>Selecta in Genesim</i>
<i>adnotGen</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Genesim</i>
<i>homEx</i>	<i>Homiliae in Exodum</i>
<i>commEx</i>	<i>Fragmentum ex Commentariis in Exodum</i>
<i>selEx</i>	<i>Selecta in Exodum</i>
<i>adnotEx</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Exodum</i>
<i>homLev</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>
<i>selLev</i>	<i>Selecta in Leviticum</i>
<i>homNum</i>	<i>Homiliae in Numeris</i>
<i>selNum</i>	<i>Selecta in Numeris</i>
<i>selDeut</i>	<i>Selecta in Deuteronomium</i>
<i>adnotDeut</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Deuteronomium</i>
<i>adnotLev</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Leviticum</i>
<i>homJos</i>	<i>Homiliae in Josuam</i>
<i>selJos</i>	<i>Selecta in Josuam</i>
<i>adnotJos</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Josuam</i>
<i>selJud</i>	<i>Selecta in Judices</i>
<i>adnotJud</i>	<i>Adnotationes in Judices</i>
<i>frRuth</i>	<i>Fragmentum in Ruth</i>
<i>frReg</i>	<i>Fragmenta 1–22 in Reges</i>
<i>selJob</i>	<i>Selecta in Job</i>
<i>enarrJob</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Job</i>
<i>selPs</i>	<i>Selecta in Psalmi</i>
<i>excPs</i>	<i>Excerpta in Psalmi</i>
<i>frPs</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Psalmos 1–150</i>
<i>commProv</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Proverbia</i>
<i>expProv</i>	<i>Exposita in Proverbia</i>
<i>frProv</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Proverbia</i>
<i>Cant</i>	<i>Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum</i>

<i>minCan</i>	<i>Fragmentum ex Commentario Minore in Canticum Canticorum</i>
<i>homJer</i>	<i>Homiliae 1–20 in Jeremiam</i>
<i>frJer</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Homiliis in Jeremiam</i>
<i>frLam</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Lamentationes</i>
<i>frEz</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Ezechielem</i>
<i>selEz</i>	<i>Selecta in Ezechiel</i>
<i>frOs</i>	<i>Fragmentum ex Commentariis in Osee</i>
<i>fr1,2Matt</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Evangelium Matthaei (in catenis)</i>
<i>commMatt</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri 10–17</i>
<i>frMatt</i>	<i>Commentariorum series 1–145 in Matthaeum</i>
<i>homLuc</i>	<i>Homiliae in Lucam</i>
<i>frLuc</i>	<i>Fragmenta 1–112 in Lucam</i>
<i>commJohn</i>	<i>Commentarii in Joannem</i>
<i>frJohn</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Evangelium Joannis (in catenis)</i>
<i>homAct</i>	<i>Fragmentum ex Homiliis in Acta Apostolorum</i>
<i>comm1Cor</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Epistulam 1 ad Corinthios</i>
<i>commEph</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Epistulam ad Ephesios</i>
<i>frHeb</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Epistulam ad Hebraeos</i>
<i>exhMar</i>	<i>Exhortatio ad Martyrium</i>
<i>deOr</i>	<i>De Oratione</i>
<i>Princ</i>	<i>De Principiis (P. Koetschau)</i>
<i>frRes</i>	<i>De Resurrectione libri ii</i>
<i>Res</i>	<i>Fragmenta de Resurrectione</i>

The following unabbreviated titles indicate Latin translations:

Homilies on Genesis

Homilies on Exodus

Homilies on Leviticus

Homilies on Numbers

Homilies on Joshua

Homilies on Psalms

Homilies on Jeremiah

Homilies on Ezekiel

The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies (R.P. Lawson)

Homilies on Luke

Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans

Whether a citation from *De Principiis* is from Greek or Latin is indicated *ad hoc*, unless this is obvious from the context.

Following Origen, Psalms are numbered after LXX.

Phil Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

2. *Other works*

- ACO Schwartz, E., *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*
epAv Jerome, *Epistula ad Avitum*
FP Butterworth, G.W. (tr.), *Origen on First Principles*
GCS Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
libOr Justinianus Imperator, *Liber adversus Origenem* (or, *Epistula ad Mennam Constantinopolitanum*)
PG J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (volume, page, line)
Mansi J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*
SVF *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (volume, page, verse)
TU Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
COT Tzamalikos, P., *Origen: Cosmology and Ontology of Time*, Brill, Leiden, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Christianity was grounded on the conviction that the advent of Jesus constitutes the epicenter of the world history, the turning point in a process towards salvation. The sense of victory stemmed from the belief that, in the person of Jesus, the first and decisive victory against evil had already been won. What remained was this victory to be realized for the entirety of the world in the future—a future perceived as a *historical* one. This is the fundamental perception on which a Christian conception of history should be formed. The question of the old philosophy about Being and Becoming was not so much expressed in terms of the ‘essence’ of φύσις behind the phenomena. It was now clear that Being is God, whereas Becoming is a meaningful *process* in time, in which divine and creaturely will encounter each other. God manifests his will and man is free to obey or to disobey, to conform or not to conform to it, being responsible for his own conduct. This correlation was seen in the context of a teleological process, a course towards a goal, an *end* (τέλος), which was exemplified and prefigured in the personal life of Jesus and promised to all as an eschatological prospect.

Although the new religion was founded on the events and teaching related to the historical life of Jesus, the history of Revelation was understood to go as back as the creation of the world. This revelation did not come from the mystical experience of any instructor purported to be a chosen vessel of God; it was based on a concrete set of historical occurrences. To elucidate the significance of this event was felt to be the task of Christian theologians. Hence the problem of philosophy of history came forth as one of prime importance. The Presocratic religious question had been treated mainly in terms of pursuing stability behind the *physis* (φύσις) soliciting the essence behind the phenomena. With Christianity the problem of *the world in time* becomes of main priority. To be sure, some pagan schools of thought did quest for a purpose of history. Plato did reflect on the ultimate goal of the earthly life. Aristotle did research on the teleological causal sequence according to which civic life was formed. The Stoics, as well as Cicero, did visualize a world-state based on reason as a goal which human race ought to fulfil. What was entirely new though was the question of an overall *meaning* of human history—a purpose originated in the οἰκονομία, the dispensation of God manifested within the world since its creation.

Origen came into sight in the scene of History at an epoch when Christians were challenged to produce a reasoned argument for their faith: it was no more possible to rest content with the elementary proclamation of the *kerygma*, a duty that the Apologists fulfilled to the best of their ability. He found himself in a social and spiritual setting demanding increasing explicitness. If the required

distinctness seeks supporting arguments in Scripture and, at the same time, decks itself out in the terms and skillfulness of philosophy, the predicament can be overcome by a doctrine of hermeneutics combined with an opposite philosophy. This is what Origen did, while it could be hardly said that his precursors broached along the hermeneutic problem. He then made out the requirement for exegetical rendering of Scripture, the disclosure and exposition of the real relationship of this revelation with the historical continuance. It was the need out of real situations that compelled Origen to move productively on the terrain of history, since challenges around him were too strong to be discounted. He did not have the shield of imperial protection, he was open to all kinds of winds and 'winters', such as that of which he speaks in *commJohn*, insinuating his personal difficulties in Alexandria. Although far from being soaked in abstract logic and any tedious passion for formal classification, he had to draw on classical philosophy and certain techniques of the art of rhetoric, since he addressed himself to a social setting quite different from that of the Apologists. Besides, it was he who carried out a fruitful conjunction of the Church of the fishermen, the poor in mind, with Hellenism, the greatest force which determined the spiritual and social situation of his day, indeed the greatest historical cyclone of the age.

Origen was well equipped for the task which circumstances determined, since he had assiduously studied the Bible as well as the common Hellenic curriculum. This was indispensable for a theologian experiencing a new world coming to the fore at the outset of the new religion. Christianity, against a background of other sects, cults, beliefs and various religions of its time and place, was successful in organizing its tenets into a coherent system. To a considerable extent, this was a feat of Origen. Christian Church eventually became the legatee of Greece and Rome besides claiming to inherit the Hebrew Scriptures. Still this did not happen right from the start. Regarding philosophy of history at least, the term 'normative Christianity' up to the epoch of Origen has liabilities. Through taut argument, he made an effort to dissipate some of the obscurity surrounding a grasp of history of distinct Christian colouration. Yet elusive as it may have been at his time, his theory can be accounted. Origen laid the foundation of the work and provided the material to construct the edifice on the doctrine of a Christian Philosophy of History and Eschatology.

Homonyms

Origen's work was transmitted via divergent, and not rarely forged, manuscripts.¹ Since the principal tenets which make up his theology are incisively bound up

¹ Even during his lifetime, Origen had been impeached for heresy and he complained that his writings had been tampered with. In his epistle to Julius Africanus, he refers to unnamed

with his conception of History, this study *ipso facto* brings to the heart of his theology. A critical key to comprehend his view of History is to recognize the significance of homonyms in his understanding and exposition of Scripture.

Many miscomprehensions are due to failure to grasp this crucial aspect of his methodology, although he emphasized the significance of ‘clarifying the homonyms’² (καθαίροντες τὰς ὁμωνυμίας, that is, making out different conceptions denoted by a certain term) and entertained this tool in interpreting Scripture. Unless this distinction of different realities predicated by one and the same word is made, Origen’s views are bound to be misconstrued. He uses a caustic language for those who are not as mindful as they should be in studying any kind of problem, ‘be it moral, or natural or theological’ (ἡθικὸν πρόβλημα, ἢ φυσιολογούμενον ἢ θεολογούμενον).³ He censures any lack of attentiveness to the duty of being alert to homonymity and set out to be accurate, always ready to disqualify any precarious reading of the scriptural text. ‘Precarious’ is any rendering which compromises a view of God worthy of his majesty. Otherwise, he asserts, people will inevitably fall into conclusions that are either ‘irreverent or stupid’.⁴ It is ‘a characteristic of idiots not to make out the issue of anagogical interpretation of Scripture and not to know how to entertain tropology (μὴ εἰδόντων τροπολογεῖν, μηδὲ συνιέντων τὰ τῆς ἀναγωγῆς τῶν γραφῶν)’.⁵

Cardinal notions such as τέλος (end), αἰὼν (aeon), αἰώνιος (eternal), γῆ (earth),⁶ κόσμος (cosmos), γνῶσις (knowledge), σοφία (wisdom), θάνατος (death),

persons, who might accuse him of ‘falsifying’ (παραχαράττειν) the doctrine of the Church: they lay in wait watching for alleged reasons (ζητοῦσιν ἀφορμὰς) ‘to slunder those who are eminent’ (τοὺς ἐν μέσῳ συκοφαντεῖν) and ‘impute any distinguished person in public’ (τῶν διαφανομένων ἐν τῷ κοινῷ κατηγορεῖν). Cf. *Homilies on Luke*, 25.6: “Others, however, criticize our homilies unjustly and censure us for holding positions that we never knew we held.” Also, *Homilies on Genesis*, 13.3: “I am indeed digging wells. But immediately the adherents to the letter will incite invidious charges against me and will prowl for me. They will forthwith contrive hostilities and persecutions, denying that the truth can stand except upon the soil.” In the Preface of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Rufinus tells us that Origen’s works had been ‘interpolated’. The same he says in the Preface of *Princ.* In his *Apology Against Jerome* and in his *Book on the Adulteration of Origen’s Writings*, Rufinus expresses suspicion that heretics have falsified some passages in Origen’s works.

² *commGen*, 3, PG.12.89.13 (*Philocalia*, 14, 2).

³ *Philocalia*, 14, 2 (*apud commGen*, 3) PG.12.89.8–17. Scripture is posited to contain all three kinds of knowledge: ‘natural’ (φυσικὴν), ‘moral’ (ἡθικὴν), ‘theological’ (θεολογικὴν). *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.25–26. Of them, ‘natural’ knowledge is expounded in Ecclesiastes, ‘moral’ one in the Proverbs, and ‘theological’ in the Song of Songs. *expProv*, 22, PG.17.220.54f. Cf. *frPs*, 76, 21 and *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.25f.

⁴ *Philocalia*, 14, 2 (*commGen*, 3, PG.12.89.32). Cf. ‘stupid and irreverent’ (ἡλίθιον καὶ ἀσεβές), *commJohn*, 2, XXII; *deOr*, XXIX, 10; *selGen*, PG.12.101.4. Clement had emphasized the task of ‘handling homonyms’ properly. *Stromateis*, 8.6.17.1.

⁵ *commMatt*, 10, 14. Cf. *frMatt*, 433, drawing attention to ‘division and tropology of problems’ (διαίρεσις καὶ τροπολογία προβλημάτων).

⁶ *Cels*, VII, 31.

ἀνάστασις (resurrection),⁷ νόμος (law),⁸ προφητεία (prophecy)⁹ can be elucidated only once they are duly pointed out as homonyms. The term *end*, for example, has no less than four denotations (excluding the current meanings of it). Firstly, it may suggest the end of a certain cosmic period (which is the beginning of the next). Secondly, it may allude to the ‘goal’ of an individual rational creature—a goal that may come to pass in any of the aeons to come. Thirdly, it may well betoken the final ‘subjection’ of all rational nature to Christ, as in 1 Cor. 15, 25–27. Fourthly, it may point to the ultimate end, marked by the ‘subjection’ of Christ to the Father, according to 1 Cor. 15, 28. This is why I bring the notion of *end* to the fore, scrutinizing this as a homonym, and arguing that this represents the culmination of a chain of cardinal ideas which make up Origen’s theology.

Without the different imports of a homonym being resolved and the sundry realities denoted by this being clarified, Origen’s theology is bound to be miscomprehended. I shall argue that confusion and apparent contradictions in *Princ* are due to failure (of both Rufinus and Origen’s detractors) to grasp the different realities denoted by the term ‘end’, as well as by other homonyms, such as αἰὼν (aeon) and αἰώνιος (eternal), γνῶσις (knowledge), etc. It will be shown that much of the miscomprehension of his authentic views stem from failure to grasp the importance of homonyms and to point out the import ascribed to them on each occasion.

What I am looking for is an awareness that there is a distinction to be made, which is all the more necessary since scholarship by and large appears to have no inkling of homonymity as a principal key for understanding Origen’s theology, a factor bearing heavily upon his philosophy of history. This places an onus on me to point out and explain the nuances of crucial designations. For neglecting homonyms results to losing one of the tools which (with due caution) can be used in assessing the meaning (indeed meanings) of specific terms. Unless this task is fulfilled certain passages may appear as tantalizingly inconclusive.

Origen himself put forward the importance of homonyms as a prerequisite for understanding the occasionally veiled meaning of Scripture. I myself stressed the importance of studying homonyms in Origen since long time ago, urging that his theology cannot be understood unless the significance of homonyms is pointed out and put into use.¹⁰ Origen’s assertion is that the key to unlocking the Epistle to the Romans is understanding Paul’s use of homonyms: expressions

⁷ *commMatt*, 17, 29.

⁸ *frGen*, PG.12.84.52; *Philocalia*, 9: 1, 2, 3; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7), pp. 150, 152; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21), sections 10, 15, 36a.

⁹ *commICor*, section 48.

¹⁰ P. Tzamalikos, *The Concept of Time in Origen* (1986), Introduction. Cf. *COT*, pp. 16–17.

such as ‘law’, ‘Jew’, ‘circumcision’, ‘death’, are used by Paul repeatedly but with divergent meanings.¹¹ I was glad to come across R. Roukema’s assertion that Origen ‘made homonymity the key of his interpretation of this epistle.’¹² Indeed Origen gives emphasis to points such as the homonymity of ‘natural law’ and the ‘law of Moses’, but Roukema’s remark holds true not only for this particular epistle, but also for all Scripture.

In his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Origen put considerable stress on the importance of homonyms, obviously because he makes extensive use of it in this particular work. In all probability, he felt he could hardly resolve crucial points of this Epistle without having recourse to the notion of homonymity. Recognizing this significant point, the Cappadocians Basil and Gregory who excerpted the *Philocalia*, recorded his remarks about the emphasis placed on the significance of homonyms. Scripture itself makes use of homonyms, he asserts: this ‘should be observed by those who are diligent students of it’, in order to ‘protect ourselves from mistakes and misconstructions’.¹³ This indeed happens, Origen remarks, with those who do not realize that the Scripture employs ‘homonyms’ (ὁμώνυμοι φωναί) and think that, ‘since the name is one, what is designated by this name is also one’ (ὥς ὄνομα ἓν ἐστίν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ σημαίνόμενον ἓν).¹⁴

I wish to lay some stress on the fact that Origen uses Aristotle’s definition of homonyms verbatim.¹⁵ I am not sure whether he had read Aristotle’s *Categoriae* himself, or he used a textbook definition. I find this definition quoted by some authors after Aristotle (either stating their source, or not), which suggests the sentence being a sort of common stock. The Christian author who had definitely read the *Categoriae* was Hippolytus. He also appears to be aware of almost all of Aristotle’s writings available to him at the time: discrediting Basilides’ philosophical knowledge and exposing him, Hippolytus points him up as asserting about homonyms what had already been said ‘many generations ago, by Aristotle in his *Categoriae*’.¹⁶ Likewise, Clement refers to homonyms at various points. At one of them he furnishes a definition,¹⁷ still this is not the word-for-word definition of the *Categoriae*. Other authors (all of them subsequent to Origen, except for

¹¹ He summarizes the content of Romans at the beginning of chapter 2 of his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*.

¹² R. Roukema, *The Diversity of Laws in Origen’s Commentary to the Romans*, p. 9.

¹³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (I.1–XII.21), section 36a; *Philocalia*, 9, 3.

¹⁴ *Loc. cit. Philocalia*, 9, 1. Cf. *commMatt*, 17, 31.

¹⁵ *homJer*, 20, 1: “homonyms are those which have only the name in common, but the account of essence corresponding with the name is different” (ὁμώνυμα δὲ ἐστίν, ὧν ὄνομα μόνον κοινόν, ὃ δὲ κατὰ τοῦνομα τῆς οὐσίας λόγος ἕτερος). Cf. Aristotle, *Categoriae*, I.1.

¹⁶ Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, 7.20.

¹⁷ Clement, *Stromateis*, 8.8.24.7.

Alexander of Aphrodisias) quote Aristotle's definition of 'homonyms' to the letter.¹⁸ What is more important is that Origen returns to this point over and over underscoring its moment.¹⁹

The Origenistic controversy in scholarship

I shall refrain from looking back on theories that make up the ferment over Origen, especially views which have been widely received. It is not only his philosophy of history and eschatology that are beset by misconception. There is a variety of fanciful extrapolations, such as the myth about him espousing a beginningless world of spirits, or about endless recurrence of worlds, or endless time, or 'angelic time', or about him having not eschatological ideas, assigning him with the generation of the Logos wholly on a par with the creation of the world. These are represented as the putative salient features of his theology, which are widely accepted as a matter of course far and wide scholarship. Over many years I have struggled to show that nothing remotely like this is the case. Origen simply cannot afford, on his own principles, to endorse suchlike ideas. One *caveat* should be introduced at this point, however. For all his proverbial literal incisiveness, his theology should be considered in the widest historical context possible and the import of crucial terms should be studied on its own account in comparison with how those terms were loaded in other authors, both prior and posterior to Origen. This is why the bibliography of ancient sources, both pagan and Christian, is so extensive in this book.

It is then not just a cluster of passages that discredit such theories—probably this is the least of all. Rather, it is a general *mentality* imbuing his overall theology, which supplies a whole battery of arguments against such claims and show him holding fast to theories antipodean to those mentioned. For what we

¹⁸ John Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, v. 13,1, pp. 19 & 20. Dexippus, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, pp. 18 & 20. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, v. 8, p. 30. Porphyry, *In Aristotelis Categorias Expositio per Interrogationem et Responsionem*, v. 4,1, pp. 61 & 62. Eustratius, *In Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea i Commentaria*, p. 55. Elias of Alexandria, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, pp. 136 & 139. Ammonius (A.D. cent. 5, Alexandria), *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarius*, p. 17. *Commentaria In Dionysii Thracis Artem Grammatica*, Scholia Marciana (partim excerpta ex Heliodoro), p. 389. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis Topicorum Libros Octo Commentaria*, p. 97. John of Damascus, *Dialectica (Capita Philosophica)*, (recensio fusior), sections 6, 9, 32, 47, 65; *op. cit.* (recensio brevior), sections 15, 30, 48; *Fragmenta Philosophica* (e cod. Oxon. Bodl. Auct. T.1.6), section 14. Theodorus Studites, *Epistulae*, Epistle 528 (Joanni Grammatico: pp. 788–91). Michael Psellus, *Opuscula Logica, Physica, Allegorica, Alia*, Opusculum 51, lines 123f. Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, p. 1449. Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, p. 26.

¹⁹ *Cels*, VII, 31; 34; 38; *Dial*, 11; 16; 22; *commMatt*, 10, 4; 12, 6; 17, 2; 17, 33; *frJohn*, LXXVII; *commJohn*, 13, LXI; 32, XVIII; *Philocalia*, 14, 2 (*apud commGen*, 3; *comm. on Gen.* 1, 16f); *hom-Jer*, 10, 6; 18, 9; *deOr*, XXIX, 2; *frLuc*, 186. *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 26.

have is a clear ban on endless time, a constant orientation to a crystal-clear eschatological expectation, numerous references to the dramatic character of a teleological course of history. It has always been something of a mystery to me how Origen could be open to such assertions, when plain statements of his leave no room for even attenuately proving what is claimed about him; and how his many-pronged assault on Celsus, which involves almost all the aspects of his theology, is not squared with allegations conflicting this indisputable piece of mature work.

Claims about Origen go as back as many centuries ago. Let me just cite an instance of how hearsay about Origen and his life was easily adopted.

It is widely known that Origen was sponsored by Ambrose, a formerly follower of a certain heresy,²⁰ whom he had converted to Christianity. The testimony is currently ascribed to Eusebius, but I can assure that a considerable number of other authors attest to this.²¹ On the other hand, there is a strange testimony by Photius, according to which the man who supplied Origen with the means to carry out his exegetical work was Hippolytus: he is attested to have provided the seven scribes to stenograph his teaching, plus another seven calligraphers, to record the homilies in good handwriting. What is more, Origen is represented to produce theological teaching at the urging of Hippolytus, who is stated to be so demanding that Origen calls him 'a taskmaster' (ἐργοδιώκτην).²²

²⁰ Epiphanius of Salamis reports that Ambrose was a follower of 'either Marcion or Sabellius'. *Panarion (Adversus Haereses)*, v. 2, p. 403: τινὲς δὲ τοῦτον τὸν Ἀμβρόσιον ἔφασαν οἱ μὲν Μαρκωνιστὴν, οἱ δὲ Σαβελλιανόν. An educated and affluent man, Ambrose initially could not find in Scripture the intellectual nourishment he craved, which stimulated him to urge Origen for a sophisticated exposition of the doctrine.

²¹ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.18.1; 6.23.1; 6.28.1. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion (Adversus Haereses)*, v. 2, p. 405. Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon (lib. 1–4)*, pp. 455 & 456. Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, p. 438. Suda, *Lexicon*, entries 182 & 183. John Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum (lib. 1–12)*, v. 3, p. 124. Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, v. 1, pp. 137 & 138. Georgius Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, v. 1, pp. 444 & 445.

²² Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Bekker p. 94a. In the Bible, the term ἐργοδιώκεται has both a pejorative and a laudatory sense. The deprecatory one appears in Exodus, 3, 7; 5: 6, 10, 13, referring to the taskmasters of Pharaoh's, who are normally taken to denote evil power. This is the sense in which Christian authors generally received this word. Cf. ἐργοδιώκεται suggesting 'evil powers': Cyril of Alexandria, *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate*, PG.68.188.22; PG.68.237.54; *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*, PG.69.412.20; *Commentarius in Isaiaem Prophetam*, PG.70.860.32. 'The spirits of wickedness': Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae Spirituales 50* (collectio H), Homily 47, line 72: Cf. *Sermones 64* (collectio B), 11.1.5; 11.2.2; 11.2.9; Homily 47, lines 47 & 130. 'Taskmasters' indicating 'the devil': Ephraem Syrus, *Reprehensio Sui Ipsius Atque Confessio*, p. 78. John Chrysostom, *In Genesim (Homiliae 1–67)*, PG.53.258.1, and in two works dubiously assigned to him: *In Herodem et Infantes*, PG.61.702.10; *In Psalmos 101–107*, PG.55.657.54. Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Isaiaem*, p. 2369. A similar sense in Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina de Se Ipso*, p. 1281. Also, *Chronicon Paschale* (A.D. cent. 7), p. 120. Nicephorus I (A.D. cent. 8–9), *Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815*, ch. 36. Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, p. 390. John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela*, PG.95.1265.28. The same sense (that of evil agents) in Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit*, section 255. Cf.

Origen does in fact use the expression ‘the taskmasters of God’ (τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐργοδιωκτῶν),²³ but he does so referring to Ambrose, who had urged him to compose a commentary on John. It is Ambrose whom Origen addresses in this commentary, as well as in other writings.²⁴ Hence Photius appears to write on the basis of hearsay, which he actually admits (‘it is said that’, λέγεται). One then should wonder why the rest of his information about Origen should be taken as reliable. Regarding historical truth, it seems to me that Photius confused real instances. According to Eusebius, Hippolytus was he who initially inspired Origen to devote himself to scriptural exegesis. After a catalogue of titles of Hippolytus’ works, Eusebius notes that Hippolytus himself, and works of his, became the cause for Origen to start writing commentaries ‘at the urging of Ambrose’.²⁵ Hippolytus was older than Origen and a theologian of note at the time when Origen was an emerging personality in theology. The testimony of Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, is that Origen’s father died a martyr at the time when Hippolytus was flourishing.²⁶ Eusebius tells us that Origen paid a visit ‘to the ancient church of Rome’, but he does not specify that it was Hippolytus that Origen listened to.²⁷ Besides, Eusebius appears unaware of Hippolytus’ see, saying that he was a leader of a certain church ‘somewhere’ (ἐτέρας που καὶ αὐτός προεστώς ἐκκλησίας).²⁸

There is something strange about all this nevertheless. At the time of Photius, who was a meticulous and thoughtful scholar, the *Suda* lexicon was already on offer and the lemma on Origen states Ambrose to be Origen’s sponsor. Is it really strange, or indeed Photius knew something more than the composer of the

De Vita Moysis (lib. i–ii), 1.37. A morally neutral (literal) sense in John Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 318 and Theophanes Confessor (A.D. cent. 8–9), *Chronographia*, p. 440. An approbatory sense of ‘taskmasters’ working ‘toward the works of God’ appears in Scripture: Paralipomenon 1 (Chronicon 1), 23, 4; Paralipomenon 2 (Chronicon 2), 2, 17; 8, 10; Esdras i (liber apocryphus), 5, 56. It is therefore striking that, in all literature, it is only Origen who uses the term in this laudatory sense.

²³ *commJohn*, V, 1; *Philocalia*, 5, 1.

²⁴ *commJohn*, I, II; 2, I; 6, II; 13, I; 20, I; 28, I; 32, I. *Cels*, Pr. 1; III, 1; IV, 1; V, 1; VI, 1; VIII, 1; VIII, 76. *deOr*, II, 1; XXXIV, 1. *exhMar*, I; XIV; XXXVI; XXXVIII. *Epistula ad Ignotum* (Fabianum Romanum). *epAfr*, PG.11.85.47. *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1007.46. *Philocalia*, 15, 1.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.22.1.

²⁶ Nicephorus I, *Chronographia Brevis* (recensiones duae), p. 94.

²⁷ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.14.10–11. J. Daniélou adds to Eusebius testimony that Origen studied under Hippolytus there (*Origen*, p. 20). However Eusebius’ text does not say so, since at that point he does not mention Hippolytus at all. Stating Origen’s wish to visit Rome, Eusebius simply adds that Origen ‘after a short stay there, returned to Alexandria’.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 6.20.2. At another point, he refers to a certain letter of Dionysius of Alexandria (who succeeded Heraclas, a bishop of Alexandria who remained in office for sixteen years until his death) which was read (or, delivered) in Rome through Hippolytus. *Ibid.* 6.46.5. These are all the points where the name of Hippolytus is mentioned by Eusebius in all of his *Ecclesiastical History*, indeed in all of his extant writings.

Lexicon? Be that as it may, it is not that extraordinary to find misidentification in ancient chroniclers. To cite an instance, the 14th century historian Ephraem refers to Origen's father reporting that he died under Alexander Severus (which is correct), his name being Philonides (Φιλωνίδης), instead of Leonides.²⁹

Latin translations

1. *De Principiis*

The impression that *Princ* is Origen's masterpiece still holds sway. This however is largely only a part of the lost *De Principiis*, trustworthy regarding its parts compiled in the *Philocalia*, but now edited as a conspectus of scanty fragments concocted with arguments against Origenism by uninformed opponents. This is a skeletal phantasm, where flesh and tints are applied by biased third parties, mostly disposed to tar Origen with all conceivable stains of heresy. Particularly, the synthesis of P. Koetschau's *Princ* is a massive gleaning of testimonies, most of which do not do justice to Origen: a concoction of selected parts of authentic dicta with biased interpretations of third parties. Where the Greek manuscript is deficient, or fractional (such as that of *Philocalia*), the want is supplied by attestation hostile to Origen. Koetschau's edition is an outstanding example of this way of editing Origen. Jerome, Justinian, Methodius of Olympus,³⁰ partially Photius, John of Damascus and others attested views making all too obvious that the sympathies of the witnesses lay not with the Alexandrian. It is well known that Justinian's depiction of Origen was skewed. The opposition to his putative theology came long after Origen's death, too late for him to return to the fray. In *Princ* there are vestiges of his thought, but Rufinus did not furnish any clarified account of critical notions. Speaking of the Trinity, for example, he slips into temporal language at several points.³¹ His translation renders certain subtle notions clumsily, so as to allow sufficient room for animadversion, which eventually (yet unfairly) is levelled against Origen himself, despite his remarkable linguistic thoughtfulness. The problem with Rufinus, in this work at least, lies in the danger looming of the translator's aspiration to guide the reader through Origen's train of thought—a resolution which at least he had the candour to declare. This results to Latin text being at points a detrimental misrendering of the original. It is unfortunate that too much prominence has been given to this chimerical version.

²⁹ Ephraem (Historian and Poet, A.D. cent. 14, Thrace), *Chronicon*, line 165.

³⁰ Cf. *COT*, pp. 263–64.

³¹ *COT*, pp. 10–11.

The dissension and suspicion surrounding Latin translations could easily lead to suspension of any judgement and positive establishment as to what is, and what is not, authentic about Origen's views. I regard however a suspension of judgement to be worse than any outright denial of some of his real views.

2. *Other Latin translations*

Origen's known translators are Rufinus and Jerome. Extant Latin translations by Rufinus (who died in 411) are *On First Principles*, ten books of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (in 406); sixteen homilies on Genesis, thirteen on Exodus, sixteen on Leviticus (all three of these works on OT, between 403 and 405); twenty-eight on Numbers; (in 410, in Sicily); four books of the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (perhaps, his last translation, after the twenty-eight homilies on Numbers); twenty-six on Joshua and nine on Judges (all two, sometime between 401 and 403), and nine homilies on Psalms. Rufinus also had translated Pamphilus' *Apology pro Origen* and wrote *The Adulteration of Origen's Books*.

Latin translations by Jerome are those of the two homilies on the Song of Songs, eight homilies on Isaiah, fourteen homilies on Jeremiah, and thirty nine homilies on Luke. In his prologue to Origen's *Homilies on Ezekiel*, Jerome said he intended to translate all the homilies, since he regarded the Alexandrian a teacher of the Church second only to the apostles.

There are also anonymous Latin translations of the *Commentary on Matthew*, from Matthew 16, 13 to 27, 63, and of a *Homily on 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 28*, plus fragments of other homilies.

The extent of works preserved in Latin is larger than those extant in the Greek original and Rufinus is the main character under suspicion in the debate about the trustworthiness of Latin translations.

The evidence to be collected from solely the Latin translations is sometimes tantalizingly inconclusive. The task of coping with them is occasionally frustrating, at least in this respect: if they make an 'orthodox' point about this theology, they are put in doubt as untrustworthy, or are maligned as having been tampered with. On that account any evidence is bound to be ambiguous, since this is branded as contestable anyway.

The problem is that there is no (and there could hardly be) universal agreement on the points and the extent to which Latin renderings should be regarded as controvertible. Due to lack of common ground, a widespread subjectivism on the question renders discussion practically impossible. Parts of evidence are discounted to various degrees, portions are dismissed as forgeries simply because they conform to what later came to be the putative orthodoxy. Part of scholarship presents Origen's arguments unsympathetically, in highly abbreviated form, and with only the scantiest indication of how they are meant to work.

If someone is persuaded about Origen maintaining a certain ‘heretic’ doctrine, and wants to hang on to it, he can easily dismiss Latin evidence to the contrary as ‘interpolations by Rufinus’. Any assertion, any assessment, any statement on Origen, could be faulted on this account. To engage in such a disputation simply means to embark on an endless and proving-nothing contest, with indecisive arguments and inconclusive evidence. For the doubts raised about these translations raise questions as to whether Origen holds consistently to this or that opinion, which fits badly with the endless quarrel about who is the author of this or that passage—is it Origen or Rufinus? Did unknown third parties tamper with it? Thus at the end of the day even the most sound argument is disputed as unreliable.

It then turns out to be very hard to establish with certainty definitive views assigned to Origen once Greek texts are not authorized, whereas I believe they deserve to be.³² The puzzlement can be removed when the Greek sources are set out in full. The evidence throws a flood of light on crucial subjects and is too extensive and massive to be set apart. That done, one will never be short of argument. Unless this basis is laid, I think the problem of after all confirming Origen’s theology is insoluble. For in that case any systematic basis is simply abolished. There are no common premises, there is no common scientific ground, there is no common methodology: what is there is only tentative subjective arguments about what is, or what is not, reliable as a source of reference. P. Lawson’s assessment confers a hint of the chaotic state of things concerning the possibility of a positive scientific assessment:

If we compare the recovered Greek fragments of the Commentary with the translation of Rufinus, it is quite obvious that, here as elsewhere, his version is extremely free; and this so much so that throughout the great areas for which we have no Greek remains, we can never be quite certain whether or not he is offering a mere paraphrase of the original, or to what extent he may have expanded or abridged or even changed or ‘corrected’ what Origen had set down.³³

On the other hand, there is the thesis disputing the reliability of Greek texts preserved in the *Philocalia* and Procopius’ Catena on the Octateuch. Here the point is that some scholars challenge not Rufinus’ expansions, but the Greek text itself, which they regard as an abbreviated rendering of a non-extant more extended Greek authentic original (*this* presumed to be Origen’s *real* text). But

³² The reader can see for himself in this book numerous citations in which critical points are invariably supported by evidence involving both undisputed works of Origen’s and certain Greek catenae fragments. These clusters of citations prove both kinds of sources unfailingly conforming with each other.

³³ *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 5.

this invites the following question: if what we have is an *abridged* rendering, what is the point for Origen to quote Proverbs, 10, 19, indeed to refer to Solomon personally, 'If you indulge too much in talking, you shall not avoid sinning' (ἐκ πολυλογίας οὐκ ἐκφεύξη ἁμαρτίαν)?³⁴ Such a comment could never be included in an abridged rendering: does any *abridged* version extend apologies for wordiness? Nevertheless, this suppositious abridged rendering is also posited to have been composed by unknown third parties. In a study comparing the Greek fragments of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans with Rufinus' Latin translation, K.H. Schelkle calls into question the suspicion of Rufinus' trustworthiness and the preference for the Greek fragments: the reliability of the Greek fragments is contested through the outright denial of them being regarded as genuine pieces of Origen's original Commentary. Rather, they are taken as excerpts from the Commentary, that is, summaries of longer passages, having been shaped by the excerptor. The argument is then that the excerpts create their own wording, taking into account Origen's key words and thoughts of his exegesis.³⁵ It seems to me, however, that there are points where the content of the exegesis is too meaningful to be regarded as Rufinus' padding. Thus although I would concede J. Scherrer's assertion that Rufinus has substituted his own exegesis at several points, I would at the same time allow that 'the translation is often accurate, exact, and in large measure faithful'.³⁶

This notwithstanding, it certainly takes a jump to conclusion to assert that the points which Rufinus reformulated are those pertaining to the Trinity.³⁷ The view is a platitude in modern historical-critical mindset of theology, the thesis being that statements about the Trinity and the resurrection of the body are suspicious if they agree with the fourth-century Church dogma. These homilies however are hortatory in nature, concerned with edification rather than with dogmatic disputation. Being sapiential in their mode of argumentation, they do not need to alert theological speculations that might be regarded as being offensive, or even unduly bold. It is hardly plausible that Origen might introduce any 'scandal' into a didactic enterprise of a protreptic character.

Arguing for by and large Rufinus' faithfulness as a translator, Annie Jaubert³⁸ is indeed right in asserting that the hortatory nature of these homilies is precisely an argument in favour of essential fidelity of them. Annie Jaubert, neverthe-

³⁴ *comm* John, 5, IV (*Philocalia*, 5, 3); so in 5, V (*Philocalia*, 5, 4). Cf. *Cels*, V, 1; *deOr*, XXI, 2.

³⁵ K.H. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer der Vöte: Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1–11*, pp. 443–48.

³⁶ J. Scherrer (ed.), *Le Commentaire d'Origène sur Rom. III.5–V.7, d'après les extraits du Papyrus n. 88748 du Musée du Caire et les fragments de la Philocalie et du Vaticanus graecus 762. Essai de reconstitution du texte et de la pensée de tomes V et VI du Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*.

³⁷ Cf. P. Nautin, *Origène. Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre*, pp. 150–52.

³⁸ *Origène: Homélies sur Josué*, p. 68. Cf. p. 81.

less, argues that while Rufinus has remained true to Origen's thought, his work (the Homilies on Joshua) should not be considered as a translation, but as a free adaptation.³⁹ With reference to the Homilies on Joshua, I concur with the conclusion claiming Rufinus' translation to be trustworthy: even if this translation is in fact a long paraphrase, this is not an inaccurate one. Although we cannot be sure of having Origen's expression, still we can trust the text for his thought.

I myself have argued that Rufinus expressed Origen's thought in his own understanding, which has been mostly damaging. His diction does not stand up to Origen's own polished and sophisticated language.⁴⁰ The fact is nevertheless that all comparisons concerning Rufinus' trustworthiness are made between his Latin renderings and extant Greek texts. However, we have only a few Greek fragments being parallel to the homilies now surviving in Latin. Thus, any judgement about Rufinus' creditability concerning these translations is uncertain. I am now convinced that a vast bulk of Origenistic literature is due to this endless and fruitless debate. One scholar makes a claim, those who disagree with the views put forward (because this does not conform to their own sureties) simply cast doubt on the other's (either Latin or Greek) sources, and the dispute goes on inconclusively. This state of affairs however may disappoint and occasion desisting from making a bid. It then turns out to be hard to define Origen's real views, in an epoch when Greek language is all but best liked to scholarship. However, if one rests happily without considering the Greek evidence, he will forfeit much that can be learned about this theology uncorrupted.

To find rival interpretations is not undesirable, provided each case is fairly argued and ably supported. I have myself been tantalized with this problem of inconclusiveness and my position now is that Latin evidence should be considered along with all of Greek writings. The dissension then seems uncalled-for to me, since there is neither conflicting evidence in the Greek corpus nor (*Princ* apart) stumbling-blocks in Latin texts. Moreover, there is nothing such as Plato's ambiguousness and suggestiveness, or Philo's contradictions, which left room for so many subsequent interpretations.

Comparison should be made not between texts, but between *ideas* of Origen's. Rufinus' aim is to convey the voice of Origen, if not always his own words. He is not invariably successful, as I have argued with regard to Origen's philosophy of Time and do the same referring to his Eschatology. In that case Greek texts are indispensable for restoring his authentic mindset. This done, we can discover that Latin translations are mostly faithful in transferring verified ideas. Maybe not

³⁹ *Op. cit.* pp. 81–82.

⁴⁰ *COT*, pp. 10, 12.

all of his words are there, but the essence of his theology makes its distinctive mark. Textual evidence can produce and bolster a reliable grasp of Origen's ideas, not by just sticking to words. For all Origen's devout attention to words, his texts should be received and explored not as a conglomerate of passages, but as functional elements making up a spiritual and historical *attitude*, inherently harmonious and self-consistent. Points betokening a process of evolution in forming certain aspects of this theology cannot be overlooked. The historical adventure of philosophically loaded terms and notions, both before and after Origen, should be explored. No serious account of any aspect of his ideas can be sustained if one thought it could suffice to just read Origen's texts. Again, I should refer the reader to the bibliography, which contains sources functioning in this book, not just consulted with. I therefore would rather disallow the task of quoting assessments about Origen for the sake of endless rebuttal of modern scholarship, although I shall certainly avail myself of portions confirming the real Origen. After all, the original text is the ablest exponent of his genuine thought. Thus, although not leaving Latin translations out of study (they are indeed proved to be valuably supportive) I regard Greek text as the source of resistance to considerations that I argue to be wanting. I still and all believe that, even if Latin translations are (wholly, or at points) regarded as not entirely reliable, they on no account should be left unperused. The puzzlement can then be removed when the Greek sources are set out, without at the same time discarding the Latin textual evidence.

There is one more *caveat* to be introduced however: certain points of Latin translations may result to having to go to lengths of inconclusive interpretation, unless pertinent Greek points are taken into consideration in order to remove ambiguities. In sum, still and all those translations do not contradict Greek texts. In real life though, whenever one comes across points confirming crucial points (such as indefectible Trinitarian accounts) suspicion hangs over Latin portions. Normally the case is that those who call such clauses into question and warn against their trustworthiness, happen not to have read the entirety of Greek corpus, and consequently resort to disputing the authenticity of certain of them. If by any chance the relevant Greek portions were lost, the Latin ones could have been dismissed out of hand, and indeed this is the normal case with scholars who are slow in Greek. Thus there are several remarks impugning Latin passages simply because of unawareness of the same points made in extant Greek texts alike.

Furthermore, Rufinus' prefaces are valuable reports of how he carried out his job in each case. I do not see why he should not be given the credit of honesty and trustworthiness.⁴¹ Wherever necessary, he does not shade his intention to

⁴¹ Cf. Monica Wagner, *Rufinus the Translator. A Study of His Theory and Practice as Illustrated in His Version of the Apologetica of St. Gregory Nazianzen*, p. 11.

eliminate whatever he knew it was rancorous distortions.⁴² I am surprised at F. Winkelman⁴³ expressing distrust for Rufinus' statements in his prologues, and questioning the honesty of these statements. In the past, as well as in this book, I have expressed asseverated doubts about Rufinus' aptitude to comprehend sophisticated notions and offer nuanced constructions. Further, shortcomings of his performance as a translator crop up here and there. To challenge his *truthfulness*, however, seems to me to be an exaggeration. A certain *ethos* of Rufinus' personal history, such as his faith and his struggle to get his message across, cannot be left unaccounted for. The heated arguments which swirled around Origen's thought were advocated by men who, to say the least, did *believe* what they argued for. To spend long periods conducting an ascetic life was a matter of personal devotion, not a question of playing politics. No matter what mistakes, virtues or shortcomings occur in one's mental capacities, we should not entertain the unconsidered idea that all those people at those times spent their own unique and entire lifetime just for the sake of seducing others to fallacies. For they were times when people pursued their causes, being in the first place themselves indoctrinated by the truth they espoused. Barring Rufinus' rendering of *Princ* involving more than free translation, which means omission or modification of contestable material, I take his testimony to be given without any ulterior motive or a veiled aim other than his conviction about his mentor's orthodoxy. If we were to dispute his *integrity*, not simply theological aptitude, this is tantamount to charging him with the attempt to smuggle a heretic (whom Rufinus *knew* he was a heretic) into the Church—which seems to me a wanting assumption. I would characterize his overall performance using a word that Origen himself had used about the disciples of Jesus: a guileless (ἀπάνουργον) testimony.⁴⁴ For all his shortcomings, Rufinus cannot be refused ethical credence.

Regarding the creditability of Latin rendering, one cannot normally produce definitive conclusions by simply putting Greek and Latin texts side by side. Firstly, Latin translations render an abbreviated version of the original text. The Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is a telling case: the surviving

⁴² Cf. Rufinus, *Liber de Adulteratione Librorum Origenis. Praefatio ad Heraclium; Praefatio De Principiis* 1.3.

⁴³ F. Winkelman, "Einige Bemerkungen zu des Rufinus von Aquileia und des Hieronymus über ihre Übersetzungstheorie und methode", pp. 534–45.

⁴⁴ A very rare word, used once in *Cels*, III, 24. Unknown to classical epoch, it was used only by the 2–3 cent. A.D. writers Athenaeus and Philostratus. Origen must have upheld this either from Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* (libri 1–2), 1.1.20, or from writers he had read, such as Plutarch and Sextus Empiricus. No other instances of use of the word ἀπάνουργον before Origen are attested. After him, this was used once or twice by each of Eusebius, Didymus the Blind, Cyril of Alexandria and Epiphanius of Salamis, being otherwise absent from Christian literature. The fact that this was used by Porphyry once (*Contra Christianos*, Fr. 7) reinforces my assumption that he was well aware of Origen's writings. s. *infra*.

Greek fragments only rarely show word-for-word correspondence with Rufinus' Latin translation; he has in fact omitted half of the original. Secondly, the *Catena* string together thoughts in a sentence according to certain key words familiar to those acquainted with this theology, but they do not always reproduce entire passages. Thirdly, portions of Origen found in other writers' works serve to the exposition of a certain topic. A case in point, we find Greek fragments of Origen's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, in 1) Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* 29.73. 2) Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, 7.32.17. 3) The *Catena*. 4) The *Philocalia*. 5) The *Tura Papyrus* discovered in 1941. The purpose of each of these sources is different. A certain author quoting Origen has mainly in mind his own priorities. Thus, when Socrates uses a quotation from Book 1 of the *Commentary* (not found anywhere to correspond to Rufinus' translation) he is discussing the Nestorian dispute and claims that Origen had used the title θεοτόκος ('mother of God') with reference to Mary in his commentary. His aim was to prove that tradition supported the contested title for Mary; it was not to preserve Origen's *Commentary* for posterity. Yet when he comes to afford an account of Trinitarian Theology, that is, of the most august doctrine of the Church, he is quite explicit and unequivocal: "At all the points of his writings Origen professes the Father as co-eternal with the Son"⁴⁵ and adduces Athanasius' testimony confirming Origen's Trinitarian orthodoxy.⁴⁶ I do not then see why everything that Rufinus translates should be branded as fabrication simply because this happens to demonstrate Origen anticipating orthodox views.

My methodology then does not aim at matching Latin passages with Greek ones (which is a task frustrating and sometimes impossible), but at confirming *views* found both in Greek and Latin portions. So far, I have found no significant conflict between these texts, at least on issues that I have been concerned with.

The main question, however, is this: in the event of certain portions of Origen's being dismissed as untrustworthy, have they been studied in the first place? For I know of entire monographs written with virtually no engagement with the vast bulk of his surviving works, be they Greek or Latin. Perhaps it is the barrier of language, due to which the study was not extended over the whole of the extant Greek and Latin texts; perhaps it was deemed convenient to abide by inveterate verdicts about the Alexandrian.

I conclude therefore that Latin translations could be used massively, provided analogous or equivalent passages on the same subject are adduced in order to confirm conclusively the point made. I disagree with P. Nautin that Rufinus'

⁴⁵ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 7.6.

⁴⁶ Socrates, *op. cit.* 6.12, referring also to the testimony by Athanasius, *De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi*, 27.1. Cf. *op. cit.* 2.21, attesting to Origen's Trinitarian orthodoxy.

translation of the *Apology* by Pamphilus altered on the occasion of the Trinity, although he admits that this is literal in other passages that can be compared with Greek fragments where the doctrine of the Trinity is not discussed.⁴⁷ With respect to History and Eschatology, my assertion is that the ideas are really Origen's, if at points obscured by the hand of Rufinus. This deficiency though can be overcome through painstaking study.

Origen and Platonism

My contention is that important aspects of Origen's thought conflict with Platonism. For a long period of time the assertion (regarded as a stricture) of Platonism in Origen was not easily defensible. This because a misleading past has rendered this assumption quite attractive to scholarship, even though it can be shown by argument to be wrong. Sometimes, the conclusion of Platonism was disqualified or claimed to be wrong, but the error in the argument was not diagnosed. This leaves something of a mystery, because it is not the case that the claim of 'Platonism' was ably supported, but only because allegations of third parties slotted in the *First Principles* were promptly upheld. Actually, the claim of Platonism in Origen appears so baffling, that argument would be needed to establish not its incoherence, but its coherence. For it thrives on half-truths confronting his own statements and cardinal ideas, with 'Platonism' being mostly a flight of fancy in heads of unlearned authors (mainly bishops) of old times, whose views were upheld by modern theologians no less uninformed about what Plato really wrote.

Many scholars inculpated Origen and Gnostics, whom they lumped together, and Justinian himself had made the case against alleged Platonism in Origen sharper. This was probably a product of the so-called 'Origenistic controversy', stemming from the putative 'Origenism' of the 6th century, of which the real father(s) was anyone but Origen himself. Willing witnesses found it all too easy to content themselves with incriminating this theology as a comprehensive arid rendering of Platonism in Christian terminology. Although the founder of Neoplatonism was a younger contemporary to Origen (let alone Porphyry, who started his affiliation with Plotinus's school at Rome well after Origen's death), we are invariably besieged by the hackneyed assertion that his Trinity was a Plotinian triad. But the critical objection to this is why should the triadic ontological scheme of the *Enneds* not be a modified version of Origen's ideas. Why should not Porphyry's denigrating comments⁴⁸ on Origen be a proof

⁴⁷ P. Nautin, *op. cit.* pp. 150–52.

⁴⁸ Cf. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.19.7–9 (Porphyry, *Contra Christianos*, Fr. 39).

of how well Plotinian circles were aware of the Alexandrians thought, who antedated them all?

In the Christian mindset, 'Platonism' is considered as a reproach, which was levelled against Origen. However, those who regard themselves as 'orthodox' Christians countenance a teaching about constitution of human nature that is heavily dominated by Platonic theory. In fact we hardly find any trace of the distinctive biblical anthropology, as we now interpret it, particularly regarding life and personality as a function of the human body animated by the divine spirit. The truth is though that Origen espoused a notion held in derision by many Platonists, which nevertheless was originated in the Hebraic tradition: survival as resurrection of the body. According to Platonists, material things make up only the lower half of the wholeness of reality, indeed the far less dignified half of it. For them the body is the source of passion, of meanness and decay, the most outright representation of degeneration of materiality; this ought to dissolve irrevocably. Likewise, to Gnostics 'resurrection' as a return to materiality was nothing less than a curse. Rejecting the notion of the soul surviving without a body, Origen virtually denied the idea of resurrected bodies living in a discarnate form: he defended resurrection *in a body*; although this is understood to be a body of a different quality, still this is a definitely *material* body. On this point he conveniently adopted the Stoic tenet of universal materiality. The salient point though is that, *pace* Paul, he made resurrection the central theme of his thought, indeed of all Christian doctrine: if there is no resurrection, there is no Christian faith and all Biblical history is void of any meaning at all.⁴⁹ No one after Paul made so strenuously the Cross and Resurrection the pivotal point designating all history from start to finish.

*Tentative Theological Conjectures*⁵⁰

Origen lived in an epoch in which many doctrines of the Church were not yet definitively established, thus being open to tentative theological conjectures. Some symbolic interpretations therefore appear excessive, maybe defective, still it is he who states himself to be apt to a better resolution. Humility and modesty did not abandon him. He refers to his 'mediocre intellect' (τὸ ἑμαντοῦ τῆς διανοίας μέτριον),⁵¹ which should 'make clear what is denoted by the evangelical word' (καθαίρωμεν τὸ ἐν τῇ ἐκκειμένῃ λέξει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου σημαινόμενον) as far as he could (ὅση δύναμις).⁵² Maybe the problem was after all what the *Suda* Lexicon says about him: he was too active because of his vast experience

⁴⁹ *Cels*, II, 77; *Dial*, 5; *homJer*, 17, 6; *commMatt*, 17, 29; 17, 33; *commICor*, section 84.

⁵⁰ Cf. πρόβλημα θεολογούμενον: *Philocalia*, 14, 2 (*commGen*, 3), PG.12.89.7.

⁵¹ *epAfr*, PG.11.48.23.

⁵² *commMatt*, 17, 29. Cf. *Cels*, VII, 1; *frPs*, 4, 1.

(τὸ τῆς πολυπειρίας δραστήριον).⁵³ This Origen himself concedes, addressing himself to Ambrose and saying that he ‘left nothing out of investigation according to the measure’ of his ‘ability’,⁵⁴ admitting at the same time that he did this as far as he was able to wake of the grace bestowed upon him (κατὰ τὴν δεδομένην ἡμῖν χάριν, ὡς κεχωρήκαμεν).⁵⁵ Numerous are the instances where he propounds an interpretation while hoping that someone else might provide an improved resolution in future consideration. He urges his audience not to hesitate to adopt a better solution once they come across one. Thence his expressions ‘to the extent we understood this’ (ὡς ἐχωρήσαμεν)⁵⁶ and ‘to the extent we understood according to the grace bestowed upon us’ (ὡς κεχωρήκαμεν).⁵⁷ In one of his scarce references to his own self, we see him expressing theological views which he holds ‘in private’ (ιδίᾳ), while the passage shows his approach to theological speculation in relation to his duties and responsibility as a preacher of the Church:

We make these comments while somehow in private (ιδίᾳ) preserving for ourselves and defending the version (ἐκδοχῆς) that ‘all days’ suggest those ‘days until the end of the aeon’⁵⁸ in relation to things human nature is capable of grasping while it is still here. For it is possible also, if that exegesis is preserved, to attach attention to the ‘I’, so that the one who is with those sent to make disciples of all the nations ‘until the end’ is the one who emptied himself and took the form of a servant. . . . But whether this suggests all days until this time, or just all days, or not even all, but every day—this will be possible to be considered by anyone who wishes to do so (ἐνέσται σκοπεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ).⁵⁹

Although there is a certain preaching put forward, there are certain alternative ‘versions’ (ἐκδοχαί), which are left to be considered by those ‘who wish’ to do so. He oftentimes expresses more than one views on a text, without opting for any of them. Adventurous as they may have been, his surmises were at least disciplined *vis-à-vis* what apparently were undisciplined portions of Scripture. Besides, since Paul had declared himself to be ‘rude in speech’ (ιδιότης τῷ λόγῳ)⁶⁰ Origen expresses some apprehension lest Paul wrote something while

⁵³ *Suda*, Alphabetic letter omega, entry 183. The author of the lexicon (A.D. cent. 10) probably received this from Georgius Monachus (A.D. cent. 9, Alexandria), *Chronicon* (lib. 1–4), p. 456; *Chronicon Breve* (lib. 1–6) (redactio recentior), v. 110, p. 537. The text is invariably reproduced by Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus (A.D. cent. 10, Constantinople), *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, v. 1, p. 139 and Georgius Cedrenus (A.D. cent. 11–12, possibly Constantinople), *Compendium Historiarum*, p. 1, p. 445.

⁵⁴ *Cels*, VII, 1. This literally refers to his reply to Celsus’ claims, but it holds true for the whole of his exegetical activity.

⁵⁵ *deOr*, XVIII, 1.

⁵⁶ *commMatt*, 15, 37.

⁵⁷ *deOr*, XVIII, 1.

⁵⁸ *Matt*, 28, 20.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Phil*, 2, 7. *commJohn*, X, 10.

⁶⁰ 2 *Cor*, 11, 6.

he meant to say something different (ἕτερον τοῦ νενοημένου τὸ γεγραμμένου). It is not then only an inherent difficulty to grasp the deeper meaning (τὸ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν δυσθῆρατον), but also Paul's slowness in Greek, that might produce alternative interpretations (πλείονας ἐκδοχὰς γίνεσθαι τοῦ γεγραμμένου). Any of them, although might appear appropriate to the exegete, might at the same time cause problems to others who do not share the same understanding of Scripture (δόξει τοῖς μὴ ὁμοίως νενοηκόσιν παρέχειν πράγματα).⁶¹

Such expressions betoken a propriety of personal interpretations so that audience or readers be orientated not to his own assertions, but to the quest for the renewing activity of the Trinity within the world. On account of the same premise, he frequently declares his exegeses valid only 'in proportion' to his own ability (ὅση δύναμις).⁶² This means that he only advances a hypothesis for inquiry, quite modestly saying this:

These thoughts for the passage at hand have occurred to us at present. If, however, someone finds out something more appropriate, let the reader not feel diffident to receive those things, forsaking the things I have said.⁶³

Likewise, at another point:

For the time being we have been able to propose the foregoing account concerning the rationale behind circumcision. We have nevertheless said those things on the condition that if anyone should address these questions in a more appropriate and more rational manner, let his arguments rather than mine be upheld.⁶⁴

There are points where he refrains from offering a resolution, although it was himself who introduced the problematique on a certain point. His phrase "we offer this opinion not as a definitive resolution" (ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἀποφαινόμενοι λέγομεν) is followed by this: "for matters of such enormity need to be thoroughly thought about to determine if they are so, or not".⁶⁵ This shows that formation of an integrated and closed dogmatic system was never his intention. Even in the *Princ*, which is an early attempt to recapitulate and organize the principal doctrines of the Church, he refrains from always furnishing definitive resolutions of his own, although he proposed two or three alternatives to certain questions. He allows the reader to employ a resolution for himself, which would be unthinkable should his aim had been the synthesis of an integral and definitive doctrinal system. This he had declared himself to be a deliberate methodology:

⁶¹ *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 218.

⁶² *Cels*, I, 48; V, 5; V, 28.

⁶³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.8.9.

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.* 2.13.33. Cf. *Princ* (Lat.), II.6.7.

⁶⁵ *commJohn*, 13, L. In like manner, *commMatt*, 13,30: "for we do not resolve for any definite answer" (ἡμεῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἀποφαινόμεθα). He was nevertheless aware of the risk, hence his use of the verb *παράκινδυνεύειν* (putting myself into great risk): *Cels*, V, 26 (*Philocalia*, 22, 6); *homJer*, 20, 4. Cf. p. 80, n. 137; p. 105, n. 351; p. 241, n. 25; p. 407, n. 147.

And what must we say about the prophecies, which we all know are filled with riddles and dark sayings?⁶⁶ Or, if we come to the gospels, the accurate interpretation even of these, since it is an interpretation of the mind of Christ,⁶⁷ demands... grace... And who, on reading the revelations made to John, could fail to be amazed at the deep obscurity of the unspeakable mysteries contained therein... and as for the apostolic epistles, what man who is skilled in literary interpretation would think them to be plain and easily understood, when even in them there are thousands of passages that provide, as if through a window, a narrow opening leading to multitude of the deepest thoughts? Seeing therefore that these things are so, and that thousands of men make mistakes, it is dangerous for us when we read to declare lightly that we understand things (οὐκ ἀκίνδυνον ἐν τῷ ἀναγινώσκειν εὐχερῶς ἀποφαίνεσθαι νοεῖν) for which the 'key of knowledge' is necessary, which the Saviour says⁶⁸ is with the lawyers.⁶⁹

Parts of exposition are then left moot and definitive resolutions are eschewed with the denouement left to the reader's judgement.⁷⁰ Yet, despite certain ideas put forward tentatively and others proffered as a surmise to be considered, these points did not escape the ravages of time and were taken (either in good faith, or not) as conclusive theological doctrines propounded tenaciously. In fairness to him, however, it should be said that he views the inconclusive issues with caution, as very complex ones, and presents his conclusions only tentatively proposed as conjectures, offering them as possible, not as mandatory.⁷¹ He obviously could not forego his ambition to bring unresolved theological questions to the fore, unable to foresee that some merely bold speculations were eventually misconstrued as blatant heresies.

He ventures alternative answers and resolutions as a kind of 'training' (γυμνασία) of mind.⁷² This task is imposed by the Scripture itself, which contains expressions in the form of 'riddles', 'enigmas' and 'parables', precisely for the purpose to train the 'sagacity' of those who hear them.⁷³ He allows for

⁶⁶ Cf. Prov. 1, 6. *commJohn*, 2, XXVIII; *Cels*, III, 45; VII, 10; *Princ*, IV.2.3 (Gr. & Lat.); *hom-Jos*, p. 415; *Philocalia*, 1, 10; 2, 2; 18, 16; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1077.34; *commrProv*, PG.13.20.27–28; PG.13.21.52; 13.25.39–40.

⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 2, 16.

⁶⁸ Luke, 11, 52.

⁶⁹ *Princ* (Gr.), IV.2.3.

⁷⁰ Cf. *commJohn*, 10, X: after having expounded three alternatives, the actual import of the eschatological state is 'left to be considered by whom who wishes to do so'. *commJohn*, 6, IV; *Cels*, V, 29.

⁷¹ An example of evolution of central theological ideas during his lifetime, in *COT*, pp. 301–2.

⁷² *commMatt*, 14, 12. "We have expounded this for the sake of exercise of mind, both that of ours and of those who are with us".

⁷³ *Cels*, III, 45; VII, 10. This view was upheld by Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 14, 33; *Homilia Dicta in Lacis*, PG.31.1440.16; *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 2, 3; *Sermones de Moribus a Symeone Metaphrasta Collecti*, PG.32.1136.31. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Professione Christiana ad Harmonium*, v. 8,1, p. 129.

‘statements’ which are not meant ‘to be doctrines’ but are proposed ‘for the sake of discussion’, lest it might appear ‘that a question has been mooted without discussion’.⁷⁴ There are points, however, where he does not wish to expound such conjectures, for fear that his tentative propositions might be misunderstood by his audience.⁷⁵ The fact is that the crucial distinction between ‘logical training’ (γυμνασίας λογικῆς) and ‘doctrinal’ affirmation (δογματικῆς) is clearly made.⁷⁶ His ideal was that ‘nothing should be left out of study’ (ἀνεξέταστον),⁷⁷ a stance promptly upheld by the Cappadocians, too: everything should be considered, but not all considerations should result to definitive doctrinal statements. The theologian could stop at the crossroads just proposing optional conjectures, not rigid designations, having nevertheless left nothing out of assiduous inquiry (ἀνεξέταστον).⁷⁸

We have already seen Athanasius attesting to Origen entertaining theological conjectures, not pressing definitive doctrines.⁷⁹ This statement should be taken seriously,⁸⁰ since his practice was followed by his Cappadocian admirers. Gregory of Nyssa warns that what he said should be left ‘to the judgement of the hearers’, for ‘the proposition is not a definitive affirmation, but an exercise and inquiry’ (οὐ γὰρ ἀπόφασις, ἀλλὰ γυμνασία καὶ ζήτησις).⁸¹

⁷⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), I.8.4.

⁷⁵ *commMatt*, 15, 5. He refers to the painful question of ‘castration’, as in Matt. 19, 12: “since we do not want to become a pretext to those who do not understand the words of Jesus about castration in the way these words should be understood, and they assume them to be proposed physically”. s. *infra*, n. 105.

⁷⁶ *commMatt*, 15, 33. Cf. *frLuc*, 186.

⁷⁷ *Cels*, III, 23&53; VII, 1; *commJohn*, 1, XXXIV; 2, XVIII; 6, XV & XXXV; 19, XIII; 32, V; *frJohn*, XLVIII; *deOr*, XVI, 1; *commMatt*, 13, 14; *commICor*, section 18; *expProv*, 10, PG.17.188.29; *frJer*, 2, 2; *Philocalia*, 10, 2; 18, 1; 18, 23. Epiphanius of Salamis, who saw himself as the antipathetic critic of all theological aberration, tells us that this tendency ‘to leave no part of Scripture without an exegesis’ (μηδὲν τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἔασις ἀνερμήνευτον), along with Origen’s ‘vast experience’, was the cause for him to incur a tremendous fall (τὸ τῆς πολυπειρίας εἰς μέγα πτώμα). s. his compendious *Panarion* (*Adversus Haereses*), v. 2, p. 409.

⁷⁸ Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistulae*, 79.10; 244.3. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 1.1.225; 2.1.593; 3.1.27; 3.1.29; 3.1.43; *De Opificio Hominis*, pp. 128; 229; *De Professione Christiana ad Harmonium*, v. 8.1, p. 130. Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae Morales*, PG.31748.10. John Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio* (*lib. I–6*), 2.4.

⁷⁹ Athanasius, *De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi*, 27, 1: “those things which he wrote as an inquiry and exercise should not be taken as his own conclusive views” (ὅς ὡς ζητῶν καὶ γυμνάζων ἔγραψε ταῦτα μὴ ὡς αὐτοῦ φρονούντος δεχέσθω τις). He adds that there should be a clear distinction between his riposts to heretics and his definitive doctrinal propositions. In my view, some of his statements against Celsus should be considered under this light, such as *Cels*, VIII, 15, apparently giving the impression of subordinationism supported, but running contrary to the real spirit of his theology once read in this way.

⁸⁰ The same distinction is made about Theognostus’ expositions. Athanasius, *op. cit.* 25.2.

⁸¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *De Tridui Inter Mortem et Resurrectionem Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Spatio* (*In Christi Resurrectionem Oratio I*), v. 9, p. 286. The same he says in *De Opificio Hominis*, p. 185: “not as a definitive resolution, but as an exercise” (οὐκ ἀποφαντικῶς, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν γυμνασίας εἶδει). Cf. *Dialogus de Anima et Resurrectione*, PG.46.57.40; *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, p. 68.

This is not unusual: tentative theories were propounded in the first centuries, before the doctrine began to settle in semi-fixed, or even fixed, formulas. These works have their own special singularities and it is fair for everyone who dared to propose guidelines to be assessed within a specific historical and social context, as it happened with the Apologists, for instance. Basil's refraining from calling the Holy Spirit 'God' does not make him a heretic, whereas it is a truism that Athanasius, the hero of orthodoxy, might have made some of his formulations fuller, had he lived a couple of centuries later. The question is whether the Church, which teaches compassion and forgiveness, can accept what she regards as inconvenient conjectures of Origen's to be perhaps errors of a pioneer, not claims of a heretic. For he at many points speaks tentatively, bringing forth questions for meditation by his audience, being neither settled doctrines, nor dogmatic assertions. The doctrine of pre-existence of souls, to cite an instance, was considered in the Church as late as during the fifth century. Hence, it would be unfair to condemn Origen on this point, which the Church had not settled down during his lifetime.

He was confident that human intellect could comprehend certain doctrines through divine enlightenment. His anti-Platonic attitude on the causative relation between 'virtue' and 'knowledge'⁸² led him to leaving some truths out of any express exposition. The Holy Spirit might lead a Christian to comprehension of those secret truths following conduct of a virtuous life; but this is understood to be a divine gift, not a causative result subsequent to a certain intellectual exercise.

In *Dial* he extensively expresses his 'agony' and awe at his intention to say a few words about the 'mystical' doctrine of the soul. The reader of those introductory statements should notice a significant point: he does not call on his audience to listen carefully, so that they can understand, or to concentrate on the words in order to comprehend them. But he says: "we have arrived at a mystical teaching... transform yourselves, leave evil behind, abandon any opposition, wrath, quarrel, anger, grievances, dissension, so that there will be no schisms among you, but you all be restored in one mind and in one disposition." And yet he continues: "I feel agony proposing to speak, I feel agony proposing not to speak" (ἀγωνιῶ καὶ εἰπεῖν, ἀγωνιῶ καὶ μὴ εἰπεῖν).⁸³ He mentions a certain

⁸² s. ch. 5, pp. 170, 172; ch. 7, p. 209: it is not Knowledge that leads to Virtue, but the opposite way around.

⁸³ *Dial*, 15. The notion of being 'mystical' is a recondite, and frequently a hostile one, to Western readers. Normally it connotes an unmediated knowledge (of a teaching, a doctrine, or of God) obtained through enlightened experience, not by discursive reasoning, let alone analytical argument. In Christian authors, this betokens a deeper apprehension of doctrines inculcated by the Church. This suggests a bottomless and unfathomable perceptive penetration into doctrines of the Church out of divine inspiration. In Origen's analyses, mystical knowledge stands side by side with a rational academical exposition of his theology. Relevant to 'mystical doctrines' is his appeal to a specific dogma being a 'mystery'. (Cf. 'the great

perspicacity being necessary for those under instruction, meaning the astuteness of perception that can be obtained only once man has been freed from the bondage of wickedness. Simplicity of mind is the same righteous existential position, through which crooked and fallacious doctrines may be seen as what they really are, and thus can be subsequently shunned.

There is an obvious difference of existential attitude in the quest for knowledge, which is a point of antithesis between Origen and Platonism. At the same time though, his attitude prevented him from presenting a detailed account of mystical doctrines. Once a man has (through proper disposition and action) prepared himself for the Holy Spirit to visit him and grant him the gift of comprehension, there is no need to couch in words what is beyond language. Those who deserve to learn veiled truths will be enlightened and taught by God.

There is a stream of scholarship postulating a wholesale 'Platonic' identity to Origen's thought. What is almost always forgotten, however, is that it is Origen himself who singles out Platonic views, for the purpose of juxtaposing them with his own conceptions. Had he upheld a notion redolent of a Platonic outlook, would it be too difficult for him to say a few words about it? *Cels* promptly concedes certain of his viewpoints appearing to be similar to Platonic views. Those points are pointed out, and considered with portions of Plato's works quoted whenever necessary.

On the issue of history and eschatology, Origen knows that his views have nothing to do with those of any pagan philosopher. It is no accident that this section of *Cels* is one of the shortest of the entire work. He quotes the challenge by Celsus, yet he does not regard him worthy of a full reply on a question which requires the listener to be of an entirely different background. In any event, there could be little which might be explicated, due to his constant

mystery of resurrection', which is 'hardly comprehensible', *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI & XXXV; *commMatt*, 13, 21; *Cels*, I, 7. Cf. *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17:324.30; 325.1 & 17.365.43. *commJohn*, 32: II, VII, VIII, XXI. *frJohn*, LC & LCIII). Although his mind was probably crossed by the practice of ancient mysteries, scriptural authority for referring to 'mystery' was available to him in abundance (Cf. Tobit, 12, 7. Matt. 13, 11; Luke, 8, 10; Mark, 4, 11; 1 Cor. 2, 1 & 7; 4, 1; 13, 2; 14, 2; 15, 51; Eph. 1, 9; 3, 3-4 & 9; 5, 32; 6, 19; Col. 1, 26-27; 2, 2; 4, 3; 2 Thess. 2, 7; 1 Tim. 3, 9 & 16; Rev. 1, 20; 10, 7; 17, 5 & 7.). He appeals to 'mystical doctrines' quite often, quoting Rom. 11, 25 and Eph. 5, 32: *commJohn*, 19, IV; 32, VII; *Cels*, IV, 49; *frJohn*, XI, XLV; *commMatt*, 17, 34; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), 11, 25. So he does with Rom. 16, 25 (*Cels*, II, 4; III, 61; IV, 1; *commJohn*, 6, IV; 13, LXVI; *selPs*, 50, PG.12.1453.48; *Philocalia*, 1, 7 & 29) and 2 Thess. 2, 7 (*Cels*, II, 50; VI, 46; *homJer*, 19, 14; *selPs*, 27, PG.12.1288.4). His references to a μυστήριον exceeds one hundred instances in his Greek writings. This approach initiated the Patristic tradition of reference to 'mystical doctrines' of the Church, which I discuss later (pp. 359-60; 362; 365; 367; 371-72; 377). The term 'mystical' qualifies a sublime grasp which is hard or impossible or not permissible to couch. 'Allegorical' is a sublime interpretation rendering a universal principle out of a concrete narration: this is always possible to explicate.

care not to 'betray' what he held to be secret mysteries of the wisdom of God entrusted him with.⁸⁴

The doctrines about these questions are great⁸⁵ and mystical. To this teaching the saying, 'it is good to hide the mystery of the king'⁸⁶ is befitting. For we do not want the teaching about souls (which do not assume a body according to a doctrine of transmigration) to be cast before just any audience, nor that holy things should be given to the dogs, nor that pearls be cast before swine.⁸⁷ For that would be impious, as it involves a betrayal of the secret mysteries of the wisdom of God (προδοσίαν περιέχον τῶν ἀπορρήτων τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίας λογίων), of which it is well written, 'Wisdom will not enter into a soul that practices evil, neither will it dwell in a body involved in sin' (εἰς κακότεχνον ψυχὴν οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται σοφία οὐδὲ κατοικήσει ἐν σώματι κατὰχρεφ ἁμαρτίας).⁸⁸ It is then enough to give an account of the doctrines which are said in a mystical way, under the guise of a story, by just following the course of that story, in order that those who have the ability may work out the meaning of the passages for themselves.⁸⁹

This concern prevented him from expounding a detailed account of these mystical doctrines, even at the risk of his thought being misapprehended. He advanced some conjectures, reporting rather than endorsing any of them, but never did he offend the putative faith. History shows that his statements of humility, restraint and reservation, along with his concern for congruence between confession and community, proved inadequate to prevent from far-reaching miscomprehension.

On the method of Biblical interpretation

Beyond the Greek and Philonic method of allegory, this had been already practiced in Christian exegesis. Origen mentions an elder⁹⁰ who had furnished an allegorical interpretation of the parable of Good Samaritan, on which he

⁸⁴ *Cels*, V, 29.

⁸⁵ Cf. Heb. 5, 11.

⁸⁶ Tobit, 12, 7. *Cels*, V, 19; V, 29 (*Philocalia*, 22, 8). In Latin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5; 5.1.10; 6.8.2; 8.12.8. One should reflect on why, in *Princ*, III.1.17, at the points expressing this notion, portions of Greek text are missing, while the Latin parallel renders them clearly.

⁸⁷ Matt. 7, 6. *Cels*, V, 29; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *frPs*, 37, 6; 118, 11; *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1589.45; 20, PG.12.1249.8; 150, PG.12.1684.1; *expProv*, 23, PG.17.224.9; 26, PG.17.237.55; *commMatt*, 10, 8; *frMatt*, 137I; *Dial*, 12, 13, 14, 15; *selEx*, (comm. on Ex. 12, 46), PG.12.288.9. In Latin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6.8.1; *Homilies on Genesis*, X.1; XIII, 1; *Homilies on Luke*, 6.6.3; 12.7.2; *Homilies on Joshua*, 21.2.

⁸⁸ Wis. 1, 4. A recurring motif. Cf. *Cels*, III, 60; V, 29; *frJohn*, LXXVI; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *commI Cor*, section 11; *selPs*, 88, PG.12.1549.27; *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1621.31; *expProv*, 1, PG.17.164.14; 24, PG.17.232.11. Cf. pp. 170, 376.

⁸⁹ *Cels*, V, 29. Cf. parallel references to the 'hidden mysteries' of Scripture: *commJohn*, 13, XVII; *commMatt*, 11, 11; *commI Cor*, section 18; *frPs*, 118, 131; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.324.29.

⁹⁰ *Homilies on Luke*, 34.3. For Irenaeus, s. *Adversus Haereses*, 3.11.7.

essays some improvement. Justin Martyr and the *Epistle of Barnabas* had applied allegory, and Irenaeus had taught that the gospel of Mark should be read ‘with love to the truth’, that is, not always to the letter. Bringing up the allegories of the Greeks in his polemic against Celsus, Origen defended the right of Christians to allegorize. He was aware of Philo’s writings, whom he mentions either by name⁹¹ or implicitly.⁹² Philo stands out as a model for Origen to entertain his allegorical method. There are certain key-terms that determine his conception and practice of interpreting history, which are the following:

1. *Allegory* (ἀλληγορία) is literally derived from ἄλλο ἀγορεύεσθαι,⁹³ that is, an expression or narration designated to signify things different (and more sublime) from its literal purport. Formally Origen bases his allegorical interpretation on Paul’s statement about events of the Old Testament having been expressed in allegorical garment.⁹⁴ This appeal to Paul is a reoccurring motif,⁹⁵ but the instances where he defends his allegorical interpretation are many times as much as those where he directly appeals to Paul.⁹⁶ This scriptural authority, however, was all but too popular with Christian authors. John Chrysostom bluntly styles the expression of Paul’s a ‘misuse of language’ (καταχρηστικῶς), asserting that the word τύπος should have been used instead.⁹⁷

This is the point for a few things to be said, regarding the personal tragic experience which determined Origen’s adhering to allegory and him being suspi-

⁹¹ *Cels*, IV, 51; VI, 21; *commMatt*, 15, 3.

⁹² Cf. reference to Philo’s work *Legum Allegoriarum Libri i–iii*, (Νόμων Ἱερῶν Ἀλληγορίαι) in *commMatt*, 17, 17: “someone before us, who composed books about allegories of the sacred laws”. *Cels*, IV, 51: “He [sc. Celsus] seems to me to have heard also that there are treatises containing the allegories of the Law”.

⁹³ Etymologicum Gudianum, *Additamenta in Etymologicum Gudianum* (ἀάλιον–ζειαί), Alphabetic entry alpha, p. 92. ἄλλο ἀγορεύεσθαι παρὰ τὸ κείμενον. Cf. Hesychius of Alexandria, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 3127: ἀλληγορία· ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὸ ἀκούόμενον ὑποδεικνύουσα. Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 1170: ἀλληγορία· ἡ μεταφορά. ἄλλο λέγον τὸ γράμμα καὶ ἄλλο τὸ νόημα. Lexica Segueriana, *Collectio Verborum Utilium e Differentibus Rhetoribus et Sapientibus Multis*, Alphabetic entry alpha, p. 68: ἀλληγορία· ἐπειδὴν ἄλλο τὸ γράμμα κατὰ τὸ πρόχειρον δηλοῖ, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ νόημα καταλαμβάνηται.

⁹⁴ *Gal*, 4, 24.

⁹⁵ *Cels*, II, 3; IV, 44; *Princ*, IV.2.6 (Gr. & Lat.); *Philocalia*, 1, 13; *commMatt*, 10, 14; 17, 34; *commI Cor*, section 35; *commJohn*, XX, 10; *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1592.22.

⁹⁶ *Cels*, I: 17; 18; 20; 27; 50; IV: 38; 42; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 87; VI, 29; VII, 10; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.6; *commJohn*, 1, XXVI; 6, IV; 10, XXVIII; 13, XVII; XXII; XL; 20, XX; *frJohn*, XXVII; LV; CXXVIII; *frLuc*, 180; *commMatt*, 17, 17&35; *frLam*, 27, et passim.

⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, *In Epistolam ad Galatas Commentarius*, PG.61.662.20. Likewise, *In Illud: Habentes Eundem Spiritum* (homiliae 1–3), PG.51.285.39–40. Cf. *De Paenitentia* (homiliae 1–9), PG.49.320.57. Theodoret of Cyrus is at one with Chrysostom, if in milder expressions: *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, p. 268; *Interpretatio in xiv Epistulas Sancti Pauli*, PG.82.489.45. Cyril of Alexandria does not object to this being called ‘allegory’, but he does not make much of it: *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*, PG.69.25.24; 69.677.16; *Commentarius in xii Prophetas Minores*, v. 2, p. 490; *Epistulae Paschales sive Homiliae Paschales* (epist. 1–30), PG.77.481.30. Didymus consents to the word ‘allegory’, assuming this work is his own: *Dialexis Montanistae et Orthodoxi* (sp.), p. 457. The rest of theologians opted for eschewing the dilemma.

cious of the 'letter' which 'kills'.⁹⁸ His recurrent expression κατὰ λέξιν ('according to the literal sense') normally warns against any jejune and paltry literalism in reading Scripture.⁹⁹ However, the letter is the terrain for the interpreter to strive for: he does not discount reading κατὰ λέξιν and it is according to the letter that he seeks parallel or supplementary supportive points in Scripture.¹⁰⁰ After all, Scripture is the embodiment of Christ, since he 'willed' to offer himself through the 'body' of the letter,¹⁰¹ the vehicle of his words which 'shall not pass away'.¹⁰² He refers to 'those' who lived before him (οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν), but he scarcely mentions names, although he does so with doctrines propounded by certain teachers 'before us'. Beyond his references to Philo, he mentions Pantaenus,¹⁰³ while all other references involve no name at all.¹⁰⁴ Among them, there is a cloudy reference to 'some people before' Origen, who 'by their books' became the cause for others to take the 'third castration', as in Matt. 19, 12, literally. Those are said to have provided the starting-point for 'certain people' to commit castration to themselves, which is deemed to have been an act 'of faith, but also one of irrationality'.¹⁰⁵ The personal experience at that point is a moving piece of impersonal yet profound confession with dignity, out of which a resolute need for allegory comes forth. Regarding authors before him who had dealings with allegory, beyond Philo,¹⁰⁶ he probably had in mind the Stoics Cleanthes and

⁹⁸ s. chapter 10, p. 375.

⁹⁹ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3:1, 2, 4, 5. *commJohn*, 10, XLIII. *deOr*, XI, 1. *Philocalia*, 1:17, 18, 20, 21; 8, 1. *commMatt*, 10, 16; 13, 30; 14, 6; 15, 1; 15, 21; 15, 22; 16, 4; 16, 8; 17, 6. *homLuc*, 17. *commEph*, section 19; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 218; *frProv*, PG.13.20.41; 13.25.44; *frOs*, PG.13.825.29&35.

¹⁰⁰ About Origen having been accused of excessive literalism, s. *infra*, n. 157, and chapter 10, p. 363.

¹⁰¹ *commJohn*, 1, VI: "But once the Saviour has come, and has made the Gospel to emerge as a physical existence in the Gospel, he has made all things Gospel, as it were" (ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἐπιδημήσας καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον σωματοποιηθῆναι θελήσας τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ πάντα ὡσεὶ εὐαγγέλιον πεποίηκεν). s. chapter 2, note 144.

¹⁰² Matt. 24, 35; Mark, 13, 31; Luke, 21, 33; Cf. 2 Peter, 3, 10.

¹⁰³ *Epistula Quibusdam qui ei Obrectabant* (ad Alexandrum Hierosolymitanum), line 6.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. 'those before us' (οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν): *Cels*, V, 55; VII, 20; *commJohn*, 2, III; *deOr*, XXVI, 6; *homJer*, 11, 3; *commMatt*, 14, 2; 15, 35; *commEph*, section 8; *selEx*, PG.12.285.12; *frPs*, 38, 11–12. Also, a reference to 'someone before us' who argued that only evil people celebrate their birthday: *selGen*, PG.12.132.4 & *commMatt*, 10, 22.

¹⁰⁵ *commMatt*, 15, 2. He mentions two authors: one, a certain Sextus, who had written a book entitled *Opinions* (Γνώμαι); two, Philo and his book *Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat* (Περὶ Τοῦ Τὸ Χεῖρον Τῷ Κρείττονι Φιλεῖν Ἐπιτίθεσθαι). With reference to these books and authors on this question, he urges that 'no one should believe them'. This nevertheless did not prevent him from quoting from this book of Sextus in *Cels*, VIII, 30. The book of Sextus (possibly 2–3 cent. A.D.) was pretty popular among Christians, and was translated in Latin by Rufinus, despite Jerome's attacks who had styled Sextus a 'Pythagorean' and 'idolater'.

¹⁰⁶ Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 157; *Legum Allegoriarum Libri i–iii*, 2.5 & 10; 3: 4, 60, 236, 239; *De Cherubim*, 25; *De Posteritate Caini*, 7; 51; *De Agricultura*, 27; 157; *De Plantatione*, 36; *De Ebrietate*, 99; *De Migratione Abrahami*, 131, *De Fuga et Inventione*, 179; *De Mutatione Nominum*, 67; *De Somniis* (lib. i–ii), 1.67; 1.73; 1.102; 2.8; 2.31; 2.142; 2.207; *De Abrahamo*, 68; 99; 131; *De Josepho*, 28; *De*

Chrysippus,¹⁰⁷ the (probably 1st century A.D.) philosopher Heraclitus,¹⁰⁸ Longinus (also, probably 1st century A.D.),¹⁰⁹ his contemporary Cassius Longinus,¹¹⁰ and Plutarch.¹¹¹ Of his Christian forebears, he should have in mind Irenaeus who entertained the idea of OT proclaiming Christ 'in parables and allegories',¹¹² Hippolytus,¹¹³ Clement of Alexandria,¹¹⁴ even the apologist Tatian who had disputed the right of Greeks to entertain allegory upon the tales of their gods, which was part of Origen's argumentation against Celsus.¹¹⁵

2. *Underlying meaning*, or, deeper sense, or, subliminal intent (ὑπόνοια). The word ὑπόνοια is produced from ὑπό (under)+νοῦς (real meaning) of an expression. A term typically used by Philo in eliciting the allegorical meaning of a proposition.¹¹⁶ Suda tells us that allegory is entertained *by means* of ὑπόνοια, which is a thesis of Philo's upheld by Eusebius.¹¹⁷ Origen employed the term¹¹⁸

Decalogo, 1; 101; *De Specialibus Legibus* (lib. i-iv), 1:269, 287, 327; 2: 29, 147; *De Praemiis et Poenis* + *De Exsecrationibus*, 65; 125; 159; *De Vita Contemplativa*, 28; 29; 78; *Hypothetica sive Apologia pro Iudaeis*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁷ Cleanthes, *SVF*, I, 118, 19–20; I, 124, 35f. Chrysippus, *SVF*, II, 314, 21f (*apud Cels*, IV, 48); *SVF*, II, 318, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Heraclitus, *Allegoriae Quaestiones Homericae*, 1.3; 3.2; 5.1 & 2; 5.9 & 13; 6.1; 13.1 & 5; 15.2; 16.5; 17.3 & 9; 19.5; 20.12; 23.9; 24.2, 5, 6, 8; 25.12; 26.11; 27.4; 29.6; 30.7; 32.1; 34.8; 35.2 & 9; 37.6; 39.2; 41.3 & 12; 42.1 & 5; 49.2; 53.2; 58.4; 59.1; 63.7; 69.12; 75.12.

¹⁰⁹ Longinus, *De Sublimitate*, 9.7; 32.7.

¹¹⁰ Cassius Longinus, *Ars Rhetorica*, p. 562 (Walz).

¹¹¹ Plutarch, *Quomodo Adolescens Poetas Audire Debeat* (14d–37b), p. 19, section F; *De Iside et Osiride* (351c–384c), p. 362, section B; p. 363, section D; *De Pythiae Oraculis* (394d–409d), p. 409, section D; *De Esu Carnium* i (993a–996c), p. 996, section B; *Fragmenta*, Fr. 157.

¹¹² Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* (libri 1–2), 1.1.6. *Adversus Haereses* (liber 5), Fr. 18.

¹¹³ Hippolytus, *Contra Haeresin Noeti*, 15.1&2; *De Benedictionibus Isaaci et Jacobi*, p. 88; *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* (*Philosophumena*), 4.46.2; 5.7.23; 5.7.36; 5.15.4; 5.26.6; 6.14.7; 6.19.1; 6.55.2; 8.14.3 & 4; 10.15.3; 10.17.4. *Fragmenta in Proverbia* (sp.), Fr. 46.

¹¹⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 1.4.3; 11.111.1. *Paedagogus*, 1.5.12.1; 1.5.12.4; 1.5.14.3; 1.5.15.1, 3, 4; 1.6.36.1; 1.6.37.3; 1.6.38.3; 1.6.43.2; 1.6.45.2 & 4; 1.6.47.1, 2, 3; 1.7.53.3; 1.8.66.4; 1.9.84.1; 1.11.96.2; 2.2.32.3; 2.8.62.1; 2.10.87.4; 2.10.104.3; 3.2.9.3; 3.7.38.3; 3.11.76.1. *Stromateis*, 1.5.30.1; 1.9.43.2; 1.26.169.2; 2.5.20.2; 2.18.94.5; 3.4.38.1; 3.6.49.6 3.12.80.1; 4.4.15.6; 4.22.141.4; 5.1.10.3; 5.1.12.2; 5.4.20.3; 5.4.21.4; 5.8.49.3; 5.8.50.1; 5.9.58.6; 5.11.68.3; 5.11.72.2; 5.14.89.2; 5.14.100.4; 5.14.106.1; 6.3.32.5; 6.6.53.5; 6.8.62.1; 6.11.88.3; 6.15.124.5; 6.15.131.3; 6.16.140.1; 7.6.32.7; 7.12.80.5; 7.14.87.3; 7.18.109.3. *Eclogae Propheticae*, 2.3; 8.2. *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 3.56.5.

¹¹⁵ Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 21, 2&3.

¹¹⁶ *De Plantatione*, 113; *De Mutatione Nominum*, 62; *De Somniis* (lib. i-ii), 1.77; 1.120; *De Josepho*, 28; 194; 210; 261; 262; *De Specialibus Legibus* (lib. i-iv), 2. 257; 3.52; 3.53; 3.55; 4.36; *De Vita Contemplativa*, 28; *In Flaccum*, 12; *Legatio ad Gaium*, 35; 337.

¹¹⁷ Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 7.8.29: τὰ μὲν πρὸς λέξιν θεωρούμενα, τὰ δὲ καὶ δι' ὑπονοιῶν ἀλληγορούμενα. Cf. *Generalis Elementaria Introductio* (*Eclogae Propheticae*), p. 27. In *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2.17.20, he quotes a pretty famed portion from Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*, 78: αἱ δὲ ἐξηγήσεις τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων γίνονται αὐτοῖς δι' ὑπονοιῶν ἐν ἀλληγορίαις. The same by Georgius Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, v. 1, p. 352. Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon* (lib. 1–4), p. 333; *Chronicon Breve* (lib. 1–6) (*redactio recentior*), v. 110, p. 397. Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter theta, entry 228. Likewise, Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, 28; *De Opificio Mundi*, 157; *De Praemiis et poenis* + *De Exsecrationibus*, 65.

¹¹⁸ *Cels*, III, 43; IV, 87; IV, 34; 38; 44; 48; 50; 66; *Philocalia*, 20, 14; *commJohn*, 2, XXIX & XXXI; 13, XI; 20, XXXIV; *commMatt*, 17, 32; *fJohn*, LXIX.

and at one point he emphasizes its meaning speaking of ‘spiritual interpretation of the underlying meaning’ (τροπικὰς ὑπονοίας).¹¹⁹ As a matter of fact, this is a Platonic term put into use to revive the Stoic practice of allegory on Greek poetry, especially Homer. Plato, excluding poets from his State, argues that he is not interested in finding out whether poets use ὑπόνοιαι in their narration of gods perpetrating all kinds of evil, since youth is not able to discern points which should be taken not literally.¹²⁰

3. *Meaning* (σημαινόμενον), as distinct from a certain *word* in a text. A term favourite to Philo,¹²¹ too, which Origen promptly upheld,¹²² among other points, in the same work where he implicitly refers to Philo.¹²³ Justin uses this once,¹²⁴ but not in a strict technical sense. The term appears in Clement, put into use in the context of allegory, as well as in three portions dubiously attributed to Hippolytus.¹²⁵

4. *Anagogical sense* of a scriptural expression (ἀναγωγή): *Anagoge*, or ‘leading up’, is the method through which one can consider a narration or statement as an *allegory*.¹²⁶ Philo never used the term, apart from a point, but in a different sense.¹²⁷ Origen made ample use of this,¹²⁸ in order to denote the elevation of

¹¹⁹ *Cels*, III, 43.

¹²⁰ Plato, *Respublica*, 378d7.

¹²¹ *Legum Allegoriarum Libri* iii–iii, 2.16; 3.188; *De Cherubim*, 129; *De Posteritate Caini*, 44; *De Plantatione*, 114; 115; 152; 174; *De Ebrietate*, 23; *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia*, 172; *De Somniis* (lib. i–ii), 1.3; 1.63; 1.85; 1.87; 2.3; 2.39; *De Vita Mosis* (lib. i–ii), 2.39; *De Aeternitate Mundi*, 3; 4; *Hypothetica* sive *Apologia pro Iudaeis*, p. 197.

¹²² *Philocalia*, Prologue, sections 4, 1; 9, 1; 9, 2; 9, 3; 14, 1; 14, 2; *commJohn*, 4, I (*Philocalia*, 20, 4); 13, V; 20, II; *frJohn*, XVII; *Dial*, 25; *commGen*, PG.12.89.12; *commMatt*, 10, 14; 12, 35; 17, 29; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21), sections 10; 15; 25; 36a; *commI Cor*, section 48.

¹²³ *commMatt*, 17, 17.

¹²⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 84.3.

¹²⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.16.1. *Stromateis*, 1.10.48.1; 5.7.42.1; 5.8.53.4; 6.11.88.3; 6.17.151.4; 7.1.1.3; 7.16.96.2; 7.16.96.4. *Quis Dives Salvetur*, 12.1; 42.3. Hippolytus, *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, 12; *Fragmenta in Proverbia*, 36 (they both seem to be Origen’s texts, or Origen’s after Hippolytus); *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, section 3.

¹²⁶ Derived from ἀνω + ἀγειν, that is, ‘furnishing a sublime exegesis’. Cf. *commJohn*, 6, IV: κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν ἀλληγορίας τῶν ἀναγεγραμμένων. The expression κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν (implicitly or explicitly contrasted with κατὰ ἱστορίαν) recurs in *Cels*, IV, 21 & 45; *commJohn*, 1, VIII; 6, IV; 28, VI & XII; 32, XXVII; *frJohn*, LXXVI; LXXIX; LXXXVI; *commMat*, 10, 14; 10, 23; 15, 7; 16, 25; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 83; *frLuc*, 131; *selEx*, PG.12.289.10–11; *selEz*, 17, PG.13.814.44; 18, PG.13.816.37; 28, PG.13.821.39; *homJob*, 22, PG.17.93.4; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1164.4; 4, PG.12.1088.33 & PG.12.1133.49–50; *frPs*, 77, 19–25 & 48–51; *excPs*, PG.17.141.4; *homJer*, 15, 2; 19, 14; *homJob*, 29, PG.17.93.4.

¹²⁷ Philo, *In Flaccum*, 27.

¹²⁸ *commMatt*, 15; 5, 7, 19, 22, 25; 16, 24–25; *frLuc*, 180; 202; *commJohn*, 1, I; 10: III, XXVIII, XXXI, LXIII; 13: XVII, XXIX, XXX, LXIV; 20, III; 28: VIII, XI, XXIV; *selEz*, PG.13:769, 800, 813, 816, 820, 821; *homJer*, 1, 12; 19, 15; *frJer*, 41; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1125; 12.1133; 12.1156; 12.1164; 1188; *frPs*, 118, 147; 77, 54; *Princ*, IV.3.4; IV.3.6; IV.3.7; *De Engastrimytho* (*Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25*), sections 2, 6; *excPs*, PG.17.141.4; *frLam*, 7; 23; 29; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21), section 10; *deOr*, XIII, 4.

the mind from sense perception and images to divine realities and truths. With this term, his allegorical method parts way with the nomenclature of Philo. The designation enters the realm of theology with Origen, unless he was advised by Hippolytus, since there is a fragment which I have almost no doubt that it is Origen's, still influence upon him by Hippolytus cannot be ruled out.¹²⁹

5. *Interpretation according to the spiritual sense, or, tropological interpretation, or tropology* (τροπολογία): Clement uses this only once,¹³⁰ and Justin must be credited with its introduction.¹³¹ For all his allegorical tendency, Philo never used the word. It was Origen who introduced it as a mature technical term, applied to both allegory and typology.¹³² The term, derived from *τρέπειν τὸν λόγον* ('to alter the designation of an expression'), indicates rendering one's thought or arguments in a metaphorical or figurative manner. The remark of T. Heithier that 'the term τροπολογία comes from rhetoric'¹³³ is incorrect. No rhetorician before Origen ever used this word, which was unknown to Classical Antiquity. It had been used in the Epistle of Aristeeus to Philocrates, a text difficult to date (it might well have been written between 3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.).¹³⁴

The term τροπολογία was used by Origen's admirers in Cappadocia, Basil,¹³⁵ Gregory of Nyssa¹³⁶ (but not by Gregory of Nazianzus), quite expectedly by Eusebius¹³⁷ and Didymus the Blind.¹³⁸ Later it was taken up by Cyril of Alexandria,¹³⁹ John Chrysostom,¹⁴⁰ Eustathius of Thessaloniki (12th cent. A.D.),

¹²⁹ Hippolytus, *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, Fr. 12.

¹³⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae Propheticae*, 35.1.

¹³¹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 57.2; 114.2; 129.2.

¹³² *Cels*, I: 15, 17, 18, 42; II: 37; III: 43; IV: 12, 13, 17, 38, 39, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 72; V: 38, 55, 56, 58; VI: 37, 61; VII: 38; VIII: 67; *homJer*, 1, 7; 5.13&14; 7, 3; *commJohn*, 32, VIII: 32, XIII; *frJohn*, LXXIIIa; *frLuc*, 186; *Philocalia*, 9, 3; 15, 15; 17, 6; *commMatt*, 10: 14, 18, 20; 11, 3; 12: 6, 8, 41; 13: 4, 5, 19; 14, 18; 15: 4, 17, 18, 20, 21; 16, 19; 17: 22, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36; *frPs*, 77, 44; 77, 48–51; 92, 3; *excPs*, PG.17.147.23; *frLam*, 37; *selEz*, PG.13.817.48; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 36a.

¹³³ T. Heithier, *Translatio Religionis: Die Paulusdeutung des Origenes in seinem Kommentar zum Römerbrief*, 5:276, n. 79.

¹³⁴ Aristeeus Epistula, *Aristeeus Epistula ad Philocratem*, section 150.

¹³⁵ Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 9.1; *Homiliae Super Psalmos*, PG.29.393; *Adversus Eunomium* (libri 5), PG.29.544; 29.713.

¹³⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *In Diem Luminum* (vulgo *In Baptismum Christi oratio*) (ed. E. Gebhardt) v. 9.236; *In Canticum Canticorum* (Homiliae 15) (H. Langerbeck), v. 6, p. 5; *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, PG.44.81.

¹³⁷ Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 2.Pref.2; 8.9.20; *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 2.3.94; 6.20.22; 7.1.75; 7.1.115; 7.3.35; *Generalis Elementaria Introductio (Eclogae Propheticae)* (T. Gaisford), pp. 186; 189; *Commentarius in Isaiaam*, 1.64; 1.99.

¹³⁸ Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Job (1–4)*, Cod. p. 101; *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten (7–8.8)*, Cod. p. 219; *Commentarii in Zacchariam*, 2.213; 5.146; 5.208; *Commentarii in Psalmos 35–39*, Cod. p. 257; *Commentarii in Psalmos 40–44.4*, Cod. p. 310; *In Genesim*, Cod. pp. 51; 52; 165.

¹³⁹ Cyril of Alexandria, *Expositio in Psalmos*, PG.69.917; 69.1192.

¹⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.55.225.

Georgius Monachus (who says that tropology is just another appellation for ‘parable’),¹⁴¹ and probably Maximus Confessor.¹⁴² Hesychius of Alexandria (the lexicographer, who was probably a pagan) identifies the word with ‘allegory’.¹⁴³ In 6th century, Oecumenius upheld the term.¹⁴⁴ Later still, John of Damascus¹⁴⁵ and Theodorus Studites (8–9th cent. A.D.) upheld this, too.¹⁴⁶ Attributions to Numenius¹⁴⁷ or to Celsus are in fact excerpts from Origen’s own references. Photius and Michael Psellus also made use of the term.¹⁴⁸ Hesychius of Alexandria identified tropology with allegory¹⁴⁹ and so did Pseudo-Zonaras in his *Lexicon*.¹⁵⁰ Georgius Cedrenus (11–12th cent. A.D.) and Georgius Acropolites, both in Constantinople (13th cent. A.D.), employed the term also.¹⁵¹

It seems to me that tropology was never actually understood as something clearly distinct from allegory. Although Zonaras (or, the Pseudo-one) understood tropology as a sort of ‘alteration’ (ἀλλοίωσις ἐτέρου πρὸς ἕτερον),¹⁵² he defined this as synonymous with allegory,¹⁵³ or even as a substitute for a ‘parable’.¹⁵⁴ On this he no doubt followed the (probably 4th century A.D.) grammarian Timaeus, the so-called Sophist, who had professed such a view in his dictionary of Platonic terminology.¹⁵⁵

Maximus Confessor (6–7th cent. A.D.) long before Zonaras, in the same place, Constantinople, had furnished a strange definition: ‘*Allegory*’ is applied to ‘inanimate things, such as mountains, hills, trees, et cetera, while *tropology* is applied to human members, such as head, eyes, et cetera’.¹⁵⁶

The term then should be regarded as one peculiar to Origen, although

¹⁴¹ Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, p. 150; the same in *Chronicon Breve (lib. 1–6)*, v. 110, p. 200.

¹⁴² Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones et Dubia*, section 1, 8.

¹⁴³ Hesychius of Alexandria, *Lexicon*, alphabetic letter alpha, entries 2918 & 3126; s. also alphabetic letter beta, entry 824.

¹⁴⁴ Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, pp. 87, 101, 106, 116, 117, 124, 210, 243.

¹⁴⁵ John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, 31. Also in a work ascribed to him: *Disputatio Christiani et Saraceni*, 6 & 7.

¹⁴⁶ Theodorus Studites, *Epistulae*, Epistle 497.

¹⁴⁷ Numenius, *Fragmenta*, Frs. 1b, 1c; 10.

¹⁴⁸ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 168, pp. 116a; 161a. Michael Psellus, *Oratoria Minora*, 8; *Theologica*, Opuscula 4 & 7; *Poemata*, Poem 53.

¹⁴⁹ Hesychius of Alexandria, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alpha, entries 2918 & 3126; Cf. Alphabetic letter beta, entry 824.

¹⁵⁰ Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alpha, p. 125; alphabetic letter pi, p. 1509; alphabetic letter tau, p. 1747.

¹⁵¹ Georgius Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, v. 1, p. 97. Georgius Acropolites, *Epitaphius in Joannem Ducam*, 5.

¹⁵² Pseudo-Zonaras, *op. cit.* Alphabetic letter tau, p. 1747.

¹⁵³ *Op. cit.* Alphabetic letter alpha, p. 125.

¹⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* Alphabetic letter pi, p. 1509.

¹⁵⁵ Timaeus the Sophist, *Lexicon Platonicum*, p. 998a.

¹⁵⁶ Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones et Dubia*, sections 1, 8.

certainly not initiated by him. It is not only because this fits his method of exegesis. In addition, half as much the cases where the term is used in literature are found in either Origen's own texts or references to others by him, such as to Celsus and Numenius. Abundant use is made by Eusebius, Didymus, while all others use this only in just a few instances. Eustathius of Antioch, no more than a hundred years after Origen's death, used the term τροπολογία at several points, in a vituperative essay against him.¹⁵⁷ The text is full of violent vitriolic attacks on Origen, whom Eustathius reproves for excessive literalism, because he had refrained from entertaining the allegorical method in order to accommodate the 'witch of Endor' episode in 1 Sam. 28 (1 Kings 28). Indeed Origen remains faithful to the letter of Scripture at that point. The text of Eustathius is surprising not for the author's theses, but for the abusive expressions against Origen personally. It seems that this hostility flowed not so much from Origen's particular exegesis, but from his theory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit being different and distinct hypostases. This was irritating to a monarchian such as Eustathius, who was a representative of the Asiatic tradition, still (due to political circumstances of the day) unable to voice his views because of the danger of being held as a heretic.¹⁵⁸

His namesake Eustathius of Thessaloniki (12th cent. A.D.) retained Origen's term for his own philological purposes, that is, furnishing allegorical interpretations of Homer.¹⁵⁹

6. *Typos* (τύπος): In LXX, the word means 'exemplar' either to be or not to be imitated.¹⁶⁰ Paul's allegory of Christ being the 'rock' providing water in the desert¹⁶¹ uses the word τύπος in the sense of exemplar, as in the OT.¹⁶² Adam is a 'type' of the aeon to come.¹⁶³ Also in the sense of 'pattern', after the use in Exodus 25, 40, Paul uses the same instance in Heb. 8, 5.

The term was used by Philo in the sense of 'seal'.¹⁶⁴ It could not have been used otherwise by a Jew, since this actually was appropriated to refer to the correspondence between the Old and New Testament, the former regarded as

¹⁵⁷ Eustathius of Antioch (4th cent A.D.), *De Engastrimytho Contra Origenem*, 21.3; 21.10; 22.4; 22.6; 22.7.

¹⁵⁸ Eustathius was condemned and deposed by a council held in 327 in Antioch under the presidency of Eusebius. The reasons are not known, but they are believed to be not doctrinal.

¹⁵⁹ Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, v. 1, p. 479; *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, v. 1, pp. 79; 276. Eustathius and Oecumenius are two scholars using Origen's terminology frequently.

¹⁶⁰ 4 Macc. 6, 19.

¹⁶¹ 1 Cor. 10, 6.

¹⁶² 1 Cor. 10, 8. The word in the same sense in 1 Tim. 4, 12; 1 Thess. 1, 7; 2 Thess. 3, 9; Tit. 2, 7; 1 Peter, 5, 3.

¹⁶³ Rom. 5, 14.

¹⁶⁴ Philo, *Legum Allegoriarum Libri i-iii*, 161; *De Ebrietate*, 36; *De Vita Mosis* (lib. i-ii), 2 & 76.

foreshadowing the advent of the Logos Incarnate. It enters Christian parlance, at least in the sense of allegory, with Paul, then with Apostolic writers¹⁶⁵ and was employed, but not extensively used, by Clement of Alexandria.¹⁶⁶ Hippolytus made ample use of it.¹⁶⁷ I should have thought that he is an exemplar to Origen for entertaining this nomenclature.

Origen upheld the term in the context of his philosophy of history, meaning a former event carrying in itself an image of a later one.¹⁶⁸ Instances, events and figures in the Old Testament are *typoi* anticipating events in the New Testament. Certainly he appeals to Heb. 8, 5. This creates for him the context¹⁶⁹ in which 'the entire Old Testament is the beginning of the Gospel' ('ἀρχὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου' τὴν πᾶσαν παρεστήσαμεν εἶναι παλαιὰν διαθήκην).¹⁷⁰ Jesus was foreshadowed in the type of Moses, of Jeremiah,¹⁷¹ of 'the real God', of Joseph,¹⁷² of Joshua,¹⁷³ of Jonas,¹⁷⁴ of Jacob,¹⁷⁵ the red colour was the type of Jesus' blood,¹⁷⁶ and the Israelites of history are 'types' of the spiritual Israelites.¹⁷⁷

Speaking of *typos* is not quite the same as allegory. Through *allegory* the exegete establishes a relation either between events and principles, or between events of OT and what Origen calls 'theoremata' or 'objects of contemplation' (θεωρήματα, visions), deliberately avoiding the word *idea*. He bespeaks his conception being at odds with idealism by means of various expressions: He mentions 'those who created the fantasy of the *ideas*' (τὰς ιδέας φαντασθέντες)¹⁷⁸ or, refers

¹⁶⁵ *Barnabae Epistula*, ch. 7.3c; 7.7; 7.10b; 7.11a; 8.1; 12.2b; 12.5a; 12.6a. Justin, *Apologia*, 60.3; 60.5; *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 40.1; 41.1; 41.4 (circumcision as *typos*); 42.4 ('types' and 'symbols'); 90.2 ('the prophets revealed thing 'in parables and types, hiding the truth lying therein, so that they could not be easily comprehended by anyone'); 91.2&4; 111.1&2; 114.1; 131.4; 134.3; 140.1.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 1.5.23.1; 1.6.47.4; *Stromateis*, 1.5.31.3; 2.5.20.2.

¹⁶⁷ Hippolytus, *Fragmenta in Genesim*, Fr. 28; Fr. 39; 40; 51; *Commentarium in Daniele*, 1.14.6; 1.29.1; 2.12.2; 4.23.5; 4.24.2; 4.30.9; 1.18.1; *De Benedictionibus Isaaci et Jacobi*, pp. 6, 10, 102; *De Benedictione Balaam*, Fr. 21; *De Resurrectione ad Mammaeam Imperatricem*. In his *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, the word τύπος is never used in this sense.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *frMatt*, 57 and *Cels*, IV, 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Cels*, II, 2; V, 44; *Princ*, IV.2.6; *commJohn*, 1, VI; 6, LI; 10: XV, XVI, LXIII; 13, XXIV; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.6 (*Philocalia*, 1, 13); *homJer*, 7, 1; 18, 2; *frJer*, 4; *Philocalia*, 1, 13; 1, 30; *homLev* (Baehrens), p. 334; *commMatt*, 16, 3; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1148.17; *selEz*, 28, PG.13.821.28; *commEph*, section 12; *Philocalia*, 1, 30.

¹⁷⁰ *commJohn*, I, 15. Cf. ref. to ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου being the OT: *op. cit.* 1, IV; 1, XIII; *Cels*, II, 4; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.329.1.

¹⁷¹ *commMatt*, 12, 9; *frLam*, 69.

¹⁷² *selGen*, PG.12.145.7; *homLuc*, 28.

¹⁷³ *selNum*, PG.12.576.37; *selGen*, PG.12.145.6.

¹⁷⁴ *deOr*, XIII, 4; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 30.

¹⁷⁵ *selGen* (comm. on Gen. 31, 46), PG.12.128.3.

¹⁷⁶ *selLev*, PG.12.404.11.

¹⁷⁷ *Princ*, IV.3.7 (*Philocalia* 1, 23).

¹⁷⁸ *Cels*, IV, 4 (*Philocalia*, 15, 6); *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6.

to Aristotle's strictures on the Platonic ideas as 'twitterings' (τερετίσματα)¹⁷⁹ As a general rule, he refrains from using this word in the Platonic sense, and yields to such a use rather for the sake of his argument against Celsus at one point,¹⁸⁰ whereas he has no problem with using this in its Biblical sense.¹⁸¹

By means of *typos*, on the other hand, Origen highlights a certain correspondence between historical *events*. Old Testament sets forth the *typos*, the New Testament fulfilled this *typos* while at the same time it has established the *typoi* to be fulfilled at the eschatological end.¹⁸² This means that through what was later called 'typology' Origen remains entirely on the ground of history, since what he does is not to entertain *ideas*, but to assess given *facts*.¹⁸³ This obviously has nothing to do with pagan allegories, which parted way with all history, probing entirely in the realm of abstract ideas.

In the book of Wisdom of Solomon, 19,6, there is an interesting portion about the entire nature, which was re-arranged from above, by means of new *typoi* imposed by order of God (ἡ κτίσις ἐν ἰδίῳ γένοι πάλιν ἄνωθεν διευποῦτο ὑπηρετοῦσα ταῖς σαῖς ἐπιταγαῖς), for the sake of salvation of his 'children'. This suggests that at the moment of the Red Sea passage, the Creator *re-arranged* the *logoi* of the universe for the sake of his elected people. What is interesting in this portion is that the verb διευποῦτο is used in the sense that Origen conceives of creation in *commJohn*, speaking of 'everything' made 'according to the τύπους' of Wisdom. Referring to the actual creation of the world he portrays this as follows:

Accordingly, just as life came to be in the Logos, so the Logos was in the beginning. Moreover, consider if it is possible also for us to take the statement, 'In the beginning was the Logos', in conformity with this meaning, so that all things came to be in accordance with the wisdom and the forms of the system of concepts which exist in him [sc. the Logos] (ἵνα κατὰ τὴν σοφίαν καὶ τοὺς τύπους τοῦ συστήματος τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ νοημάτων τὰ πάντα γίνηται). For I think that, just as a house or ship are built or constructed according to the architectural forms, having as their beginning the plans and reasons (λόγους) in the craftsman, in like manner all things have come to be according to the reasons (λόγους) of what will be, which reasons were

¹⁷⁹ *Cels*, I, 13; II, 12. Cf. Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora*, 83a33 (I, 22). In *Princ*, II.3.6 (Lat.), besides rejecting any notion of 'incorporeal world', he distances himself from 'certain imaginary forms which the Greeks call *ideas*'.

¹⁸⁰ *Cels*, VI, 64.

¹⁸¹ *selGen*, PG.12.104.1&9, ref. to Gen. 5, 3, or, *commJohn*, XXXII, 27, ref. to Luke, 9, 29–31, where the Gospel word is εἶδος, but Origen's text has ἰδέα, somehow sticking to the Gen. 5, 3 wording.

¹⁸² Cf. "God made Scripture body and soul and spirit", that is, 'body to those before us, soul for us, and spirit to 'those who shall inherit eternal life in the aeon to come' and shall attain to the heavenly and true things of the law". *homLev* (Gr. text, Baehrens), p. 334.

¹⁸³ s. chapters 10 & 11.

distinctly articulated by God in wisdom (οὕτω τὰ σύμπαντα γεγονέναι κατὰ τοὺς ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ προτρανωθέντας ὑπὸ Θεοῦ τῶν ἐσομένων λόγους); for ‘he made all things in wisdom’.¹⁸⁴ We should also say that once God had created a living wisdom, so to speak (κτίσας, ἵν’ οὕτως εἴπω, ἔμψυχον σοφίαν ὁ Θεός), he allowed from the forms which were in her to present to the things which exist and to matter [both] their actual creation (πλάσιν)¹⁸⁵ and the species, and I focus my reflection on whether this holds true also for individual existence.¹⁸⁶

Hence, *logos* is a creature, whereas *typos* is the real historical correspondence between the *logoi* within the real setting and process of the world. In this sense, *typoi* represent God’s providential intentions with respect to His action in history, whereas *logoi* are those which bring about these *typoi* as actual events.

Since extensive and inconclusive discussions have essayed to demarcate the difference between metaphor and allegory, two words should be added here. A *metaphor* translates a meaning from objects to objects, or from event to events, or from words to words, endowed with a broader meaning. The outcome of a metaphor is still a natural object, be that a natural entity, a situation, a behaviour, or a term. Thus when Origen reads the scriptural narration about the ‘temple’ having been a ‘house of merchandise’ and a ‘den of thieves’,¹⁸⁷ he says that what we should understand from this is that God wills a Christian to maintain his own soul (the ‘temple’) pure from anything vile or alien to His will. He does not style this narration an ‘allegory’, but one κατὰ μεταφορὰν.¹⁸⁸ Allegory, on the other hand, translates objects, actions and words to *truths*, which are present and active throughout history. Metaphor *substitutes* natural entities for broader natural entities (real or imagined), allegory *renders* events revealing their inherent meaning, their properties and qualities, real or desired, within palpable *historical* truth.

7. *Symbol* (σύμβολον) is one more watchword of allegorical exegesis. It had been used by Philo,¹⁸⁹ and was employed by Origen, having in the meantime been sanctified through the use by authorities such as Justin, Hippolytus and Clement.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Psalm 103, 24.

¹⁸⁵ The meaning of πλάσις (Gen. 2, 7) indicating ‘actual creation’ is contrasted with ποιήσις (Gen. 1, 26), which implies the providential creation. s. chapter 9, p. 332. *COT*, pp. 84–85.

¹⁸⁶ *comm John*, 1, XIX. Cf. *COT*, p. 83.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Matt. 21, 13; Mark, 11, 17; Luke, 19, 46; John, 2, 16.

¹⁸⁸ *comm John*, 10, XXXIV. This is the sole instance where the expression κατὰ μεταφορὰν is used.

¹⁸⁹ *De Ofificio Mundi*, 154; 157; 164; *Legum Allegoriarum Libri i–iii*, 1: 1, 21, 26, 58, 68, 72, 80, 97; 2: 27, 73, 89; 3: 24, 45, 74, 93, 120; *De Migratione Abrahami*, 2, 77, 89; *et passim*.

¹⁹⁰ Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, 27.4; 32.5; 54.7; 55: 1, 2, 6. *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 14.2; 40.3; 42: 1, 4; 52.4; 53.4; 68.6; 78.6; 86.1; 88.8; 90.5; 111: 1, 4; 112.2; 120.2; 131.5; 138: 1,2,3. Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 2.15.3; 2.16.2; 9.84.6; 10.109.3. *Paedagogus*, 1.6.35.1; 1.6.36.4; 1.9.88.3; 2.2.27.1; 2.7.54.1; 3.3.19.1; 3.3.19.3. *Stromateis*, 1.15.70.1; 1.23.153.2; 2.19.98; *Eclogae Propheticae*, 14.1; 26.2. Hippolytus, *Contra Haeresin Noeti*, 15.3; *De antichristo*, 57; *Fragmenta*

Origen in fact did consider historical testimonies as *symbols* of a higher truth manifested by means of historical occurrences corresponding between Old and New Testament, or between dicta said in particular instances, which are regarded as loaded with a special meaning. John, during the Lord's Supper 'was leaning on Jesus' bosom'.¹⁹¹ In a conspicuous accordance, Origen uses the same words both in *commJohn* and *commLuc*, stating that this was not only history, but also a symbolic image: 'John was leaning on the bosom of the Logos, being one of those worthy of resting in the most mystical doctrines'.¹⁹² What is 'symbolic' can be elicited along with intense 'investigation of ineffable and mystical' doctrines (κατὰ τε τὸ συμβολικὸν καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀπορρήτοτερον καὶ μυστικὸν ἐξετάζοντι).¹⁹³

Symbol in Origen enjoys a wide application, not restricted to questions of philosophy of history. He amply entertains symbolic interpretations of appellations, such as names of persons or localities in the Gospel, e.g. the change of Simon's name which means 'dove', to Cephas-Peter, meaning 'stone'. Old Testament, and the Semitic world in general, provided an even wider basis for entertaining this logic, since in that context the symbolic interpretation of names was common (the change of Abram's name to Abraham, and so on). It was also Scripture that provided authority for symbolic interpretations of animals, plants, and natural phenomena. Origen appears quite happy to avail himself of such a sound background. Symbol is after all a 'sign' (σημεῖον) not relegating things to a non-historical perspective, but mainly casting some light upon what is to follow in history. In fact, 'any sign of those recorded (be that a sequence of events, or a precept) is designative of a certain thing which is to be fulfilled later (δηλωτικὸν τινὸς ἐστὶν ὕστερον πληρουμένον)'¹⁹⁴—that is, to be accomplished in the real historical future.

8. Another term used is *mystagogy* (μυσταγωγία) which comes from pagan mysteries. A mystagogue is he who introduces the faithful into the mysteries of a cult, acting as a guide.¹⁹⁵ The use of the term *mystagogy* in Origen applies to all the blessed men who administer and interpret Christian revelation,¹⁹⁶ such as Paul and the other sanctified men.¹⁹⁷ He uses this sparingly, in order to sug-

in *Genesim*, Fr. 5; *Fragmenta in Proverbia*, Fr. 8; *Commentarium in Daniele*, 4.45.3; *Chronicon*, 20; *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, 3; *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, 4.49.3; 5.26.8; 5.26.9; 6.27.1; 6.32.1; 8.9.2; 8.14.3; 9.30.5 & 6.

¹⁹¹ John, 13, 23.

¹⁹² *frLuc*, 223; *commJohn*, XXXII, 20.

¹⁹³ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1148.20.

¹⁹⁴ *commMatt*, 12, 3.

¹⁹⁵ *Cels*, VIII, 48.

¹⁹⁶ *Cels*, III, 60; VI, 23; *frPs*, 44, 11–14; 83, 4.

¹⁹⁷ *excPs*, PG.17.132.23.

gest initiation and instruction into the spiritual truth of revelation. Above all, the term *mystagogue* applies to Jesus himself.¹⁹⁸

Final notes

Admitting of human frailty, Origen delivered homilies being hortatory in nature and refined in their mode of argumentation. In his frequently didactic style, he appears restless for the welfare of the entire Church. He was devoted to the decipherment of the old documents for the sake not only of himself, but also of his congregation. His counterassault on the pagans finds its most integral expression in *Contra Celsum*, turning his opponent's widely received views against their author. Trying to win over Celsus with care, he brings to the battle a substantial part of his erudition, transforming this into an array of arguments. Whether these arguments overpower the target is not the main thing to consider, and I know that there are some who doubt about the effectiveness of his reasoning. Neither is a major deed that this text preserves a modicum of classical learning, although this was by no means Origen's intention. What is important is that we have his theology laid bare and express in almost all facets of it. We have him standing before history to be accounted for. He then deserves a hearing on the issue of philosophy of history and eschatology.

Origen has indeed put forward the arguments and notions that make up his theory. Since he tucked them into commentaries and homilies they are not always prominent. This was my assumption on which I canvassed his theory of Time: although he never wrote an *ad hoc* treatise on the issue, he had formed a crystal-clear theory of it, which is functionally present throughout his expositions. His most penetrating speculations and concepts appear at points giving the impression that they come forth somehow in passing (*qua non*), in works where his principal purpose was both theological and pastoral at the same time. For indeed many of his works were *pièces d'occasion*, written to cope with demanding dogmatic needs, in moments snatched from other duties, or even adventures, personal ordeal, or distress. Setting out to pen the sixth volume of his Commentary on John, he makes what is extremely rare (and always concealed behind the veil of implication): a reference to obstructions in his personal life. He refers to the hard time he had in Alexandria during the period he was writing the fifth volume of the commentary, and to himself being forced to leave the city and move to Caesarea never to return. "The storm at Alexandria seemed to oppose us.... But after we had proceeded for a while in the sixth

¹⁹⁸ *commJohn*, 13, L (μυσταγωγούντος); *frJohn*, XXXVI (μυσταγωγῶν).

book, we were rescued from the land of Egypt, when God who led his people from Egypt delivered us.”¹⁹⁹

However, despite his views on history and eschatology put forward apparently in passing, there is neither fluidity nor any wavering in expressing them and making his cardinal points. I should have thought that one could hardly say the same about Philo, or indeed Plotinus, with whom Origen has been bracketed together by certain streams of scholarship. For although it is true that there is no much wavering in Plotinus’ Neoplatonic exposition, still volatility and fluidity is not absent from some of the points he makes.

Origen contemptuously declines scientific discussion with Celsus. Still it is not quite the case that in his view natural science should be shunned; he simply thought it inessential to his own purpose. He invariably entertained the idea that the cardinal cause to be pursued is not a dry scientific ideal (which had let people of his era down in frustration), but self-transformation within the Church. Since scientific *knowledge* had proved itself unfit to provide consolation, *salvation*²⁰⁰ was the real desideratum for the people of his date. The burning desire was conversion to God and transformation of the entire world.²⁰¹

This process is dramatic, since action in history can shift its moral value, and, untimely action may cause change from being constructive to being destructive.²⁰² The salient feature of his theology though is that the Christian message, with Jesus in the center of it, was never lost or submerged.

Origen, it has to be said, did not enjoy the understanding he deserved. He did not receive the propriety of his texts being treated fairly and this occurred already during his lifetime. Nevertheless he is a commanding figure that claims our attention and my aim in this book is to show he must be credited with having pioneered the cardinal ideas of the Christian philosophy of history.

I have been attempting to show that Origen’s philosophy of history and his eschatology can fit as properly as any other aspect of his theology into the surrounding context of his thought. He made decisive advances in philosophical vein, although he would be utterly uninterested in being regarded as a philosopher of note. No doubt Paul was the polestar guiding his steps, he was his *spiritus rector* who inspired him to mould and couch his view of history. Yet it was philosophy that taught him to entertain appropriate ideas in argument

¹⁹⁹ *commJohn*, 6, I. The long preamble to the sixth volume of *commJohn* is a reference to his predicament, because of which he had been compelled to interrupt his work. His prayer now is that no further misfortune might force him to interrupt writing a second time (μηκέτι μεσολαβούσης περιστάσεως διακοπήν τοῦ εἰρμού τῆς γραφῆς).

²⁰⁰ *COT*, pp. 5–7; 203.

²⁰¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5.

²⁰² *Cels*, IV, 69; *commJohn*, 32, XIX; *frJohn*, LXXVII; *Scholia in Matthaëum*, PG.17.292.38.

putting old material to new use, while struggling with novel ideas at the dawn of Christian theology.

He was quick to grasp the significance of classical patrimony and acted accordingly, not only as his works show, but also as Gregory Thaumaturgus recorded for posterity, being himself the best witness to Origen's attitude to philosophy, indeed to his attitude to classical erudition as a teacher.²⁰³ He urged his students to study all streams of Greek philosophy; he allowed nothing of this to be left unexamined. He was one of the very few being profoundly aware of the *qualitas occulta* of Hellenism and openheartedly yielded the palm to the Greek writers for eloquence and literary skill.²⁰⁴ This notwithstanding, philosophy and classical education related to Christian faith was placed and regarded as being sub par, and quite unabashedly he drew a parallel between the Christian doctrine and Greek views.

Origen made his mark as a careful student of philosophy, which made his work neither clumsily constructed nor unevenly informed—although his work is not evenly mature at all points. In fact he never regarded philosophy as a primary authority, although he always was a assiduous and informed student of all philosophical schools. Some commentators have called him a philosopher. I strongly doubt whether he might acquiesce to such a designation. I should have thought that what he might have desired was to be called 'theologos' after John, but since he could hardly dream of this, he could have called himself a 'philosopher according to Christ'.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Gregory Thaumaturgus, *In Origenem Oratio Panegyrica*, section 14: οὐδενὸς ἀπειράστους εἶναι θέλων δόγματος Ἑλληνικοῦ ('he wanted us to be not incognizant of any Greek doctrine'). Likewise, in section 11.

²⁰⁴ *Cels*, III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2); *commJohn*, 1, VIII; *frJer*, 16.

²⁰⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.1.15. The term *philosophy* is frequent throughout Origen's writings, amounting to some hundreds of instances. However, it is only a few times that 'philosophy' means *theology*: *Cels*, IV, 9: φιλοσοφοῦντα τὰ τοῦ λόγου. *Cels*, V, 24: περί οὗ φιλοσοφοῦντες λέγομεν (at that point 'philosophy' is used as a substitute of 'theology' explaining John, 1,1). Cf. *frPs*, 76.21: 'the philosophy of Moses' (ἡ κατὰ Μωσέα φιλοσοφία). *Cels*, III.58: things that 'have been treated philosophically by the prophets of God and the disciples of Jesus' (πεφιλοσοφῆσθαι παρὰ τοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ προφήταις καὶ τοῖς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀποστόλοις). His own interpretation of Scripture is stated as 'philosophy searching the underlying meaning' (ἐν ὑπονοίᾳ φιλοσοφεῖν). 'Allegorical interpretation' as 'philosophy' may be 'either successful or not', since revelation of the concealed truth of Scripture is petitioned from the same Spirit who is the author of this Scripture (*Cels*, IV, 38). Ultimately, this is 'philosophy' in its own sense: a 'philosophy toward Christianity' (φιλοσοφία πρὸς χριστιανισμόν), *Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum*, section 1 (*Philocalia*, 13, 1).

PART I

TIME AND HISTORY

CHAPTER ONE

HUMAN BEING THROUGHOUT AN AEON

The conception of a multiple space along with the view of time determine certain functions which attribute to history a distinctive *character*. Although Origen employed the putative Stoic conception of time as ‘extension’, he converted this to his own conception of space and time. This is why he appears indifferent to nuances which held some currency among the Old Stoics. To cite an instance, the Old Stoa appeared punctilious on the specific import of particular spatial terms. A τόπος is different from a χώρα, and they both are quite unlike the ‘void’ (κενόν), being one of the four ‘incorporeals’ which they had to concede. Besides, all these terms are distinct from τὸ πᾶν. Since his cosmos was depicted on dissimilar ontological premises, he was detached from the Stoic subtleties.¹

In Origen there are numerous references to sundry ‘spaces’ which comprise the entire ‘single’² world. The term normally used to designate a particular space is χωρίον, which is derived from χώρος (‘space’). A χωρίον betokens a particular space.³ Similar to modern science, Origen’s particular spaces stand apart from each other by means of a qualitative, not geometrical, distance, and yet, this multiplicity notwithstanding, this cosmos is regarded as one, single and perfect.⁴

Alongside with χώρος, the term τόπος is also used to denote divers realms of life within this one and single world.⁵ This *cosmos* is rendered not only by this very word (κόσμος), but also through terms such as τὸ πᾶν, or τὸ ὅλον, which certainly bear to natural realities different from those in Stoic physics. The Stoic τόπος (place, region, or room which a thing occupies) is different from a χώρα (space, or room in which a thing is) and they both are contrasted from the ‘void’ (κενόν). Moreover, τὸ ὅλον (the ‘whole’, denoting the universe) is distinct from them all,⁶ and is actually different from τὸ πᾶν (the ‘whole’), which means a definite *order* of the universe, including the κενόν.

¹ A comprehensive analysis of Origen’s concept of World and Time, in *COT*, chs. 1 & 6.

² *Prin* (Lat.), II.3.6.

³ It is remarkable that χώρος is a modern-science term, particularly in the mathematical theory of spaces.

⁴ *Cels*, IV, 99 (*Philocalia*, 20, 26); *Princ* (Gr.) IV.2.5 (*Philocalia*, 1, 12); *commMatt*, 12, 36; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.344.29; *Princ*, (Lat.), II.3.6; II.4.3. Cf. *COT*, pp. 103, 108, 110.

⁵ Cf. *commJohn*, 19, XX.

⁶ Cf. testimonies by Stobaeus, Aëtius, Sextus Empiricus, Simplicius, and Themistius. *SVF*, II, 162, 1–164, 12.

Mobility within the world is the fountainhead of history. The interplay between the divine and creaturely will determines its course. In this world everything is moving. The Logos is active ever since the beginning of creation. He created the world; he sustains this in being and provides for it,⁷ he is present and acting in all Biblical history. Rational beings (τὰ λογικὰ)⁸ are also active, either conforming to the divine will, or not doing so. There is no state between committing sin and not committing sin,⁹ since ‘no one can serve two masters at the same time’.¹⁰ This is especially interesting, since Origen, despite his Stoic liabilities, parts way with them, who actually allow for morally neuter action.¹¹ To this tenet of the Stoic cast of mind he refers at points. He knows that the ‘Greeks’ (intimating the Stoics) who dealt with this ethical question postulated προαίρεσις as the origin of either good or evil, while what is ‘morally indifferent’ does not involve choice at all.¹² He upbraids Celsus for ‘presenting himself to have learnt the Stoic teaching (τὸν στωικὸν λόγον) about things indifferent’ (τὰ περὶ ἀδιαφόρων) and yet subsequently contradicting himself.¹³

⁷ *fiJohn*, I.

⁸ Rational creatures of different ranks of life are denoted through the appellative τὰ λογικὰ, that is, through a neuter epithet: *Cels*, IV: 74; 77; 81; *Princ*, III.1.12; *commJohn*, 1, XIX; 2, XI; *fiJohn*, II; *commEph*, section 9; *selEz*, PG.13.780.35. τῶν λογικῶν: *Cels*, IV, 24; VII, 17. *commJohn*, 1, XXVII; 2: II; III; V; XV; XVIII; XXIII; 10, LXV; 20, XXXVI. *fiJohn*, LXV; *deOr*, VI, 1; XXVII, 12; *fiLuc*, 216; *selPs*, 32, PG.12.1305.27; 36, PG.12.1317.52; 60, PG.12.1481.37; 138, PG.12.1661.52; *Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Evangelium Matthaei*, Fr. 3; *commEph*, sections 9&11. τοῖς λογικοῖς: *Cels*, IV: 77; 85; *commJohn*, 1, XXV; *exhMar*, LXVII; *fiJer*, 20; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1132.20. I render the idea of rational animals in sundry ranks of life through different expressions: rational creatures, rational animals (λογικὸν ζῷον: *commJohn*, 20, XXVIII; *Cels*, IV, 7; 25; 99; *Princ*, III.1.3; *Philocalia*, 20, 26; 21, 2; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1053.30 & PG.12.1089.34; *selEz*, PG.13.817.49; *Cant*, 6, PG.17.277.43. τῶν λογικῶν ζώων, *Cels*, VII, 60; VIII, 69; *commJohn*, 1, XXXI; *fiPs*, 118, 107&145; τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῷου: *Cels*, III, 69; IV, 78 (*Philocalia*, 20, 5); *commJohn*, 10, LXV; *expProv*, 2, PG.17.165.43), cognizant beings, conscious and alive ones, conscious agents; also, rational hypostases (λογικῶν ὑποστάσεων, *Princ*, III.1.22), rational natures (λογικαὶ φύσεις, *fiPs*, 103, 10–11 *et passim*). In the sole instance where a rational nature is expressed through the masculine adjective οἱ λογικοί, this refers to humans: *Cels*, IV, 29. Cf. God judges ‘according to righteousness’ both ‘humans and the rest of rational natures’ (ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν λογικῶν φύσεων), *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V7) (P. Cair. 88748 +cod. Vat.), p. 180.

⁹ *commJohn*, 20, XIII: “there is nothing between committing sin and not committing sin”. I should have thought that the absolute Genitive οὐδενός ὄντος is that of the neuter οὐδὲν (not of the masculine οὐδεὶς). This suggests that there is no *state* between sin and virtue, in the sense that a rational creature either does what is appropriate for any moment to be done, or does not do so. This is canvassed later, discussing the notion of *kairos*.

¹⁰ Matt. 6, 24. Cf. *Cels*, VIII: 3; 5; 8; 15; 16; 56; *homJer*, 7, 3; 20, 7; *commEph*, section 9; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.368.35–36. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6.3.4; 4.1.17; 5.6.8; 6.5.2–4; *Homilies on Luke*, 37.3; *Homilies on Exodus*, 3.3. An account of the relation of this view to Early Stoicism, in *COT*, pp. 315–16.

¹¹ The morally ‘indifferent’ (ἀδιάφορα) actions or states are those being neither good nor evil. Diogenes Laertius reports them as ‘neuter’ (οὐδέτερα). *SVF*, III, 28, 1–30, 4.

¹² *Cels*, IV, 45.

¹³ *Cels*, VI, 73.

‘Indifferent’ is whatever does not involve free will and choice. This is action that does not demand making a choice of one thing over another, that is, resolution (προαίρεσις).¹⁴ This is why ‘the Holy Scripture forbids pride for things which are [morally] indifferent’ (τὴν ἐπὶ ἀδιαφόροις καύχῃσιν),¹⁵ since they are not the outcome of free will. Anything that does does not involve struggle and resolution is morally indifferent (ἀπροαιρέτω καὶ ἀδιαφόρῳ πράγματι).¹⁶ ‘Prudence’ (φρόνησις), meaning discretion in judgement, is the ‘science of good deeds, and evil and neuter ones’.¹⁷ Beyond this definition, he does not appear to use the term οὐδέτερα¹⁸ in order to make points of his own: he simply countenances the Stoic tenet, referring to ‘good deeds’ (κατορθώματα), ‘sins’ (ἁμαρτήματα), ‘the indifferent’ (ἀδιάφορα). To the latter he refers in *Cels*, apropos of reference to Stoicism,¹⁹ but action related to ‘the indifferent’ (ἀδιάφορα) plays no part in his philosophy of history.

There are instances of reference not only to ‘sin’ (ἁμαρτήμα), which is a common theme in theology, but also to ‘morally indifferent’ things or states of life (ἀδιάφορα). Such instances of ἀδιάφορα are the ‘use of animals as food’,²⁰ ‘the use of cows’,²¹ ‘marriage’ as well as ‘celibacy’, and ‘circumcision’ alike.²² This view comes from Paul not forbidding marriage and nonetheless from the Stoic tenet regarding marriage and sex as morally indifferent concerning the wise man,²³ assuming the Stoic ‘wise man’ could be held as the equivalent to a Christian ‘bishop’. Origen is severe in warning any Christian bishop against

¹⁴ *commMatt*, 11, 12; *Philocalia*, 24, 6.

¹⁵ *Commentariū in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 228.

¹⁶ *homJer*, 12, 8.

¹⁷ Defining φρόνησις in *homJer*, 8, 2: ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν καὶ οὐθετέρων. Origen is the sole Christian author to quote this definition, which was current among pagan authors. Gregory Thaumaturgus addressing his master makes a reference to the definition of φρόνησις, which does not involve ‘neuters’, but only ‘good and evil’ (*In Origenem Oratio Panegyrica*, section 9). This is quoted by Origen in *Commentariū in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 126: ἐπιστήμη ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν. The definition of ‘prudence’ (not of ‘virtue’ in general) actually originates in Chrysippus. Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, 3.271; *Adversus Mathematicos*, 11.170 (*SVF*, III, 156, 1f); 11.184; 11.246. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 7.92 (*SVF*, III, 65, 10 & 13). Arius Didymus, *Liber de Philosophorum Sectis* (epitome *apud*. Stobaeum), page + column 64, 1. Andronicus Rhodius, *De Passionibus*, (p. 19, K. Schuchhardt) (*SVF*, III, 65, 22). Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis Adversus Stoicos* (1058e–1086b), 1066D8 (*SVF*, II, 340, 2–4) & 1067A8. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, v. 8, p. 389 (*SVF*, II, 50, 16–18). Albinus, *Epitome Doctrinae Platonicae sive Διδασκαλικός*, 29.2. Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, 2.59.4 (*SVF*, III, 63, 23f). Cf. a spurious work ascribed to Plato, *Definitiones* 411d4–6. The definition eventually became a lemma: Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter phi, entry 726. Cf. however, discussion *infra*, p. 169, n. 164.

¹⁸ Cf. Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, II.7.11e (*SVF*, III, 136, 18f). Cf. *COT*, p. 315, n. 31. In *Cels*, VIII, 47, οὐδέτερα means simply ‘neither’.

¹⁹ *Cels*, VI, 73.

²⁰ *Cels*, VIII, 30.

²¹ *Cels*, V, 36.

²² *commI Cor*, section 37.

²³ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 11.138.5.

sex and inadequate preparation before celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Such bishops are men who ‘defile their episcopal office’ and enter ‘without precaution into such [sc. holy] things’.²⁴

Besides, to hold the office of a king, in the simple sense of carrying out the task *vis-à-vis* a king’s subjects, is a morally neuter situation (μέσσην καὶ ἀδιάφορον).²⁵ Likewise, to be born a son of a man holding a high social office is something not involving free choice and resolution, it is ‘a thing not elected’ and thus ‘indifferent’ (ἀπροαιρέτω καὶ ἀδιαφόρῳ πράγματι).²⁶

Other activities however are pointed out as not ‘indifferent’, and those who argue for them to be held as such are rebuked. Such activities are ‘idolatry’ (εἰδωλολατρεῖν),²⁷ or ‘offering sacrifices’ (θύειν) to pagan deities.²⁸

In a like manner, he represents states of life which are ‘morally indifferent’ (μέσσην), such as medicine and clairvoyance,²⁹ since they can be entertained by both evil and upright persons.³⁰ Likewise, to be just alive (τὸν μέσσην καὶ κατὰ φύσιν βίον) does not involve any moral quality in itself, it simply happens according and due to natural law.³¹ Life proper is ‘neither good nor bad’, it is ‘morally neuter’ (ἡ ἀδιάφορος ζωὴ καὶ μήτε ἀγαθὸν οὐσα καθ’ αὐτήν μήτε κακόν),³² in the same sense that ‘human wisdom’ is morally indifferent (ἀδιάφορος ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη σοφία).³³

On the same grounds, the event of death is natural, happening to animate persons and other creatures,³⁴ since it occurs out of necessity (ἐξ ἀνάγκης συμβαίνον).³⁵ But since ‘death’ is a homonym, there are also imports of it that are ‘evil’, while others signify blessing.³⁶

As for ‘desire’, if this is understood as lust and hunger for transgression, it is itself evil; yet if it is earnest desire for what God has promised, this is a morally indifferent wish (μέσσην).³⁷ To this category belongs whatever is ‘neither upright nor evil’ (οὔτε ἀστεῖον οὔτε φαῦλον).³⁸ On the other hand, to pursue virtue

²⁴ *selEz*, 7, PG.13.793.21–28. Cf. p. 395 and n. 89.

²⁵ *Cels*, I, 61.

²⁶ *homJer*, 12, 8.

²⁷ *commICor*, section 26.

²⁸ *exhMar*, XLV.

²⁹ *Cels*, III, 25.

³⁰ *Cels*, III, 25 & IV, 96; *Philocalia*, 20, 23.

³¹ *Cels*, VII, 3.

³² *commJohn*, 20, XXV & XXXIX. *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 38.

³³ *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 230.

³⁴ *Cels*, VIII, 32; *Dial*, 25; *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX.

³⁵ *fpPs*, 77, 48–51; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 30; *commMatt*, 13, 9.

³⁶ *Dial*, 24–27; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 30.

³⁷ *Cels*, VIII, 50.

³⁸ *Princ*, III.1.18 (*Philocalia*, 21, 17).

and righteousness ‘can be neither morally indifferent nor evil’ (οὔτε μέσον, οὔτε φαῦλον).³⁹ Indeed his constant interest is for souls which are ‘neither unclean nor disinterested’ (μὴ καθαράς μηδὲ ἀδιαφόρους ψυχάς).⁴⁰

Similarly, time proper is indifferent, since this is a natural element in the make up of the world. At a certain point, he upholds the Stoic terminology once more, referring to ‘the morally indifferent time which a human life comprises’ (τὸν μέσον τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζωῆς χρόνον).⁴¹ This is why I have argued that it is absurd to introduce and refer to a notion of *quality* of time,⁴² unless we indicate the quality of *action* in time. Time proper is just a natural element in the make-up of the world and natural elements have no moral quality.⁴³

In Stoicism ‘good deeds’ are understood in a context of an *ideology* rather than philosophy: the ideal of the wise man is an objective, still a purposeless one. This was in fact the reason for Marcus Aurelius’s despair and hopelessness.⁴⁴ Origen by contrast considers the entire historical process and ‘good deeds’ placed in this process as a meaningful factor in the conceptual frame of hope and expectation for fulfillment of a promise and indeed of a radical transformation of the entire world. I refer to Stoicism through the term ‘ideology’, since no ultimate goal for the entire world to be transformed exists, nor indeed does it make any sense. To Stoics the world is a mechanistic automaton, destined to repeat itself endlessly. Thus, despite the technical and terminological similarities, Origen’s outlook is divergent. The crucial notion is *freedom of will*. In this standpoint everything is dependent upon choice, in a world where abruptness and contingency mark every moment of history. This is indeed a dramatic time, excluding mechanistic recurrence of events, unless they happen to come about through unrestrained choice. This universe is not just a huge monotonous mechanism playing and invariably re-playing the same story. The technical terms aside, those two standpoints are *essentially* different. Whenever the term ‘good deed’ (κατόρθωμα) is used,⁴⁵ the Stoic propinquity is only apparent.

The question that might be invited is this: how is it possible to square the assertion ‘there is no really state between committing sin and not committing sin’⁴⁶ with reference to ‘indifferent’ things? This must have been a tantalizing

³⁹ *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat., p. 230).

⁴⁰ *Cant*, PG.17.257.16; also, *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum* (Fragmenta) (Baehrens), p. 144.

⁴¹ *Scholia in Lucam (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28)*, PG.17.360.45.

⁴² Cf. T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*, p. 94.

⁴³ *COT*, p. 335. Cf. ‘quality of action in time’, *infra*, p. 130.

⁴⁴ *COT*, pp. 202; 206; 235; 289; 332; 334; 362.

⁴⁵ *commJohn*, 2, XIII; 13, XLIII; *frJohn*, LIV; *deOr*, VIII, 2; IX, 3; *Princ*, III.1.19; III.1.23; *frLuc*, 38b; 42; *commMatt*, 11, 14; 12, 30; *comm1Cor*, section 39; *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 +cod. Vat.), p. 184; *commGen*, PG.12.64.6; *frPs*, 92, 1–2; 108, 29–31; 121, 4,5; 129, 3–5. *Philocalia*, 21, 18; 21, 22; 23, 7. *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1116.15; 4, PG.12.1140.41; 51, PG.12.1457.20; 65, PG.12.1501.49; 117, PG.12.1584.14&21&25; 145, PG.12.1676.18.

⁴⁶ *commJohn*, 20, XIII.

question, which received an answer by the end of Origen's life. In his Commentary on Matthew, his resolution is that anything which is 'indifferent' may become either 'good' or 'evil' because of one's choice (διὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν). There are not things indifferent in themselves; they may *become* morally accountable out of free will and sovereign response to the instructing Logos⁴⁷ inherent in each man (διὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν καὶ τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν λόγον). On account of freedom of choice indifferent things or acts may turn out to be commendable or reprehensible.⁴⁸ This means that the clause about the 'indifferent' has a modified bearing: whereas in Stoicism this is a question of *ethics*, in Origen this becomes a question of *anthropology*.

This philosophy of history involves consideration of all free action, its purposes and resolutions. The Logos is ceaselessly acting: he is the creator of the world, present in all the history of the Old Testament. He moved from heavens into the womb of a Virgin; he advanced from this womb into the real world; he then moved to the Cross and thence down to Hades; then back to the earth, and after this up to heavens again. He will be moving from heavens to earth once more, this time for the purpose of judging the world.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the notions of prolongation of time and causality⁵⁰ raise certain questions about the mobility of the conscious and responsible denizens of this wider world within a prolonged time and the existential laws establish therein.⁵¹ Inquiry in those questions will provide substantial conclusions about how the character of history is understood and how motion within history is pregnant with a certain meaning, which I am now going to explore.

Origen and the doctrine of transmigration

A rational hypostasis remains in a certain plane of being for one aeon at least on account of the principles of judgement and causality.⁵² Changes of existential status take place only after a certain judgement, which occurs only at the end

⁴⁷ *commJohn*, 2, XV.

⁴⁸ *commMatt*, 11, 12: τὰ δὲ τῷ ἰδίῳ λόγῳ ἀδιάφορα ταῦτα ἔαν ἐπὶ χάρας, δυνάμενα διὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν καὶ τὸν ἐν ἡμῖν λόγον ἀμαρτανόμενα μὲν κακῶς πράττεσθαι, κατορθούμενα δὲ γίνεσθαι καλῶς.

⁴⁹ The idea of Logos ceaselessly acting is central in Origen (s. chapter 9, n. 698: *commJohn*, 13, LIX: δραστηρίου ὄντος τοῦ λόγου), yet this particular articulation actually originates with Hippolytus: *In Canticum Canticorum* (paraphrasis), 21.2; *Fragmenta in Proverbia* (c. cod. Coislin. 193), Fr. 72; *Fragmenta in Proverbia*, Fr. 54.

⁵⁰ *COT*, chapters. 7 & 8, pp. 272f & 310f.

⁵¹ Reference to higher (κρείττονες δυνάμεις) or lower existential ranks (χείρονες δυνάμεις) of conscious and alive rational beings acting within history along with the human race is a recurrent theme in Origen. Cf. *commJohn*, 1, XXV; 2: V & XXIII; 10, XLVI; 19, XX; 28, XVII; *frJohn*, LXXXV; *Cels*, II, 51; IV, 30; *commEph*, section 12; *deOr*, XVII, 12; *selNum*, PG.12.577.46. The structure of this world is canvassed in *COT*, pp. 99f.

⁵² *COT*, pp. 292f; 310f.

of an aeon. Whether in the following aeon one will live in the same rank of life, or will be transferred to another one, is determined only at a judgement. Any transition from one existential condition to another is impossible unless at the end of a cosmic period. This idea invites certain questions concerning the existential status of a human being throughout an aeon.

The term soul (ψυχή) is exclusive to the human rank of life:⁵³ the soul is just one manifestation (or, 'part', μέρος) of rational essence (λογικὴ οὐσία).⁵⁴

Among other questions, we must par excellence scrutinize the doctrine concerning the essence of the soul (περὶ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς ψυχῆς), and the origin of its constitution, its entrance into the earthly body, the arrangements of the life of each soul, its release from this [earthly] place, and see if there is any contingency (εἰ ἐνδέχεται) for this [soul] to enter in a body for a second time, or not, and whether this may happen during the same period (περίοδω) and the same order (διακοσμήσει)⁵⁵ or not, and if it enters the same body or another one. And if it is the same body, [we must examine] whether it remains the same subject and is changed only in quality, or it is changed as both a subject and in quality, being nevertheless the same one,⁵⁶ and whether this being will always use the same body or will substitute (ἀμείψει) this. In the context of these questions (ἐν οἷς), it is necessary to examine what transmigration proper is (τὶ ἐστὶ κυρίως μετενσωμάτωσις), in what way it differs from incarnation (ἐνσωματώσεως), and if it follows that anyone who upholds the doctrine of transmigration (τῷ λέγοντι μετενσωμάτωσιν) he also maintains that the world is incorruptible. In the same context (ἐν οἷς), it will be necessary to expound the arguments of those who, in accordance with the Scriptures, allow for the soul to be sown together with the body and the consequences following from such arguments. In general, since the doctrine of the soul is great and difficult to interpret,⁵⁷ being gathered from words scattered here and there in the Scriptures (σποράδην κειμένων), it needs a treatise of its own. Therefore, since we have briefly examined the problem arising from questions asked about Elias and John,⁵⁸ let us for the present continue with [exegesis of] what follows.⁵⁹

⁵³ *Cels*, VI, 71; VII, 38; *commJohn*, 1, XXV.

⁵⁴ *frJohn*, XLV. Likewise, 'rational nature' (λογικὴ φύσις), indicating either all rational essence or a particular existential order: *commJohn*, 2, XXIII; *Cels*, III: 54; 75; IV: 13; 74; VII, 46; VIII, 72; *deOr*, XXVII, 2; *frLuc*, 216; *commMatt*, 16, 23; *expProv*, PG.17:169.11; 176.34; 197.19; *frPs*, 4, 1; 53, 3; 88, 9; 107, 13; *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.41; 4, PG.12.1133.4; 20, PG.12.1249.6; 24, PG.12.1272.18; 36, PG.12.1317.43; 38, PG.12.1389.1; 44, PG.12.1432.50; 50, PG.12.1456.43; 109, PG.12.1569.14; 118, PG.12.1621.28; 150, PG.12.1685.8.

⁵⁵ The two Greek terms, περίοδος and διακόσμησις are characteristic of the Stoic relevant terminology.

⁵⁶ He insinuates a Platonic conception: the 'soul' will be the same, but the 'subject' (viz. the person) will appear as a different one after reincarnation.

⁵⁷ Cf. Heb. 5, 11. The expression is used whenever he wishes to eschew elaboration on 'mystical' or 'secret' doctrines, which should not be divulged unthoughtfully. Cf. *Cels*, V, 59; VII, 32; *commMatt*, 17, 2.

⁵⁸ Referring to John, 1, 21 & Matt. 16, 14; s. *commJohn*, 6, XIII & XIV.

⁵⁹ *commJohn*, 6, XIV.

Rejection of the doctrine of transmigration is a fundamental conviction explicated in a comment on Matthew 17, 10–13:

At that point I think that by *Elias* it is not Elias' soul which is meant; [I assert this] in order not to fall into the doctrine of transmigration (τῆς μετενσωματώσεως δόγμα), which is alien to the Church and is not handed over by the apostles, nor does it appear anywhere in the scriptures.⁶⁰

In the same work, there is reference to the 'false doctrine of transmigration' (τῆς μετενσωματώσεως ψευδοδοξίαν),⁶¹ and to the 'heresy of transmigration',⁶² which is flatly rejected.⁶³ A similar reference is made to those who have been harmed 'by the foolish doctrine of reincarnation, taught by the physicians who sometimes degrade the rational creature to an entirely irrational animal, sometimes to that which is capable of perception'.⁶⁴ There is also reference to the Jews, Egyptians and Pythagoreans, who hold 'the myth about reincarnation'⁶⁵ of the soul, the verdict being, 'we do not hold the doctrine of transmigration of the soul and its fall even to irrational animals.'⁶⁶

On this issue, therefore, there is downright antithesis not only to the Greeks 'who introduce the notion of transmigration',⁶⁷ but also to the Jews 'who held the doctrine about transmigration to be true, since it was derived from their fathers and was not alien to their secret teaching'.⁶⁸

This attitude is one more point of contrast with the Platonic perception. The Platonists held that the soul is a personal being living in itself, an incorporeal hypostasis which may be intermittently imprisoned in a body, or to be out of any body at any time. A soul may 'get out' of a human body after death and 'enter' another body any time after death. During a cosmic period, therefore, a soul might enter into another body for a second time.

Origen did not regard the soul as an incorporeal being living in itself apart from a body.⁶⁹ A rational animal may have its existential order changed only following a judgement, at the end of an aeon. This is the ground on which he argues against any notion of soul entering into another body during the same aeon. On this he deploys a battery of arguments, which could be rendered thus:

⁶⁰ *commMatt*, 13, 1.

⁶¹ *commMatt*, 10, 20.

⁶² *fMatt*, 314.

⁶³ *commJohn*, 6, XI.

⁶⁴ *Cels*, III, 75. Plato held that human souls could become re-incarnate in animals. Metempsychosis into plant, though not stated by Plato himself, was held by later Platonists such as Plotinus. Cf. *Enneads*, III.4.2.

⁶⁵ *Cels*, V, 49. Cf. *op. cit.* I, 13&20; V, 29; VI, 36.

⁶⁶ *Cels*, VIII, 30.

⁶⁷ *commMatt*, 13, 1.

⁶⁸ *commJohn*, 6, XII.

⁶⁹ *COT*, pp. 71, 87, 91, 93, 95, 96, 99.

If one surmised that a soul would enter a body for a *second* time in the period from the beginning of this world until the consummation, there is no reason not to presume that this may enter a body for a *third* time during the same period, indeed even more. This is in fact held by those who believe that re-embodiment is the way for a soul to be edified and possibly punished from previous sin. But if this process goes on, it should be assumed that a soul would always be invested with a body because of its former sin. Therefore, there will be no consummation of the world, during which 'the heaven and the earth will pass away.'⁷⁰ One could argue though that a soul will be reincarnate only until this is purified, whereas after a 'so to speak, infinite number of years'⁷¹ it will be in no need of further reincarnations. It could also be urged that, in this way, one soul after another will be purified; and since the number of souls is finite,⁷² there will be a moment when no soul will need incarnation. Subsequently, the material world will be destroyed because there will be no soul in need of incarnation. But this runs contrary to the Holy Scripture, which says that at the time of consummation there will be plenty of sinners in the world; for Jesus himself said, 'Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?'⁷³

The argument is developed on the basis of two premises: firstly, there will be a time when the world will be consummated; secondly, at that moment there will be plenty of sinners in the world. The possibilities to be considered then are the following:

1. Consummation of the world will be followed by punishment. In that case there are two possibilities: either punishment *in another body*, or punishment *out of any body* at all. Considering this, he challenges the proponents of this view to explain what the 'causes' and the 'differences' in this conception of punishment are.⁷⁴ Nevertheless this is a hypothetical case employed just for the completeness of reasoning. This is why he does not elaborate on the expressions 'in another body' or 'out of any body'. The case is not actually related to the Greeks, to whom Origen refers later on. To Platonists there is no notion of consummation of the world: they regard the world as everlasting and metempsychosis takes place at any time, being not associated with any consummation. On the other hand, the Stoics espoused the doctrine of recurrence, but they held the successive worlds to be identical. In any event, Stoicism disallows any notion of retribution of sins.

⁷⁰ Matt. 24, 25.

⁷¹ *commMatt*, 13, 1.

⁷² *Loc. cit.*

⁷³ Luke, 18, 8. Cf. Matt. 24, 37–38. *commMatt*, 13, 1. Cf. *commJohn*, 6, LIX.

⁷⁴ *commMatt*, 13, 1. Origen implies his principal view that a rational creature can *never* live without a body.

2. There will be no punishment at all, since all sinners are supposed to be purified ‘at one go’ (ἁθρόως) at the very moment of consummation.⁷⁵

3. The third possibility is in fact Origen’s own view of how justice is done. He affirms that there might be a procedure of punishment according to which creatures will live *in bodies* and yet *outside* of this life, in accordance with their merits.⁷⁶ He evidently insinuates his conception of existential causality in a prolonged time.

The conclusion is that, ‘to those who can see’, each one of the above-mentioned possibilities of retribution ‘disproves the tenet of transmigration’ (ἕκαστον δὲ τούτων... ἀνατρεπτικόν ἐστι τῆς μετενσωματώσεως): ‘retribution of sins will take place not in the form of transmigration’ (ἔσται δὲ ἡ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων εἴσπραξις οὐκ ἐν μετενσωματώσει).⁷⁷ The foregoing arguments are directed against those who accept that there will be a ‘consummation’ of the world. Yet there are also ‘the Greeks who, in compliance to their tenets, postulate the doctrine of transmigration of souls and hold that the world will not be destroyed.’⁷⁸ It is significant that the arguments against the doctrine of transmigration are largely based on his fundamental view of the world having a beginning and his attitude towards the notion of the Infinite.⁷⁹ It is then worthwhile to consider this reasoning, since it reveals important aspects of his conception of history.

The Greek tenets about non-consummation of the world are rejected on the grounds of his doctrine that the world stands in a dialectical relation with God. The view of time as the continuum where divine and creaturely will encounter each other proves the finiteness of the world. If the world were infinite, there would be no foreknowledge. This, not because (as it has falsely been attributed to Origen) God *cannot* comprehend what is infinite, but because in that case ‘foreknowledge’ simply makes no sense.⁸⁰ If the world is beginningless and endless,⁸¹ any notion of *before* (hence: of *fore*-knowledge) is meaningless. Consequently, if there is no foreknowledge, *prophecy* makes no sense either, since no

⁷⁵ *commMatt*, 13, 1. *Fragmenta in Evangelium Matthaei*, pp. 7–8. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5.

⁷⁶ *Loc. cit.*: ἡ (ὅπερ βέλτιον) εἷς ἐστι τρόπος κολάσεως τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσιν ἐν σώματι τὸ ἔξω αὐτοῦ <καὶ> τῆς καταστάσεως τοῦ βίου τούτου τὸ κατ’ ἄξιαν τῶν ἡμαρτημένων παθεῖν. Origen alludes to his conception of existential causality. *COT*, pp. 327f.

⁷⁷ *commMatt*, 13, 1; *Fragmenta in Evangelium Matthaei*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ *Loc. cit.*: εἰ δὲ ἀναγκαιῶς οἱ τὴν μετενσωμάτωσιν εἰσάγοντες Ἕλληνες, ὥς ἀκόλουθα αὐτοῖς τιθέντες, οὐδὲ φθείρεσθαι βούλονται τὸν κόσμον.

⁷⁹ Cf. chapter 6 and *COT*, pp. 245f.

⁸⁰ *COT*, p. 245f. s. *infra*, chapter 6.

⁸¹ *commMatt*, 13, 1: εἰ δὲ μὴ φθείρεται ὁ κόσμος ἀλλ’ ἐπ’ ἄπειρον ἔσται, οὐκ ἔσται ὁ Θεὸς εἰδώς τα πάντα πρὸ γενέσεως αὐτῶν. *Septuagint*, Susanna (translatio Graeca: section 35a; Theodotionis versio: section 42). Cf. *Princ.* III.1.12 (*Philocalia* 21, 11); *deOr*, V, 2; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.I–XII.21)*, section 1; *Philocalia* 25, 2.

end of the world makes sense.⁸² The doctrine of transmigration is rejected on two accounts. First, the duration of the world is not infinite in terms of both beginning and end. Second, time is not simply the morally indifferent natural continuum in which action takes place meaninglessly; this is where action has a purpose aiming at an end. Action is meaningful, since this is subject to judgement and has an eschatological perspective.

The distinction between soul and spirit

A pithy and illuminating comment is made apropos of the passage of Luke, 1, 16–17, ‘And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. Moreover, he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias’.⁸³ The purpose is to clarify the distinction between ‘soul’ on the one hand, and ‘spirit and power’ on the other: “And note that he did not say *in the soul of Elias*, so that a doctrine of reincarnation would be grounded, but *in the spirit and power of Elias*”.⁸⁴ This renders the following comment pregnant with fruitful meaning:

For John was not Elias in actuality, as those who hold the doctrine of transmigration say, alleging that the soul of Elias came in John. For he does not say ‘in the soul of Elias’—because it was not a transmigration—but he says ‘in the spirit and power of Elias’.⁸⁵ For there was spirit and power upon Elias, that is, a spiritual gift as it happened to each one of the prophets. This spirit, which was in Elias, was bestowed upon John.⁸⁶

Once more, the distinction is buttressed up with scriptural authority: “It is clear that the Scripture acknowledges a certain difference of spirit from a soul”, for indeed passages such as 1 Thess. 5, 23, or Dan. 3, 86, ‘betoken the difference between spirit and soul’.⁸⁷

There is awareness that the passage John 1, 21 (‘And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not’) might be used by those who

⁸² *commMatt*, 13, 1: ἡπειρα γὰρ τῇ φύσει οὐχ οἶόν τε περιλαμβάνεσθαι τῇ περατοῦν πεφυκνία τὰ γινωσκόμενα γνώσει. τούτῳ δὲ ἀκολουθεῖ μηδὲ προφητείας δύνασθαι γενέσθαι περὶ πάντων ὀντινωνοῦν, ἅτε ἀπειρῶν ὄντων τῶν πάντων.

⁸³ *commMatt*, 13, 2.

⁸⁴ *commMatt*, 13, 2. Likewise, *fiLuc*, Frs. 17c&17e (rejecting μετεμψύχωσης). *Homilies on Luke*, 4.5. Also, rejecting μετεμψύχωσης, *Philocalia*, 20, 1; *selEz*, 14, PG.18.808.2.

⁸⁵ Luke, 1, 17.

⁸⁶ *homLuc*, 4. Cf. *commJohn*, 6, X; XI; XII; 10, XX. The Christian author to uphold the argument apropos of the same instance is Hesychius of Jerusalem, *In Conceptionem Venerabilis Praecursoris* (Homilia 16), section 10.

⁸⁷ *commMatt*, 13, 2. Cf. 1 Thess. 5, 23: ‘And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ’. Dan. 3, 86: ‘bless, spirits and souls of the just’.

believe in transmigration and [hold] that soul is clothed in different bodies having no memory of the previous lives at all.⁸⁸ But a man who thinks according to the doctrines of the Church should reject such an interpretation because the reference is not made to the soul of Elias, but to his spirit and power.⁸⁹ It is indeed possible to prove from numerous passages in the Scripture that the spirit is something different from the soul.⁹⁰ Therefore, 'there is nothing absurd in saying that John has come in the spirit and power of Elias.'⁹¹ John is said to be Elias, on account not of his soul, but of his spirit and power. There is nothing contrary to the teaching of the Church if one said that they [sc. the spirit and power] formerly were in Elias and then they were bestowed upon John; for 'spirits of prophets are subjected to prophets',⁹² but souls of prophets are not subjected to prophets. Thus the saying, 'the spirit of Elias is resting in Elisaeus',⁹³ means that it was the 'spirit', 'not the soul', of Elias resting in Elisaeus.⁹⁴

The distinction between soul and spirit is developed by juxtaposition of scriptural passages referring either to a soul or to a spirit. The soul is 'something intermediate' (μέσον) which is open to either virtue or evil, whereas the spirit of man is not susceptible to anything evil.⁹⁵ It is then 'possible that many spirits exist within a man, not only worse but also better ones',⁹⁶ and it is clear that the spirit of God existing within a man is distinct from the spirit of man himself.⁹⁷ Having then adduced various passages from the Scripture, he concludes that it is possible to countenance that more than one superior spirits exist within a man,⁹⁸ as well as that many 'powers' may exist within one man.⁹⁹

The manner in which the distinction between 'soul' and 'spirit and power' is made is not all too a systematic one. We can, however, restore the tenet from different points referring to this subject. An example is the foregoing portion of Luke 1, 17, which seems to be the springboard for the inquiry in the question. To Origen it suffices to reject the notion of transmigration by providing an exegesis entirely based on Scripture. According to his doctrine of the Fall,

⁸⁸ *commJohn*, 6, X.

⁸⁹ *commJohn*, 6, XI.

⁹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁹¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁹² 1 Cor. 14, 32.

⁹³ 4 Kings, 2, 15.

⁹⁴ *commMatt*, 13, 2.

⁹⁵ *commJohn*, 32, XVIII.

⁹⁶ *commMatt*, 13, 2.

⁹⁷ *Loc. cit.* καὶ γὰρ σαφῶς ὁ ἀπόστολος παρέστησεν ἕτερον εἶναι τὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ πνεῦμα, κἂν ἐν ἡμῖν ᾗ, παρὰ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκάστου ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ.

⁹⁸ *Loc. cit.* δυνατὸν καὶ ταῦτα νοεῖσθαι πλείονα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ εἶναι κρείττονα πνεύματα.

⁹⁹ *commMatt*, 10, 20. Cf. an account of this in *commJohn*, 20, II–VI. s. chapter 9, p. 331 & n. 699. It is assumed that those powers are intimated by Psalm 102, 1, 'all that is within me'. In *Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, p. 416 (*Philocalia*, 12, 1). Cf. *commJohn*, 10, LXVI; 28, XVII; *commMatt*, 15, 7; *Cels*, II, 51; IV, 30; *fiJohn*, LXXXV; *deOr*, XXVII, 12.

the soul is originated in the divine reality and is called 'soul' only so long as it refers to the human rank of life.¹⁰⁰ This reality is also the ultimate destination of the soul, as I shall discuss in chapter 9. Since, therefore, the origin, as well as the destination, of the soul is relevant to the mystical doctrine of the Fall, it is not surprising that a systematic account of this theory is absent. The contrast of his doctrine from that of Plato's is declared through the assertion that this theory is 'a different and more sublime view' than that of Plato's:

Had [Celsus] comprehended what follows upon a soul when this will be in the eternal life (τὶ ἀκολουθεῖ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐν αἰωνίῳ ἐσομένη ζωῇ) and what is right to maintain about its essence and origin (περὶ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν αὐτῆς), he would not have ridiculed in this way the idea of an immortal coming to (ἀθάνατον ἐρχόμενον) a mortal body, not according to Plato's transmigration, but according to a different and more sublime theory.¹⁰¹

Although the doctrine about the soul is regarded as 'mystical'¹⁰² and there is no express account of it, there are certain things which can be said beside the point that soul has always a body. Human existence is not consisted just of body and soul according to the Platonic dualism where the soul is understood to vitalize the body. Man comprises body, soul and spirit, united in one constitution.¹⁰³ Of them, the soul is originated in the divine life, since this was produced by interaction of 'reasons' (λόγοι) created at the Providential creation, and were placed in the 'body' of the beginningless Wisdom, that is, of the Son, decorating this as 'ornaments' and 'precious stones'.¹⁰⁴ However, a soul as an individual existential characteristic, appears from the Fall onwards, this is in a state of fall, which means that the soul is regarded as *immanent* in the world. The spirit, on the other hand, is not an element immanent in the world. It comes from God, since it is He who 'gives' it.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the spirit is by no means regarded as being in any state of fall. It is a divine element bestowed by God directly. This is why the soul and body belong, so to speak, to man, but his spirit is of God. The former is *his* own, but the latter is God's. Man has a spirit just through a certain

¹⁰⁰ *Cels*, VII, 38; *homLuc*, 14.

¹⁰¹ *Cels*, IV, 17.

¹⁰² *commMatt*, 15, 34.

¹⁰³ *commMatt*, 17, 27; *frMatt*, 302 & 382; *Dial*, 6–8.

¹⁰⁴ The notion of 'precious stones' (λίθοι τίμιοι) is central in Origen's doctrine of Creation and Fall. Cf. *COT*, pp. 72, 79–80, 82–3, 93, 95. The expression λίθοι τίμιοι is scriptural. Cf. LXX: 2 Kings (2 Samuel), 12, 30; 3 Kings (Regum 1), 6, 1a; 7, 46; 7, 47; 10, 2; 10, 10; 10, 11; Paralipomenon 1 (Chronicon 1), 20, 2; 29, 2; 3, 6; 9, 1; 9, 9; Paralipomenon 2 (Chronicon 2), 3, 6; 9, 1; 9, 9; 9, 10; 32, 27; Tobit (Cod. Sinaiticus), 13, 17; Psalms, 18, 11; 20, 4; Prov. 3, 15; 8, 11; 8, 19; 31, 10; Daniel (Theodotionis versio), 11, 38. Also in NT: 1 Cor. 3, 12; Rev. 17, 4; 18, 16; 21, 11; 21, 19. Cf. *Cels*, VI, 70; VII, 30; VIII, 19 & 20; *commJohn*, 10: XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLII; 20, XXIII; *homJer*, 16, 5; *frJer*, 11 & 12; *commI Cor*, section 15; *selPs*, 20, PG.12.1249.4–9&19; *selEz*, 28, PG.13.821.5; *homJob*, 28, PG.17.89.52; *expProv*, 31, PG.17.252.2; *frPs*, 101: 16, 17; 118: 126, 127.

¹⁰⁵ *frMatt*, 495.

‘participation’ to the ‘more divine spirit within’ him (θειοτέρῳ πνεύματι) given by God.¹⁰⁶ However, further analysis of this point should not detain us here since this is beyond my present scope. The main point to be made in this section is that a human soul does not enter another body during the same aeon—which invites this question: what happens to the soul during the period of an aeon?

Human being throughout an aeon

The answer which Origen furnishes is consistent with his fundamental tenet that corporeality is a universal characteristic of creatures, regardless of their rank of life.¹⁰⁷ His theory is that, after death, the soul makes use of a body, which has the same ‘form’ as the one during the lifetime. In *Res* we find the view that ‘before the resurrection’, and after its ‘separation’ from the body, ‘soul makes use of a certain body’,¹⁰⁸ which is ‘of the same shape as the gross and earthly’ one. For whenever ‘there is a recounting of appearance of a dead person, this has been seen in a shape being the same as that which he had when he was in flesh’.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, when it is said that ‘Samuel was appearing, that is, he was visible, this also denotes that he was clothed with a body’.¹¹⁰

After death then the soul has also a human body, which is made of a matter of another quality. The thesis that after death human being is still alive and the soul is in a body provides one more argument against transmigration. For ‘it is not possible’ for Elias’ soul to be in John’s body ‘because one soul cannot function into two bodies at the same time’;¹¹¹ ‘once [Elias] ascended together with a body, how could this soul, which had a body, be possibly transposed to another body?’¹¹² This is why ‘it was not the elevated Elias who had come having changed a body [and] having been named John’.¹¹³

What Origen reaffirms is not only his belief that after death human beings are ‘alive’,¹¹⁴ but also his tenet about corporeality. A human being has a *human* body throughout an aeon and what is different from the earthly one is the quality of it. In his view this should not be regarded as strange. For a human body changes not only after death, but also every day: ‘this is why not erroneously body has been called a river’.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ *commJohn*, 2, XXI.

¹⁰⁷ *COT*, pp. 114–16.

¹⁰⁸ *frRes*, PG.11.96.27.

¹⁰⁹ *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁰ *loc. cit.*

¹¹¹ *homLuc*, 4.

¹¹² *loc. cit.*

¹¹³ *commJohn*, 6, VI.

¹¹⁴ *commMatt*, 17, 36; s. also, *commJohn*, 20, XII.

¹¹⁵ *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1093.19. The idea of the body being a ‘river’ comes from Marcus Aurelius (*Meditations*, 2.17.1) and Origen upheld this. The tenet about matter being changeable

It is necessary for a soul, which exists in spatial places, to make use of bodies appropriate to those places. Moreover, if it were necessary for us to live within sea as sea-creatures, we would have a body similar to that of fishes; so when we are likely to inherit the kingdom of heaven and to be in different places, it is necessary that we use bodies which are spiritual. Nevertheless, the previous shape of a body is not extinguished, even in case this is transformed to a more glorious form. This is what Jesus' body (as well as that of Moses' and Elias') was like: during the transfiguration this was not another one from that which this was previously (ὥσπερ ἦν τὸ 'Ιησοῦ εἶδος... οὐχ ἕτερον ἐν τῇ μεταμορφώσει, παρ' ὃ ἦν).¹¹⁶

This passage indicates that the body of Jesus was transformed into a 'more glorious form' at the time of his metamorphosis. Nevertheless, this was not *another* body. The same holds for the bodies of Moses and Elias, who were present during the event. They subsequently 'returned to the place whence they came', in order to announce to others the words spoken to them by Jesus; that is, to promulgate those words to the 'sleeping saints', who were to 'arise' in 'the holy city' a short while later, during the passion of Jesus.¹¹⁷

In spite of mutation of a body's matter during an aeon, the personal identity of a human being remains the same.¹¹⁸ Yet, a lifetime is too short a period compared to the duration of an aeon. The question called for is therefore this: what happens with the state of a human not only *after* death, but also *before* birth? The question receives this answer:

We know that when a soul, which in its nature is incorporeal and invisible, is in any material place, it is in need of a body, the nature of which is adapted to that place (τῷ χωρίῳ ἐκείνῳ). With this [body] in certain places (ὅπου μὲν) it is clothed upon with, after it has put off the previous one, which in the former state was necessary, but this is superfluous in the second state. In other places (ὅπου δὲ) it is clothed upon with the body which it [sc. the soul] formerly had, since it needs a better garment in the purer and aetheral and heavenly places (τόπους). This [aetheral body the soul] put off, arriving through birth in this world, assuming that afterbirth which was useful during its stay in the womb of the pregnant woman, for as long as it had to stay there; and underneath that, it is clothed upon with the body which was necessary for being about to live on earth. Then again, since there is an earthly house of the tabernacle, which is somehow necessary to the tabernacle, the Scripture says that the earthly house of the tabernacle is dissolved, and that the tabernacle clothed upon with 'a house not made with hands, eternal

and convertible, always in a state of ceaseless permutation, is certainly older, sustained by the disciples of Thales, Pythagoras and the Stoics (Cf. H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 307). Hippolytus bears witness to the idea, which had been advanced by 'the sect of philosophers called of the Academy' ('Ακαδημαϊκή)... whose founder was Pyrrho', meaning the Sceptic philosopher. *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, I.23.1&2.

¹¹⁶ *selPs*, 1, PG 12.1096.2. Migne quotes a passage in Latin that is almost *verbatim* the same as the Greek one: this is an extract from Pamphilus' *Apologia*, where he presents this affirmation as a testimony of Rufinus ('sic verit Rufinus...'). *loc. cit.*, n. 65.

¹¹⁷ Quoting Matt. 27, 52–53. *frMatt*, 365.

¹¹⁸ *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1093.22–24.

in the heavens'.¹¹⁹ The men of God say that 'that which is corruptible shall be clothed upon with incorruption', which is different from that which is incorruptible, and that 'that which is mortal shall be clothed upon with immortality',¹²⁰ which is not the same as that which is immortal.¹²¹

This is how the corporeal status of a human being throughout an aeon is portrayed. All the denizens of the broader world are corporeal entities living in a world which is material and soul should always be understood to be in a body.

E. de Faye¹²² thought that the statements in Latin¹²³ averring that it is only the Trinity who lives without a body, are simply interpolations by Rufinus. This is not quite the case, since Origen felt strongly about corporeality and argued against those who might contend that it is possible for a soul after death to be punished without being in a body.¹²⁴ The saying, 'but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell'¹²⁵ implies that 'the incorporeal soul is not punished without a body' (ὅτι ἀσώματος ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ ὅτι ἄνευ σώματος οὐ κολάζεται).¹²⁶ In any event, a 'soul is in need of a body for its spatial translations' (σώματος δέεται διὰ τὰς τοπικὰς μεταβάσεις).¹²⁷

A particular point should be clarified, all the more since Platonism is normally attributed to Origen. When he uses the expression ἔξω σωμάτων, he actually denotes the state of living out of the *earthly* body, not outside *any* body, certainly not outside of corporeality. Superior existential positions are understood 'out of bodies *such*' as the human ones (τοὺς ἔξω τοιούτων σωμάτων).¹²⁸ This is how the same expression 'out of bodies' (ἔξω σωμάτων, used further in the same work, again referring to angels) should be understood.¹²⁹ The expression 'stripped from earthy bodies' (γυμνοὶ τῶν γηϊνῶν σωμάτων) indicates different existential condition, material bodies of a different quality of stuff, but bodies still.¹³⁰

¹¹⁹ Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 1f.

¹²⁰ 1 Cor. 15, 53.

¹²¹ *Cels*, VII, 32.

¹²² E. de Faye, *Origène, sa Vie, son Oeuvre, sa Pensée*, v. III, pp. 73–78.

¹²³ *Princ* (Lat.), I.6.4; II.2.2; IV.3.15; *Homilies on Exodus*, 6.5.

¹²⁴ s. *supra*, *commMatt*, 13, 1.

¹²⁵ *Matt*, 10, 28.

¹²⁶ *frMatt*, 209. The same comment is made in *selPs*, 1, in almost identical wording: Τὸ δὲ 'Φοβήθητε τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεένῃ' τάχα μὲν διδάσκει, ὅτι ἀσώματος ἡ ψυχὴ, τάχα δὲ δηλοῖ καὶ ὅτι χωρὶς σώματος οὐ κολασθήσεται.

¹²⁷ *Cels*, V, 19.

¹²⁸ *commJohn*, 10, XLVI.

¹²⁹ *commJohn*, 13, XIV.

¹³⁰ *Cels*, IV, 92. This portion refers to lower creatures, that is, daemons; at this point they are stated not only as having bodies, but also as having 'the grosser of bodies' (τὰ παχύτερα τῶν σωμάτων). The same expression in *Cels*, V, 5, about evil creatures, who live out of bodies such as the earthly ones (τῶν φαύλων ἔξω τοῦ παχύτερου σώματος δυνάμεων).

This is the spirit in which references to ‘daemons, or whatever lives outside bodies (ἔξω σωμάτων)’ signify life out of an earthy body, not out of *any* body.¹³¹ Similar is a reference to those ‘natures’ who live ‘outside flesh and blood’ (ἔξω σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος).¹³² The expression about a soul ‘stripped from a body’ is also used referring to the soul of Jesus, who went down to Hades ‘stripped from a body, he parleyed with souls stripped from bodies’ (καὶ γυμνὴ σώματος γενόμενος ψυχὴ ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ὠμίλει ψυχαῖς).¹³³

This does not actually imply a disembodied soul: a little further in the same work it is made clear that this expression actually bespeaks a soul ‘stripped from *this kind of body*’ (τὴν γυμνὴν τοιοῦτου σώματος ψυχὴν).¹³⁴ In this context, it is not ‘impossible that the soul of a dead man may have been seen’,¹³⁵ in like manner that it is ‘possible for the physical eyes to see the body of the soul in a form in every respect alike to its former shape.’¹³⁶

This is the context in which reference to ‘souls and angels and daemons’ that live ‘out of bodies’ (ἔξω σωμάτων) is made: ‘souls and angels and daemons’ live in material bodies, which are unlike the visible *earthly* ones. The expression ‘out of bodies’ (ἔξω σωμάτων) is used to betoken corporeal life in ‘purer and aethereal bodies’, contrasted with ‘the gross bodies of our place’.¹³⁷ Even at the individual ‘resurrection’ (to be canvassed in chapter 5) a soul lives a corporeal life, in a body ‘of an aethereal and better kind’.¹³⁸ Again, in *commMatt*, the state of a soul being ‘out of a body’ is manifestly stated to be a corporeal one: it lives in a body both before and after being clothed with an *earthly* one.¹³⁹

H. Crouzel was right in withdrawing his earlier assertion ascribing to Origen the opinion that a soul lives without a body during the period after death until resurrection. Subsequently, he conceded that Origen regards the soul as a being clothed with a body during that period.¹⁴⁰ However, Origen’s perception about corporeality pertains not only to that period of time, but also to the time *before* birth. Besides, a human being does not *change* body after death. According to this rather strange opinion, a human being is asserted to have *two bodies*, with the visible one portrayed as being ‘under’ another (unviewed) human body. It is only during the formation of a human being into ‘the womb of the pregnant woman, for as long as it had to stay there’, yet ‘underneath that, it is clothed

¹³¹ *Cels*, VII, 68.

¹³² *commJohn*, 20, XXVII.

¹³³ *Cels*, II, 43. It would be misleading to render, ‘stripped from *any* body’.

¹³⁴ *Cels*, VII, 59; italics mine.

¹³⁵ *Cels*, II, 61.

¹³⁶ *Loc. cit.*

¹³⁷ *Cels*, VII, 5.

¹³⁸ *commMatt*, 17, 29.

¹³⁹ *Op. cit.*, 15, 35.

¹⁴⁰ H. Crouzel, “Mort et Immortalité selon Origène”, p. 186.

upon with the body which was necessary for being about to live on earth'.¹⁴¹ A human being then is posited to live in a body even *before* birth, and it has *two bodies* while in a human lifetime. H. Crouzel treated the issue with unawareness of the central role that the notion of *corporeality* plays in Origen, specifically that any rational animal is unthinkable without a body. To him it makes no sense to discuss about *how* a soul 'lives' after death.¹⁴² In the context of Origen's theology, such an expression is self-defeating, since it is only a 'human being' that *lives*, not a 'soul'. What is important is not to illustrate in detail how Origen envisages human life *in a body* either before birth or after death, whether he believes in vestigial bodies or not: what is important to point out is the very fact that he makes corporeality a permanent and universal characteristic of all conscious and alive beings throughout all time. This actually implies his conception of a rational creature being a *whole*, not a bifurcated ontological accident. Hence my dissent from H. Crouzel is not about details of *how* a state of human condition should be described after death until resurrection; rather, this is about recognizing Origen's un-Platonic intent: there is no state of cognizant animals *living* and yet standing *out of corporeality* at all.

It would be interesting (yet beyond my scope) to discuss how modern science has made progress towards detecting what Origen regarded as a body *under* which the visible human body is. I only note this: modern research has shown that the 'brightness' of human body is particularly strong when a human being is in certain existential states, such as praying, or profoundly loving. Well over seventeen centuries ago, Origen declared that 'the prophets became more clear-sighted in mind and *brighter*, not only in their soul but also *in their body* because of the touch, so to speak, of the Holy Spirit upon their souls (ἐγίνοντο καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν λαμπρότεροι ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶμα).'¹⁴³ The same idea is expressed at another point, commenting on the reference of Jesus to the 'bright body' of the righteous.¹⁴⁴ The notion is applicable not only to prophets, but also to anyone who genuinely attaches himself to Christ. Here is how Homily 32 on Luke is concluded:

I wish that the eyes of all (catechumens and faithful, women, men and children)—not the eyes of the body, but the eyes of the soul—would look upon Jesus. For when you look at him, your faces will be shining from the light of his eye. You will be able to say, 'The light of your face, o Lord, has made its mark upon us'.¹⁴⁵

What is significant is not how Origen figures corporeality. A soul is understood as an entity inseparable from a material body. At variance with Plato, a human

¹⁴¹ *Cels*, VII, 32.

¹⁴² H. Crouzel, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴³ *Cels*, VII, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Luke, 11, 34. s. *fr* *Luc*, 187: "thus the whole body will be bright".

¹⁴⁵ Psalm 4,7. *Homilies on Luke*, 32.6.

being is posited as an oneness, which is ‘one unity’ (κρᾶσις μία),¹⁴⁶ that is, a being which is one, although somehow a composite ‘union’ (κρᾶσις) of incorporeal and corporeal elements, even though they are themselves ‘contrary in nature’ (φύσει ἐναντία).¹⁴⁷

Those affirmations (about the soul always being in a body) demonstrate a deeper conception of human being as an indissoluble entity; also, a rejection of Platonic understanding of souls as personal hypostases being capable of living as autonomous entities without any body at all.

He clearly advances the existential connection between ‘being in the world’ and ‘having a body’. The participle ‘τυγχάνουσα’ (being in) is a causative one: it connotes the *reason why* a soul needs a body—and the reason is that a soul is always ‘in a corporeal place’.¹⁴⁸ Further, this interdependence is highlighted again: ‘we need a body for various purposes *because* we are in a material place, indeed a body which is of the same nature as the *nature* of the corporeal place and we put on the tabernacle *because* we are in need of a body’.¹⁴⁹

He, therefore, remains faithful to his view that creaturely ‘life’ comprises an inseparable entity of both incorporeal and corporeal nature, and by no means what is thought of as incorporeal could be considered as conducting a disembodied life of its own, living in itself without any body at all. Besides, on account of his view of the entire world being material (where corporeality actually means spatiality) he states that ‘a soul is in need of a body for its spatial transitions’.¹⁵⁰ As for the *place* in which human beings live after death and ‘before the consummation of the aeon’,¹⁵¹ there is an answer, too. In *frRes* there is a comment on the parable of the rich and Lazarus:¹⁵² the latter was resting ‘in the bosom of Abraham’,¹⁵³ by this meaning, ‘to be together with Christ’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁶ *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.357; *commJohn*, 13, L. Cf. *frLuc*, 242: ἐν γὰρ τι τὸ συναμφοτέρον ἐστὶ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἡ ζωὴ κοινὴ. Cf. *commJohn*, 2, XXI; *Cels*, VI, 63. To call man ‘composite’ (σύνθετον) does not call his *oneness* in question. (*Cels*, VII, 24; VIII, 23; *frLuc*, 186; *Dial*, 6), in the sense that a life of a soul alone is unthinkable. The point is canvassed in *COT*, p. 97 and I have urged Origen’s un-Platonic attitude on this. Platonists (even those born during Origen’s lifetime, such as Plotinus, Iamblichus and Porphyry) did not allow human being to be composite entity soul/body (τὸ συναμφοτέρον), but only a soul clothed with a body. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneades*, IV.7.3; IV.9.4; VI.7.5. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 3, 8. Porphyry, *Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*, Sententia 21. So did Proclus, writing a hundred and fifty years after Origen: Proclus, *In Platonis Alcibiadem i*, section 317.

¹⁴⁷ *commJohn*, 13, L. To be a union through ‘mixing’ or ‘blending’ does not dispute *oneness* proper. It is characteristic that Plato uses the term κρᾶσις referring to the soul, which does not impugn its simplicity and oneness. Cf. *Pheado*, 86b: κρᾶσις καὶ ἁρμονία αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν. Cf. *COT*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁸ *Cels*, VII, 32.

¹⁴⁹ *Cels*, VII, 33; italics mine.

¹⁵⁰ *Cels*, V, 19.

¹⁵¹ *frRes*, PG.11.96.1f.

¹⁵² Cf. Luke, 16, 19–31.

¹⁵³ *frRes*, PG.11.96.2f. Cf. *commJohn*, 32, xx; *frLuc*, 223.

¹⁵⁴ *Dial*, 23–24.

In *Cels* there is a more detailed account of *where* human soul exists during the period after death until the consummation of an aeon. The argument is based on the notion of just retribution, which applies to both recompense and punishment, following from the presupposition that the deeds of a Christian have a value and they secure his future existential status:

Furthermore, it has been believed not only by Christians and Jews, but also by many others among Greeks and barbarians, that the human soul lives and exists after separation from the body. And it is proven by the doctrine that the pure soul, which is not burdened by the leaden weights of evil,¹⁵⁵ is raised to the heights, to the places (τόπους) of the purer and ethereal bodies, withdrawing from the gross bodies (παχέα σώματα) and the corruption attaching to them; on the other hand, the bad soul, that is dragged down by sins and cannot enjoy even a respite, strays here and rambles about, some of them at tombs where also phantasms of shadowy souls have been seen,¹⁵⁶ while others simply roam about on the earth.¹⁵⁷

In any case the dead are in some 'place', which in *commJohn* is called 'place of the souls' (τοῦ χωρίου τῶν ψυχῶν).¹⁵⁸ This is the sense in which 'after death the soul does not exist in this life'.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the dead are somehow 'present in this life, although to explain exactly how [this happens] is not easy'.¹⁶⁰ Until the end of an aeon, the existential status is still a human one in a body of a certain quality deserved until judgement. It is only at the time of judgement that a man 'collects the harvest', that is, receives another existential status in the aeon to come—once judged to deserve a transposition at all.

These two notions of 'award' and 'collection of the harvest' are depicted extensively.¹⁶¹ The main point made is that 'human beings' maintain their rank of life 'until the consummation of the aeon'.¹⁶² During this period of time, a human being 'saved in Christ' (οἱ ἐν Χριστῷ σωζόμενοι) are not superior to 'angels', by reason of the fact that they are still human beings.¹⁶³ Those who 'are now merciful' (οἱ νῦν ἐλεήμονες) will become 'angels' in 'the aeon to come'¹⁶⁴ and it is then that they may be sent as 'angels' to assist human beings to attaining to eternal life.¹⁶⁵ Further, to believe that such an 'alteration' (μεταβολή)¹⁶⁶ may take place 'before the consummation of the aeon' (πρὸ τῆς συντελείας

¹⁵⁵ Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 4. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246–7; *Respublica*, 519b.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 81c; s. also *Cels*, II, 60.

¹⁵⁷ *Cels*, VII, 5.

¹⁵⁸ *commJohn*, 28, VI.

¹⁵⁹ *selPs*, 102, PG.12.1560.30; *frPs*, 102, 16–17.

¹⁶⁰ *deOr*, XXXI, 5.

¹⁶¹ *commJohn*, 13, XLI. Cf. *commJohn*, 13, XLV–XLVIII.

¹⁶² *expProv*, 1, PG.17.165.12.

¹⁶³ *commMatt*, 10, 3.

¹⁶⁴ *expProv*, 28, PG.17.245.8.

¹⁶⁵ *commJohn*, 10, XXX.

¹⁶⁶ *Loc. cit.*

τοῦ αἰῶνος)¹⁶⁷ is an opinion urged by those who 'have not grasped the meaning of the Scripture and long for things which are impossible'.¹⁶⁸ For whatever the 'award' from God will be, this will be given in the 'aeon to come' (ἐν δὲ τῷ μέλλοντι <αἰῶνι> ἢ παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου διανομή).¹⁶⁹

In regard of mobility in history, primarily regarded as free moral action, we have seen that 'there is nothing between committing sin and not committing sin'.¹⁷⁰ The question is then what happens to this action in the interim, that is, between human death and consummation of an aeon. A comment¹⁷¹ goes along this line: the expression 'out of the vineyard', where the workers were before they were 'hired', 'is the place of the souls before this body';¹⁷² in fact 'vineyard' is not only this life, but also the place where the souls will be after death; 'for the souls which are out of the body do not stand idle': Samuel 'was working by prophesying being out of the body' and Jeremiah was praying 'for his people'.¹⁷³ Hence we should work in the vineyard 'whether present or absent',¹⁷⁴ 'for no one will be sent in the vineyard (according to the parable) in order not to work'.¹⁷⁵

Accordingly, 'in a place of prayer', among those standing with the faithful, there are those 'who have fallen asleep before us':

And if Paul while still clothed by a body held that it cooperated with his spirit in Corinth,¹⁷⁶ we must not give up the belief that so also the blessed ones who have departed come in the spirit more quickly than he who is in the body to the assemblies of the Church.¹⁷⁷

Therefore, those 'who have departed from this life' are engaged in a sort of activity until the consummation of the aeon. Consequently, the 'whole' which is said to be 'spirit, soul, body', will be judged' at the time of 'the presence' of Christ.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁷ *commMatt*, 10, 13.

¹⁶⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ *expProv*, 24, PG.17.232.7.

¹⁷⁰ *commJohn*, 20, XIII.

¹⁷¹ *commMatt*, 15, 35, comm. on Matt. 20, 1–16. The question to which he addresses himself is this: "if the soul has been sown together with the body, how did it come about for them to remain idle during the whole day?"

¹⁷² *Loc. cit.*

¹⁷³ 2 Macc. 15, 14. *commMatt*, 15, 35.

¹⁷⁴ 2 Cor. 5, 9. He refers to 'presence' or 'absence' with respect to this life.

¹⁷⁵ *commMatt*, 15, 35.

¹⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 5, 3–4.

¹⁷⁷ *deOr*, XXXI, 5.

¹⁷⁸ *fiMatt*, 382. Cf. 1 Thess. 5, 23.

Conclusion

Origen provides answers to the questions raised by his own view of history, so that he remains consistent with it. He rejects the doctrine of transmigration, held by the Greeks, Jews and Egyptians, reaffirming his view of universal corporeality and his tenet that the world had a beginning and is directed to an end. This direction has a meaningful character underlined by judgement at the end of an aeon. He also reiterates that a human being is a 'whole', an entity comprising spirit, soul and always a body, although the quality of matter which constitutes this body may be altered. Creaturely mobility is of significance inasmuch as it betokens free moral action. Human beings after death exist in bodies and in activity: prophecy and prayer are examples of such activity. These examples are characteristic, since they underline that movement in space-time is a purposeful process towards an end. In this way the eschatological character of action in history makes its first mark.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

The perpetual advent of the Logos

Following from his conception of the relation of the Logos to the world, Origen considers the presence and function of the Logos in the whole of time ‘not only the future...but also in the past.’¹ This means that the ‘advent’ of the Logos in the world takes place as long as the world exists, from its beginning to its end:

According to the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ as this was historically related, his advent was in a body, still in a manner of universal event which cast light upon the whole world, when ‘the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us’.² For ‘he was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and he made the world, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.’³ However, it is necessary to know that he was also appearing prior to this, yet not in a body, in each of the saints. And after this visible dwelling, he comes upon us again.⁴

In *commJohn* it is accordingly stated:

Furthermore, [let me refer once more to] the subject concerning the saints who had lived before the corporeal advent of Jesus, and who had something more than the other faithful, so that they had comprehended the mysteries of divinity: it was the Logos of God who had taught them before he became flesh. For he was ceaselessly (ἀεὶ) working, being an imitator of his own Father, of whom he says ‘My Father is working hitherto’.⁵

Those saints ‘were instructed by Christ before he became flesh’, indeed by Christ ‘who was begotten before the Lucifer’.⁶ So ‘there is no when’ the Logos was not ‘present in life, either after the epoch of Jesus or before it.’⁷ In the same work, there is a fragment commenting on John 1, 29 (‘Behold the Lamb of God, which bears and takes away the sin of the world’):

¹ *frLuc*, 34.

² John, 1, 14.

³ John, 1, 9–11.

⁴ *homJer*, 9, 1.

⁵ John, 1, 17. *commJohn*, 6, IV.

⁶ Psalm 109, 3. *commJohn*, 6, IV.

⁷ *commJohn*, 20, XII.

It has been well said [about him], 'he who bears and takes away the sin', not >he who bore and took< or, >he who will bear and take away<. For he perpetually (ἀεὶ) carries out the bearing and taking away the sin of those who seek refuge in him. We then assert out of this that he bore, and bears, and will bear, applying the verb 'to bear' to each particular time (καθ' ἑκάστων καιρῶν).⁸

The argumentation in *Cels* runs in the same vein:

Regarding God's benevolence, he comes down to men not in terms of space, but in terms of his providence (οὐ τοπικῶς, ἀλλὰ προνοητικῶς); and the Son of God [was with his disciples] not only during that specific time, but he is always (ἀεὶ) with his disciples, fulfilling his promise 'Lo, I am with you all the days until the end of the aeon'.⁹

What is more, he clears up the real source of Christian faith: this was not established out of human intelligence or sagacity, but it came about as a result of God the Logos' self-manifestation through his perpetual advent to the world, within history, since the creation of it.

The doctrine authenticated as the word of God and Jesus, being the Son of God, is proven to be such on one both before and after he was incarnated. I affirm in addition that even after his Incarnation he is always (ἀεὶ) found by those people who have very sharp eyes of soul, [and he is found] to be most divine and to have truly come down on to us from God, and to have owed the doctrine about him, or what follows from this doctrine, not to human intelligence, but to God's self-manifestation (ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιφανείας), who established Judaism in the first place, and after this Christianity through varied wisdom and various miracles.¹⁰

As a matter of fact, God wants 'to enable us to become familiar with him through Christ and the perpetual (ἀεὶ) advent of the Logos'.¹¹

Thus Origen holds the doctrine of the 'spiritual advent of Christ' (νοητὴ ἐπιδημία Χριστοῦ)¹² as a perpetual manifestation of God into the world. The 'presence' of the Logos then may point to either his 'spiritual advent' before his Incarnation, or to the corporeal presence of Christ in the world, or to his presence thereafter, or even to 'the prominent and glorious' presence of Christ expected at the consummation of the world.¹³ This is the ground for an exegesis of a passage of Luke 2, 6 ('the days were accomplished that she should be delivered'):

Many people think it is superfluous to say, 'But Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered, and she brought forth a son'. For who is the woman who

⁸ *frJohn*, XIX.

⁹ Matt. 28, 20. *Cels*, V, 12. Cf. *op. cit.* IV, 5 & 12.

¹⁰ *Cels*, III, 14.

¹¹ *Cels*, IV, 6.

¹² *commJohn*, 19, V.

¹³ *frMatt*, 204; *commMatt*, 16, 22.

can bring forth unless the time for bearing is already complete?...One should know that in the case of John it has been written 'Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered',¹⁴ whereas of Mary [it has been written] 'the days were accomplished'.¹⁵ For [the expressions] 'the days were accomplished' and 'full time came' are not identical, since time has also nights, but in the case of Jesus there are no nights, but only days to be accomplished that he be brought forth.¹⁶

The notion implied is that the actual presence of Christ did not occur *after* a certain period of time had elapsed. Christ has always been in the world. What appeared at a certain historical moment was his presence in a corporeal form. For he came who was the one 'who was destined to bring peace in the world, he who establishes a connection between heavens and earth.'¹⁷ The incarnation of Christ 'is a genesis, not in the sense of a way [for coming] from non-being into being', but "a way from 'being in the form of God'¹⁸ to undertaking the 'form of a servant'.¹⁹

The doctrine of Incarnation is regarded as a mystical one,²⁰ as a 'mystery',²¹ being a manifestation of the love of God to creatures.²² Incarnation took place so that 'man who had gone astray' (ἀποσκιρτήσαντα) be saved²³ and humans become 'friends' of God.²⁴ The Incarnation was then 'not futile' (μὴ μάταιον):²⁵ through this the transcendent God became 'approachable' (προσιτός) to men;²⁶ for one may become a man of God departing from the humanity which Christ assumed at that particular time.²⁷

The character of Incarnation as a historical event is assiduously pointed out,²⁸ with Origen being eager to enunciate this as a *real* event, not a 'seeming' one (οὐ δόκησιν),²⁹ and so was the passion of Jesus. The term 'death' applied to Christ refers to his human hypostasis,³⁰ because he did not cease being God during the time of his Incarnation.³¹

¹⁴ Luke, 1, 57.

¹⁵ Luke, 2, 6.

¹⁶ *homLuc*, 9.

¹⁷ *homLuc*, 15.

¹⁸ Phil. 2, 6.

¹⁹ Phil. 2, 7. *frMatt*, 3.

²⁰ *excPs*, 50, PG.17.137.31–32.

²¹ *homLuc*, 24. Cf. *Cels*, IV, 9.

²² *selDeut*, (comm. on Deut. 13, 3).

²³ *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.29.

²⁴ *Cels*, I, 37; III, 28; III, 29; IV, 18; IV, 19. Cf. p. 157, note 84.

²⁵ *commJohn*, 10, XI.

²⁶ *frMatt*, 54.

²⁷ 1 Tim. 6, 11. *commJohn*, 1, IX.

²⁸ *Cels*, VI, 78.

²⁹ *Cels*, II, 16; IV, 19: a downright assault on Docetism. *Princ* (Lat.) Pref. 4; II.6.3. Cf. *Cels*, II, 16; VIII, 65; *commJohn*, 10, VI; *frJohn*, LIII; (implicitly) *deOr*, XX.

³⁰ *homJer*, 14, 6.

³¹ *Cels*, IV, 5.

He portrays the reason for the Incarnation, as well as the relation of his divinity to his soul.³² Although neither the body nor the soul of Jesus was God,³³ they were 'one' with the Logos of God, thus pointing out the Logos as the personal element of the incarnated Son.³⁴ The soul and body of Jesus were 'one' with the Logos of God, so that 'all this is one whole.'³⁵

The advent of Christ is continuing even after his Incarnation and resurrection. Thus, 'as he had descended to the perfect before his visible and corporeal Incarnation, so [he does] after his proclaimed presence.'³⁶ The Logos 'returned' from the Incarnation to what 'he was in the beginning with God'.³⁷ He is thereafter served 'not of men neither by man',³⁸ but he 'calls upon the souls which have prepared themselves to receive him.'³⁹ Christ was therefore incarnate according to the divine dispensation and yet he continues to be present; for 'everything passes away, but those [sc. commandments] do not and neither does the Logos [pass away]'; for if he 'falls into the ground', he falls willingly in order 'to bring forth much fruit.'⁴⁰

Incarnation did not take place so that the presence of the Logos become more concrete, thus compelling, as it were, men to admit it. On the contrary, this event let human freedom untrammelled.⁴¹ This is why the term 'gospel' (εὐαγγέλιον) pertains only to the New, not to the Old Testament: the word of Christ is to men an εὐαγγέλιον only 'once they accept these things which are announced',⁴² that is, only once this teaching is accepted. The presuppositions for accepting the Logos of God are always the same, regardless of him being either incarnate or not.⁴³ If these presuppositions do not exist, a man cannot apprehend the Logos, even if he sees him incarnate in front of him:

In order to see perceptible things, there is nothing acting, but once directed towards a point, a healthy eye can see, whether it wishes to see or not. But the divine things are not of such a nature; for at present they cannot be seen unless they exercise action of their own so as to be seen.⁴⁴

³² *commMatt*, 16, 8.

³³ *Cels*, II, 9.

³⁴ *Loc. cit.*

³⁵ *commMatt*, 16, 8.

³⁶ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

³⁷ *John*, 1, 2. *commJohn*, 1, VII.

³⁸ Cf. *Gal*, 1, 1.

³⁹ *commJohn*, 32, XVII.

⁴⁰ *John*, 12, 24. *frMatt*, 99.

⁴¹ Cf. *commGen*, 3.

⁴² *commJohn*, 1, VI. The term εὐαγγέλιον literally means 'announcement of rejoicing news'.

⁴³ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

⁴⁴ *homLuc*, 3. The same in *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1164.25–35. This is one of the numerous points proving the catenae fragments conveying Origen's real voice.

Not only God himself, but also an 'angel, as long as he does not want to be seen, is not seen even though present. . . . This is how things in the case of Christ should be apprehended'. One should not think that 'all those who saw were seeing Christ himself. They saw the body of Christ, but they were not seeing Christ as he is in himself. Only those who deserved to see his magnitude saw him'. This was also promised by the Scripture, which says, 'for he is found by those who do not put him to the test and he appears to those who are not unfaithful to him.'⁴⁵

On that account, 'although Jesus was one, he had many aspects; and he did not appear uniformly to all those who saw him';⁴⁶ 'not even with the apostles themselves and the disciples was he always present or always apparent, because they were unable to receive perpetually his divinity. After he had accomplished the work of his Incarnation, his divinity was more brilliant.'⁴⁷

Therefore, the Scripture, in which everything is done according to divine judgement, recorded about Jesus that before his passion he appeared quite generally to the *hoi polloi* (τοῖς πλείοσι), still even this he did not do always (οὐκ ᾄει); but that after the passion he no longer appeared in the same way, but [used to come into view] with a certain discernment adjusted as it should to each particular individual. It is the same as the saying which is recorded, 'God appeared unto Abraham'⁴⁸ or to one of the saints,⁴⁹ and that this 'appeared' (ὤφθη) was not uninterrupted, but occurred only intermittently (ἐκ διαλειμμάτων) and he did not appear to all. This is how you should understand also the Son of God to have appeared, according to a similar divine judgement concerning those who saw him [after his passion].⁵⁰

Christ 'was sent into the world not only to become known, but also to conceal himself. For his nature in its completeness was not known even to the people who knew him, but some part of him eluded them and to some people he was entirely unknown.'⁵¹ His 'human characteristics were visible to all people, while the divine characteristics could not be seen by all of them.'⁵² Therefore, during both the incarnate presence and the perpetual incorporeal advent, the internal existential presuppositions for anyone to 'see' the Logos are just the same. The advent of Christ to each individual person remains a sheer fact. It is up to each one to prepare his own self properly in order to apprehend this presence:

And we should know that the advent of the Logos occurs to those who enjoy the most of blessing. For what is the personal benefit for me if the Logos has come to

⁴⁵ Wis. 1, 2. *homLuc*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Cels*, II, 64.

⁴⁷ *Cels*, II, 65.

⁴⁸ Gen. 12, 7. Cf. Gen. 17, 1; 18, 1; Acts, 7, 2.

⁴⁹ Cf. Gen. 26, 24; 35, 9; 48, 3; Ex. 6, 3; Paralipomenon 2 (Chronicon 2) 1, 7; 7, 12.

⁵⁰ *Cels*, II, 66.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.* II, 67.

⁵² *Op. cit.* II, 70; s. also *Cels*, VI, 77.

the world but I do not have him? And, by contrast, even if we suppose that the advent of the Logos had not taken place yet, and I could become myself as the prophets became, then I do have the Logos.⁵³

The doctrine of the Church, according to Origen, is that the incarnation of Christ was the ‘fulfillment of the promise’ which the prophets had announced.⁵⁴ On the question why the advent became corporeal, Origen replies that Christ assumed a body because God had promised this. It was an act of God’s providence for the sake of the entire world. Nevertheless the event of Incarnation itself, and the time at which this occurred, was a decision exclusive to God. The reasons and timing of this act are not cognoscible to humans. This is a central view, which is subsequent to the doctrine of God’s transcendence⁵⁵ and of the reasons of Providence being exclusive to the divine knowledge.⁵⁶ The result of the Incarnation is triumphantly stated in this pithy passage, rendered in Latin by Jerome:

I have something within me that faultily stands upright and raises itself up in the pride of sin. Let this thing decline; let it be destroyed. Should this fall, then that which was formerly fallen, will wake up and stand. My ‘inward man’⁵⁷ once lay smashed and the ‘outward man’⁵⁸ stood straight. Before I believed in Jesus, the good was deposited, while the evil was standing. After he came, what was evil in me broke down. And Scripture has been fulfilled: ‘Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus’⁵⁹ and, ‘Mortify therefore your members, which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery’⁶⁰ and the rest.⁶¹

The consummation of aeons

The historical moment of Incarnation marks out a certain fixed point in the continuum of the whole time: a moment of prominent importance exceeding even the significance of those which mark the ‘consummation’ and ‘end’ of an aeon. Once again, the significance of this event is authorized by Paul. The passages are Heb. 9, 26 (‘but now once in the end of the aeons hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’) and 1 Cor. 10, 11 (‘and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the aeons have come’).

⁵³ *homJer*, 9, 1.

⁵⁴ *homLuc*, 15; italics mine.

⁵⁵ *Cels*, III, 38; IV, 69; *commMatt*, 17, 9; *frLuc*, 34.

⁵⁶ *Cels*, III, 38.

⁵⁷ Rom. 7, 22.

⁵⁸ 2 Cor. 4, 16.

⁵⁹ 2 Cor. 4, 10.

⁶⁰ Col. 3, 5.

⁶¹ *Homilies on Luke*, 16.9.

There are then certain fixed points in the continuum of time, which are different from those which mark the end of each aeon. They are those marking the 'end of aeons', that is, the end of a period comprising a number of aeons—a number undetermined and incognoscible.⁶² As at the end of an aeon 'certain events'⁶³ occur (destruction of the world, consummation, judgement, rearrangement of conscious and alive agents in sundry lanes of being), so at the 'end' of a set of aeons the event of Incarnation came to pass. While the end of an aeon is invariably marked by the same characteristics (consummation, judgement, existential rearrangement of rational beings), the 'end of aeons' is not marked by occurrences which are identical. The Incarnation occurred at the 'end' of an undetermined number of aeons, which marks the 'beginning' of a next series, undetermined either:

I think that, as the last month is the consummation (συντέλεια) of the year, after which the beginning of another month comes up, so it may be that, once several aeons complete as it were a year of aeons, the present aeon is 'the end', after which certain 'aeons to come' will appear; of them the aeon to come is the beginning, and in these coming aeons God will 'show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness';⁶⁴ concerning the utmost sinner, who has spoken ill of the Holy Spirit,⁶⁵ and is under the burden of sin throughout the present aeon, and from beginning to end in the ensuing aeon that is to come, I know not how God will dispense thing with him [sc. the utmost sinner] after those aeons (μετὰ ταῦτα οὐκ οἶδα ὥπως οἰκονομησόμενον).⁶⁶

This statement does not dispute the non-infinity of time: the finiteness of time comes up at the same point, through reference to 'the paternal will concerning the order in the entirety of aeons (ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς αἰῶσι)'. Furthermore, the contingency concerning future dispensation is maintained: 'what are the true laws to be fulfilled in' the future 'no one can even imagine, save he who has contemplated the Father's will concerning his ordinances in all the aeons in accordance with "his unexplored judgements and his unrevealed ways"'.⁶⁷

The uniqueness of the incarnation of Christ

Since time is understood to consist of aeons marked by consummations of the world, how is it possible for rational natures to know the word of God in a

⁶² *deOr*, XXVII, 15.

⁶³ *commMatt*, 15, 31.

⁶⁴ Cf. Eph. 2, 7.

⁶⁵ Matt. 12, 31.

⁶⁶ *deOr*, XXVII, 15. Regarding eventual forgiveness of sins, Origen was initially tantalized about Matt. 12, 31f, since this is pertinent to his Eschatology. On this particular issue, there is a certain evolution in his statements. *COT*, pp. 301–2.

⁶⁷ Rom. 11, 33. *deOr*, XXVII, 14.

subsequent aeon? Does such a conception of history entail that Christ should appear incarnate all over again in order to reveal the word of God to the world?

The answer to this question is negative. The advent of Christ does not mean that he 'swapped places', but only that 'he became visible whereas he formerly was not. Being invisible, by reason of him being image of the invisible God, he assumed the form of a servant; thus the Logos became flesh and hence visible, so that he might instruct us to see his glory through his visible appearance.'⁶⁸ On account of the doctrine of the perpetual relation of the invisible Logos to the world, the *uniqueness* of his appearance into the world in an corporeal form is reaffirmed.

It was not only through his visible presence that the Logos communicated with the world and revealed the word of God, but he is also perpetually acting as a mediator between creatures and God. In all the instances of the Old Testament where God appeared to the patriarchs and prophets, this was God the Logos.⁶⁹ The incarnation of Christ is a 'mystery', hence 'it is difficult to know the mystery of Incarnation in all its particulars.'⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this 'mystery has been prepared' by the providence of God 'before the foundation of the world' and the incarnation of Christ is like 'bread which descended from heavens and gave life to the world.'⁷¹ He appeared incarnate not because there was no other way for the Logos to reveal the truth to the world, but because God himself appointed this way for his self-manifestation. Why God acted in this way is incognoscible to men, since this was an act of his Providence and men are unable know the reasons of providence.⁷²

Despite this thesis, Origen did strive to provide an exegesis of *why* the Incarnation took place at all. The pertinent exposition is found in *Cels* and, although long, it is not expressed in a very explicit manner. To give a detailed account of this is beyond my scope. I shall only point out that, to him, the Incarnation is not just an incident in the eternal life of the Logos. This moment was chosen ever since the beginning. There are reasons for Christ not to have been incarnate earlier and there are reasons for this Incarnation to have taken place now, on the 'last days' which indeed mark the 'end of aeons'.⁷³

This is the context in which the crucifixion of Christ is regarded as a 'sacrifice' that took place 'once'.⁷⁴ The authority of Rom. 6, 10 provides Origen

⁶⁸ *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1584.55f.

⁶⁹ *commEph*, sections 9 & 12; *homJer*, 9, 1; *commJohn*, 1, XXXI; 6, IV & XXX; *frJohn*, I; *frPs*, 131, 8; *Philocalia*, 27, 9.

⁷⁰ *homLuc*, 24.

⁷¹ Cf. John, 6: 33, 41, 50, 51, 58. *selPs*, 64, PG.12.1496.30–34. *selPs*, 68, PG.12.1516.45f; *frPs*, 44, 3; *frLuc*, 60b; *Cels*, I, 48; II, 9; VII, 16; *commJohn*, 1, XXI; 10, XVII; 20, XXXV; *deOr*, XXVII, 2 & 3; *commMatt*, 12, 5 & 33.

⁷² *Cels*, III, 38.

⁷³ *Cels*, V, 28–33.

⁷⁴ *commJohn*, 1, XXXV.

with his cause: 'for in that he died, he died unto sin once (ἐφάπαξ).'⁷⁵ Besides, the ἁπαξ of Heb. 9, 26 is upheld faithfully: the Incarnation is a manifestation of the divine dispensation 'prepared before the foundation of the world': this is how the uniqueness of the event is underlined. The 'genesis of Jesus Christ'⁷⁶ is as unique an event as the 'genesis of men'⁷⁷ and the 'genesis of heavens and earth'.⁷⁸ The Incarnation is an unprecedented historical occurrence. This is why Jesus is he who 'came out of God',⁷⁹ whereas 'before that, he did not will to go out of the Father'.⁸⁰ God 'made *one* special descent in order to convert those whom the divine Scripture mystically calls "the lost sheep of the house of Israel",⁸¹ which had strayed down from the mountains'.⁸²

We have a discrete and yet ubiquitous event that took place *once and for all*,⁸³ with respect not only to the *past* but also to the *future*. The saying in the Revelation that 'he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood'⁸⁴ bespeaks the blood of the incarnate Logos. Even if at some moment we ascend to the highest plane of being, we shall never forget the entrance of the Logos into a body like that of ours.⁸⁵ Thus, the uniqueness of the Incarnation bears upon the eschatological perspectives, as portrayed in the Revelation. This is *one* specific point in the whole of time, between the beginning and the end of the world, loaded with a decisive eschatological purpose.⁸⁶ So this is a unique 'kairos' (discussed in chapter 4) in the whole dispensation (οἰκονομία) of God in relation to the world:

It is not surprising that, in certain generations, there have been prophets who, due to their vigorous (εὐτονον)⁸⁷ and healthy (ἐβρώμενον) conduct of life, and regarding their reception of divinity (θειότητος), were superior to other prophets, some of whom were their contemporaries while others lived earlier and later than

⁷⁵ *commJohn*, 1, IX.

⁷⁶ Matt. 1, 1.

⁷⁷ Gen. 5, 1.

⁷⁸ Gen. 2, 4.

⁷⁹ Cf. John, 13, 3.

⁸⁰ *commJohn*, 32, III.

⁸¹ Matt. 15, 24.

⁸² *Cels*, IV, 17.

⁸³ Cf. Rom. 6, 10. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.9.4.

⁸⁴ Rev. 19, 13.

⁸⁵ *commJohn*, 2, VIII.

⁸⁶ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVI–XXXVII.

⁸⁷ The terms 'vigorous' (εὐτονον) and 'healthy' have a mainly ethical implication. The adjective εὐτονος is of Stoic descent (Cf. Origen's use of the term: *SVF*, III: 66, 23; 121, 1f; 123, 6; 123, 19), derived from τόνος—a notion of Stoic Physics. The term εὐτονος, and its derivatives (εὐτονία, εὐτόνωος, εὐτονον) recur at quite a number of points. *Cels*, II, 24 & 56; III, 30; 67; 68; IV, 8; VII, 7; 22; *commJohn*, 6, XXII; 10, XVIII; 28, VII&XIV; 32, XXXII. *frJohn*, XXXIV; *exhMar*, XXIII; XXXI; *deOr*, XXVII, 4; 5; 6; XXXI, 2; *Philocalia*, 23, 10; *homJer*, 15: 1, 2; *homJos*, p. 436; *commMatt*, 10, 18; 16, 25; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), pp. 158 & 216; *frPs*, 118, 4; 118, 85; 147, 2; *commGen*, PG.12.68.35; *selPs*, 17, PG.12.1229.46; 17, PG.12.1237.9; 118, PG.12.1604.6.

they. Therefore, it should not be surprising that a certain time (καιρὸς) occurred, when an exceptional person, who was far too different from his forerunners or those who lived after him, presented himself to the human race. The discourse about these questions is itself more mystical and profound, and its explanation is impossible to be comprehended by ordinary listeners. In order to clarify these questions and reply to what has been said [sc. by Celsus] about the advent of Christ, 'Is it only now after such a long aeon that it occurred to God to honour (or: justify, δικαιῶσαι) the human race, while he did not care at all?', we have to touch upon the teaching about divisions and to explain why 'when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the angels of God; and the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'.⁸⁸ And it will be necessary to explain the reason why in each case the birth of a man took place into a particular region as the subject of the one who has been assigned that region, and how is it reasonable that 'the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'. We must explain why previously 'the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance', whereas concerning subsequent things (περὶ δὲ τῶν ὕστερον) the Father said to the Saviour, 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the bounds of the earth for thy possession'.⁸⁹ For there are certain courses of thought and syllogisms which are ineffable and impossible to relate, and they concern differentiation of divine dispensation toward human souls.

Even if Celsus will not acknowledge this, after many prophets who were reformers of that Israel, Christ came as reformer of the whole world (ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου). He did not need to use whips and bonds and tortures against men, as it happened according to the primary dispensation. For his teaching was enough, when 'the sower went forth to sow'⁹⁰ the word everywhere. And since there will be a certain time, which will determine the necessary limits of the world (which this must have, since it had a beginning), then there will be a certain end to the world, and, after this end, a righteous judgement of all.⁹¹ Therefore, anyone who engages in reflection on the doctrine (φιλοσοφοῦντα τὰ τοῦ λόγου) will need to construct his argument with proofs of all kinds, drawing on the divine scriptures and from rational consequence existing in the expression of the teaching.⁹²

Origen's reply to the stricture of Celsus is that God 'has always cared for the reformation of the rational beings and given to them opportunities of virtue', and 'there is no time when God did not want to honour the life of men'.⁹³

We argued earlier that it was not as if God had risen up from long sleep when he sent Jesus to the human race, but, for reasonable causes, he accomplished the

⁸⁸ Deut. 32, 8–9. Cf. *Cels*, V, 25–30.

⁸⁹ Psalm 2, 8.

⁹⁰ Matt. 8, 3.

⁹¹ 'Judgement of all': the expression in Greek is 'καί μετὰ τὸ τέλος δικαία περὶ πάντων κρίσις'. Reference is made to judgement of the entire world (πάντων), not only of human beings.

⁹² *Cels*, IV, 8.

⁹³ *Op. cit.* IV, 7.

oikonomia of his Incarnation, and granted his benefaction upon mankind for all time (ἀεὶ). For nothing good has happened among men without the divine Logos, who visited the souls of those who are able, even if but for a short time, to receive these actions of the divine Logos. Moreover, although the advent of Jesus took place apparently in one corner, this happened so for quite good reasons: for it was necessary for all those who had learnt that there was one God, and who were reading his prophets and learning of the Christ they preached, that the one who had been prophesied should come and indeed come at the opportune time (ἐν καιρῷ), at the time when the teaching would flow from one corner unto all over the world.⁹⁴

This because ‘the divine Scriptures, which understand the “sleepless nature”⁹⁵ of God, teach us that God dispenses the affairs of the world at the appropriate times (κατὰ καιρούς), as reason demands.’⁹⁶ This is a point where most clearly Origen enunciates that not only Christ was incarnate once, but also this was an event which occurred *once and for all*. The divine dispensation had ‘reasonable causes’ to employ ‘Incarnation’. The implementation of this dispensation is expressed through the term ἐπικληρώσαντα (he who accomplished), which is a Past participle and implies what Past tense does: this event took place once in the past and the dispensation concerning this has been fulfilled.

The incarnation of the Logos, the ‘day’⁹⁷ of Jesus, marks the fulfillment of the divine promise proclaimed by the prophets, since the incarnate Logos was the same one who had descended to the prophets.⁹⁸ In *Cels*, he rebukes the doctrine of recurrence of identical worlds styling this ‘ludicrous’.⁹⁹ One of his arguments is that this could entail that the incarnation of Christ could be allowed to have happened already in the past, or that it will happen again in the future, indeed for an infinite number of times,¹⁰⁰ which is an idea unacceptable to him.

In view of this, anyone can see why the following allegation of Jerome is groundless: “your Origen allows himself to assert that Christ has often suffered and will often suffer, on the ground that what was beneficial once will be beneficial always”¹⁰¹ What we find in *Princ* with respect to this question is a text in the Second Book extant only in Latin:

⁹⁴ *Op. cit.* VI, 78.

⁹⁵ *Op. cit.* VI, 79. The idea is from Plato, *Timaeus*, 52b7. It appears also in the Corpus Hermeticum, *Poimandres*, section 15, and in the apocryphon *Acta Thomae*, sections 60 & 66. Origen definitely received this from Hippolytus, *Contra Haeresin Noeti*, 18.1. He was followed by Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG.24.12.16, Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 2.1.142 and Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistulae Paschales* sive *Homiliae Paschales* (epist. 1–30), PG.77.821.53 & *Commentarius in xii Prophetas Minores*, v. 2, p. 344.

⁹⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁹⁷ Cf. John, 8, 56.

⁹⁸ *comm John*, 20, XLII.

⁹⁹ *Cels*, V, 20.

¹⁰⁰ *Cels*, IV, 67.

¹⁰¹ Jerome, *Apology*, cited in *FP*, p. 88, n. 4.

This world, however, which in itself is called an 'aeon',¹⁰² is said to be the end of many aeons. Now the holy apostle teaches that Christ did not suffer in the aeon that was before this, nor yet in the aeon before that; and I do not know whether it is in my power to enumerate all the previous aeons in which he did not suffer. I will, however, quote the statements of Paul from which I have arrived at this point of knowledge. He says: 'But now once at the consummation of the aeons has he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself'.¹⁰³ He says that Christ has become a 'sacrifice' once, and that 'at the consummation of the aeons he has been manifested to put away sin'.¹⁰⁴

Even if this were an inaccurate rendering, there is nothing in it which would entail that any idea of the possibility of the Incarnation to be repeated is implied. On the contrary, once again the crucial passage of Heb. 9, 26 is reiterated.¹⁰⁵

The faithfulness of Rufinus' translation at this point could be reasonably disputed: the expression, 'and I do not know whether it is in my power to enumerate all the previous aeons in which he did not suffer' is unlike Origen. Once Greek texts are taken into account, the conclusion is incontestable: he strongly propounds the uniqueness of Incarnation. Therefore he could had never expressed a view in the obfuscating manner that Rufinus' ambiguous phraseology does. The translator seems to aspire to countervailing detraction pointing up Origen as not being faithful to the *ἐφ' ἅπαξ* incarnation of the Logos, as a consequence of his notion of prolongation of time. But Rufinus strives to do so being himself unaware of Origen's express views. Once more, in his effort to render Origen's thought in a way that he deemed appropriate, he created problems while trying to solve questions that do not actually exist in the first place.

What Origen holds is that at the 'consummation of aeons' which occurred during the present aeon, God 'willed'¹⁰⁶ 'to reveal himself', and as a 'measure of revelation'¹⁰⁷ he 'willed to send a divine teacher to mankind'.¹⁰⁸ In the portion of *frLuc* he appears conscious of the meaning of the Past tense: he comments on it, with all his expressions about the 'will' and 'act' of God towards the Incarnation being in the Past tense, which denotes an action which *once* took place in the past.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Wis. 13, 9.

¹⁰³ Heb. 9, 26.

¹⁰⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.5.

¹⁰⁵ s. *Cels*, I, XX.

¹⁰⁶ *Cels*, I, 37.

¹⁰⁷ *frLuc*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ *Cels*, I, 37.

¹⁰⁹ Origen's alacrity to the significance of tenses, particularly Past tense, is a telling aspect of his analyses. For connotations of this particular tense, Cf. *COT*, pp. 21; 24; 119; 126-8; 137; 143; 300; 346; 357; 358.

If, however, the foregoing analysis allows some room for doubt, which is hardly to be expected, let me quote a portion from the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*.

In this passage, therefore, the Apostle quite correctly says, 'Death will no longer exercise dominion over him'. For he will *no longer* give himself over to the tyrant's realm of dominion, nor will he empty himself one more time by undertaking the form of a servant and by becoming obedient unto death.¹¹⁰ *Never again* will he endure the domination of the tyrant and of death in the form of a servant, even though he was put in this position willingly and not by coercion.

This is why I am surprised that certain people are apt to claim, in contradiction to this crystal-clear pronouncement of Paul, that in the future aeon it should be necessary for Christ to suffer the same things or similar things all over again, so that those whom his remedy was unable to cure in the life of the present dispensation might be freed.¹¹¹

This conforms with exclusion of the possibility of a second incarnation, as well as with rejection of recurrence of events in respect of both past and future aeons.¹¹² Taking into account this meticulous use of language, I should note that the expression *σωματοποιηθῆναι θελήσας* (he who *willed* to assume a body)¹¹³ denotes the uniqueness of the Incarnation. For both terms are in the Past tense, which denotes an action that took place once in the past. Had Origen declared this event to have taken place more than once in the past (that is, if Incarnation regularly takes place in each aeon) he could have used the verbs in Imperfect tense, which denotes a continuous, or repeated, action in the past. He could also have used Present tense, in order to bespeak a 'periodical' or 'repeated' incarnation of the Logos, as an event reoccurring intermittently. For example, in *Cels*, he alludes to his notion of 'assuming' a 'body' 'in accordance with one's merits' as an episode taking place at the consummation of an aeon. However, he uses Present tense (*δίδωσιν, ἀναλαμβάνόντων*) in order to denote that this *always* happens at the end of an aeon,¹¹⁴ whereas, in the same sentence, he states that God 'willed' this occurrence to be normally established, using Past tense in order to imply that this 'eternal law'¹¹⁵ was established *once* God *willed* so. Speaking of the Incarnation, however, the language is used in a manner clearly denoting that this event took place 'once' (*ἅπαξ*):

¹¹⁰ Cf. Phil. 2, 7–8.

¹¹¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.12–13; italics mine.

¹¹² Cf. *Cels*, IV, 68; V, 20; V, 23. The possibility of a 'second fall', is discussed in chapter 9, p. 348f.

¹¹³ *comm John*, 1, VI; italics mine.

¹¹⁴ *Cels*, V, 19.

¹¹⁵ *comm John*, 20, XXXIX.

Or it is befitting for you (ἔξεστιν) to argue for the fact that God did not always (μὴ αἰεὶ) appeared to the race of Hebrews, while we are not allowed to expound the same kind of argument in the case of Jesus? For it is he who just this once (ἅπαξ) was resurrected and convinced the disciples about his resurrection, and indeed convinced them so strongly (ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον), that they show to everyone that they risk undertaking (παίζουσι) all the troubles of this life, on account of looking towards the eternal life and the resurrection, which has been exemplified (ὑποδειγμένην) before them both in word and action.¹¹⁶

Accordingly, he speaks of Christ thus: “he offered the *unique* (ἅπαξ) sacrifice by offering himself, not only for the sake of man, but also for the sake of all rational creatures (οὐχ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ παντός λογικοῦ τὴν ἅπαξ θυσίαν προσενεχθεῖσαν ἑαυτὸν προσενεγκών)”. He argues that ‘it could be absurd’ (καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον) to claim that it was only for human sins that Christ ‘tasted death’.¹¹⁷ Christ ‘tasted death for the sake of the whole world’ (ὑπὲρ παντός), not only for the sake of human beings. The conclusion from this argumentation is that Jesus ‘died for the sake not only of men, but also of all other rational creatures’ (οὐ μόνον ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν λοιπῶν λογικῶν).¹¹⁸

In *frMatt* 38 I (quoting Matt. 3, 2), it is stated that the ‘kingdom’ [of heaven] betokens the ‘presence’ of Christ, both the ‘former’ and the ‘last’ one.¹¹⁹ For the Christian faith proclaims ‘two’ advents of Christ throughout all history: a ‘humble’ one in a human form, and a second ‘glorious and divine’ one which in its divinity will have nothing involved with the human existence.¹²⁰ All the pertinent references always denote the uniqueness of the Incarnation: ‘he who was *once* incarnate’ (τὸν ἅπαξ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα);¹²¹ he who made ‘one descent’ (μίαν κατάβασιν) because of his love for man¹²² and ‘for once’ (ἅπαξ) ‘assumed human nature’.¹²³

Latin translations also remain faithful to this aspect of Origen’s theology. In the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, after having considered heathen examples and secular histories and legends about persons sacrificing their own life for the sake of the many, he argues thus:

Nevertheless, regarding those individuals about whom these stories are narrated, none of these, not even in fable, is presented to have absolved the sins of the *entire world*, except for Jesus alone, who, ‘being in the form of God, thought it not rob-

¹¹⁶ *Cels*, II, 77.

¹¹⁷ Heb. 2, 9.

¹¹⁸ *commJohn*, 1, XXXV.

¹¹⁹ *frMatt*, 38 I.

¹²⁰ *Cels*, I, 56; the same notion in *frMatt*, 204 & 363.

¹²¹ *Op. cit.* I, 61; italics mine.

¹²² *Op. cit.* IV, 17.

¹²³ *commMatt*, 10, 14.

bery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation.¹²⁴ And having taken the form of a servant, in conformity with the will of the Father, he offered himself as a sacrifice for *the entire world*,¹²⁵ by delivering his own blood to the ruler of this world.¹²⁶

Referring to the end of an aeon, he calls the occurrences of that moment an 'eternal law'¹²⁷ and portrays the meaning of consummation, the causes of it, as well as the content and the outcome of judgement. He does this in detail, speaking also of 'heavenly and spiritual laws' which exist 'for salvation' and 'for the service to God'.¹²⁸

There is a notable difference between the accuracy of expounding the consummation of this aeon and the consummation of *other* aeons. With the uniqueness of the Incarnation emphatically pointed out, all other 'consummations of aeons' are not treated in the same assertive manner: they are just said to be moments when 'something should be done',¹²⁹ yet it is only God 'who knows the times of revealing things and the measures of revelation'.¹³⁰

A question that is invited then, is this: why did the Incarnation take place only in the present aeon? As a matter of fact, this was a question posed by Celsus: "Is it only now after such a long aeon that it occurred to God to honour the human race, while he did not care at all?"¹³¹ Which means that a '*why then?*' question is introduced with regard to the Incarnation. Origen did not decline to address himself to this: "We will reply to this that God at no time not desired to honour the life of men, but he has always cared for the reformation of the rational animal (τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον) and given opportunities for virtue."¹³² As for the *why then?* question, his reply goes thus:

In order to clarify these questions and reply to what has been said [sc. by Celsus] about the advent of Christ... we have to touch upon the teaching about divisions and to explain why 'when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the angels of God; and the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'.¹³³ And it will be necessary to explain the reason why in each case the birth of a man took place into a particular region as the subject of the one who has been assigned that region, and how is it reasonable that 'the Lord's portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance'. We must

¹²⁴ Phil. 2, 6–7.

¹²⁵ Cf. John, 2, 2.

¹²⁶ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.11.4; italics mine.

¹²⁷ s. *supra*. *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX.

¹²⁸ *commJohn*, 10, XXIV.

¹²⁹ *commMatt*, 15, 31.

¹³⁰ *frLuc*, 34.

¹³¹ *Cels*, IV, 7.

¹³² *Loc. cit.*

¹³³ Deut. 32, 8–9. Cf. *Cels*, V, 25–30.

explain why previously ‘the Lord’s portion was Jacob his people, Israel the lot of his inheritance’, whereas concerning subsequent things (περὶ δὲ τῶν ὕστερον) the Father said to the Saviour, ‘Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the bounds of the earth for thy possession.’¹³⁴ For there are certain courses of thought and syllogisms which are ineffable and impossible to relate, and they concern differentiation of divine dispensation toward human souls.¹³⁵

At this point there is no further elaboration on what is implied to be beyond expressional ability. Later in the same work though¹³⁶ there is an extensive account of the entire question:

However, since we suppose that some of those who are more investigative of these questions may come upon this writing, let us expound a few things about the deeper truths, which involve a certain secret and ineffable conception, taking the risk for this venture (παράκινδυνεύοντες); I refer to different places, of those being upon earth (χωρία τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς), which have been assigned from the beginning to different superintendents. And let us expound our doctrine, showing this free from the absurdities, which we have just mentioned.¹³⁷

Although the *why then?* doctrine is regarded as ‘unutterable and ineffable’, Origen essays to yield an exposition at this point of *Cels*. The Incarnation is a manifestation of the divine providence, covertly foretold in Scripture as regards the time of its materialization. This was realized at the designated time, that is, at the appointed *kairos* for this to come to pass. This facet of the dispute between Celsus and Origen is illuminative of how each of them understood not only time, but also history: Celsus’ conception was one of a God who was attending the human drama, as if this God were himself a temporal being. This is the import of his argumentative question: what kind of God is this? Is this a God who stays aloof attending the misery of human race for immeasurable aeons and doing nothing to alleviate this? What is the point of his decision to send his Son only now to lighten human ignorance and ease suffering? Notwithstanding his Platonic premises, Celsus views God and human history as unfolded simultaneously, in a parallel and moment-to-moment corresponding course.

Set off against this view, Origen propounds a different scheme. Certainly God follows the human drama moment-to-moment and cares even for what seems most unimportant to human eyes.¹³⁸ This God, however, is atemporal. He has knowledge not only of the present stage, but also of the conclusion of this

¹³⁴ Psalm 2, 8.

¹³⁵ *Cels*, IV, 8. About the ‘teaching about Incarnation’ being ‘mystical’, s. *selPs*, 50, PG.12.1453.33–52 (*Philocalia*, 1, 29).

¹³⁶ *Cels*, V, 25–33.

¹³⁷ *Cels*, V, 28; also, *selPs*, 104. Cf. p. 20, n. 65; p. 241, n. 25; p. 407, n. 147.

¹³⁸ *COT*, pp. 350–51.

drama. A timeless God knows the entire history and course of creation. The Incarnation is one moment in the course of this cosmic drama, a providentially scheduled act. The following saying in the Wisdom of Solomon is a witness to God's divine plan and foreknowledge of the entire historical process.

Moreover, when nations consenting together in wickedness had been confounded she [sc. God's Wisdom] knew the righteous man and preserved him blameless unto God, and kept him impeccable unto God and kept him strong when his heart yearned towards his child.¹³⁹

Origen's account of this event involves the entire divine dispensation. Although he holds a notion of a prolonged time comprising aeons, and does not a priori rule out the possibility of recurrence of one event or another,¹⁴⁰ the Incarnation is a unique episode. This has granted history a certain meaning in both directions, namely, past and future, which I am now going to explore.

Incarnation and History

Particular attention is paid to perusal of the actual meaning of the term εὐαγγέλιον (gospel), considered in terms of philosophy of history. Literally, the term means 'announcement of things' which rejoice those who hear them, 'once they accept what is announced'.¹⁴¹ Since the Old Testament is held to contain this announcement, if in a veiled manner, it could be argued that this denotation of εὐαγγέλιον applies to the Old Testament, too. However, this triumphant designation is not applied to the Law and the prophets, even though they announced 'good news'.¹⁴²

Nevertheless, someone might deem that he should take exception to the first definition [sc. of the term εὐαγγέλιον], since those writings [sc. the Old Testament] not entitled gospels also fall under this title. For the Law and the prophets are believed to be discourses containing a pronouncement of things which, with good reason, make the hearers glad whenever they accept the things which are pronounced, since they are beneficial.

One might reply to this, however, that before the advent of Christ, the Law and the prophets did not contain the pronouncement which is proper to the definition of the gospel, since he who elucidated the mysteries contained therein [sc. in the Law and the prophets] had not come yet. But once the Saviour has come, and has

¹³⁹ Wis. 10, 5.

¹⁴⁰ On account of creaturely freedom, the arrangement of future worlds is declared unknown. By the same token, the Stoic doctrine of recurrence of identical worlds is strongly rejected. *Cels.* IV, 12; IV, 68; V, 20; V, 23.

¹⁴¹ *comm John*, 1, V.

¹⁴² *comm John*, 1, VI.

willed (θελήσας) the gospel to emerge as a physical existence (σωματοποιηθῆναι)¹⁴³ in the gospel,¹⁴⁴ he has made all things gospel, as it were.

And I would not be off target to use the example, ‘A little leaven leaveth the whole lump’.¹⁴⁵ Because < >¹⁴⁶ sons of men in his divinity, having removed the veil on the Law and prophets,¹⁴⁷ he showed the divine inspiration of them all, demonstrating to those wanting to become disciples of his wisdom what the truths were hidden in the Law of Moses, which the ancients cultivated in ‘example and shadow,’¹⁴⁸ and what the truth was in the events of the stories, which ‘happened unto them in examples, and were written’ for the sake of us ‘upon whom the ends of the world are come’.¹⁴⁹

Everyone, then, whom Christ has reached, worships God neither in Jerusalem nor on the mountain of the Samaritans, but because he has learnt that ‘God is spirit’, serves him spiritually ‘in spirit and truth’,¹⁵⁰ and no longer (οὐκέτι) worships the Father and creator of all things figuratively.

Therefore, before that gospel which came into existence because of the coming of Christ, nothing of the old things was gospel. By contrast, the gospel which is a new testament, having removed us from ‘the antiquity of the letter’,¹⁵¹ made the (never growing old) newness of the Spirit shine forth in the light of knowledge. This [sc. newness of the Spirit] is proper to the New Testament, although this is held forth in all the Scriptures. For indeed it was necessary for the gospel, which actualized that which was considered as gospel in the Old Testament, to be called ‘gospel’ par excellence (ἐχρῆν δὲ τὸ ποιητικὸν τοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ διαθήκῃ νομιζομένου εὐαγγελίου εὐαγγέλιον ἐξαίρετως καλεῖσθαι εὐαγγέλιον).¹⁵²

Although the covert OT announcement was ‘good news’ (and therefore OT was εὐαγγέλιον in a sense), the term εὐαγγέλιον applies only to what contains

¹⁴³ In this case, the verb σωματοποιεῖσθαι has the special meaning of the Logos who had appeared in the OT now having become visible in a corporeal form, with the text of Scripture being the embodiment of Christ. The verb σωματοποιεῖσθαι is extremely rare in Greek literature and normally means ‘organize in a body’ (e.g. writings, or people). In this sense it may also be in the active mood (σωματοποιεῖν). The verb σωματοποιεῖσθαι suggesting the Incarnation of the Logos is used only by Hippolytus and Origen—obviously the latter received this form the former, since his writings are oftentimes interlaced with Hippolytus’ ideas. Cf. Hippolytus, *Commentarium in Danielelem*, 3.14.6: αὐτὸν τὸν λόγον ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων σωματοποιεῖσθαι καὶ σχῆμα ἀνθρώπου ἀναλαμβάνειν.

¹⁴⁴ Καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον σωματοποιηθῆναι θελήσας τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ πάντα ὡσεὶ εὐαγγέλιον πεποίηκε. I accept θελήσας with E. Klostermann, not Migne’s ποιήσας. Origen, who par excellence associated the opening of Genesis and that of John’s Gospel, always emphasizes the notion of divine *will*, in relation to both Creation and Incarnation. Using the art of rhetoric, this is a double entendre of the term εὐαγγέλιον. Jesus made the ‘gospel’ corporeal, being himself the physical expression of ‘good news’. The ‘gospel’ is both an ‘object’ (the teaching of Jesus) and ‘subject’ (Jesus himself).

¹⁴⁵ Gal. 5, 9.

¹⁴⁶ There is a lacuna in the text at this point.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. 2 Cor. 3, 15.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Heb. 8, 5.

¹⁴⁹ 1 Cor. 10, 11.

¹⁵⁰ John, 4, 24.

¹⁵¹ Rom. 7, 6.

¹⁵² *commJohn*, 1, VI; italics mine. An articulate logolatry with the term εὐαγγέλιον.

the *realization* of these promises. This designation is reserved only for the period of history after the Incarnation, which is the time in which the Holy Spirit has unveiled in a *historical manner* the mysteries proclaimed in the Old Testament. Εὐαγγέλιον applies to that period of history when God speaks and acts within history in a more unveiled manner. In comparison with the old times, He speaks to the world not through the riddles of the law and the prophets, but by means of Himself truly assuming human nature. The Old Testament was incomplete (πεπληρωμένη οὐκ ἦν), in the sense that He who said 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (συνπληρῶσαι),'¹⁵³ was not physically present in that chain of events.¹⁵⁴ The 'veil' was 'removed' once this physical presence and instruction was staged in history.

The incarnation of the Logos 'clarified' the 'mysteries' of the Old Testament, which contained a 'promise' expressed in a veiled manner. These writings however cannot be called εὐαγγέλιον. For the object (and subject) of this promise, which is the Logos, appears in a 'corporeal' form only in the New Testament. This 'presence' (both as teaching and historical events) removed the veil from the words of the law and prophets and *historically* proved them inspired by God. It was the 'promise' itself, secretly expressed in the Old Testament, that became corporeal. This is why the term εὐαγγέλιον applies 'par excellence' (ἐξαιρέτως) to what 'actualizes' (ποιητικόν) the old message.

History *before* this event already had a teleological character: its course moved towards the advent of the Logos. The evolution of history was directed by the *promise* given by God and, subsequently, by the *expectation* and *hope* for this event to occur, since this had been *prophesied*.

But are you not impressed so as to marvel by the testimonials of the supreme God and his holy angels, uttered through prophets, not after Jesus' advent but *before* he came on to human life, so that you stand in awe both at the prophets who received divine inspiration and the one whom they prophesied? For it so happened that his advent to human life was proclaimed in anticipation many years before, by numerous men, so that the whole nation of the Jews was hanging on the *expectation* of him whom they *hoped* would come.¹⁵⁵

This is the sense in which John the Baptist and his preaching is regarded as an 'end', whereas Jesus Christ is a 'beginning'.¹⁵⁶ This 'beginning' is not only temporal but also qualitative, meaning enlightenment and renewal of the history thereafter.¹⁵⁷ This is why Origen takes up those definitions of the term 'end'

¹⁵³ Matt. 5, 17.

¹⁵⁴ *commMatt*, 10, 12.

¹⁵⁵ *Cels*, III, 28; italics mine.

¹⁵⁶ *frMatt*, 74.

¹⁵⁷ *frMatt*, 227.

(τέλος) which fit best this own conception of history. He appeals to Aristotle in order to define ‘end’ (τέλος) as the final cause (οὐδ’ ἔνεκεν τὰ ἄλλα, αὐτὸ δὲ οὐκ αὐτῶν ἔνεκα)¹⁵⁸ and as the end or purpose of action (δι’ οὐ τις τὰ ἄλλα πράττει, αὐτὸ δὲ διὰ μηδὲν ἄλλο).¹⁵⁹ He appeals also to ‘the followers of Herophilus’:

End is a predicate on account of which everything else is done, whereas this in itself is not done for the sake of anything else. Its concomitant predicate is called goal (σκοπὸν), in the same sense that true happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is [the predicate respective] to the notion of being happy. And this [sc. goal] is the ultimate choice.¹⁶⁰

That the incarnation of Christ is a ‘beginning’ understood in both a temporal and a qualitative sense, is expressed in a single passage: Christ is he who ‘has transformed himself by undertaking the form of a servant; thanks to him we began to live according to the New Testament and prepare ourselves for the consummation of figures and the beginning of the truth itself.’¹⁶¹ Besides, a telling comment on John 2, 19, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’, goes thus:

For it is not written ‘Destroy this temple and on the third day and I will raise it up’, but ‘in three days’. For [construction] of the temple*¹⁶² is raised during the first and the second day after it has been destroyed, but its raising up is completed during all three days. This is why resurrection has both taken place and there will be a resurrection, too. For even though we are buried with Christ, we are also resurrected together with him.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Origen apparently has in mind Aristotle’s statements in *Physica* 243a3 (and 194a27 nonetheless), *Metaphysica* 1059a35 (also, 983a31, 994b9, 996a26, etc.).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 499e. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1094a18, etc.

¹⁶⁰ *selPs*, PG.12.1053.18–20, from the introductory text of Origen’s Commentary on Psalms (also in *selPs*, PG.12.1053.29). Notice his selectiveness from pagan philosophy: “we have selected... on the one hand from the followers of Aristotle... and on the other from the followers of Herophilus”. Herophilus was a 3rd century A.D. Alexandrian medical doctor, greatly admired by Galen who regarded him as second only to Hippocrats and Chrysippus. The book ‘On the Stoic Use of Terms’ mentioned here is not attested by any other author. Who were ‘the followers of Herophilus’ mentioned by Origen? Here are some names of ‘Herophilians’ (‘followers of Hieophilus’) witnessed by various authors: Manteias (Μαντείας), Alexander the ‘lover of truth’ (Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Φιλαλήθης), Appolonius (Ἀπολλώνιος), Aristoxenus (Ἀριστόξενος), Bacheius (Βακχείος), Chrysermus (Χρύσερμος), Facas (Φακάς), Hegetor (Ἡγήτωρ), Heraclides of Taras (Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ταραντίνος), Kallianax (Καλλιάνας), Zeno (Ζήνων). Galen is the author to compare the views of Herophilians with those of both old and ‘more recent Stoics’ (οἱ νεώτεροι Στωικοὶ). *De Plenitudine Liber*, v. 27, pp. 525, 527–28. Of Christian theologians beside Origen, only three mention Herophilus: Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica*, 15.61.4), Theodoret of Cyrus (*Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, 5.22) and Photius (*Bibliotheca*, Cod. 167, p. 114b).

¹⁶¹ *selPs*, 76. PG.12.1540.18–22: προευτρεπιζόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἄρξασθαι τοὺς τύπους παύεσθαι, ἄρχεσθαι δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

¹⁶² There is a lacuna after the word ναοῦ (‘of the temple’). The word missing should be κατασκευή, since Origen applies this sequence of words in the ensuing chapter of the same work: τῆς τοῦ ναοῦ κατασκευῆς, *commJohn*, 10, XVIII. Cf. τοῦ ναοῦ κατασκευήν, *selDeut*, PG.12.816.37.

¹⁶³ Cf. Rom. 6, 4. *commJohn*, 10, XXXVII.

History is the means for the divine dispensation to be realized: on the 'first day' there is evil; on the 'second day', consummation takes place; the 'third' is the day of resurrection.¹⁶⁴

History then acquires a new meaning *after* the incarnation of the Logos. Action is reinforced by the *hope* and *expectation* of resurrection, which has already been realized in history. This granted a clear purport upon *future* time and showed the way in which the course towards the end will be fulfilled:

For indeed both (that is, the temple and Jesus' body) according to one of the possible exegeses (κατὰ μίαν τῶν ἐκδοχῶν), appear to me to be a type of the Church, which becomes a spiritual house 'for a holy priesthood',¹⁶⁵ by virtue of the fact that she is built of living stones, she is called a 'temple'¹⁶⁶ built 'upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the chief cornerstone'.¹⁶⁷ And through the saying 'Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular',¹⁶⁸ [we believe] that the temple will be raised up and the body will be resurrected on the third day after the day of evil¹⁶⁹ which menaces it, and [after] the day of consummation which follows, even if the harmony of the stones of the temple appear to be demolished, <or,> as it is written in Psalm twenty one, all the bones of Christ appear to be scattered¹⁷⁰ out of persecution and adversities by those who wage war against the unity of the temple. For the third day will show up, in the new heaven and the new earth,¹⁷¹ when these bones, the whole house of Israel,¹⁷² shall be raised up on the great day of the Lord (κυριακῇ),¹⁷³ while death will have been

¹⁶⁴ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹⁶⁵ 1 Pet. 2, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Eph. 2, 21.

¹⁶⁷ Eph. 2, 20.

¹⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 12, 27.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Eccl. 7, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Psalm 21, 15.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Rev. 21, 1.

¹⁷² Ez. 37, 11.

¹⁷³ The name κυριακή is applied to the Last Day (*commJohn*, 10, XXXV). The word κυριακή (feminine adj.) should be paid some attention. As a masculine adjective (κυριακός) it was used in Roman Empire, referring to a 'master', especially to the emperor. It is derived from Κύριος (the Lord), and means 'belonging to the Lord', or simply 'of the Lord' (Cf. 1 Cor. 11, 20). The day of rest does not belong to the 'sun' (Sunday), but to the Lord (Κυριακή). Clement of Alexandria adduces the testimony that the Gnostics identified the day of rest Κυριακή with the Ogdoad, the 'heavenly Jerusalem' and universal 'Mother' (τῇ Μητρί), the eighth day of the Lord (*Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 3.63.1). He also interprets Plato's statement in *Respublica* 616b2 as an allusion to the 'day of the Lord' (κυριακὴν ἡμέραν) (*Stromateis*, 5.14.106.2). The name of this day probably comes from certain apocrypha. Cf. *Acta Thomae*, 31; *Acta Joannis*, 6; 106; *Acta Pauli*, Fr. 3 (Origen quotes from this work in *commJohn*, 20, XII, s. *infra*); *Acta Petri* (*Martyrium Petri*), 30; *Apocalypsis Apocrypha Joannis*, 6; 10. Thus Κυριακή is the Greek name for the sacred day of the week during the last two thousand years, and so Origen calls this, too (*Cels*, VIII, 22), obviously after Rev. 1, 10. The same term is applied to a righteous person, who is called 'man of the Lord' (κυριακός ἄνθρωπος, or simply, κυριακός; *frPs*, 88, 51–53; *selPs*, PG.12.1549; *excPs*, PG.17.132). Such persons are the innocent who will rest in God at the resurrection, in the pleroma (πλήρωμα) of Deity. These are denoted by the 'eight souls' (1 Peter 3, 20) saved in the ark of Noah. Cf. *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1129.3. Cf. p. 263, n. 198; pp. 294f; p. 342.

conquered.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, [we believe that] the resurrection of Christ too, which ensued from his passion on the cross, contains the mystery of the resurrection of the entire body of Christ. Just as that perceptible body of Jesus has been crucified, buried, and afterwards raised up, so also the whole body of the saints of Christ have been ‘crucified with’¹⁷⁵ Christ and now no longer live. For each of them, like Paul, boasts in nothing else than ‘in the cross of our Lord Christ Jesus’,¹⁷⁶ through whom he has been crucified to the world and the world to him. Therefore, he has not only been crucified with Christ, and crucified to the world, but he is also buried with Christ, ‘for’, Paul says, ‘we were buried with Christ.’¹⁷⁷ And as if he has attained some kind of betrothal to resurrection (ἐν τινι ἀρραβῶνι ἀναστάσεως), he says, ‘We have been resurrected with him’,¹⁷⁸ for he walks in a certain newness of life, in the same way as [he will be living] in the hoped for (ἐλπιζομένην) blessed and perfect resurrection, although he has not been resurrected yet. Hence, although he is now either crucified and after that buried, or he is now buried and removed from the cross, there will be a time when (ποτὲ δὲ) he will be resurrected due to the very fact that he is now buried.¹⁷⁹

The course of history advances towards the ‘hoped for’ (ἐλπιζομένην) resurrection. This is the account on which the Church is regarded as the place for progressing towards salvation. This is why she is the ‘temple’,¹⁸⁰ and ‘body’ of Christ. For the body of Jesus was a ‘prefiguration’ (προτύπωσιν)¹⁸¹ of the Church.¹⁸² This is also why¹⁸³ the construction of the temple of Solomon is understood to pertain to the Church:

We shall attempt, however, to refer each of the statements, which have reference to the temple, analogically to the Church.¹⁸⁴

There are numerous points all through showing the Church being regarded as the *locus* for salvation.¹⁸⁵ The meaning of ‘salvation’ is the ‘return to God’, already realized as ‘resurrection’ experienced in the reality of sacraments, which though is a ‘great mystery’¹⁸⁶ ‘hard to speculate’. This is to be expected, since the notion of resurrection is closely related to the conception of the Fall: resurrection is ‘restoration’ from the fallen state.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 54.

¹⁷⁵ Gal. 2, 20.

¹⁷⁶ Gal. 6, 14.

¹⁷⁷ Rom. 6, 4.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Rom. 6, 5.

¹⁷⁹ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹⁸⁰ He refers to the temple of Solomon, as in John, 2, 18.

¹⁸¹ *frJohn*, CXL.

¹⁸² *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹⁸³ Cf. 3 Kings, 6, 27.

¹⁸⁴ *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.23–25; *excPs*, PG.17.113.31–33. *deOr*, XXVI, 3; *homJer*, 7, 3 (the Church styled ‘the earth of God’); *homJer*, 13, 3 (‘it is only therein that one can be saved’); *homJer*, 5, 16, *et passim*. Cf. p. 283, note 372.

¹⁸⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI.

This is why he calls the resurrection of Jesus Christ the 'exemplified' (ὑποδειγμένην)¹⁸⁷ one. His 'death and resurrection' have already established a 'prefiguration' (προτύπωσιν)¹⁸⁸ of the resurrection the entire world, as those who follow him in 'his death' will also be like him 'in the resurrection' (τὴν μετὰ τὸ σάββατον ἀνάπαυσιν τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ ἐμποιοῦντος τοῖς συμμέροφιν τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένοις καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως).¹⁸⁹

The real meaning which future time acquired is established by the fact that Jesus 'staged the resurrection of the dead through his own resurrection'.¹⁹⁰ This was a historical event, which proved the validity of the promise of Jesus to his disciples that they will be resurrected, too.¹⁹¹ In a Greek fragment of the Commentary on Matthew, it is reaffirmed that the death and resurrection of Christ was also a figure of the resurrection of all.¹⁹²

Incarnation is a 'mystery' which was in the providence of God 'before the foundation of the world'; this was realized at the proper time appointed by God himself, at a moment which marks the consummation of a number of aeons. This event unveiled the meaning of history and rational hypostases thereafter exist in 'betrothal' (ἐν ἀρραβῶνι) to the triumphant reality of the 'end'.¹⁹³ This betrothal imparts the sense in which the *future* became *present*. In the person of Jesus the end was realized and within the Church the future is realized as present through the sacramental life of the Church.¹⁹⁴ The resurrection of Jesus was the incipient *fulfillment* of the *promise* of God, given through Jesus professing the eventual resurrection of the entire world.

The future became present not only for the resurrected Jesus himself, but also for everyone who believes in God through Christ. This is why Paul 'attained some kind of betrothal to resurrection' and walks as if he were resurrected already, although not resurrected yet. In *selPs* Origen speaks of history after the resurrection of Christ in a really jubilant manner, not in consideration of what history will be, but on account of what history has already *become*:

What that day will be like, on which reconciliation of God to men took place, and a lasting war was suspended, and the earth was proven to be heaven, and the unmerited men of the earth appeared worthy of the kingdom, and the foundation of our nature was elevated above the heavens (ὑπὲρ ἅνω τῶν οὐρανῶν), and paradise opened and we received back our ancient fatherland, and the curse was

¹⁸⁷ *Cels*, II, 77.

¹⁸⁸ *frJohn*, CXL.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Rom. 6, 5. *commJohn*, 2, XXXIII.

¹⁹⁰ *frMatt*, 34.

¹⁹¹ *frJohn*, CV—comm. on John, 14, 3 and quoting 2 Tim. 2, 12.

¹⁹² *frMatt*, 553. Cf. *Princ* (Lat.), I.2.4: "there should exist a resurrection, the figure of which was shown in our Lord and Saviour".

¹⁹³ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *Cels*, V, 33; VIII, 22; *selGen*, PG.12.100. In *Jesu Nare homiliae xxvi*, p. 441.

extinguished and sin was forgiven? He is certainly who created all the days, yet he par excellence (ἐξαιρέτως) made *that* day; for it was on that day that he realized the supreme mysteries befitting him. Let us then rejoice and be overjoyed on that day, enjoying a double joy and feast; one [joy], because we were emancipated from the captivity of the devil; and a second [joy], because we are elevated to the kingdom of heavens.¹⁹⁵

The cause for this joy stems from the eschatological expectation having somehow already become *present*, since ‘He who is going to bring peace in the world has arrived; he who establishes a bond between heaven and earth transforms earth into heaven through the preaching of the gospel’.¹⁹⁶ In the same vein, when Jesus says, ‘Be assured; I have overcome the world’,¹⁹⁷ we can certainly assume that ‘with that leader the world has now been overcome by us; and its walls, which persons of this aeon used to support, have collapsed’.¹⁹⁸

The eschatological prospect has already been realized as a concrete historical reality, within the experience of the ecclesiastical life. The resurrection of Jesus is certainly the ‘first’ fulfillment, but not a momentary one. It has been established in history as a real and definitive historical *present* within the Church, potentially for every human being until the end of the aeon. This is how a development of the vicarious character of Christ’s sacrifice is sustained. However, it is not only a matter of experience, this is also a reality pertaining to that multifarious world that Origen maintains. “At the coming of Lord Jesus the world is overcome”, he reiterates. “Yet I want to know more clearly those things that are said”. Recourse is once again had in Paul, so that ‘he can disclose to us how Christ overcame the world’. Appealing to the ‘principalities and authorities’ of the Epistle to the Colossians,¹⁹⁹ he understands the drama of Incarnation to have taken place before the eyes of the entire ‘world’:

I gather from these words, therefore, that when the heavenly powers saw the combat of Jesus (the principalities and hostile authorities stripped of their authorities, ‘the strong one bound and his goods spoiled’)²⁰⁰ they thundered with their heavenly trumpets, because with the prince of this world bound, the world was overcome, and the heavenly army gave the joyful shout at the triumph of Christ.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1584.27–42. On the idea of ‘ancient fatherland’ (ἀρχαίαν πατρίδα), s. pp. 288f.

¹⁹⁶ *homLuc*, 15. Cf. the same notion: out of the passion and resurrection of Jesus an ‘emancipation’ of souls has already taken place. *selPs*, 67, PG.1508.52–1509.5: “Ἡ καὶ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ σταυροῦ λέγει, ἐν ᾧ ἀναβὰς καὶ τοὺς ἐν ἀέρι δαίμονας καὶ τὰ πνεύματα τῆς πονηρίας ἀφ’ ἧς εἶχον ὑπερηφανίας κατασπάσας, τὰς ὑπ’ αὐτῶν αἰχμαλωτισθείσας ψυχὰς διὰ τῶν πονηρῶν πράξεων, καὶ ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἀποστάσας, καθάπερ τινὰ αἰχμαλωσίαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄδου κευθμώνων ἀνεγκύσας ἡλευθέρωσεν.

¹⁹⁷ John, 16, 33.

¹⁹⁸ *Homilies on Joshua*, 7.2.

¹⁹⁹ Col. 2, 14–15.

²⁰⁰ Matt. 12, 29

²⁰¹ Cf. Joshua, 6, 20. *Homilies on Joshua*, 7.3.

Origen makes pretty much of the idea of Paul's in that portion of the Colossians: "For the Son was indeed visibly crucified in the flesh, but invisibly on that cross the devil with his principalities and authorities was affixed to the cross".²⁰² The ecclesiastical mystery through which the eschatological reality is experienced as present, is not relegated to a jejune subjectivism. On the contrary, it is a functional element of the real historical process:

We see how many things are obscurely shadowed in his first coming, the completion and even *perfection* of which will be completed by the second coming. As the apostle Paul says, 'He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places'.²⁰³ Certainly we do *not yet* see believers to have either been *already* raised or seated in the heavenly places, yet these things have indeed been obscurely shadowed through *faith*; for through the mind and through *hope* we are elevated from earthly and dead works, and we raise up our heart to heavenly and eternal things. In his second coming, however, this will be *fulfilled*: Those things that for the time being we have only *anticipated* by *faith* and *hope*, we shall then also physically retain in their effective reality.²⁰⁴

Thus it is not only about 'hope', it is also about 'fulfillment', so that we can refer to a certain 'already'. This philosophy of history is characterized by a tension of the promise having both 'already' and 'not yet' been fulfilled, within a history of a dramatic nature.

The sayings of the prophet in which he said of Christ, 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive' were fulfilled.²⁰⁵ Hence by his resurrection he has *already* destroyed the power of the death, which is also why it is written that he set captives free. Listen now to when the Apostle says that the enemy and tyrant, whose power [Christ] destroyed, *is going to be destroyed*.²⁰⁶ He says, 'the last enemy is destroyed, death'.²⁰⁷ The kingdom of death then has *already* been destroyed, and the captivity that was being held under its authority has been abolished. But because that enemy and tyrant is still to be destroyed *ultimately* at the end of the aeon, this is why we see him even now, I do not say reigning so much as robbing. Having been dislodged from his kingdom, we see him going around through deserts and wastelands²⁰⁸ seeking to gather to him a company of unbelievers.²⁰⁹

²⁰² Cf. Col. 2, 14–15. *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.3. Cf. *Homilies on Luke*, 16. 9–10. "Before I believed in Jesus, the goodness in me laid down, while the evil was standing. After he came, what was evil in me has collapsed. . . . The fall of all these vices is beneficial."

²⁰³ Eph. 2, 6.

²⁰⁴ *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.4; italics mine.

²⁰⁵ Psalm 68, 18; Eph. 4, 8.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *comm John*, 20, XXXIX.

²⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 26.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Matt. 12, 43; Luke, 11, 24; 1 Peter 5, 8.

²⁰⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.37; my italics lay stress on the tension between 'already' and 'not yet'. s. pp. 256–7, 299, 333, 346.

The typological principle, 'the former carry in themselves figures of the latter'²¹⁰ proclaims Incarnation having illuminated the sayings of the Old Testament.²¹¹ Since 'the mysteries conform with each other', history evolves so that 'the patterns of the New and Old Testament are accordant'.²¹² The correspondence between the two Testaments is not a redundant duplication of things. For instance, there is a paradoxical coherence between the instances of Abraham and the required sacrifice of Isaac, on the one hand, and Jesus, on the other. Here is how this reads:

Already at that time, the faith in the resurrection began to be sustained in Isaac. Thus, Abraham hoped for the resurrection of Isaac and believed in a future that had not yet come to pass. How then are 'sons of Abraham'²¹³ those who do not believe what has happened in Christ, which Abraham did believe was to occur in Isaac? Rather, to say this more clearly, Abraham knew himself to prefigure the image of future truth; he knew Christ was to be born from his seed, who was also to be offered as a truer victim for the whole world and was to be raised from the dead.²¹⁴

And yet, this does not imply trifling repetition. History moves forward and its meaning, while believed in and hoped for, becomes evident once subsequent occurrences cast light upon its course. 'Prefiguration' does not mean mere 'duplication' within different scenery in future. Rather it means revelation of what is here called 'truer', that is, emergence of truth proper, unveiled. A correspondence of events in this respect is described thus:

Behold God standing *vis-à-vis* men with men in wonderful benevolence: Abraham offered God a mortal son who was not put to death; God delivered to death an immortal son for men.²¹⁵

This accord of events can be grasped only by means of faith and divine edification. This is how Origen's typology should be understood. Any factual parallelism has to be illuminated, a certain semblance in form does not imply identification of events:

It was then not without profound mastery that the Apostle speaks about Adam calling him a type of Christ. The type is similar in genus but opposite in species. For the type is similar in genus in that, just as something is spread out to very many men from the one Adam, so also something is dispersed to very many men

²¹⁰ *fr. Matt.*, 57.

²¹¹ *comm. John*, 10, XXXV.

²¹² *Homilies on Genesis*, 10. 5.

²¹³ Cf. *John*, 8, 37.

²¹⁴ *Homilies on Genesis*, 8.1.

²¹⁵ *Op. cit.* VIII, 8.

from the one Christ. But the species is opposite, because the transgression which began with Adam ‘made many sinners’, whereas by the obedience of Christ ‘many shall be made righteous’.²¹⁶

It is not then simply a question of theoretical analysis of history. It is consequent to this correspondence of events and the way of its disclosure, that prophecy, which is authored by the Holy Spirit, is a ‘prediction of future things; and when they are accomplished what had been said reaches its end.’²¹⁷ The passion and resurrection of Christ is a ‘prefiguration’ of what will happen to the ‘body’ of the Church at the end: “For Christ is the ‘head of the Church’, so that Christ and Church are one body.”²¹⁸ The advent of Christ, as a promise of God, marks the fulfillment; it is the ‘answer of him who is *expected* to those who *expect* him’.²¹⁹ Because he who came was he who ‘could establish peace in the *future* and reconcile heavens to the earth and *transform earth itself into heaven* through his preaching’.²²⁰ This historical event establishes a springboard for the future process of history. How this ‘beginning’ is understood is stated thus:

For indeed Jesus, as well his disciples, wanted that those people who approached them to believe not only in his divine nature and marvels (παραδόξοις), as though he did not share in human nature and had not taken upon himself the human flesh which lusts ‘against the spirit’;²²¹ but since the power, which descended in human nature and within human circumstances, and assumed a soul and a human body, was believed (πιστεύεσθαι) to concur with divine nature for the purpose of *salvation* of those who believe (πιστεύουσιν), they saw that with him [sc. Jesus] human and divine nature *began* to be woven together, so that human nature, through its communion with the divine one, *become* divine itself.²²² And this [is believed to happen] not only in Jesus, but also to all those who, once started to believe and assume that conduct of life which Jesus taught, and which *leads* everyone who lives according to the instructions (ὑποθήκας) of Jesus to friendship (φιλίαν) with God²²³ and communion (κοινωνίαν) with Jesus.²²⁴

²¹⁶ Rom. 5, 19. Notice Origen’s erudition, and his familiarity with Greek elegance of argument. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.2.2.

²¹⁷ *frMatt*, 21.

²¹⁸ Heb. 1, 9. *Cels*, VI, 79.

²¹⁹ *homLuc*, 15.

²²⁰ *homJer*, 5, 5; italics mine.

²²¹ Gal. 5, 17.

²²² This might be the source of Athanasius’ acclaimed statement, ‘He became man so that we be deified’ (Αὐτός γάρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν), *De Incarnatione Verbi*, 54.3. I believe however that the real source for both Athanasius and Origen is Hippolytus, *Commentarium in Daniele*, 4.39.6: Ὅδε γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου τὰ ἄνω κάτω γενέσθαι, ἵνα καὶ τὰ κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω ἐλθεῖν δυνήθῃ. Likewise, *In Canticum Mosis*, Fr. 1: ὁ ἄνωθεν κατελθὼν καὶ τὸν κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω ἀνενέγκας.

²²³ Cf. James, 2, 23. s. p. 157, note 84.

²²⁴ *Cels*, III, 28; italics mine.

He was incarnate so that those who ‘exercise their freedom towards accepting’ the word of the prophets will thereafter ‘be given the paternal inheritance’.²²⁵ The Incarnation marks the moment of history at which ‘we *began* to live according to the New Testament’. This means that we ‘are preparing ourselves for beginning the termination of the figures and for the beginning of the truth itself’.²²⁶ Once the incarnation of the Logos took place, we know the meaning of movement in history thereafter. We also learned that the resurrection was an ‘exemplified’ prefiguration of the resurrection of the entire ‘body’ of Christ,²²⁷ which will come to pass at the end. An anticipated eschatological reality has *begun to be realized*. In a sense, this is already *present* in history. Following Peter, who says that Christ crucified leaves behind an example for us,²²⁸ Origen argues that ‘the cross was a token of victory over the devil, on which he was both crucified and triumphant.’ In fact ‘two antithetic things were crucified: Jesus himself as a saint and the world as a sinner’ and this indeed ‘prefigures history’.²²⁹ In this respect, Origen put forward the double role of Christ as a victim and as a priest.²³⁰ No one after Paul did make the Cross the pivotal midpoint of all history as Origen did.²³¹

The Incarnation and resurrection was something with a twofold meaning in respect of the direction in history. Firstly, it was an event through which God showed the path to salvation. Secondly, this ultimate end was presented into history not as a prophetic proclamation, but as a real historical event, which staged the historical eventuality in the present time. Subsequently, the same event is what enables all men to sense this *future* at the *present* time through faithful experience within the Church.

It is out of this *realization* and *promise* that the word of the incarnate Logos is called εὐαγγέλιον. Explaining the etymology of the term,²³² Origen points out that what is announced is ‘the saving advent of Jesus Christ’. So ‘to those who opt for accepting this’ and ‘to him who *believes*’, this εὐαγγέλιον ‘teaches the sojourn of the good Father in his Son’. Thus the ‘good’ (ἀγαθόν) which is ‘*promised* by these books, is what constitutes our *expectation*’.²³³

²²⁵ *frMatt*, 227.

²²⁶ *selPs*, 76, PG.12.1540.18–22. s. *supra*.

²²⁷ *Cels*, VI, 79.

²²⁸ ὑπογραμμόν: 1 Peter, 2, 21.

²²⁹ *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.3–4.

²³⁰ *Op. cit.* 8.6, considering Heb. 5, 6 and 1 Cor 5, 7. Cf. *Homilies on Genesis*, 8.6.9.

²³¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica*, 32. When Gregory of Nyssa urges that the real cosmic and historical significance of the salvation lies in the fact of Christ’s true Incarnation, he actually echoes Origen.

²³² That is, the meaning of the term εὐαγγέλιον being ‘announcement of things rejoicing him who hears them, once he has accepted that which is announced’. *commJohn*, 1, V.

²³³ *commJohn*, 1, V; italics mine.

The incarnation of the Logos then has oriented history towards the end, which he *realized*. He revealed and staged its actual content within history, and *promised* this realization to those who will follow the road shown to them. The resurrection of Jesus determined action in history: it illuminated and ‘exemplified’ its ongoing drama,²³⁴ as well as its ultimate perspectives. Thus *hope* and *expectation* became more intense, since the *promise* given by Jesus has been already *realized* in his person as an ‘example’ ‘both in word and deed’ of what *will* happen at the *end*.

For it is he who just this once (ἅπαξ) was resurrected and convinced the disciples about his resurrection, and indeed convinced them so strongly (ἐπὶ τοσούτον), that they show to everyone that they risk undertaking (παίζουσι) all the troubles of this life, on account of looking towards the eternal life and the resurrection, which has been exemplified (ὑποδειγμένην) before them both in word and action.²³⁵

‘Movement’ (that is, free moral action) in history is now stimulated by *hope*; it is weighed *vis-à-vis* a goal, ‘the blessed and perfect resurrection hoped for’.²³⁶ The road towards this goal certainly presupposes proper action; yet God can reinforce this action through his grace, which is perpetual since perpetual is the presence of the Logos even ‘after his visible presence’.²³⁷ Thus, history is coloured by ‘incessant grace’ and ‘perpetual hope’. This is the meaning of *referecne* to ‘the incessant grace and the non-perishability of hope’ (τὸ διηνεκὲς τῆς χάριτος καὶ τὸ ἀμάραντον τῆς ἐλπίδος).²³⁸

History has now a new orientation towards an eventuality, which was both promised and ‘exemplified’.²³⁹ Now the relation between God and acting agents is underlined by God’s grace and creatures’ hope. A pious man acts ‘in this aeon, yet he strives looking forward to the aeon to come’.²⁴⁰

After the Incarnation ‘we who have been familiar with Christ *expect* (προσδοκῶμεν) to receive our reward’,²⁴¹ since now ‘rewarding promises of God are being hoped for’ (καὶ τῶν ἐλπιζομένων ἀμοιβαίων ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ).²⁴² Christ, therefore, offers consolation ‘through the hope of the future’ (ταῖς ἐλπίσι τοῦ μέλλοντος)²⁴³ and conduct in history is enlightened and directed by faith. This

²³⁴ “The Lord was the first to be tempted with every temptation that men were to be tempted. He is tempted for this reason, that once he conquers, we might also conquer.” *Homilies on Luke*, 29.3.

²³⁵ *Cels*, II, 77.

²³⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

²³⁷ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

²³⁸ *adnotLev*, PG.17.20.35–37.

²³⁹ Cf. *Cels*, II, 77.

²⁴⁰ *selLev*, PG.12.401.15.

²⁴¹ *commMatt*, 15, 35.

²⁴² *commMatt*, 12, 34.

²⁴³ *selPs*, 48, PG.12.1445.8.

conception of faith is advanced through extensive analyses²⁴⁴ in order to portray the intense eschatological character that creaturely movement has acquired since God manifested himself in history and hope and expectation were meaningfully established thereby.

Following the allegorical exegesis of 'in three days',²⁴⁵ Origen considers that 'the present aeon is night'²⁴⁶ and a period of 'distress and affliction and suffering and pain'²⁴⁷ and 'to the righteous men this aeon is a winter'.²⁴⁸ However, the Incarnation enlightened the import of hope, which directs course in history to the very end of it. Here is how Psalm 36, 7 ('fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass') is commented on:

He says not to imitate that prosperity which was achieved through wickedness; nor let yourself be incited to evil, even if you see some evil person prospering; for you should think that this aeon belongs to those who have no other hope. Let them be happy in this aeon and let them have what they regard as goods. We, however, look forward to another aeon of life; and our hope lies in that aeon onwards. It is not possible to possess the goods both in this aeon and in that aeon; for if someone possesses them in this aeon, there he will hear, while being punished, 'Thou in thy lifetime didst receive thy good things'.²⁴⁹

Analogously, the comment on Psalm 36, 8 ('fret not yourself in any wise to do evil') is: "Do not consecrate your attention upon their prosperity; but wait for the end and you shall see their destruction."²⁵⁰

The exegesis of Psalm 61, 6 ('My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my patience is from him') runs in the same vein. Despite affliction and hardship brought in life because of persistence in righteousness, a Christian lives 'looking towards' God, having Him 'an expectation and hope; this is why I endure all afflictions which occur to me at present'.²⁵¹ The entire world is thus conditioned towards a future final goal.

The Incarnation rendered both past and future time meaningful. While the eschatological eventuality was staged and exemplified in the person of Jesus, this

²⁴⁴ *Cels*, II, 38. Cf. *Cels*, IV, 38; VI, 20; *commMatt*, 17, 33.

²⁴⁵ *commJohn*, 10, XXV. Cf. *John*, 2, 19.

²⁴⁶ *Homiliae in Job* (fr. in catenis; typus I) (e codd. Paris.), PG.12.1044.40–44. *Op. cit.* (fr. in catenis; typus II) (e codd. Marc.), PG.17.96.42–47. *Op. cit.* (fr. in catenis, typus I + II) (e codd. Vat.) (Pitra), p. 382 (*selJob*, 35). The idea of this aeon being a 'night' was upheld by Didymus: *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, Fr. 1136, (comm. on Psalm 118, 147). John Chrysostom entertains the metaphor verbatim, in fact quoting Origen: *Fragmenta in Job*, PG.64.644.18–21; *De Virginitate*, 58.

²⁴⁷ *frMatt*, 135.

²⁴⁸ *frMatt*, 152.

²⁴⁹ Luke, 16, 25. *excPs*, 36, PG.17.124f. The same idea in *selGen*, PG.12.132.29; *deOr*, XIX, 2.

²⁵⁰ *frPs*, 36, 35; *selPs*, 36, PG.12.1317.1–6.

²⁵¹ *selPs*, 61, PG.12.1485.

nevertheless does not remove the dramatic character of history. Unpredicted accidents loom at every corner during historical course. To witness the resurrection of Jesus is one thing, still the ultimate historical reality in its fullness is yet to be realized, to be revealed and indeed to be seen and understood only at the real end of history. Thus the eschatological character of the historical process remains undiminished: "the Saviour did not give us pure wine and the whole countenance of divinity, but through his Incarnation, just as through the window, he makes us look at the brightness of divinity."²⁵² We still see God through a glass, darkly. However clearly a undefiled person grasps 'divine learning' at this stage, it is for sure that 'those things that the holy ones will deserve to see "face to face" when the enigma is over, will be far more sublime and magnificent'.²⁵³ Alluding to Paul, Origen often compares three types of food corresponding to three stages in spiritual life: milk, vegetables and solid food, served respective to babes, to the weak, and to the perfect.²⁵⁴ The third food, after the manna of this life ceases,²⁵⁵ extends into the eschatological reality, when the victory has been truly won.²⁵⁶ Hence his reference to 'the restoration of the world and the renewal of the whole creation, which has been re-established through the resurrection of the Lord'.²⁵⁷

Full knowledge of divinity is reserved for the end, which will be discussed in chapter 9. By showing and revealing the divine things, the Incarnation intensified the eschatological character of history. In a superb poetic analogy, Origen describes the revelation of Christ in his Incarnation as looking through the nets, leaning through the window and calling his bride to follow. The bridegroom Logos is present and absent, appearing and disappearing at the same time.²⁵⁸

This view of history through the Incarnation of the Logos is an outstanding example of the importance placed upon real historical occurrences. The narration of the Old Testament is not caused to evaporate into an idea or intellectual abstraction. On the contrary, Origen shows how those episodes were not only real, but also pregnant with meaning. Thanks to the incarnation of the Son, we not only grasp the coming of the Spirit in past history, but also achieve this coming at present and future historical time.

To discuss fallacies surrounding Origen on this cardinal aspect of his thought would be an thankless and extremely extensive job. I will then refrain from doing this, making only one comment, in order to indicate the extent to which this

²⁵² *Homilies on Joshua*, 3.5. For 'window', cf. Song, 2, 9; 5, 4 and *Cant*, PG.17.264.12.

²⁵³ *Op. cit.* 6, 1.

²⁵⁴ *de Or.* XXVII, 5; *Cels*, IV, 18; *Homilies on Leviticus*, 1.4; *Homilies on Numbers*, 27.1; *Homilies on Joshua*, 9.9&22.2.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Joshua*, 5, 12.

²⁵⁶ *Homilies on Joshua*, 6.1.

²⁵⁷ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.7.3.

²⁵⁸ *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 230. Cf. note 252.

theology suffered misconception. M. Werner regarded the abandonment of Paul's interpretation of the soteriological significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the 'decisive moment in the process of de-eschatologizing'.²⁵⁹ His opinion is that within the development of the Catholic Church theology, the crisis reached its zenith in the persons of the Alexandrian Christians, Clement and Origen.²⁶⁰

In the Gnostic schools, in the gnosticising circles of the Church, and especially with the Alexandrian Christians, the principal break with the traditional doctrine of the soteriological significance of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus becomes clearly evident. For the inevitable reconstruction of doctrine by means of Hellenistic religious philosophy so developed that in the new dogma the soteriological significance of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, in any form, had no part to play.²⁶¹

In this section we let Origen speak for himself, so that strictures passed on him can be considered aboveboard and the weight of pertinent animadversion can be considered on its own merits.

The eternal gospel

The gospel is then held to contain 'a figure and a shadow of heavenly things'²⁶² and its pronouncement advances comprehension of the incarnation of the Logos with respect to history. The Scripture is stated as a 'body' consisted of the letter of the narration, the 'soul' of this 'body', and the 'spirit' which appears 'according to figures and a shadow of heavenly things'.²⁶³ The prophecies in the Old Testament determined a course in history leading to the coming of the Messiah. The incarnation of the Logos shows the direction towards the final end, that is, resurrection. Scripture, it has been said, comprises body, soul and spirit. The figure is completed by the averment that before the Incarnation the Scripture was understood as 'body', it is understood as 'soul' thereafter, whereas comprehension as 'spirit' is an eschatological prospect.

The gospel contains a figurative description of the eschatological reality,²⁶⁴ which can be depicted and understood through that which is called 'eternal gospel'.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, a portion from Rom. 6, 17, where reference to the 'form of teaching' (τύπον διδασχῆς) is made, is taken to authorize the import of the eternal gospel.

²⁵⁹ M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma*, p. 72f.

²⁶⁰ *Op. cit.* p. 117.

²⁶¹ *Op. cit.* p. 119.

²⁶² *homLev* (Baehrens), p. 334. Cf. Heb. 8, 5; 10, 1; Col. 2, 17.

²⁶³ *Loc. cit.* Cf. *Princ.* IV.2.4 (*Philocalia*, 1, 11).

²⁶⁴ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 3.1.51: οὐ γὰρ καινόν τι καταγγέλλω νῦν εὐαγγέλιον, ἀλλὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασιν ὑμῶν πραγματεύομαι.

²⁶⁵ Rev. 14, 6.

It also impresses me that he has not said, 'But ye have obeyed from the heart the doctrine which was delivered to you'. Instead he put it, 'the form of doctrine'. I do not think that the apostle would sense 'doctrine' and 'form of doctrine' to be identical. On the contrary, it seems to me that he would know that 'the form of doctrine' was less than 'the doctrine' itself. Instead, now in the present life, while we are in the body and 'the earthly tent weighs down a mind full of thoughts',²⁶⁶ we possess the form of doctrine but not the doctrine itself, as indeed the same apostle says elsewhere, 'But now we see through a glass, darkly.'²⁶⁷

The relation of the gospel to the 'eternal' one is similar to the relation of the 'mysteries' of the Old Testament to what has been revealed through the New Testament.²⁶⁸ The 'law' is called 'eternal'²⁶⁹ in the sense that the law is 'spiritual',²⁷⁰ which means non-temporary.

The 'eternal law' is everything that is mystical. Things visible existing around are temporary and come to an end forthwith. 'For the fashion of this world passeth away,'²⁷¹ without a doubt that of the letter also passes away, and those things which are eternal, which hold a spiritual import, remain.'²⁷²

Consequent to this notion, a 'conceptual' (τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ)²⁷³ distinction is made between the 'sensible gospel' and the 'intelligible and spiritual gospel'. According to this distinction, 'all the struggle is to try to reach the profoundness of the evangelic mind and to inquire into the bare truth of the types in it' (τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ γυμνὴν τύπων ἀλήθειαν).²⁷⁴

It is indicative of the eschatological character of Origen's thought that he is preoccupied with portraying the meaning and critical character of the *future* time. To him Incarnation cast light upon the meaning of history until the end of time. The 'end' as 'apokatastasis' constitutes the final reality that has already been intimated through 'prophecy'.²⁷⁵ Associating his notion of 'aeons' with the Old Testament, he points out the flood of Noah²⁷⁶ and the destruction of Sodom as real historical occurrences, which are also intimated as figurative examples of consummations, although not actual (cosmic) and universal ones, nevertheless indicative of how divine Providence acts upon sinners in large scale.

²⁶⁶ Wis. 9, 15. Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 6. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *op. cit.* 3.2.14.

²⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 13, 12. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6.3.8.

²⁶⁸ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Lev. 6, 15; Is. 24, 5; Num. 15, 15. The expression 'eternal law' (νόμον αἰώνιον), in *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Rom. 7, 14.

²⁷¹ 1 Cor. 7, 31.

²⁷² *Homilies on Leviticus*, 13.6.2.

²⁷³ *commJohn*, 1, VIII.

²⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

²⁷⁵ *selEz*, 17, PG.13.816.1–3. The portion Ez. 17, 23 at hand contains the crucial word ἀποκατασταθήσεται.

²⁷⁶ Gen. 6, 13f. *commJohn*, 20, IV.

In point of this, the question, which would be invited, is whether the time of the Old Testament is extended to the past until the beginning of time itself. Such a question could emerge out of points of *Princ* such as ‘God did not begin to work for the first time when he made this visible world’.²⁷⁷ I have argued though that Origen regards the narration in Genesis as pertaining to the very beginning of the creative act of God.²⁷⁸ The ‘days’ of Genesis are understood to indicate no time, but process of thought.²⁷⁹ Besides, the notions of providential and actual creation are buttressed up with passages of Genesis.²⁸⁰ Once more, *Princ* is all but a trustworthy source, since statements such as those in III.5.2–4 are assuredly interpolations of Rufinus. Whereas at that point it is stated that the narration in Genesis does not indicate the very beginning of creation, but only the creation of the present world, in III.6.8 it is asserted that this narration is ‘referring to the beginning of the entire creation’. There is a egregious contradiction into the same work, indeed into the same Book (the Third one) of this work. It is hard to force Origen into self-defeating accounts or idiosyncrasy within the same chapter of *Princ*.

As regards the Incarnation, there are points where Origen seems to hold that the span of time which has been illuminated is the period from the prophecies onwards.²⁸¹ This however stems from need of allegorical interpretation relating to an exegesis of ‘sabbatism’ (the rest on the seventh day), which is ‘rest and termination of committing sin’.²⁸² It is also for exegetical reasons that it is maintained that the ‘ecclesiastical state... emerged... at the time of Abraham’,²⁸³ which can also be seen in a portion of *deOr*:

Hence he who sees these things and perceives in his mind a week of aeons so that he may contemplate a holy Sabbath rest,²⁸⁴ and a month of aeons, that he may see the holy new moon of God, and a year of aeons, that he may understand the feasts of the year, when ‘all the males’ must appear before ‘the Lord God’,²⁸⁵ and the years proportioned to so large a number of aeons, that he may comprehend the holy seventh year, and the seven weeks of aeons, that he may sing the praises of him who has laid down laws so great.²⁸⁶

This exegesis, although entirely consistent with Origen’s conception of history, is applied for the sake of interpretation. For in the same work there is an elu-

²⁷⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.3.

²⁷⁸ *COT*, pp. 356–67.

²⁷⁹ *Cels*, V, 59. Cf. *COT*, p. 150.

²⁸⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.8.

²⁸¹ *commJohn*, 13, XLVI & XLVIII.

²⁸² *selPs*, 77, PG.17.144.32–36.

²⁸³ *frMatt*, 5.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Heb. 4, 9.

²⁸⁵ Deut. 16, 16.

²⁸⁶ *deOr*, XXVII, 16.

quoting remark about the temporal terms which are found here and there in Scripture:

And it has to be investigated if the words written of feasts or sacred assemblies that take place according to 'days' or 'months' or 'seasons' or 'years'²⁸⁷ are actually referred to aeons. For if 'the law' has a 'shadow of [good] things to come',²⁸⁸ it must needs be that the many Sabbaths are a 'shadow' of certain (τινῶν) many days and that the new moons come round in intermittent extensions of time (διὰ χρονικῶν διαστημάτων), although I do not know under which moon accompanying them, or which sun, they refer to. And if the 'first month' and the 'tenth' day 'until the fourteenth' and the feast of unleavened bread from 'the fourteenth until the one and twentieth'²⁸⁹ contain 'a shadow of things to come',²⁹⁰ 'who is wise'²⁹¹ and so much 'friendly' to God,²⁹² as to grasp the meaning of the 'first' of many months, and the 'tenth day' of it, and all that follows? Further, what ought I to say of the feast of the 'seven weeks'²⁹³ and of 'the seventh month'²⁹⁴ (of which the new moon is a day 'of trumpets', but 'on the tenth a day of atonement')²⁹⁵—which are things known to God alone, who has laid down laws regarding them? And who has so contained in himself 'the mind of Christ'²⁹⁶ that he can understand the seven years of the freedom of the Hebrew servants and 'the release' of debts and the relief from tillage of the holy land?²⁹⁷ There is also one [year] called the Jubilee, which stands over and above the feast of seven years,²⁹⁸ but what this in fact is or what are the true laws to be fulfilled in it, no one is able to comprehend clearly, save he who has contemplated the Father's will concerning his ordinances in all the aeons in accordance with 'his inscrutable judgements and his ways which are impossible to explore'.²⁹⁹

J. Daniélou considered this passage out of context and purported that 'the totality of Time' in Origen is consisted of 'the jubilee of aeonian years' and claims that in this, among others, he has been 'anticipated by the Gnostics'.³⁰⁰ I have made a suggestion about this point elsewhere.³⁰¹ The mere fact is that references to a 'week of aeons' and a 'month of aeons' and a 'year of aeons'³⁰² are simply allegorical renderings apropos of scriptural instances.

²⁸⁷ Gal. 4, 10.

²⁸⁸ Heb. 10, 1.

²⁸⁹ Ex. 12: 2, 3, 6, 15, 18.

²⁹⁰ Heb. 10, 1.

²⁹¹ Hos. 14, 9.

²⁹² Cf. James, 2, 23. Cf. p. 175, note 84.

²⁹³ Deut. 16, 9.

²⁹⁴ Lev. 16, 29f.

²⁹⁵ Lev. 23, 24 & 27.

²⁹⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 16. Cf. p. 370, note 98 and p. 383.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Ex. 21, 2; Lev. 25, 4–7 & 10–17; Deut. 15, 1–3.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Lev. 25, 8f; 27, 17f.

²⁹⁹ Rom. 11, 33. *deOr*, XXVII, 14.

³⁰⁰ J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, p. 496.

³⁰¹ *COT*, p. 304.

³⁰² Cf. *deOr*, XXVII, 16; *commMatt*, 15, 31.

In like manner is the same question treated in *commMatt*. It is averred that it is a labour to grasp the deeper meaning of these temporal notions; anyone who might attempt to interpret them ‘will fall into an abyss of conceptions’ (ἄβυσσον νοημάτων). He explains that he uses the name of ‘abyss because of the inscrutability of the doctrines’ (διὰ τὸ βάθος τῶν δογμάτων) implied by means of these temporal notions.³⁰³

The narration of Genesis is held to pertain to the very beginning of creation: the ‘days’ in Genesis do not express time, but a process of thought³⁰⁴ and a certain ‘order’ (ἔνεκεν τάξεως).³⁰⁵ This is also inferred from statements in the Commentary on Genesis (which is lost) about the very beginning of creation.³⁰⁶ In *Princ* there is reference to that lost work.³⁰⁷ In any event, the entire context evinces that the account given at that point pertains to the very beginning of creation. A reference to the treatise *On Genesis* made in *Cels* also alludes to the question of the real meaning of the ‘days’ in Genesis.³⁰⁸

The only real narration about the creation of the world is ‘that which the Holy Spirit’ has written.³⁰⁹ At that point the term *κοσμοποιία*, which marks the very beginning of the actual creation is markedly used.³¹⁰ Besides, reference is made to the ‘divine word’ uttered through Moses about the ‘beginning of the world’ (ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ κόσμου).³¹¹ Finally, the ‘six’ days of the Genesis bear upon the creative act of God.³¹²

This question is after all illuminated in *commJohn*.³¹³ The relevant section is a commentary on the word ‘one’ in the saying of Jesus, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me’.³¹⁴ This ‘one’ is taken to be reminiscent of the Fall: Judas fell from ‘the apostolic rank’ exactly as the other ‘one’ fell from the heavenly ‘blessedness’. In that section there are numerous quotations of biblical references to the fallen ‘one’, as well as to the conception of ‘falling’: Judas became ‘one’, like Adam became ‘one’ (as in Gen. 3, 22) on the Fall.³¹⁵ The design of these analyses is not only that Genesis refers to the very beginning of creation, but also that it shows the pivotal significance of the incarnation of

³⁰³ *commMatt*, 15, 31.

³⁰⁴ *Cels*, V, 59.

³⁰⁵ *selGen*; PG 12.92.30, availing himself of Philo without naming him (‘some people say’, τινὲς φασίν). Cf. *De Opificio Mundi*, sections 13, 22, 28, 34, 67, 78.

³⁰⁶ *Cels*, IV, 59.

³⁰⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6.

³⁰⁸ *Cels*, VI, 60 & 61.

³⁰⁹ *homJer*, 16, 9.

³¹⁰ About *κοσμοποιία*, s. p. 398, note 102.

³¹¹ *Cels*, IV, 31.

³¹² *frMatt*, 383; likewise, *frMatt*, 4.

³¹³ *commJohn*, 23, XVIII.

³¹⁴ *John*, 13, 21.

³¹⁵ *COT*, pp. 76–78.

Christ with respect to *all* time. If resurrection cast light upon all history until the end of it, the events related to the historical life of Jesus were mystically related to all history ever since the very beginning of creation. The life of Jesus is the stackpole, around which Scripture has its profound significance revealed: “it was after the advent of Jesus that the inspiration of the prophetic words and the spiritual nature of Moses’ Law came to light”.³¹⁶ In any event, Origen is at pains to delineate that the Incarnation enlightens the *future* history until the end of it. This means that his thought is preoccupied with the eschatological perspectives of the world.

E. de Faye attributed a Gnostic influence on Origen on the question of the incarnation of Christ.³¹⁷ I have already shown that de Faye grounded his allegations of Gnostic influence upon Origen on false assumptions and miscomprehension.³¹⁸ Although ‘Gnosticism’ is a comprehensive term for streams of thought not always convergent, three major criteria could be said to apply to the Gnostic mentality: 1. Rejection of the Old Testament and its role in the history of salvation. 2. Docetism—the theory of the unreal suffering of Jesus. 3. Rejection of the eschatological expectation in terms of time and adoption of a metaphysical distinction between this world and a timeless Beyond.

These criteria show Origen definitely standing on the anti-Gnostic side. He surely attributes a prominent and crucial role to the Old Testament. He over and over again argues fronting those who ‘divide and dis sever’ (διαίρουντας καὶ διακόπτοντας) the ‘Old from the New’ Testament³¹⁹ and ‘disjoin the divinity’ (διακόπτοντες τὴν θεότητα),³²⁰ regularly rebuking the Gnostics. He refers to ‘heresies’, ‘particularly (μάλιστα) those who split the divinity and separate the Law from the Gospel’,³²¹ upbraiding them through a variety of expressions. As regards Docetism, Origen categorically rejects any belief that impugns the reality of suffering and death of Jesus. He does indeed so using the very term *δόκησις*,³²² denouncing the Gnostics: the Incarnation was a historically real event³²³ and Jesus’ death was as real³²⁴ as the death of any human being is. Among his numerous statements, I quote the following one, which is indicative of how expressly he posited that the Incarnation is the historical event which has crucial eschatological consequences towards the goal of salvation:

³¹⁶ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat. parallel), IV.1.6.

³¹⁷ E. de Faye, “De l’Influence du Gnosticisme chez Origène”, p. 222.

³¹⁸ *COT*, p. 145.

³¹⁹ *commMatt*, 10, 15.

³²⁰ *deOr*, XXIX, 12; *commEph*, sections 2 & 12; *frPs*, 77, 10–12.

³²¹ *commMatt*, 17, 32.

³²² *Cels*, II, 16; IV, 19; *commJohn*, 10, VI; *frJohn*, LIII; *deOr*, XX, 2; *Scholia in Matthaeum*, PG.17.293.20. Cf. *Princ*, I. Pref. (Lat.) 4; “And this Jesus Christ was born and suffered in truth and not merely in appearance, and truly died our common death.” Likewise, *Princ* (Lat.), II.6.3.

³²³ *Cels*, VI, 78 & 79.

³²⁴ *homJer*, 14, 6.

When you hear that *salvation* is from the Jews, you should understand these words as pertaining to Him who said them. For it was He who was the *expectation* of the nations,³²⁵ He who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.³²⁶

In this pithy passage the continuity from the Old to New Testament is affirmed through appeal to them both (Gen. 49, 10 and Rom. 1, 3). The meaning of history before the incarnation of Christ is underscored by means of the term *expectation*, and the meaning of history thereafter is denoted through the term *salvation*.

It has been argued that *Gnosis* is the outcome of an extreme Hellenization of Christianity.³²⁷ Hence the alleged relation of Origen to Gnosticism is an *inference* rather than a solidly grounded argument. Once he was branded as a Platonist within Christianity, some scholars found it all too reasonable to style him a Gnostic, too. It could be informative to theologians who make the claim about Plato being the spiritual father of Gnosticism, if they read more assiduously Hippolytus: one of his riposts to Gnostic tenets is that they reproduce Aristotle, not Plato.³²⁸

Origen's own words demonstrate that styling him a Gnostic, or something of the sort, is an allegation extrapolated out of erroneous premises. It has been taken for granted that we are faced with a 'Hellenizing Christianity' (ἑλληνίζων Χριστιανισμός). I do not know if the modern scholars, who used the quaint expression as a token of creative imagination, knew that this had been applied to Manichaeans by the historian Socrates, referring to teachings which 'are Christian in sound, but Hellenic in doctrine'.³²⁹ What eluded this line of scholarship is that Origen upbraids Manichaeans pointedly by name, and numerous statements over against fundamental Gnostic principles are spread throughout his work. In the light of this, I can now consider the obloquy on Origen by Jerome:

And when he [sc. Origen] has said that the 'eternal gospel' of the Apocalypse of John, that is, the gospel which exists in the heavens, is as far superior to our gospel as the preaching of Christ is to the rites of the old law, he goes to the extreme length of inferring (what is impious even to have thought of) that Christ will also suffer in the air and in the realms above for the salvation of the daemons. And although

³²⁵ Cf. Gen. 49, 10; italics mine.

³²⁶ Cf. Rom. 1, 3. *fr* John, LVIII—comm. on John, 4, 22, 'for salvation is of the Jews'.

³²⁷ A. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, v. I, pp. 250; 253, n. 1; 266; 267; 269. Harnack points out (vol. I, p. 250, n. 1) that the conception of Gnosticism as 'the acute secularization, or Hellenization of Christianity' goes back to Franz Overbeck, *Studien zur Geschichte der alten Kirche* (Chemnitz, 1875), p. 184.

³²⁸ Cf. Hippolytus exposing Basilides: *Refutatio Omnium Hearesium (Philosophoumena)*, 7.20.5.

³²⁹ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.22. A text ascribed to Athanasius makes a reference to 'those who apply Hellenic ways in the name of Christianity' (τῶν ἑλληνιζόντων ἐπ' ὀνόματι Χριστιανισμοῦ): *Contra Savelianos*, PG.28.97.26–27.

he does not actually say so, yet it must be understood as a logical consequence, that as God was made man for the sake of men to set them free, so also for the salvation of the daemons he will be made what they are, for whose liberation he is then to come. And in case it should be supposed that we are putting our own interpretation upon his statements, we will give his very words: 'For just as he fulfilled the shadow of the law through the shadow of the gospel, so because all law is a copy and shadow of the heavenly rites, we must carefully inquire whether we ought not to regard even the heavenly law and the rites of the higher worship not as possessing completeness, but as standing in need of the truth of that gospel which in the Apocalypse of John is called the 'eternal gospel', in comparison, that is, with this gospel of ours, which is temporal and was preached in a world and an aeon that are destined to pass away'.³³⁰

In order to assess these remarks properly, it is worth-taking into account the following portions of *Princ*:

As in this earth the law was a kind of schoolmaster to those who by it were appointed to be led to Christ³³¹ and to be instructed and trained in order that after their training in the law they might be able with greater facility to receive the more perfect precepts of Christ, so also that other earth, when it receives all the saints, first imbues and educates them in the precepts of the true and eternal law in order that they may with greater facility accept the precepts of heaven which are perfect and to which nothing can ever be added. And in heaven will truly exist what is called the 'eternal gospel' and the testament that is always new, which can never grow old.³³²

Another passage calling for attention in respect of this matter reads thus:

We must also see, however, whether the Scriptures may not perhaps indicate this further truth, that just as the legislation is presented with greater clearness and distinctness in Deuteronomy than in those books which were written at first, so also we may gather from that coming of the Saviour which he fulfilled in humility, when he 'took upon him the form of a servant',³³³ an indication of the 'more splendid and glorious second coming in the glory of his Father',³³⁴ at which coming, when in the kingdom of heaven all the saints shall live by the laws of the 'eternal gospel',³³⁵ the figure of Deuteronomy will be fulfilled; and just as by his present coming he has fulfilled that law which has a 'shadow of the good things to come',³³⁶ so also by that glorious coming the shadow of his first coming will be fulfilled and brought to perfection. For the prophet has spoken of this thus: 'The breath of our countenance is Christ the Lord, of whom we said that under his

³³⁰ Jerome, *epAv*, 12; *apud FP*, p. 309, n. 7.

³³¹ Cf. Gal. 3, 24.

³³² Cf. Rev. 14, 6; Heb. 9, 15; 12, 24; 8, 13. *Princ*, III.6.8 (Lat.).

³³³ Cf. Phil. 2, 7.

³³⁴ Cf. Matt. 16, 27.

³³⁵ Cf. Rev. 14, 6.

³³⁶ Cf. Heb. 10, 1.

shadow we shall live among the nations',³³⁷ that is at the time when he shall duly transfer all the saints from the temporal to the eternal gospel, to use a phrase by John in the Apocalypse, where he speaks of the 'eternal gospel'.³³⁸

These passages, as well as the foregoing discussion, are sufficient to show that Jerome's allegations are quite arbitrary. Origen firmly holds that the passion of Christ was a *unique* event. Christ nonetheless 'died not only for the sake of men but also for the sake of the rest of rational beings',³³⁹ which is an allusion to Paul pronouncing that Christ 'tasted death for the sake of everyone (παντός)'.³⁴⁰

It would, therefore, be absurd to say that he tasted death for the human sins only and not further also for the sake of anyone else beside men, who happened to be in sins.³⁴¹

Even in Latin renderings, such as the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, this assertion is present, if sometimes obscure behind Rufinus' fuzzy translation. Apropos of an exegesis on Rom. 1, 2, 'which he had promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures',³⁴² the text is pretty clear:

I leave for you the reader to reflect on whether this [portion]³⁴³ should be taken simply to refer to the gospel promised by God in the prophetic Scriptures, or to distinction of another gospel which John calls in the Apocalypse 'eternal',³⁴⁴ which is to be revealed at the time when the shadow expires and the truth comes and when death shall be swallowed up³⁴⁵ and eternity restored. Those eternal years pronounced by the prophet clearly correspond with this eternal gospel: 'I kept in mind the eternal years'.³⁴⁶ With the eternal gospel can also be correlated the book of life, in which the names of the saints are said to be written,³⁴⁷ as indeed can those books which, in Daniel, were opened when the court was seated,³⁴⁸ or those in Ezekiel the prophet which are said to be inscribed on the within and without,³⁴⁹ and all the things that are recounted as having been written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.³⁵⁰

³³⁷ Lament. 4, 20.

³³⁸ *Princ* (Lat.), IV.3.13.

³³⁹ *commJohn*, 1, XXXV.

³⁴⁰ Heb. 2, 9. He quotes this in *commJohn*, 28, XVIII and *frLuc*, 70.

³⁴¹ *commJohn*, 1, XXXV.

³⁴² Rom. 1, 2.

³⁴³ *commJohn*, 2, X; 19, 5. Cf. *commJohn*, 1, VII.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Rev. 14, 6.

³⁴⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 54.

³⁴⁶ Psalm 76, 6. Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.41; *selPs*, 76, PG.12.1540.1–5; *commMatt*, 15, 31. I refer to the notion of 'eternal years' on p. 194.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Phil. 4, 3; Rev. 3, 5; 17, 8; 21, 27. Cf. *commJohn*, 5, VII; 6, LIV; *Homilies on Luke*, 11.

³⁴⁸ Daniel, 7, 10. Cf. *commJohn*, 5, VII; *commMatt*, 14, 9; *frLuc*, 228; *Philocalia*, 5, 6. *Homilies on Genesis*, 13.4; *Homilies on Ezekiel*, 2.3; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 9.41.6.

³⁴⁹ Ez. 2, 10. Cf. *Cels*, VI, 6; *commJohn*, 5, VI & VII; *Philocalia*, 5, 5; *selEz*, 3, PG.13.773.1–29.

³⁵⁰ Cf. 2 Cor. 3, 3.

Although it may be risky to render this discussion in writing, nevertheless the sayings and riddles of the wise³⁵¹ ought not to be insouciantly passed over, but should be contemplated as in a mirror³⁵² with the discriminating acuteness of the entire mind to the extent the matter allows this.

He who was the Logos who became flesh³⁵³ appeared to those who were in flesh, as the apostle says, 'For he was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and seen of angels'.³⁵⁴ That which came into view to angels³⁵⁵ did not become visible to them apart from the gospel; nor in us men, to whom it says he was sent to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.³⁵⁶ If, therefore, when he appeared to us men, he did not appear distinct from the gospel, it seems congruous to maintain that he did not appear to the angelic rank apart from the gospel, possibly the one called by John the 'eternal gospel',³⁵⁷ as we have said above.³⁵⁸

Now whether we should also assume that such a deed was accomplished by him among the other heavenly ranks of beings, that he appeared to each of them in their own form and proclaimed peace, since he indeed made peace through the blood of his cross³⁵⁹ not only with things on earth but also with beings on heaven,³⁶⁰ this is also a question which you yourself must scrutinize.³⁶¹

The passion of Jesus was a benevolent act of God not only for the sake of human beings who lived thereafter, but also of those who had already died.³⁶² He appeals to Col. 1, 20, authorizing that Christ 'made peace through the blood of his cross both to those on earth and to those in the heavens'.³⁶³

It is he who went into the lowest parts of the earth³⁶⁴ and also went above all heavens, preparing the road which leads to above all heavens, that is out of corporeality.³⁶⁵

Jesus came in order to 'perfect...every rational creature, not only man.'³⁶⁶ This statement needs especial attention, since there is widespread misapprehension

³⁵¹ Cf. Prov. 1, 6. For his sense of 'risk', s. pp. 20, 80, 241, 407.

³⁵² Cf. 1 Cor 13, 12.

³⁵³ Cf. John, 1, 14.

³⁵⁴ 1 Tim. 3, 16.

³⁵⁵ 1 Tim. 3, 16. Cf. *homLuc*, 6; *commMatt*, 15, 7.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Is. 61, 1–2; Luke 4, 18.

³⁵⁷ Rev. 14, 6.

³⁵⁸ Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.4.1.

³⁵⁹ Cf. *commJohn*, 32, XXV; *fiJohn*, LXXXIX; *homLuc*, 10; *commEph*, section 12; *selPs*, 70, PG.12.1521.31–33. *fiPs*, 107, 6. *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.324.8f.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Eph. 2, 17; Col. 1, 20. *commEph*, section 12; *homLev*, 1.3; Jerome, *epAv*, 12. Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.7.6.

³⁶¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.4.1–4.

³⁶² *homLuc*, 10, p. 61.

³⁶³ *Loc. cit.* Cf. *fiJohn*, LXXXIX; *commEph*, section 12; *fiPs*, 107, 6; *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.324.8; *commJohn*, 32, XXV.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Eph. 4, 9.

³⁶⁵ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

³⁶⁶ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVI–XXXVII; s. also *fiJohn*, XC.

on this point. In *commJohn* he spends an entire section in order to make clear that the saying of Jesus 'to finish his work'³⁶⁷ does not suggest that what was made by God in the beginning was 'imperfect'. For 'it is absurd to say that the Father has been a creator of something imperfect, and the Saviour has made perfect the imperfect, because this was originally made imperfect'.³⁶⁸ This saying of Jesus denotes a 'deeper mystery', on which Origen advances some further comments. Therefore, contentions that he asserted the rational being created by God to be 'incomplete' are erroneous. This error is normally coupled with the mistaken presumption that Origen held a 'doctrine of eternal creation'.

Jerome's allegations, therefore, that Origen affirmed a future incarnation of Christ in order to save beings of different spaces is ungrounded. The incarnation of Christ is a unique event, which took place once and for all, for the sake of *all* rational hypostases.

The notion of 'eternal gospel', on the other hand, is an idea which underlines the eschatological character of Origen's theology. Jerome's testimony on this particular point is not entirely inaccurate. What Origen believes is this: God manifested himself in the form of a man, so that creatures can know him to a certain extent. For the same reason he showed his wisdom to men in the form of human words. This is why 'now, even if we become able to see God by our mind and heart, we do not see him "as he really is", but as he manifests himself towards us according to his dispensation'.³⁶⁹ Thus, as the death of Jesus does not mean that Christ passed away, so the destruction of the world does not entail that the gospel, which Christ preached to the *entire* world, will pass away either. Christ returned to 'what he was before the Incarnation'³⁷⁰ and in the gospel there is a 'truth' which is 'beyond the figures'.³⁷¹

The *Homilies on Leviticus* provide an idea of what Origen held the eternal gospel to be. Moses saw heavenly things and passed on to Israel types and images of what he had seen.³⁷² Those 'things' belong to the eternal gospel. In this context, Origen argues, if the teaching of Moses is not grasped spiritually, then Moses cannot be called a prophet.³⁷³ This comprehension can be obtained only through illumination by the Holy Spirit.

Thus 'eternal gospel' is the spiritual content partially concealed in the Scripture. It is the wisdom of God, 'the invisible things', to which Origen so often refers after Rom. 1, 20. These are the wisdom of God, both the one which was

³⁶⁷ John, 4, 34. Cf. pp. 278 & 332.

³⁶⁸ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVI-XXXVII.

³⁶⁹ *commMatt*, 17, 19.

³⁷⁰ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

³⁷¹ *Op. cit.* 1, VIII.

³⁷² *Homilies on Leviticus*, 13.1.

³⁷³ *Op. cit.* 10.1.

created at the Providential creation³⁷⁴ and the Wisdom as a personal substance, that is, the Son. The created wisdom embroidered the body of the Wisdom/Son at the Providential creation. Knowledge of all this is insight into the eternal gospel. Hence, Origen consequently states that 'Christ, being many things, should also be understood as the gospel. Indeed perhaps what is called the *eternal gospel* should be interpreted with reference to him'.³⁷⁵

The conception of 'intelligible and spiritual gospel'³⁷⁶ is consonant with prolongation of time. It is true that 'the Church... has been founded in the name of Christ until the consummation of the aeon'.³⁷⁷ We know, nevertheless, that history will continue after the consummation, which invites the question of how salvation will be possible in the time thereafter. The answer to this is bolstered by the notion of the perpetual intelligible advent of the Logos, as well as by allegorical exegeses of the term 'Church'. The intelligible advent of the Logos pertains to the entire world, not just to the visible one.

I shall boldly follow the authority of the Scriptures to higher realms, since the presence of the Lord Jesus and his work benefited not only what is earthly, but also what is heavenly. Hence the Apostle too says, 'he indeed made peace through the blood of his cross not only with things on earth but also with beings on heaven'.³⁷⁸ But if the Lord's presence was beneficial in heaven and on earth, why do you shrink from saying that his advent has also benefited our ancestors?³⁷⁹

This advent is also stretched out along the whole of time, not just the present aeon.³⁸⁰ Thus Origen can allow that the saving intervention of the Logos into the world will continue after the consummation. There is a reply to the hypothetical question of 'how future generations will cognize the revelation granted to the world by the unique incarnation of the Logos?' This reply is, 'it is God alone who knows the measures of his self-revelation into the world'.³⁸¹

Holding the view that the Church is the place for salvation and that this will last until the consummation of this aeon, Origen employs a further allegory of the term 'Church':

³⁷⁴ Cf. *COT*, pp. 39f. Cf. discussion on pp. 387–88.

³⁷⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.14.1; italics mine. Maximus Confessor is an exception of Christian author who followed Origen on this point, which otherwise was considered with suspicion: Cf. Maximus Confessor, *Mystagogia*, chapter 3: λέγω δὲ τὸ ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν ᾧ πάντες τῆς τε προνοίας καὶ τῶν ὄντων οἱ λόγοι κατὰ μίαν περιοχῆς δύναμιν ἐνοειδῶς προὔφεισθήκασι. That is, 'through an all-embracing power' all the 'logoi' of both the divine 'providence and of beings' have been included in the Gospel.

³⁷⁶ *commJohn*, 1, VIII.

³⁷⁷ *commMatt*, 16, 22.

³⁷⁸ Col. 1, 20.

³⁷⁹ *Homilies on Luke*, 10.3.

³⁸⁰ *commJohn*, 6, IV.

³⁸¹ *Cels*, III, 38; IV, 69; VI, 79.

Each rational being is a holy place by no means inferior to the Church. For rational nature is made so that it may comprehend the glory of God.³⁸²

Thus, 'a soul is by nature a holy place of God' because 'there is an undefiled remnant in our soul'.³⁸³ It is noticeable that 'salvation' out of the incarnation of Christ pertains not only to the 'soul', but also to 'more' (πλειόνων) creatures, which is an allusion to beings of different levels. That the 'service to God' takes place according to 'heavenly and spiritual laws' bespeaks the 'eternal gospel'.

This is virtually the third 'deduction' (ἀναγωγή)³⁸⁴ of term 'Church'.

The first is that the world itself is a product of God's goodness, a terrain offered to conscious and alive animals so that they can strive for salvation, that is, return to God.³⁸⁵ In respect of this, 'any place of the world is part of the whole, since the entire world is a temple of God'; therefore, a Christian can pray standing 'in any place'.³⁸⁶ Hence the 'farm' (mentioned in the parable of Matt. 13, 36–43) 'could be said to be the entire world, not only the Church of God'.³⁸⁷

The second deduction is that, before the Incarnation, the 'holy place' of God is the temple of Solomon (and, subsequently, the law of the Old Testament).³⁸⁸ After the Incarnation 'holy place' of God and 'place' for salvation is the Church.³⁸⁹ According to this exegesis, the term 'world' may be applied to the Church.³⁹⁰

The third deduction is that 'holy place' of God is 'each rational being'. Referring particularly to humans, they are applied the term 'soul'.³⁹¹ In the light of this exegesis, 'a man alone' (μόνος ὁ ἄνθρωπος) can be said to be 'the entire world' (ὁ κόσμος ὅλος).³⁹²

Unlike other theological or technical propositions of Origen's, his notion of 'eternal gospel' after Rev. 14, 6 was not upheld by later Christian authors. It is surprising that the expression εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον is altogether absent from the totality of subsequent Christian theologians, who look as though seeking to refrain from reference to this expression of the book of Revelation. In all literature, beyond Origen's reference,³⁹³ it is amazing to find out that this scriptural expression appears only in Eusebius³⁹⁴ and quite expectedly, in the enigmatic

³⁸² *commMatt*, 16, 23.

³⁸³ *Loc. cit.* s. also *commMatt*, 16, 23; *fiJer*, 22; *commJohn*, 10, XXIV.

³⁸⁴ *commMatt*, 16, 23; 16, 24.

³⁸⁵ Cf. *commJohn*, 32, III.

³⁸⁶ Quoting 1 Tim. 2, 8; *Cels*, VII, 44.

³⁸⁷ *commMatt*, 10, 2.

³⁸⁸ *Op. cit.*, 16, 20.

³⁸⁹ *Op. cit.*, 16, 21; s. also *commJohn*, 6, LIX.

³⁹⁰ *commJohn*, 6, LIX; s. also *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.23–26.

³⁹¹ *Cels*, VII, 36; *commJohn*, 2, XVII.

³⁹² *fiJer*, 22.

³⁹³ *commJohn*, 1, VII; XIV; *commEph*, section 8.

³⁹⁴ Eusebius, *Generalis Elementaria Introductio (Eclogae Propheticae)*, p. 228.

figure of Oecumenius.³⁹⁵ Both simply make the comment that the gospel has befittingly been called ‘eternal’, since this will never pass away,³⁹⁶ thus assigning to ‘eternal’ just the notion of everlastingness. Presumably, the expression was received with suspicion, or indeed even with fear of falling into ‘Hellenism’. My discussion might contribute to understanding that this likelihood did not actually loom in Origen’s considerations.

The ‘intelligible crucifixion’ of Christ

The idea of ‘intelligible advent’ of the Logos is related to the notion of ‘intelligible crucifixion’ of Christ either before or after his physical one.³⁹⁷ This is a notion that suffered serious misconception. P. Koetschau upholds Justinian’s tendentious contentions about Origen and ascribes them to the Alexandrian unqualifiedly.³⁹⁸

But if we wish to continue our inquiries as far as the passion of the Lord our Saviour, although it is a bold and venturesome thing to seek for his passion in the heaven, nevertheless, if there are ‘spiritual hosts of wickedness’ in the heavenly places and if we are not ashamed to confess that the Lord was crucified in order to destroy those whom he destroyed through his passion, why should we fear to suspect that something similar to this may happen in the realms above, in order that the inhabitants of all places may be saved by his passion?³⁹⁹

What we are given is a misleading half-truth, concocted out of two notions of Origen’s theology. First, his conception of the world comprising sundry ranks of being, some of them superior and others inferior to the human one. Second, the notion of ‘intelligible crucifixion’, particularly the claim that such a ‘crucifixion’ may either have taken place before or might occur after the corporeal one.

In point of the first, Origen could have never asserted one more crucifixion for the salvation of the creatures of a higher existential class. The reason is simply his conviction that the incarnation and passion of the Logos took place *once and for all*, for the sake not only of human beings, but also of all rational natures. As

³⁹⁵ Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, p. 161.

³⁹⁶ Actually the term ‘crucifixion’ (σταύρωσις) is all too rare. Not used by Origen, it appears only with Athanasius and Asterius of Antioch, later in Epiphanius of Salamis and John Philoponus, and then only in John of Damascus, Photius, Michael Psellus and Romanus Melodus. Attributions to John Chrysostom are spurious.

³⁹⁷ *comm. John*, 20, XII.

³⁹⁸ Fr. 30 Koetschau *apud FP*, p. 310, n. 3. A similar passage in Jerome, *ep. Av.*, 12.

³⁹⁹ *FP*, p. 310, n. 3. Justinian obviously took the term *ἄνωθεν* (used by Origen, s. *infra*, n. 415) in its stereotyped sense of ‘from above’, or, ‘on the high’. But in this case it means ‘anew’, ‘over again’. (Cf. John, 3, 3 & Gal. 4, 9). Jerome made the same mistake. s. *infra*. This meaning, although not the hackneyed one, is confirmed by learned lexica. Cf. Suda, *Lexicon*, alphabetic letter alpha, entries 1857, 1857, 2026, 2091; *Etymologicum Gudianum* (ἁλίου-ζευαί), alphabetic entry alpha, pp. 128, line 22; 130, line 3; 136, line 1.

regards the ‘intelligible crucifixion’, Justinian’s erroneous allegations are simply the product of his unawareness of the real content of this notion. In *commJohn*, however, the perception of this ‘crucifixion’ is manifestly enunciated:

And notice that there is no time when the man figuratively understood as Jesus was not coming (οὐκ ἐπεδήμει) to life, both after the time of the narration about him and before. Subsequent to this, I think that everyone who has once been enlightened and experienced the heavenly donation, and has become a participant in the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God and of the powers of the aeon to come, and has regressed down, he renews himself to repentance, whether he crucified the Son of God at one time or crucifies him again, and puts him to an open shame,⁴⁰⁰ either before or after the bodily recorded sojourn of our Saviour. For does not the one who sins now, after his enlightenment and the other benefactions to him by God, crucify the Son of God once again by his own sins to which he has regressed (ἐπαλινδρόμησεν), although he does nothing of what in the common literal use of language could be said to be a crucifixion of the Son of God? And did this not also happen earlier, and did not a sinner after he had heard divine words crucify the Son of God in advance? And if one wishes to concede what has been written in the *Acts of Paul*⁴⁰¹ as said by the Saviour, ‘I shall be crucified over again’, just as one accepts that the statement, ‘I shall be crucified over again’ comes to pass after the sojourn, so also one accepts that it could be said, ‘Now I am about to be crucified’, before the sojourn, whenever the same causes concur. For why was he not also crucified previously, as he shall be crucified ‘over again’? But consider if the saying, ‘I have been crucified with Christ’,⁴⁰² can be applied not only to the saints after his coming, but also to those previous saints, so that we may not say that the saints after his coming surpass Moses and the patriarchs.⁴⁰³ And let the saying, ‘I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me’⁴⁰⁴ be said not only by those after his coming, but also by those who preceded it. I also focus my attention (ἐφίστημι δὲ καὶ τῷ) to the Saviour’s saying, ‘The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living’,⁴⁰⁵ that perhaps Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are living because they, too, were buried with Christ and arose with him,⁴⁰⁶ yet certainly not at the time of Jesus’ physical burial or his physical Resurrection.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Heb. 6, 4–6. Again, only Maximus Confessor made reference to Christ ‘crucified’ allegorically. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, section 4: οἱ νοητῶς ἐν ἡμῖν σταυροῦντες τὸν κύριον. Cf. Michael Psellus, *Theologica*, Opusculum 70: εἴτε τις ἕτερος σταυρῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν θεόν.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. *Acta Pauli*, Fr. 7, line 39. Cf. p. 410, note 170.

⁴⁰² Gal. 2, 19.

⁴⁰³ In line with the doctrine of unity of all Scripture, Origen holds that the holy men of OT were bestowed with equal divine illumination, and thus equal theological authority, with those of the NT. s. *commJohn*, 2, XXXIV; 6, III–VI; 13, XLVI; XLVIII; 19, V; ‘Moses and the prophets were not inferior to the apostles’ (*commJohn*, 13, XLVIII), since the apostles ‘did not comprehend things more profoundly than the fathers and prophets did’ (*commJohn*, 6, V). Cf. *Cels*, VII, 48; VIII, 12. Moses ‘saw heavenly things’ and was perfectly aware of their spiritual meaning, still he ‘passed on to Israel types and images of what he had seen’. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 13.1.

⁴⁰⁴ Gal. 2, 20.

⁴⁰⁵ Matt. 22, 32.

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Col. 2, 12; Rom. 6, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ *commJohn*, 20, XII.

A point needs to be made here. The phrase 'I shall be crucified over again' is not a scriptural one. It is supposed to have been uttered by Jesus and is stated in an apocryphon entitled *Acts of Paul*⁴⁰⁸ mentioned above. This is why he is not categorical on this phrase having really been said by Jesus. His diffidence on the point is obvious and this is why he speaks about those who 'want to accept' that this 'has been said by the Saviour'. He does not definitely profess that Jesus said this. This is just a reference to an apocryphon of the 2nd century. The point he wishes to make is *exactly the opposite* to that which Justinian and Jerome ascribed to him. Even if this phrase were really said by Jesus, this by no means compromises the uniqueness of Incarnation: in no case does another 'crucifixion' of Christ actually propound another Incarnation.

This conception of 'crucifixion' does not pertain to any corporeal passion; it denotes Christ's regret and suffering at seeing creatures regressing to sin after they had made some progress. This relapse constitutes the actual meaning of 'crucifixion'. Origen's reference to the alleged saying of Jesus, 'I shall be crucified over again', as well as his statements about 're-crucifixion' in general, are manifestly the source of Jerome's allegations that 'Origen allows himself to assert that Christ has often suffered and will often suffer'.⁴⁰⁹ But it was after all Jerome who had translated Origen's *Homilies on Luke* in Latin, where the following remarks are made:

I do not deny that Jerusalem was destroyed on account of the offense of its denizens. But I wonder whether perhaps that shedding of tears pertains also to this Jerusalem of ours. For, we are the Jerusalem that is wept over;⁴¹⁰ since we ourselves have a deeper understanding of the truth after the preaching of the Gospel, after the teaching of the Church, and after having seen the mysteries of God; once one of us sins, Jesus will admonish him and lament over him. For he does not lament over a Gentile, but over him who used to be a citizen of Jerusalem and ceased to be so.⁴¹¹

The point is related to the notion of Christ 'lamenting' and 'mourning' over our sins,⁴¹² which I will be considering anon. This is the sense in which Origen refers to 're-crucifixion' of Christ and this is how he really perceives this notion through the idea of *another* passion and what the actual content of this is. Jesus 'died' and his physical passion took place once and for all. It is only in that case that 'death' can be applied in a strict literal sense. For 'the Logos himself

⁴⁰⁸ *Acta Pauli*, Fr. 7, lines 39–41. "And the Lord said, 'Paul, I shall be crucified over again' and Paul said, 'If only this may not come about and I suffer the sight of it, o Lord'".

⁴⁰⁹ Jerome, *Apology*, I.20; *apud FP*, p. 88, n. 4.

⁴¹⁰ Identifying Jerusalem with a Christian soul is a recurring theme in Origen. Cf. his comments on Isaiah, 54, 11–14, in *Cels*, VIII, 20; so in *commJohn*, 10, XXVIII; *commJohn*, 10.

⁴¹¹ *Homilies on Luke*, 38.3.

⁴¹² Cf. *homJer*, 15, 3. s. *infra*, pp. 114, 278.

is not susceptible of death; it was human nature which befell this death.⁴¹³ Since, therefore, ‘human nature’ (that is, the corporeal form of the Logos) was assumed once and for all, it follows straight off that the ‘death’ of Jesus is a unique event. Jerome’s allegations, therefore, are groundless and have no bearing on Origen’s doctrine.

It should be added that a conception of ‘passion’ of Christ lies also in the persecution and suffering of a real Christian.⁴¹⁴ What happens to the Church is understood to happen to Christ himself; for ‘Christ is the “head of the Church”,⁴¹⁵ so that Christ and the Church are one body’.⁴¹⁶ This is the sense in which Christ has been ‘crucified’ in the past and so will he be in the future. How this ‘passion of Christ’ is perceived, is stated in *Cels*:

For it was a cause for wonder, even among people with moderate intellectual ability, that a man who was inculpated and incriminated foully, and could defend himself and prove himself guilty of none any of those accusations, and indeed he could support the quality of his life through adulation and show that his miracles were done by God, so as to give the judge a way out to a more favourable judgement of his case, he did not do so and indeed he despised and magnificently ignored his accusers. That the judge would have released Jesus without hesitation, had he defended himself, is clear from what is recorded about him where he said: ‘Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?’ and, as the Scripture goes on to say, ‘For he knew that for envy they had delivered him’.⁴¹⁷ Well, Jesus is always (ἀεὶ) being falsely inculpated, and there is no time when he is not being censured so long as evil exists among men. As regards him, he even now remains silent in face of similar things and does not reply through a voice; but he makes his defense in the conduct of lives of his genuine disciples, for this conduct cries out the sheer facts and is superior to all false imputation, disclaiming and overthrowing the misrepresentations and accusations.⁴¹⁸

If one were to follow the distorting logic of Justinian and Jerome, one should subsequently assert that Origen holds a notion of an ‘eternity of passion’. For here he says, ‘Jesus is always falsely inculpated’. Furthermore, quoting John 1, 29, he says that Christ ‘is always bearing and taking away the sin of those seeking refuge to him’, pointing out that this happened in the past, it is happening now and will happen in the future nonetheless.⁴¹⁹ Accordingly, in *homJer*, he quotes Jer. 15, 10 (‘Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man standing before judges and a man of contention to the whole earth’) explaining thus:

⁴¹³ *homJer*, 14, 6.

⁴¹⁴ *homJer*, 14, 7.

⁴¹⁵ Col. 1, 18.

⁴¹⁶ *Cels*, VI, 79.

⁴¹⁷ Matt. 27, 17–18.

⁴¹⁸ *Cels*, Pref., II.

⁴¹⁹ *frJohn*, XIX.

If you see with me the martyrs judged everywhere and members of each particular church standing before judges, you will understand in what way Jesus Christ is judged in the person of each martyr; for it is the one who is judged in the person of those who bear witness unto the truth.⁴²⁰ And, he says, you will be persuaded to accept this, when you see that it is not you who are in prison when you are in prison, but it is he; it is not you who are hungry, but it is he; [and] it is not you who are thirsty, but it is he.... Thus when a Christian is judged (yet not for something else, not for his own sins, but just because he is a Christian) it is Christ himself who is actually judged. Therefore, Christ is judged throughout the earth; and whenever a Christian is judged, it is Christ himself who is judged; [and] not only before the official courts, but where a Christian is slandered and unjustly inculpated, it is also then that Christ himself is judged unjustly.... Everywhere Christ is brought to trial and put under judgement.... Jesus suffers twice as much among men; he is sentenced by the faithless or he is disputed by the unresolved. If you clothe yourself with 'the image of the heavenly' by putting away 'the image of the earthly',⁴²¹ you are not the earth which sentences him; nor are you the earth which disputes him.⁴²²

Thus when a Christian is 'fulfilled with grief' and is tormented and condemned by the unjust', it is Christ himself who is actually 'brought to trial' (δικαζόμενος).⁴²³ In the same series of homilies, a vigorous portrayal of this 'passion' of Christ is supplied, too:

This Lord himself, my Jesus⁴²⁴ Christ says: "I gave my back to the whips, and my cheek to slaps. I hid not my face from the shame of spitting."⁴²⁵ The simple-minded people take these things to apply only to that time when Pilate whipped him, when the Jews intrigued against him. I however see Jesus each day giving his 'back to the whips'. Make an entrance into the synagogues of the Jews and see Jesus whipped by the blasphemies of their tongues. See those pagans who 'gather together'⁴²⁶ conspiring against the Christians, how they receive Jesus and he 'gives his back to the whips'. Conceive the Logos of God being abused, libelled, and hated by the faithless. See that he 'gave his cheeks to slaps' and understand that the one who has taught that if one 'shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also'⁴²⁷ is himself practicing this. So many people slap and whip him, but he is silent and does not speak. For it has been written that he remains silent to his being whipped;⁴²⁸ and, up to this day, Jesus hid not his face from shame of spitting.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁰ Cf. John, 18, 37.

⁴²¹ 1 Cor. 15, 49.

⁴²² *homJer*, 14, 7–8.

⁴²³ *homJer*, 14, 7.

⁴²⁴ Notice Origen's affection using the expression 'my Jesus'. Cf. ὁ κύριός μου Ἰησοῦς: *hom-Luc*, 26; *homJer*, 14, 12; 18, 2; 18, 5; 19, 12; ὁ ἐμός Ἰησοῦς: *Cels*, III, 31; 32; *homJer*, 20, 5; *In Jesu Nave homiliae* xxvi, p. 293. s. Appendix.

⁴²⁵ Is. 50, 6. *homJer*, 19, 12.

⁴²⁶ Cf. Psalm 2, 1–2.

⁴²⁷ Matt. 5, 39.

⁴²⁸ Cf. John, 19, 1.

⁴²⁹ Is. 50, 6.

For who of those who disparage the teaching does not up to now spit, as it were, on Jesus who tolerates this?⁴³⁰

In addition, he quotes John, 8, 49 ('and ye do dishonour me'), stating that

[this statement] was made not only to those at that time, but also to those who always (ἀεὶ) dishonour him by what they do beyond the proper word of God and those who dishonour Christ, who is justice, by the unjust things they commit, and those who dishonour the power of God,⁴³¹ which the Saviour is, 'for Christ is the power of God',⁴³² by the things that they execute according to their weakness and frailty. And 'ye do dishonour me'⁴³³ would also be said to anyone who abominates wisdom, since Christ is also wisdom.⁴³⁴

Christ 'laments and mourns over our sins'⁴³⁵ and when we are praying he 'prays with us to the Father, being himself a mediator'.⁴³⁶ For 'even in the divine nature itself there is a certain emotion of pity for our strives'.⁴³⁷

At this point, my foregoing analyses about the actual meaning of the 'body' of Christ should be recalled: in the first place, it is the whole world, and, after the Incarnation, it is the Church, that are meant by the term 'body' of Christ. The physical passion of the Logos was both a historical event and a figure of the ongoing 'passion' of his 'body', which is realized either in each act fronting his word or in any relapse to sin. Similarly, the Resurrection was both a historical event and a figure of the 'resurrection' of his entire 'body' that is now suffering the 'passion'. The conclusion is then clear: the Logos is still 'in need' of rational creatures:

Why does the Son of God have need of you? What does he seek from you? He needs your salvation. He wants you to be unfastened from the bonds of sin.⁴³⁸

Therefore, the allegations of both Justinian and Jerome regarding Origen's view of 'passion' of Christ are misleading and ascribe to him views which he never really held. The notions of 'intelligible crucifixion' of Christ and his 'always' suffering have an import which by no means puts the uniqueness of the Incarnation in question. On the basis of Origen's quotation of the passage 'I shall be crucified over again', but ignoring his own comments, and the meaning of Greek language of the portion nonetheless, it was alleged that Christ was to suffer in 'the realms above'. In which case Christ would have to assume a body all over

⁴³⁰ *homJer*, 19, 12.

⁴³¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 12, 9.

⁴³² 1 Cor. 1, 24.

⁴³³ John, 8, 49.

⁴³⁴ *commJohn*, 20, XXXVII.

⁴³⁵ *homJer*, 15, 3. s. pp. 111, 278.

⁴³⁶ *deOr*, X, 2.

⁴³⁷ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.6.2.

⁴³⁸ *Homilies on Luke*, 37.3. Cf. chapter 9, p. 265.

again, because corporeality exists in all planes of being. This idea though is alien to his real views. He consistently reaffirms the uniqueness (ἐφ' ἅπαξ) of the incarnation of Christ and holds that this intervention of God into space-time took place once and for all and it was the entirety of rational nature that was benefited from that unique corporeal presence of Christ in the world.

Conclusion

Speaking of 'eternal gospel', Origen neither presumes any repetition of the corporeal passion of Christ, nor does he imply that the gospel preached by Jesus is in any sense incomplete. He unequivocally postulates the uniqueness of the incarnation of the Logos. Moreover, he explicates that the words of Christ, being 'perfect', will 'always' act into the world. Quoting Matt. 24, 35 ('Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away') he provides the core of his conception of the gospel preached by Jesus Christ with respect to history:

For the words of the Saviour always will accomplish what is befitting them, because they are perfect and not susceptible of becoming better as if what they are now could expire. But 'heaven and earth will pass away, but his words will remain' because they are words said by the one through whom everything was made; *** for the reasons of what has been made do not pass away, even if all those made pass away.⁴³⁹

In *expProv* it is also affirmed, 'the heaven and earth will pass away...yet the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ will not pass away'.⁴⁴⁰

Therefore, Jerome was wrong in ascribing to Origen assertions such as that 'the Gospel' is regarded 'as not possessing completeness' since it 'was preached in a world and an aeon that are destined to pass away'.⁴⁴¹ For it is Origen himself who uses a superb term as a predication of the gospel, stating that 'the Gospel is ἀδιάδοχον'.⁴⁴² The term ἀδιάδοχον means 'perpetual', or 'without successor' in the sense of being 'perfect'. The gospel is ἀδιάδοχον because Christ is a 'heaven who neither passes away nor can he be destroyed'.⁴⁴³ So it is just the wonted case with Jerome testifying to Origen's thought: his aim is to vilify the Alexandrian.

⁴³⁹ *frMatt*, 484. Οἱ γὰρ τοῦ σωτῆρος λόγοι αἰεὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐνεργήσουσιν ὡς τέλειοι καὶ οὐκ ἐπιδεχόμενοι βελτίους γενέσθαι παρελθόντες ὁ εἰσὶν. ἀλλ' ὁ οὐρανὸς μὲν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἀπελεύσονται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι αὐτοῦ μενοῦσι, λόγοι ὄντες τοῦ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο. He alludes to the 'reasons' being the object of creation. Cf. pp. 306, 323, 329.

⁴⁴⁰ *expProv*, 6, PG.17.177.35–36.

⁴⁴¹ Jerome, *epAv*, 12; cited in *FP*, p. 309, n. 7.

⁴⁴² *frJohn*, LVI; the same term applied to Jesus' 'teaching' (διδασκαλίαν) in *frJohn*, CXXVIII. The term ἀδιάδοχος also in *frPs*, 112.

⁴⁴³ *frMatt*, 38 I & 38 II.

As the term *λόγος* in Greek means both ‘word’ and ‘reason’, this phrasing expresses that both the *word* of Jesus and the *reasons* of creation will ‘always’ exist. The foregoing portion of *fiMatt*, 484 is a crucial one, because it clearly portrays the meaning of history after the incarnation of Christ, as well as its eschatological consequences. The words of Jesus enable all persons to do away with the cause of actual creation having come to pass as a ‘downfall’ (καταβολή). Moreover, the words of the Son at the Providential creation and the words of the Logos during his Incarnation are not destined to vanish into nothingness, since they are reasons (in the sense of both ‘objects of creation’ and ‘words’) of God. They are not accidental and ephemeral events in the flux of time. Consequently, the eschatological perspectives of the Incarnation are clearly indicated: this is a unique historical event, the significance of which pertains to the entire of the world throughout all time: an event which established a meaning on history thereafter until the end of it.

Analysis of the Incarnation with respect to history shows that Origen considers movement in time as always directed not merely forward, but *forward with a final purpose to be fulfilled*, since this was *promised* and staged in real history. In this movement forward, the future regarded as a result of free action is not only unknown, but also essentially unformed, since it depends on free action. God alone knows the future. In his timelessness, he does not remain inactive with respect to creation: he intervenes into space-time and acts within it. Such an action is the donation of his foreknowledge to the prophets and its subsequent proclamation to human beings. These prophecies were completely illuminated only once what was foretold was realized in space-time. Normally, the realization of prophecies constitutes an intervention of God into the world. The notable character of these divine acts is that they stand in dialectical relation to creaturely free action and take place at certain moments of history, which are known solely to God. These moments are called ‘opportune times’, or *καιροί*. Thus the direction of the world in time is decisively determined and illuminated by the notions of *prophecy* and *καιρός*. How they determine the character of history I am going to examine next.

CHAPTER THREE

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

Prophecy is attributed a critical significance in view of two salient characteristics of Origen's philosophy of history. First, the eschatological direction in time. Secondly, time being not unbounded in both directions, since it had a beginning and will come to an end. This finite 'extension' is dotted by fixed points, which determine the temporal extension of each aeon. These points can be spoken of as 'beginning' or 'end' only relatively, referring to the beginning or end of a certain aeon.¹

The non-infinity of time is what makes it comprehensible; and it is because of non-infinity that a conceptual 'before time' could make some sense (if taken loosely, of course), meaning timelessness in the state of time not having been created yet. In this section, I consider that meaning of *prophecy* which is related to a specific philosophy of history. I do not dwell on other conceptions of 'prophecy' that existed in early Christian communities, such as that which Origen mentions: "So then, for Paul, 'prophecy' is mentioned when anyone speaks to men for their edification and when anyone speaks for their exhortation and consolation".² To expound the function of 'prophets' in early Christian communities is an issue that will not detain us here.

Origen considers the meaning of prophecy in close connection with his conception of a non-beginningless world and the direction of it towards an end. Had the world not a beginning, it could make no sense to say that there is God 'who knows everything before it came into being'.³ For once time is regarded as having no beginning, it could be meaningless to speak of any *before* whatever. But if there is no beginning, then there is no God's *fore*-knowledge of the world either, because there is no *before* making sense. On the other hand, if there were no end of history, prophecy about an *end* could make no sense either. This is why the finiteness of space-time is interwoven with the notion of prophecy:

¹ *selPs*, 48, PG.12.1445.12–13: Τέλος δὲ νοήσεις τὸν μέλλοντα αἰῶνα, ὅστις ἐστὶ τέλος τοῦ παρόντος ('as *end* you should understand the future aeon which is the end of the present one'.)

² *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 9.3.8.

³ Daniel (Susanna), 42.

If the world is not consummated but exists *ad infinitum*, then there is no God ‘who knows everything before it came into being.’⁴ But he will know in part each individual thing ‘before it comes into being’, or [he will know] some of them, and then again [he will know] others; for knowledge is incapable of containing infinite things; it can contain only what is finite. Since then everything would be infinite, it follows that neither prophecy of anything is possible.⁵

This means that *prophecy* pertains primarily to the eschatological perspectives of the world.⁶ According to a different conception of prophecy of no such cosmic proportions, putative infinity of the world could render prophecy not impossible; in such a case, however, prophecy should be only a prediction pronounced at a certain time and realized at a future moment. Such a prognostication though makes no difference from Greek oracles or other pagan predictions. The prophecies of Jewish prophets do not just foretell historical events: they are placed in the context of a continuous operative relation to God. In that case prophecy is actually a *divine* action. That Origen strongly rejects heathen customs of producing oracles is argued later in this chapter. What the foregoing passage shows is that it is mainly on the ground of the *eschatological direction of the world* in time that he draws a clear line between biblical prophecy and pagan augury. The notion of prophecy is then a decisive factor in the formation of a philosophy of history pertaining to the perspectives of the entire world. In the light of this, R. Sorabji ascribes to Philoponus what was already maintained by Origen, in a comment reading thus:

Up to 529, Christians adopted a defensive position. They sought only to rebut the arguments that the universe *cannot* have a beginning. In 529, however, in Alexandria, Philoponus moved on the attack: he sought to show that the universe *must* have had a beginning. The most striking and influential of his arguments had to do with the concept of infinity.⁷

Probably Sorabji was not aware of the ardent admiration that Philoponus cherished for Origen and how he had availed himself of his forebear.⁸ Origen long before had already argued that the world *must* have had a beginning. For it was he who contended that ‘that which creates is senior to what is created’ (πάν γὰρ τὸ ποιοῦν πρεσβύτερον τοῦ πεποιημένου)⁹ and ‘what proceeds from a cause must necessarily have a beginning.’¹⁰ In regard of the actual creation, there will be ‘a certain fixed time when the world will be brought to the end,

⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁵ *commMatt*, 13, 1.

⁶ s. pp. 240, 249, 290, 302, 351.

⁷ R. Sorabji, *op. cit.* p. 198; italics his.

⁸ Cf. John Philoponus, *De Opificio Mundi*, pp. 166, 195, 196, 228, 278. s. *infra*, p. 426.

⁹ *commGen*, 3, PG.2.69.42–43 (*Philocalia*, 23, 14).

¹⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.1.

which it must necessarily have *since it had a beginning*¹¹ and challenged ‘those who hold that the world is not created’ arguing that ‘they cannot speak of any beginning of the world at all’ (ὥς οὐκ ἔστιν οὖν τοῖς ἀγένητον ὑφισταμένοις τὸν κόσμον ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ εἰπεῖν).¹²

Prophecy is a function in history, still originated in the divine will and providence. We come therefore to the theme of causality between timelessness and time,¹³ and prophecy is defined thus:

Prophecy is a prediction of future occurrences; this pronouncement is accomplished when what has been foretold comes to pass (ὧν περατουμένων τέλος ἔχει τὸ ῥηθέν). It did not come to pass because it was foretold; for prophecy is not such a thing; but it was told because it was to come to pass; and this is prophecy.¹⁴

This is not simply a definition of prophecy; it also illustrates the causative relation between prophetic articulation and realization of an event. Though odd as it may appear, the prospective fulfillment of certain prophecy is the *cause*, whereas utterance of prophecy is the *result*, although it temporally precedes the event itself. Thus, prophecy occurs ‘first’ and yet this is a result; the realization of it is ‘second’ and yet this is a cause. We have then a causality *in time*, of which the constituents function in a reversed order, portrayed by the statement, ‘those *former* carry in themselves an *image* of those *latter*’ (τῶν γὰρ δευτέρων εἰκόνα φέρει τὰ πρῶτα).¹⁵ In its spiritual sense, Scripture is a shadow of the things to come, since the Old Testament foreshadows the New Testament,¹⁶ which in turn contains the eschatological mysteries which can now be seen through a glass. Contrary to common experience, it is the future that determines the past, not the other way around. Past and present is pregnant with meaning, yet this meaning is established in time by what is to come. That the future casts light upon the past is a tenet spread throughout this theology. Thus in *Cels*, ‘*the end exposed* the wonders of the Egyptians to have been produced by trickery, while those of Moses were divine.’¹⁷ Also, in the same work:

For if *the end*, which was that a whole nation owed its institution to the wonders of Moses, *shows* the striking fact that it was God who caused the miracles of Moses, why should not this argument be even more strong in the case of Jesus, since he did a greater deed than that of Moses?¹⁸

¹¹ *Cels*, IV, 9.

¹² *Cels*, IV, 79.

¹³ *COT*, pp. 337f.

¹⁴ *frMatt*, 21.

¹⁵ *frMatt*, 57. Cf. *Cels*, I, 44.

¹⁶ This method is entertained throughout the *Homilies on Leviticus*: the precepts of Leviticus are explained as mystically applying to the life of the Church.

¹⁷ Cf. Ex. 7, 8. *Cels*, II, 50; italics mine.

¹⁸ *Cels*, II, 52; italics mine.

This point of view may well allow that it involves something of a falsification to divide time into past, present and future. This is the order in the layman's experience, discredited however by Einstein himself. Since time is a continuum,¹⁹ there can be of course no division of it, apart from a conceptual illusion. Were that allowed, prophecy shows that the real priority and significance is placed upon the future which determines the present. The dramatic relation between Present and Future plays a predominant role in Origen's thought.

Much discussion has been conducted on Origen's 'allegorical method'. This led R. Hanson²⁰ and H. Koch²¹ to the misleading conclusion that Origen actually has no eschatological ideas. This claim will be considered presently, yet at this point it is worth-quoting an assessment by J. Daniélou:

People are continually talking about his [sc. Origen's] love of allegory and comparing it with Clement's. How far is that true? I think I have shown—it is in fact one of the conclusions that emerge most plainly from the book—that Origen had the greatest respect for the traditional typology; he followed the rest of the Church in seeing figures of the mysteries of Christ's life in certain texts of the Old Testament. His work thus contains a whole theology of history, which shows him to great advantage as an exponent of biblical theology.²²

I endorse this, although I cannot do the same with the author's subsequent claims about Gnostic influence on Origen on this point. H. de Lubac²³ and M. Harl²⁴ have taken similar views. It is the future that illuminates the past and grants a real meaning upon it, this is why he employs those definitions of 'end' (τέλος) from Aristotle and Herophilians that express his own theological conception of what 'end' is.²⁵ The incarnation of the Logos cast light upon the history of the Old Testament and its perspectives, which previously were hidden in 'mysteries'.²⁶

We must revert to the evangelical and apostolic exposition so that the Law can be comprehended. For unless the gospel shall have taken the veil from the face of Moses,²⁷ it is not possible for his face to be seen, nor his meaning to be grasped. See, therefore, how in the church of the Apostles the disciples stand by these things, which Moses wrote, and defend them because they can be fulfilled and were sagaciously written.²⁸

¹⁹ Since Origen does not allow the Aristotelian ontology of time, numerosity is introduced only in thought, so it does not interfere with continuity.

²⁰ R. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, pp. 364f.

²¹ H. Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, pp. 89f.

²² J. Daniélou, *Origen*, p. 312.

²³ H. de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit: L'Intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène*, p. 70.

²⁴ M. Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du Verbe Incarné*, p. 353.

²⁵ *selPs* (preamble); PG.12.1053.18–20. s. *supra*, p. 84.

²⁶ *comm John*, I, VI; s. also *Princ*, III.1.16.

²⁷ Cf. 2 Cor. 3, 14.

²⁸ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 4.7.3.

Accordingly, the second advent of Christ will reveal all the truth which is at present concealed behind the words of the gospel: He will manifest the 'eternal gospel' itself, not in rites and parables and metaphors.

Prophecy acquires a significant place in Origen's work in consideration of the illuminating role of the future. There is though a question arising at this point: in discussing the case of causality between time and timelessness,²⁹ I said that cause and effect are regarded in a reverse order. How is it then possible for the same to happen in a causality established *in history*—*id est*, in the relation between *pre-announcement* of an event and *realization* of it?

The answer to this question is that this causality, although manifested in history, is in fact a causality between time and timelessness. Prophecy is uttered by a prophet, who 'looks into the future',³⁰ yet it is God who speaks *through* the prophet. What is uttered originates in God's own foreknowledge. Prophecy as a *result*, although manifested in time, actually springs from timelessness. This is therefore a case of causality between timelessness and time. In point of this, there is an interesting statement in *Cels*, which may be culled as follows:

The proclamation of future events is the characteristic of divinity, since they are not foretold by a natural human faculty;³¹ and from the subsequent events they are understood to have been proclaimed by a divine spirit which proclaimed these things".³²...Prophecies...are not fabrications, but...a divine spirit happened to dwell in the clean souls of the prophets, who underwent any trouble for the sake of virtue, motivated them to prophesy certain things for their contemporaries and others for posterity, and par excellence to prophesy concerning 'a certain saviour who would arrive and dwell in human race'.³³...For God through his Logos, who descends into pious souls in each generation, makes them friends of God³⁴ and prophets, correcting those who listen to his words.³⁵

It is then God who speaks through prophecy.³⁶ The 'prophets and the apostles'³⁷ are just 'servants of the truth'. The reason for God to act so is to support creatures in their struggle for salvation.

Having knowledge of all things by his foreknowledge, and seeing that there are those two extremities, God willed to make them known to men through the prophets, in order that those who comprehended their words might affiliate themselves to what is better, and take heed against the opposite.³⁸

²⁹ s. *COT*, p. 337f.

³⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.19.2.

³¹ Cf. *Cels*, III, 25; IV, 96 (Celsus' words, in IV, 88).

³² *Cels*, VI, 10.

³³ *Cels*, III, 3.

³⁴ Cf. James, 2, 23. s. p. 157, note 84.

³⁵ Cf. Wis. 7, 27. *Cels*, IV, 3.

³⁶ *selDeut*, PG.12.805.22f.

³⁷ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat. parallel), IV.2.7.

³⁸ *Cels*, VI, 45.

Prophecy then is not merely a prediction of future events. It casts light upon the perspectives of action; it is a function betokening boldface the eschatological course in history and orienting towards realization of the end. This is why Origen contends that to be able just to foretell the future is not sufficient for someone to be regarded as a prophet. For prophecy is not just a forecast: it is an operation of the Holy Spirit with weighty implications:

If someone prophesies, he is not a prophet; but if one is a prophet, he does prophesy. For Varlaam prophesies because he is a soothsayer.³⁹ Thus one is not a doctor just because he carried out an act of healing; or, one is not a bricklayer just because he carried out an act of building.⁴⁰

In this passage the deeper significance of prophecy can be traced. Others who foretold what was going to happen cannot be considered as prophets, since their prediction was but a product of sorcery.⁴¹ The prophet does not sink into any state of ecstasy: “it is not the case, as some think, that the prophets were unaware of what they were saying and what they were prophesying, so to speak, while bereft of their senses.”⁴²

It is not a work of a divine spirit to influence the ostensible prophetess into a state of ecstasy and manic condition, so that she is unable to be conscious of herself. For the person being in possession of the divine spirit ought to have obtained from it far more benefit, long before anyone who may be instructed by oracles, to do that which contributes to a conduct of life that is moderate and in conformity with nature, and is either of advantage or expedient. And for that reason this person should be more perceptive (διορατικώτερον) especially at the very time when the deity is in communion with him.⁴³

I hardly need to explain that this attitude is an anti-Platonic one. According to Plato, the state of frenzy is one to be commended, because many good and useful things are derived from it. In *Phaedrus*, there is a long analysis purported to prove that ‘mania’ (μᾶνία, madness) is ‘neither shameful nor disgraceful’. The ‘greatest of blessings come to us through mania, when this is sent as a gift of the gods’, and such is the case with ‘the prophetess at Delphi and the priestess at Dodona’. They, ‘by being in a state of mania, have conferred many splendid benefits upon Greece both in private and in public affairs’. According to Plato, when diseases and the greatest troubles have been inflicted upon certain families through some ancient guilt, mania has entered in and by oracular power has

³⁹ Cf. Joshua, 13, 22.

⁴⁰ *fiJohn*, LXXXV.

⁴¹ *selNum*, (comm. on Num. 24, 7), PG.12.577.35.

⁴² *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.7.10.

⁴³ *Cels*, VII, 3. Cf. *op. cit.* VII, 4.

found a way of release for those in need, taking refuge in prayers and the service of the gods. Thus, by purification and sacred rites, he who has this madness (mania) is made safe for the present and the after time, and for him who is rightly possessed by madness a release from present ills is found.⁴⁴

Beyond commendation of mania, Plato contends that this is the state for clearest reception of divine instruction. His opinion is that god 'gave unto man's foolishness (ἄφροσύνη) the gift of divination a sufficient token' which is this: 'no man achieves true and inspired divination'⁴⁵ when he is in his rational mind, but only when the power of his intelligence is fettered in sleep or when it is distraught by disease or by reason of some divine inspiration'.⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, Plato makes the interesting distinction between the person being in the state of inspiration and the 'prophet' who interprets the oracle pronounced by the former.

Wherefore also there is a law to set the tribe of prophets⁴⁷ to pass judgement upon these inspired divinations; they themselves are indeed called 'diviners' (μάντιες) by certain who are entirely ignorant of the truth that they are not diviners but interpreters of the mysterious voice and apparition, for whom the most right name would be 'prophets' of things divined.⁴⁸

I will not, therefore, consider any further states of manic ecstasy, which are vehemently rejected by Origen, showing once again his un-Platonic point of view. Rather, I wish to emphasize his sheer dissension from Neoplatonism on the issue. According to Plotinus, there are not two things, seer and seen, but the seer is unified with the One, and is, one might say, not altogether himself any longer. In stark contrast with Origen (and with modern philosophy as initiated by Descartes), Plotinus thinks self-consciousness quite unimportant, and complains that it even impairs the activities of, say, reading or of heroism, if we are self-consciously aware of our activity.

This view is illuminating not only with regard to a prophet, but also to any state of being receiving the gift of divine light. It is one thing to speak about a doctrine being 'mystical' (which Origen does oftentimes), and quite another to countenance any notion of falling in a state of mystical ecstasy, which he rejects. In the first case, he simply quite consciously refrains from outright reference to certain aspects of the dogma, since he finds it more safe to defend a certain exegesis if he drops from full explication in order to shield this from being vilified by uninformed audience. In the second case, he rejects any

⁴⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244a-e.

⁴⁵ Plato, *Respublica*, 363b; *Leges*, 772d; *Phaedrus*, 244af.

⁴⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, 71d-e.

⁴⁷ Plato, *Leges*, 871c. Euripides, *Ion*, 413f.

⁴⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 72b.

Neoplatonic notion of ecstasy and mystical experience through self-denial.⁴⁹ This is a point which should have its implications elicited because they underscore Origen's dissent from any Platonic outlook. To allow for an ecstatic condition of contemplation has some connotations, which should be explained. For the question which arises for Plotinus is how the self can survive translation into a non-temporal state of contemplation. This question had arisen also for Augustine, but he never solved this. For it presupposes a Platonic anthropology, yet the answer takes more than that. Behind Augustine lifted up by God stands the Plotinian idea of one held aloft by the One. Yet, in addition, I would see the Manichaean view that the soul is of the same substance with God, a standpoint from which Augustine had struggled to free himself and Origen vehemently attacked all along replying to Gnostics.⁵⁰

Origen's outright denunciation of the idea that the soul is co-substantial with God is useful to recall. It was a blasphemy to assert that man might *become* God. It is one thing to be 'deified' through grace, which is to be hoped and striven for, and quite another to struggle to *become* God on one's own merits.⁵¹ I should have thought that his statement against the Gnostic Heracleon is a traceable source for Christian tradition to regard the idea as a blasphemy. All these are substantial reasons for Origen to disallow such ecstatic states in the first place, and this should be borne in mind in assessing his alleged relation with Neoplatonism.

In this theology, the prophet is conscious of himself, with all his senses functioning as normal. This is rooted in a view of history as the milieu where the dialectical relation between God and the world takes place. Prophecy is a manifestation of the benevolent intervention of God into the world, letting human freedom untrammelled. This is why prophetic utterances have always appeared not as deterministic predictions oppressing human freedom, but as 'mysteries' which were accredited through faith.⁵²

For the law and the prophecies are believed to be words containing announcement of things which reasonably rejoice those who hear them, because of the benefit that they receive once they accept what is announced.⁵³

⁴⁹ Notice Origen's dissent from Augustine's Neoplatonist attitudes: while residing in Milan in A.D. 386, Augustine came across some Platonist books in the Latin translation of Marius Victorinus, and this is said to have impelled him to some experiences which would be described as mystical.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *De Ordine*, 2.46. *commJohn*, 13, XXV.

⁵¹ *commJohn*, 13, XXV.

⁵² *commJohn*, 1, VI. Cf. Greek text in *Princ.* IV.2.3: "and what must we say about the prophecies, which we all know are filled with riddles and dark sayings?" (Cf. Prov. 1, 6); also, *Cels.* III, 45; VII, 10.

⁵³ *commJohn*, 1, VI. Cf. *homJer.* 1, 3.

Prophecy, reasoned out as related to the eschatological expectation, makes no sense in the Greek conceptions of time. In that frame of thought, a soothsayer utters an oracle, which normally is a prognostication referring to short-term expectations. The reasons for asking for an oracle were usually practical, related to particular interests of a man or of a small group of people. There is no connection with long term perspectives; this forecast does not ultimately pertain to the entirety of humanity and there is no context of any eschatological expectation whatever. This is why, in the various Greek schools of thought, biblical prophecy has no place, it is almost unthinkable. For in the Greek mindset there is no express eschatological expectation perceived in terms of an actual future realization in space-time. The biblical prophecy is altogether different form pagan oracles, on account of its origin, its function and its perspectives.

In point of the difference *in origin*, the contrast of biblical prophecy from Greek oracles is clearly stated:

According to this attitude, by collecting evidence from the holy scriptures, we prove that the prophets among the Jews, being enlightened by the divine Spirit in so far as it was beneficial to them themselves who prophesied, took precedence over all others concerning the visitation of the superior spirit to them.⁵⁴

By contrast,

If the Pythian priestess is in a state of ecstasy (ἐξίσταται) and has not control over her functions when she pronounces oracles (ὅτε μαντεύεται), what sort of spirit must one think this to be, other than the race of daemons, which poured darkness upon her mind and rational thinking? These kinds of daemons many Christians drive out of people who suffer from them, without any bizarre and magical art or sorcerer's device, but through prayer alone and much simpler adjurations and other entreaties of the kind that the simplest person could apply.⁵⁵

What 'the Greeks take to be divine inspiration' coming from 'the Pythian Apollo' is just 'the daemons' who 'perform the petitions of those who bring requests to them more because of the sacrifices they offer than because of their virtuous actions'. The same goes for him 'who rules from stormy Dodona'⁵⁶ and the 'oracle at Claros' and 'another at Branchidae and another at the shrine of Zeus Ammon, or at any place on earth where there are oracles' all them are 'not gods', but they are 'daemons'.⁵⁷

Origen generally holds that the gods of the pagans are daemons.⁵⁸ Certainly to him any prediction based on astrology is equally rejected as oracles or

⁵⁴ *Cels*, VII, 4.

⁵⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁶ That is, Zeus. Homer, *Ilias*, 15, 234–5. *Cels*, VII, 6.

⁵⁷ *Cels*, VII, 4–7.

⁵⁸ A recurring theme, out of Psalm 95, 5. *Cels*, III, 2; 3; 37; IV, 29; VII, 4; VIII, 65 & 69; VIII, 3; *Homiliae in Exodum*, pp. 226, 228. *exhMar*, XXXII. *The Song of Songs, Commentary and*

predictions out of 'dreams'. These are all dismissed as 'impious prognostication' furnished by 'false-prophets', since 'there is neither augury in Jacob nor oracle in Israel'.⁵⁹ Only 'divine foreknowledge' is allowed for.⁶⁰ As against the 'false-prophets' of the heathen,

Of the prophets among the Jews, some were wise before they pronounced prophecies and were possessed by divinity (θείας κατακωχής), while others became of this kind (τοιούτοι, sc. wise) after they had been illuminated in mind by the donation of prophecy itself. They were chosen by providence to be entrusted with the divine Spirit and with the utterances that he inspired on account of the unmatched high quality of their lives, which was of utmost ethical vigour and freedom.⁶¹

As a matter of fact, 'from many passages we might gather the exceptional qualities of the prophets—their freedom, their courage, their watchfulness'.⁶²

In point of the *function* of prophecy, I have already noted that this by no means oppresses freedom. Prophecy is uttered as a 'mystery'⁶³ accredited through faith only—that is, received through an act of freedom. It illuminates the perspectives of moral action putting no restraint on freedom at all. This *contingency* in the relation between God and men during pronouncement of prophecy is emphasized in *homJer*:

*If we repent, captivity will not go on and God will bestow mercy upon us. . . . If we commit sin, we shall be in captivity in the future. . . . For there is a useful knowledge out of the prophetic writings, that God, because of his love for men, admonishes them so that they will not suffer captivity.*⁶⁴

The same sort of *contingency* in God's action towards men is pointed out in the Eighteenth of these Homilies:

*If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn away from their evils, then I will repent of the evils that I intended to do unto them. . . . If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not in my voice, then I will repent about the good which I intended to do for them.*⁶⁵

Homilies, p. 35. Justin Martyr had made abundant use of it, *Apologia*, 41.1. *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 55.2; 73.3; 79.4; 83.4. Also upheld by the writer of *Martyrium Ignatii Antiocheni* (*Martyrium Antiochenum*), 2.4. It comes into sight once in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 4.62.4. After Origen, the argument appears in Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, and in John Philoponus (*De Opificio Mundi*, p. 203). Eusebius and Didymus the Blind are the authors using the argument of Psalms profusely.

⁵⁹ Num. 23, 23.

⁶⁰ *fiJer*, 49.

⁶¹ *Cels*, VII, 7.

⁶² *homJer*, 15, 1.

⁶³ *commJohn*, 1, VI.

⁶⁴ *homJer*, 1, 3; italics mine.

⁶⁵ *homJer*, 18, 5, ref. to Jer. 18, 8 & 18, 10; italics mine.

Suchlike instances are indicative of how human freedom is understood in its relation to God in the time after the proclamation of a prophecy. This is in fact the existential environment for the realization of the *perspectives* of a prophetic announcement.

Prophecy does not establish any determinism. This is rather a kind of shining beacon in history illuminating the road to salvation without coercing its own approval and embracing. Whatever God foreknows about the choices of rational animals, he has left them the natural possibility of conversion intact. Salvation will be achieved only with the concurrence of creaturely freedom, through faith and proper action. For 'it is in our choice to hear and not to hear, as if God had no foreknowledge; neither our freedom of will is abated because of God's foreknowledge, nor would this be more far-reaching if God had no foreknowledge'.⁶⁶ This is why 'promise' and 'prophecy' make sense only in the context of freedom, within history directed towards an 'end'—in the sense of both 'goal' and 'termination'.

When Origen deprecates astrology, he does so on the grounds of defending freedom. In *commGen* he states that if the stars are to be regarded as 'acting' upon human things, then human freedom is disallowed; from which follows straight off that there can be neither praise nor blame—there can be no sense of moral appraisal of any action. Therefore, no one could speak either of judgement by God, or of the outcome of it. Once the criterion for judgement is abolished, 'the faith is futile and the advent of Christ is futile as accomplishing nothing, and so is the dispensation (οἰκονομία) through the law and the prophets. Likewise, the toil of the apostles in order to found churches of God through Christ [was futile, too]'.⁶⁷ Considerations of this kind are the ground for determinism to be rejected, since 'human things are not coerced by necessity'.⁶⁸

The salient point made in the foregoing argument is that once *freedom* is abolished, then the entire *conception of history* is abolished, too. In that event, free action is deprived of any sense. Subsequently, judgement is meaningless and any eschatological perspective of history is rendered an absurd notion. This perspective is illustrated as an *οἰκονομία* manifested in the succession of 'the law', the 'prophets' and the 'advent of Christ' and the 'toils of the apostles' in order to establish local churches. The statement, 'if the stars exercise some kind of action upon us, then our prayer is futile',⁶⁹ is the crucial point confirming the dialectical relation between God and cognizant beings in history.

⁶⁶ *selEz*, 2, PG.13.772.24–27.

⁶⁷ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.51–53 (*Philocalia*, 23, 1).

⁶⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁹ *frJer*, 49. Cf. Philoponus' testimony, p. 426.

The notion of abolition of freedom coincides with that of ‘vanity’; and ‘vanity’ is mainly manifested by cyclic movement, especially that of the stars.⁷⁰ That ‘cyclicality’ means ‘vanity’, and ‘vanity’ actually means ‘absence of freedom’ is in fact imbuing this conception of history. Prophecy then is decisively dissociated from any implication of either vanity or oppression of freedom.

I have argued⁷¹ that *movement* is mainly understood as free creaturely action. Prophecy, as an act of God in history, actually constitutes God’s movement, so to speak, in his dialectical relation with human action. As a matter of fact, Origen avers that the utterances of a prophet constitute a *movement* of God. Quoting Deuteronomy 1, 3 (‘Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them’) he comments as follows:

God was revealing his power and the prophet was using his tongue in order to articulate what had been declared. *Movement* (κίνησις) then is called the prophetic voice itself, inasmuch as it articulates what has been said by God.⁷²

Prophecy accentuates time as the *extension* for return to God. Therefore it orients history according to a perception such as *providence—prophecy—promise—expectation—realization—anticipation—faith—hope—awaiting for—fulfillment—end*.

In this process, prophecy is the notion which bespeaks the correlation of the divine timelessness to time. For ‘providence’ is atemporal in origin, whereas the rest of these notions relate to history. Prophecy is both *in* time (due to the temporal existence of the prophet himself) and *out* of time—due to its origin, as contemplation of Wisdom⁷³ and ‘insight’⁷⁴ and ‘communion with the divine nature’.⁷⁵

Particularly, in the scheme above, *faith* is the existential condition which allows future to be experienced at present.⁷⁶ What is not yet realized is related to faith through *hope*;⁷⁷ the *expectation* out of this hope has been decisively strengthened after the *realization* of the Incarnation and the ‘exemplified’ resurrection, as this was *fulfilled* in the person of Jesus Christ. The stackpole, around which Scripture had its veiled import revealed is the life of Jesus, as Origen tersely remarks:

⁷⁰ The notion of ‘vanity’ is considered with reference to Rom. 8, 20. Cf. *Cels*, V, 13; VIII, 5; *commJohn*, 1, XVII; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 8, section 20.

⁷¹ *COT*, pp. 313f and *supra*.

⁷² *selDeut*, PG.12.805.23–27 (comm. on Deut. 1, 3); italics mine. Ἐπειδὴ ὁ μὲν Θεὸς τὴν δύναμιν ἀπεκάλυπεν· ὁ δὲ προφήτης τῇ ἑαυτοῦ γλώσσει ἐκέχρητο πρὸς παράστασιν τῶν δεδηλωμένων. Κίνησις οὖν λέγεται ἡ προφητικὴ φωνή, οἷα παριστώσα τὰ ὑπὸ Θεοῦ εἰρημένα.

⁷³ Cf. *Princ* (Lat.), I.2.2.

⁷⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), IV.4.8.

⁷⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), III.3.3.

⁷⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

⁷⁷ *Cels*, V, 51.

“we must add that it was after the advent of Jesus that the inspiration of the prophetic words and the spiritual nature of Moses’ Law came to light”.⁷⁸ For indeed Moses himself ‘saw heavenly things’ and was perfectly aware of their spiritual meaning, still he ‘passed on to Israel types and images of what he had seen’.⁷⁹

This hope then is a strong stimulation for free action.⁸⁰ When Origen refers to ‘him who subjected them in hope’,⁸¹ he means that ‘subjection’ is a notion tantamount to unrealisation. However, it is through hope and faith that unrealisation is perceived as unrealisation *yet*.

Prophecy is a main function for orientation of history towards the eschatological expectation to be established. In the scheme above, if ‘prophecy’ is taken away, then God remains unapproachable in his transcendence. In that case ‘promise—faith—hope—expectation—awaiting for—fulfillment’ lose their sense and actual content, by reason of absence of prophecy illuminating and directing the course in history.

Prophecy creates hope. This means that the objective transformation of this *not yet* into realization will take place when the ‘fullness of time’ comes. Like the moment when a prophecy is proclaimed, the time when realization of hope will occur is in God’s choice. This realization is one of the moments at which God acts into history. These moments are called *kairoi*. Since this conception of *kairos* (or, opportune time) is closely related to the character of history, this is the subject which I shall discuss next.

⁷⁸ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 4.1.6.

⁷⁹ *Op. cit.* 13.1.1.

⁸⁰ *Cels*, II, 77.

⁸¹ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.5, ref. to Rom. 8, 20; s. *supra*.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONCEPT OF *KAIROS*

The concept of *kairos* makes sense in consideration of history having a beginning and proceeding to an end. This process is crucial since creaturely motion is morally coloured with rational creatures striving to carry through the eschatological perspective. The conception of time as *extension* means that this motility relates to the will of God, positively or negatively, since ‘there is nothing between committing sin and not committing sin’.¹ The notion of *kairos* underscores the significance of history as the milieu where this dialectical relation takes place. Reference to *kairos* is made in order to express significant facets of this theology, particularly of the conception of history.

Kairos denotes a quality of action in time, when an event of outstanding significance occurs. It has been argued that *kairos* pertains to God’s action only.² I shall explore the extent to which Origen entertains this idea. The fact is that the distinction between ‘time’ (*χρόνος*) and ‘*kairos*’ (*καιρὸς*) is regularly made³ and the concept of *kairos* is closely related to that of prophecy in two ways at least. First, *kairos* is a moment of time when a prophecy was pronounced. Second, *kairos* is a time when a prophecy is fulfilled.

The kairoi of God’s action

A main principle is that knowledge of ‘how’ and ‘when’⁴ God is going to intervene into the world is beyond the cognoscibility of all conscious historical

¹ *commJohn*, 20, XIII; s. pp. 44–48.

² O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 55f.

³ *commMatt*, 10, 10 (after Eccl. 3, 1); 14, 9; 14, 12; 17, 6; *commEph*, section 5; *frLuc*, 165; 228; *selPs*, 36, PG.12.1317.37; 118, 12 1616.10. The distinction between ‘time’ (*χρόνος*) and ‘*kairos*’ (*καιρὸς*) is Biblical. Quite significantly though, beyond Eccl. 3, 1, it appears only in the Greek translation of the book of Daniel: 2, 21 (also in Theodotion’s version); 4, 37; 7, 12 (‘until the time and *kairos*’). It appears thereafter in the words of the resurrected Jesus, in Acts, 1, 7. God is represented as ‘changing *kairoi* and times’ in the sense of being He who ‘removeth kings and setteth up king’ (Daniel, 2, 21; 4, 37). Origen is indebted to this distinction, not only because he draws on Daniel 2, 21 and 7, 12 (*Cels*, VIII, 68; *frPs*, 74, 6), but also because the notion was functional for him to bolster up his crucial exegesis on the precarious notion of ‘God’s repentance’ (*μεταμέλεια Θεοῦ*): this is argued to be not a ‘passion of God’ (*οὐ πάθος Θεοῦ*), but ‘a change of *oikonomia*’ (*οἰκονομίας μεταβολή*), or ‘a transfer of the divine *oikonomia* from one thing to another (*μετάθεσις οἰκονομίας*)’. The idea is expounded in *homJer*, 20 and *frReg*, 4; 5, and is also referred to in *adnotGen*, PG.17.13.1f and *Cels*, VI, 58.

⁴ *frLuc*, 34.

agents. God alone knows the ‘opportune times’ for his action, when He ‘takes the right action’ (καιρὸς ἐστὶ χρόνος κατορθώσεως τῷ Κυρίῳ).⁵ Such statements constitute an explicit definition of *kairos* with regard to God’s action.

In *Princ*, God is the ‘perfect superintendent, who has full knowledge of both the times (καιροὺς) and the appropriate aids and the paths and the ways’ of his action.⁶ ‘It is only for the master and his divine knowledge to know the *kairos* of each man’, which means to know ‘when the time of fruits is near’ and when this is faraway’.⁸ This, because ‘the causes’ of what is done ‘lie entirely in the sphere of Providence, and it is not easy for men to come upon their explanation’.⁹

Jerome ascribed to Origen the opinion that angels perform ‘duties at the various times, which are known to God the Artificer’,¹⁰ whereas ‘others’, ‘in their various places and times, which the Artificer alone knows, undertake the governance of the world. These we believe be the angels’.¹¹

The notion is also found in *commGen* and it is worth-comparing the passage in Greek to the tendentious rendition of this. For the allegation that ‘angels... undertake the governance of the world’ is a concoction: what Origen really holds is that those beings are servitors to God’s will; they are ‘functioning spirits’ being ‘sent in order to minister’:

For the holy angels, the functioning spirits who are sent in order to minister,¹² receive, as it is natural, orders which are written according to the law of God, in the appropriate order, and *when* they should and as they should carry out the better things; for it would be absurd to maintain that they come at random and not according to a fixed order... Thus they read the book of God, so that they carry out this task neither at random nor by chance; and so they perform what it is appropriate to them.¹³

⁵ *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1616.12–14. The expression is actually Philo’s (*De Opificio Mundi*, section 59): “what can the meaning of *kairos* be other than a time of achievement?” (χρόνος κατορθώσεως). Philo treats the portion of Gen. 1, 14, which is significant in Origen’s account of *kairos* (s. *infra*). Philo’s expression was upheld word for word by Evagrius Ponticus, *Scholia in Ecclesiasten*, scholia 63&70 and John of Damascus, *Dialectica sive Capita Philosophica* (recensio fusior), section 68.

⁶ *Princ*, III.1.14 (Gr. & Lat.).

⁷ Cf. Matt. 21, 33 & 43.

⁸ *commMatt*, 17, 9.

⁹ *Cels*, III, 38.

¹⁰ Jerome, *epAv*, 9; *apud FP*, p. 240, n. 3.

¹¹ Jerome, *epAv*, 9; *apud op. cit.* p. 241, n. 6.

¹² Cf. Heb. 1, 14.

¹³ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.84.45 (*Philocalia*, 23, 21); *selGen*, PG.12.101.34; *commJohn*, 1, XII; 10, XXX; 32, XVII; *Cels*, V, 4; VIII, 34; *commMatt*, 12, 13; 17, 22; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 148; *Scholia in Matthaeum*, PG.17. 304.36; *De Engastrimytho* (= *Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25*), section 7; *Scholia in Canticum Canticorum*, PG.17.269.17; *deOr*, XXVII, 10; *selPs*, 27, PG.12.1284.46; 103, PG.1561.2; *excPs*, 27, PG.17.117.3; *expProv*, PG.17.205.41.

Angels then do not ‘undertake the governance of the world’, as Jerome ascribed to Origen: they are just ‘ministers’ of God’s will, receiving orders from Him. This is a performance *in* history, since the entire world is temporal. The heavenly bodies and their positions constitute a ‘book of God’.¹⁴ This ‘can well be read by the angels and divine powers’ who ‘act by receiving orders, as it were’. This is the exegesis of the passage in Genesis 1, 14, ‘let the lights of heaven be for signs’.¹⁵ Thus, the ‘angels...at the ordered kairos...start to carry out the dispensation concerning each individual’ man,¹⁶ which means that the interaction between rational beings is conceived on the premise that the entire world is temporal. Acting *in* history, they ‘start’ to carry out their assigned duties at the appropriate time, which is marked by the positions of the stars in the visible firmament. The angels do not actually ‘undertake the governance of the world’, as Jerome contended: they are simply beings of different existential classes and their office is posited in the context of the interaction between creatures of divers orders of being within history, whether superior or inferior to humans.¹⁷

The ‘kairoi’ of God’s action in the world are ‘unknown’ to men.¹⁸ Nevertheless, ‘there is nothing which has been or will be neglected by God, who makes what is appropriate in a world of alteration and change’; for ‘God cares for whole ages as if they were years, so to speak. In each of them, he does what is

¹⁴ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.73.16–17 (*Philocalia*, 23, 15); PG.12.84.20 (*Philocalia*, 23, 20); PG.12.84.55 (*Philocalia*, 23, 21).

¹⁵ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.56.15f (*Philocalia*, 23, 3). The portion of Gen. 1, 14 did not receive much comment in Christian literature. John Philoponus (*De Opificio Mundi*, p. 187) informs us that ‘the matter was handled by Basil, and it seems that things are as he says’, meaning that the Genesis narration only bespeaks what the letter says: heavenly bodies are there to indicate day or night, or different seasons of the year (which though is in fact correct only for the sun). Obviously Philoponus refers to Basil of Caesarea having said this in his *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, Homily 6, 4. This was also the interpretation of John Chrysostom: *In Genesim* (*homiliae* 1–67), PG.53.59–60; *In Genesim* (*sermo* 3) (sp.), PG.56.529f. A work ascribed to Athanasius furnishes the same interpretation: *Quaestiones in Scripturam Sacram* (sp.), PG.28.732f. Didymus employed an ambiguous midway attitude, which involves both seasonal phenomena and human affairs; but he mitigated the latter by saying that this is to be taken ‘in an anagogical sense’ (κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν), or ‘allegorically’ (κατ’ ἀλληγορίαν) (*In Genesim*, Cod. p. 40). Eusebius, quotes Origen’s discourse in the 6th book of *Praeparatio Evangelica*. In the 7th book, after a passing reference made in 7.11.2, he essays a comparison of this point of Genesis with Plato’s account in *Timaeus* 38c (*Praeparatio Evangelica*, 11.30.1). A thesis espoused by orthodoxy appears in his *Commentaria in Psalmos*, where the ‘stars’ are ‘signs’ in the sense of indicating day and night and different seasons: PG.23.1280f. However, in Eusebius’ *Fragmenta in Lucam*, Origen’s thesis is plainly present: stars are signs which indicate events happening in human history (PG.24.601.15–31). All other theologians preferred to eschew the precarious biblical portion. In conclusion, orthodoxy opted for receiving the term καιροὺς of Gen. 1, 14 in its hackneyed literal sense, meaning ‘weather’.

¹⁶ *commJohn*, 13, L.

¹⁷ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.69.33f.

¹⁸ *commMatt*, 17, 9. s. *frJohn*, LXI: ἀδύλους καιροὺς (unknown kairoi). Cf. John, 5, 4.

reasonable for the universe, which is most clearly understood and accomplished by God alone since the truth is known to him'.¹⁹ God is like an 'artificer' who 'knows the disposition of everyone'. It is 'only he' who can give 'what is necessary and knows *when* he should do so to each one'.²⁰ God intervenes in the world 'waiting for the appropriate preparation to take place', so that this intervention can be effectively beneficial.²¹ This is the time called 'kairos of revelation' (ἐν καιρῷ ἀποκαλύψεως).²²

This awaiting for the kairos of revelation explains why Moses and the prophets did not see at their time what the apostles saw during the sojourn of Jesus. This happened so, not because they were 'inferior' to the apostles,²³ but because they were 'expecting the fullness of time' (ἀλλ' ὡς περιμένοντες τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου). It was befitting, in keeping with the special character of the sojourn of Jesus Christ, that special things also be revealed (ἐχρῆν... ἀποκαλυφθῆναι) beyond all those that had ever been spoken or written. It was a positive waiting in anticipation of him who did not consider 'being equal with God'²⁴ robbery, but emptied himself and took the 'form of a servant'.²⁵

God, who 'knows the kairoi',²⁶ intervenes into history at his appointed opportune times; for he 'dispenses the things of the world in kairoi'.²⁷

Prophecy constitutes an outstanding way of God's acting manifestation into history. This is why he 'sent... prophets at certain kairoi'.²⁸ This was an act of his 'will', as he 'foreknew' that humanity was going to be striving under an interaction between the 'two extremes', good and evil.²⁹ Even in a prophet's lifetime there were some moments at which he was 'more perceptive' (διορατικώτερον), under the enlightenment granted by the Holy Spirit.³⁰ These particular points in a prophet's lifetime Origen calls 'opportune times of opportune times' (καιροὶ καιρῶν).³¹ They mark particular moments of communication with God, such as the appropriate moments of prayer.

These opportune times are understood as landmarks in the eschatological process. By sending the prophets, God's aim is to support people in their struggle to return to him. 'When the opportune time comes, God sends a

¹⁹ *Cels*, IV, 69.

²⁰ *commEx*, PG.12.271.50–272.1 (*Philocalia*, 27, 4); italics mine.

²¹ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

²² *commJohn*, 13, XLVIII.

²³ s. p. 110, note 403.

²⁴ Cf. Phil. 2, 6–7.

²⁵ *commJohn*, 13, XLVIII.

²⁶ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), III.1.14.

²⁷ *Cels*, VI, 79.

²⁸ *homJer*, 18, 5.

²⁹ *Cels*, VI, 45.

³⁰ *Cels*, VII, 3. Cf. *Cels*, VII, 4.

³¹ *deOr*, II, 1.

certain prophet...so that those who would understand the prophetic words repent'.³² Thus the epoch of the prophets was the 'kairos of fruits'.³³ According to another allegorical exegesis, either Moses or the prophets could be regarded as 'those who sowed',³⁴ whereas 'those who reap' are the subsequent faithful 'who accepted Christ and beheld his glory'.³⁵

Incarnation marks a major kairos, betokened as progression from one 'opportune time' to another:

God chose the fathers [sc. of the Jews], he gave a promise to them, he took the people of the fathers' generation out of Egypt, he was merciful to them when they committed sins, he educated them as Father and sent prophets to them at opportune times, he instructed them and turned them back from sins. He was patient with them always sending healers until the time when the supreme healer should come, the prophet who was different from the prophets, the healer who was different from those whom he healed. Once he came, they betrayed and killed him...Look then at the magnitude of oikonomia for the salvation of the nations!³⁶

Divine action in the world from one kairos to another is therefore a joint action unto salvation. The consummation of an aeon is a certain kind of kairos;³⁷ another one is the kairos of Incarnation, which marked the end of a number of aeons³⁸ and is a 'concluding kairos'.³⁹ In regard of this, the passage of 2 Thess. 2, 1-12 is aptly quoted: 'the day of Christ is at hand', since he was revealed 'at his kairos'.⁴⁰

In order to denote the significance of certain moments in history, Origen also employs the term 'most appropriate time' (ἐπιτήδειος καιρός), an expression pointing to the passion of Jesus.⁴¹ The time of 'judgement' also marks a 'kairos' of this particular kind, since 'at the most appropriate time' rational creatures 'take up the body which is appointed by God for everyone in accordance with his merits'.⁴²

The notion of kairos in human action

The notion of 'most opportune time' (ἐπιτήδειος καιρός) is applied not only to the divine action, but also to human one,⁴³ especially in relation to prayer:

³² *homJer*, 1, 3.

³³ *commMatt*, 17, 6—quoting Matt. 21, 33-43.

³⁴ *commJohn*, 13, XLVI—quoting John, 4, 36.

³⁵ Cf. John, 1, 14.

³⁶ *homJer*, 18, 5.

³⁷ Cf. *Cels*, VI, 79.

³⁸ *commJohn*, 1, VI.

³⁹ *commJohn*, 13, XLVI. Cf. 1 Peter, 1, 20.

⁴⁰ *Cels*, VI, 46.

⁴¹ *Cels*, II, 10. Cf. *Cels*, I, 61.

⁴² *Cels*, V, 19.

⁴³ *commJohn*, 13, XXXII.

One of these impossible things, on account of our weakness, is, I believe, to give a clear account of the matter of prayer, which should be accurate and befitting God; moreover, how God should be addressed through prayer and what times are more opportune than others (ποῖοι καιροὶ ποίων καιρῶν) for prayer.⁴⁴

Quoting John 13, 36 ('Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards') is an instance for furnishing an exegesis of critical moments in time:

Likewise, you should see that the same thing, but in a befittingly analogous manner, will be said to each of the 'all things'⁴⁵ which the Father has given into the hands of the Son. For to each of these 'all things' it will be said, 'But you will follow me later'.⁴⁶ But the [word] 'later' in the saying 'but you will follow later', although applies to each of those who will follow him, does not refer to the same opportune time (καιρὸς),⁴⁷ since they shall not follow at the same time.

In like manner, reference to the stages of human progress is made in terms of 'kairos':

'For all there is a time and a kairos for every thing under the heaven',⁴⁸ and there is a certain 'kairos to gather the precious stones together',⁴⁹ when it suits to go away and sell all one's belongings in order to buy that precious stone. For he who is destined to be wise must at the commencement be introduced to the elementary knowledge, further to be educated by this, and to remain studying this for a long time. But he should not remain in the elementary knowledge simply because he honoured this at the start: he should carry through 'to the perfection',⁵⁰ being grateful for the initiation, which had been beneficial to him at the earlier stages. Thus, once the words of the law and the prophets are understood in detail, they are in fact elementary knowledge compared to a thorough understanding of the gospel, as well as to every perception referring to the acts and teaching of Jesus Christ.⁵¹

Hence the concept of kairos pertains not only to certain moments of divine action into the world, but also to times of human action in respect of striving for salvation.

The notion of kairos and the character of History

In consideration of Origen's theory of history, it is of great significance not merely *what* is done, but also *when* something is done. This 'when' bespeaks the

⁴⁴ *deOr*, II, 1.

⁴⁵ Cf. John, 13, 2–3.

⁴⁶ Cf. John, 13, 36.

⁴⁷ *commJohn*, 32, III.

⁴⁸ Eccl. 3, 1.

⁴⁹ Eccl. 3, 5.

⁵⁰ Heb. 6, 1.

⁵¹ *commMatt*, 10, 10.

deeper significance of 'kairos' and at points makes an expressive mark. With reference to the Logos, for instance, one should examine

of what nature he is, and in what sense he is the Son of God, and what are the causes of his descending to the level of human flesh having completely assumed the human nature, and what his activity is and towards whom and *when* (καὶ εἰς τίνας καὶ πότε) this activity is exercised.⁵²

The kairos at which a word is pronounced is a constitutive element of the truth of it. A word is 'well pronounced' (hence, this is a word of 'truth') only when this is spelled out at the proper time. If this happens at an improper time, then this 'untimely' (οὐδέ ἐν καιρῷ) pronunciation is ineffective and not sufficient to produce beneficial effect. In that case this word is pronounced 'not well', it is unserviceable to human progress:

The devil assumed power upon Job and afflicted him night and day; formerly [he did that] through those who were out of him, later through his body itself, and afterwards through his own friends. So, when [sc. the devil] tried this through his [sc. Job's] own wife and yet Job was not defeated, the devil brought three friends: they were not enemies, nor were they holding malicious doctrines; [they pronounced] words, which were words of truth, but pronounced not well and not at the opportune time (οὐ καλῶς δέ, οὐδέ ἐν καιρῷ προφερομένου).⁵³

Timing constitutes a crucial element bearing on the *quality* of moral action. Origen emphasizes this conception quoting and commenting on Job 31, 40–32, 1 ('And Job stopped pronouncing words. So these three men ceased to answer Job. For he was righteous in their eyes'):

It is not merely said that he stopped. For his heart, which understood the divine things, did not stop, since he knew that there is an opportune time (καιρὸς) for everything under the heaven, a kairos of being silent and a kairos of speaking.⁵⁴ When, therefore, it was the kairos for him to reply to the three [friends], he was speaking; when, after he had stopped them up, it was kairos [for him to go silent], he went silent. I think that in fact the [expression] 'Job stopped' is said as a praise.⁵⁵

There is therefore an essential relation between action and kairos. To take into account the kairos at which certain divine mysteries must be pronounced is an essential prerequisite for the effectiveness of this preaching. For such a job is 'dangerous' and 'precarious', since one 'who hears them' might be 'harmed' should he hear these words at an untimely moment. So 'he who is a steward of the mysteries of God'⁵⁶ ...should consider the kairos at which he adduces these

⁵² *Princ.* IV.2.7 (*Philocalia*, 1, 14).

⁵³ *selJob*, 27 (comm. on Job, 27, 2), PG.17.88.47–48.

⁵⁴ Cf. Eccl. 3, 1; 3, 7.

⁵⁵ *selJob*, 32, PG.17.93.17.

⁵⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 4, 1.

doctrines, so as not to harm his listeners'.⁵⁷ The propriety of an action is then judged not only according to its content, but also according to the time at which this is realized. This is why 'beautiful' (as 'said by Isaiah' and stated in Rom. 10, 15) is what 'has been done in the appropriate *kairos*'.⁵⁸

In the foregoing analysis action has been examined from a point of view of *place*. Allowance has also been made for time being a constitutive element of the quality of an action, which takes *place*. This means that what is mainly regarded is the character of an action in itself and what is requisite is the proper time for this to occur.

Besides though, Origen holds a view of *kairos* on account of the character of an action (which is in fact a spatio-temporal event) mainly from a point of view of *time*. It is not only an action which requires the proper time in order to be duly realized; but also each time requires the proper action befitting a particular moment. The conviction about creaturely freedom, as well as the crucial importance of each *kairos*, constructed the following perception: each particular *kairos* requires the action, which is appropriate to it, in the light of the eschatological purpose of salvation. Hence, it is not impossible that two different *kairoi* may require actions which, in themselves, would be antithetical to each other. Here is a comment on the question of 'when one should contempt the dangers of dying'.⁵⁹

We say that neither should we always avoid dangers, nor always rush to meet them; to someone who is wise in Christ, it is necessary to test what is the *kairos* which demands him to go away and what is [the *kairos*] of willingness to fight without going away and, what is more, without fleeing away.⁶⁰

The same view is expressed in *Cels*:

Jesus taught his disciples not to be rash, saying to them, 'When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another';⁶¹ and when they persecute you in that, flee again to another.⁶² He not only was teaching them, but also became to them an exemplar of a steadfast conduct of life, so that they do not rush into dangers at the wrong time (*ἀκαίρως*) or for no good reason.⁶³

⁵⁷ *commJohn*, 20, II.

⁵⁸ *commJohn*, 1, VIII. The term 'beautiful' is correlated with anything 'done at the appropriate *kairos*'. In Greek, the term for 'beautiful' is *oreos* (*ὄρεος*) and is derived from a notion of time. For *oreos* is that which is 'in its *ora* (*ὥρα*; hour)' and, since it is in its *ora*, it is *orimon* (*ὄριμον*; mature). Departing from observation of nature, namely fruits, in Greek the terms for 'beautiful' (*oreos*; *ὄρεος*) and 'mature' (*orimos*; *ὄριμος*) come from the term 'hour' (*ora*; *ὥρα*). What is 'in its hour' is 'mature', and therefore this is 'beautiful'. Thus it is understandable that, in the above-mentioned expression, Origen relates 'beautiful' to what is 'done at the appropriate *kairos*'. Is. 52, 7 has 'beautiful' in the Hebrew, not in LXX.

⁵⁹ *commMatt*, 16, 1.

⁶⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹ Matt. 10, 23.

⁶² The second half of the statement is not really from Matthew; rather, it is Origen seeking to make his point strong.

⁶³ *Cels*, I, 65.

At another instance, this opinion is expounded through the notion of *kairos*:

But he saw that it is very difficult to remove from soul doctrines with which one was almost born and brought up until the age of a man, and which persuade those who uphold them that they are divine and that to overthrow them is impious. He perceived that it is hard to disprove them as ‘dung’ and ‘loss’⁶⁴ compared with the superiority of the ‘knowledge’ according to Christ, that is the truth, so that those who heard them would have been convinced. He therefore postponed this until a more suitable time (εἰς ἐπιτηδειότερον καιρὸν) after his passion and resurrection. For in reality it was an assistance untimely (ἄκαιρος) set forth to those as yet unable to receive this, because possibly it might have destroyed the perception of Jesus which they had already formed, that he was Christ and Son of the living God.⁶⁵

Every moment of history, therefore, demands a certain kind of action, which is appropriate to that specific moment. If the time is not ‘opportune’ (εὐκαιρον), then even the best of things are unnecessary or indeed harmful. For example, at the time of Jesus, ‘the opportune time of the law and the prophets’ had ‘expired’; its ‘hour’⁶⁶ was ‘past’ and, therefore, ‘it is not the *kairos* of that any more’.⁶⁷

History then is not a senseless complex of episodes, in which actions simply come to pass: each moment is, in a particular way, related to a specific performance. The *time* of a certain action is a constitutive element of its *quality* itself. It is upon the discretion of a ‘wise man in Christ’⁶⁸ to assess which the step that a specific moment requires should be. That is, to discern what is the particular relation of that *kairos* to the desired progress and how the soteriological perspectives can be administered in the most effective way.

This point actually stems from the fundamental principle of creaturely freedom. The divine intervention in history at different *kairoi* is mainly relevant to what happens in history. Divine action related to this may be either a consummation of the world because of evil having been excessive in this, or a response to a certain prayer,⁶⁹ or authorizing a prophet to announce certain things and edify people. Therefore, the character of history, as the venue where the divine and creaturely freedom encounter each other, can be traced and grounded on this conception of *kairos*.

In *selfud* Origen expresses his opinion that God’s action in history takes place at the appropriate *kairos* according to his choice and yet in relation to human action. In the light of this, he quotes and interprets the passage of Psalm 74, 3, ‘When I deem that the appropriate time (καιρὸν) has come, then I will judge

⁶⁴ Phil. 3, 8.

⁶⁵ Cf. Matt. 16, 12. *Cels*, II, 2. Cf. *commMatt*, 12, 17.

⁶⁶ Quoting Matt. 14, 15.

⁶⁷ *commMatt*, 11, 1.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* 16, 1.

⁶⁹ *deOr*, VI, 4.

good deeds'.⁷⁰ Accordingly, a rational animal 'brings its fruit forth' at its 'appropriate time' (καιρὸς), by 'kairos of bringing [fruits] forth' meaning the 'better moral quality' of a certain creature.⁷¹

This conception of kairos underlines the eschatological course of the world. There are 'kairoi' of major or less major significance. Incarnation is a major kairos, which occurred at a moment marking the conclusion of a certain period of aeons. The appearance of prophets also marked different kairoi of history. The apokatastasis which marks the 'end of the prophecy' is also a 'kairos', while 'resurrection' of an individual rational animal also marks a 'kairos' of his life throughout history (καιρὸς τῆς ἀναψύξεως).⁷²

An exegesis of Matt. 20, 1–16, renders the 'hours' of the day in the parable being designative of the various 'kairoi' of biblical history: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ,⁷³ the consummation of the aeon,⁷⁴ the outcome of judgement,⁷⁵ and finally, the 'kingdom of God'.⁷⁶ One can see that faith and life in Church can produce an existential realization of the future in the present. He regards the term 'day' allegorically, as a man's lifetime,⁷⁷ while 'vineyard' is the 'Church of God'.⁷⁸ In fact, the allegorical method allows the following translation: 'day' is the whole of time⁷⁹ and 'vineyard' is the kingdom of God, that is, the actual eschatological reality which is the ultimate objective of all historical venture.⁸⁰

Beyond these 'points', nonetheless, history is full of pinpoints, which mark the process of return to God. An action is 'right' only once it takes place at the appropriate time, whereas this is 'wrong' and 'harmful' (even if 'good' in its bare content) if it takes place at a non-opportune time.⁸¹

On the other hand, *each moment* demands an action appropriate to it. The eventuality of moral action refers to future time, which is of enormous length, such as 'a week of aeons' and a 'month of aeons' and a 'year of aeons'.⁸² Thus the perspective of moral action is pertinent to a future very long time: even 'the smallest portion of an hour' of this time is in fact a relatively long period.

⁷⁰ *selJud* (quoting Psalm 74, 3), PG 12.949.42.

⁷¹ *selPs*, 1 (quoting Psalm 1, 3), PG.12.1089.6–14.

⁷² *Cant*, 4, PG.17.272.38.

⁷³ *commMatt*, 15, 34.

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.* 15, 35.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *commMatt*, 15, 35.

⁷⁷ *Op. cit.* 15, 36.

⁷⁸ *Op. cit.* 15, 37.

⁷⁹ *Op. cit.* 15, 31.

⁸⁰ *Op. cit.* 15, 35.

⁸¹ Gregory of Nyssa expressed the idea succinctly: 'good' is that which takes place at an 'opportune time' (τῷ καλῷ, τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ εὐκαιρον). In *Ecclesiasten (homiliae 8)*, v. 5, p. 399.

⁸² *deOr*, XXVII, 16. Cf. *commMatt*, 15, 31.

In view of this perspective, everyone now and ‘here’ should do ‘everything, in order that, after his preparation here, may be found worthy to attain to the ‘daily’ (ἐπιούσιος) bread in the day that is called ‘today’, and receive it ‘day by day’.⁸³

Therefore, it is not only *action* which seeks the appropriate time to take place. It is also *time* that has to be filled full by the suitable action befitting this. This subtle distinction signifies the spatio-temporal conception of reality. There are two elements, which constitute the very existence of a certain occurrence. First, it is place: this is why it is said that an event takes *place*.⁸⁴ Secondly, it is *time*: an event becomes ‘reality’ once the ‘fullness of time’⁸⁵ comes. Space and time then concur and constitute the reality, the *historicity*, of a specific event.

As a rule, *space* is observed in the first place and the coming (or ‘fullness’) of time is expected. Origen did not overlook this, as we have seen. What he did further though was to consider each *moment* and to look forward to the occurrence of the right *action* in it. If this does not obtain, ill-timed occurrences which come to pass at an untimely moment (that is, before or after ‘the fullness of time’) are ‘powerless’ to administer a desirable purpose.⁸⁶

This is a crucial point accentuated by this conception of *kairos*. The goal of ‘movement’ (that is, moral action) in history has no other purpose than salvation. This is why each moment is actually a *kairos* which has to be ‘filled full’ by the appropriate action; that is, by the action which advances the perspective of any person acting in history. Thus, there is something more to be considered beside the ‘fullness of time’ coming with respect to space. This is the question of the *fullness of space* concurring with respect to the flux of time. This means that a certain appropriate action should take place at *each moment*, since one either commits sin or does not commit sin: ‘nothing stands between committing sin and not committing sin’.⁸⁷ ‘Fullness of space’ means that any next moment should be filled full by the suitable performance which appropriates the ultimate eschatological expectation.

Hypothetically speaking, if each moment of history were filled by the appropriate action by everyone, there would be no need for prolongation of time.⁸⁸ For in fact ‘the postponement of our conversion and the negligence of our amendment lengthen out the periods of this reconciliation and make them longer.’⁸⁹

⁸³ *de Or.*, XXVII, 16.

⁸⁴ In Plato the word for ‘place’ (*hora-χώρα*) actually means ‘space’ (*horos-χώρος*). The root of the Greek words for both ‘place’ and ‘space’ is the same. Unlike Origen, however, *χώρα* in Plato is one of the technical terms for the receptacle of the ideas.

⁸⁵ *comm John*, 13, XIII. Cf. Gal. 4, 4.

⁸⁶ Cf. *fr John*, LXXX.

⁸⁷ *comm John*, 20, XIII; s. *supra*, p. 44, note 9.

⁸⁸ Cf. *COT*, chapter 7, p. 282 and n. 55.

⁸⁹ Referring to 2 Cor. 5, 19, ‘For in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself’. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 9.41.8.

Salvation does not take place at the end of *one* aeon only because history is not filled by the action befitting each moment of this aeon. It is impropriety of action that calls for a prolonged time. Either the right conduct does not take place at all, or it takes place at an improper time—a case that virtually has the same effect as function faulty in itself. This time is not just a line that comes forth by connecting the points marking the various *kairoi* of God's action in the world. Therefore, *all the moments* of history are 'kairoi', each one in its own sense and particular significance. Certainly there is a classification of importance of the divers *kairoi*. Beyond that, however, the dialectical relation between God and creatures renders each moment of history a crucial *kairos* demanding a certain befitting doing. This is what constitutes the *dramatic* character of history, *all the moments* of which are in fact decisive ones, even though God manifests himself only at certain of them.

No one portrayed the dramatic character of history in such a telling and meaningful manner as Origen did. The critical significance of the *temporal* element of an action (and *action* proper, as I have argued, is a spatio-temporal occurrence) is pointed up through the notion of *kairos*. The quality of every action is substantially determined by the moment, that is, the *kairos* at which this takes place; and the quality of the action is crucial on account of the eschatological character of history.

Conclusion of Part I

The question discussed in this part is how Origen perceives of *function* in history and how, and to what extent, this perception is designative of a certain *character* of history. In order to line up my conclusion, I should make a distinction between 'anacyclogical' and 'teleological' view of history. The former attests to a time without any beginning or end, a time in which occurrences are regularly repeated: events just happen and recur in a purely natural sense; they are not occurrences in a meaningful process towards a goal or end whatever. Nevertheless it is another question whether or not one may speak of 'cyclic time' in itself. For it is one thing to speak of 'cyclic' or 'anacyclogical' *view* of time; but to speak of 'cyclic time' proper is quite another.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ W. Kneale asserted that temporal order is not cyclic: "Time and Eternity in Theology", pp. 91–2. J. Lucas, *A Treatise on Time and Space*, pp. 57–60. Cf. H. Reichenbach, *Space and Time*, pp. 141–43. M. Cleugh, *Time*, p. 225. G. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time*, pp. 40–41 and 259–60. In a more Mathematical way the problem is treated by T. Chapman, *Time, A Philosophical Analysis*, pp. 62–85. Likewise, A. Grünbaum, "The Status of Temporal Becoming", pp. 322–53. Cf. by the same author, "The Nature of Time", pp. 147–88 and H. Mehlberg, "Philosophical Laws of Physical Time", p. 363.

A major difficulty is to distinguish *time* from *change*. Some Greeks held that it is possible to speak of ‘cyclic time’, but this was in fact a figure of speech. The expression of Aristotle καὶ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος αὐτός εἶναι δοκεῖ κύκλος τις (for time itself is conceived as a kind of cycle)⁹¹ was taken to the letter, although Aristotle only meant that since time is not only a measure, but is also ‘measured by a complete revolution’ which is the successive periods of a year, human things fall into this ‘cycle’.⁹² Aristotle’s ancient commentators, appear conscious of what he really meant; and what Aristotle meant was irrelevant to both the ontology of time and philosophy of history.⁹³ J. Lucas developed an argument according to which there is no cyclic time. If time really were cyclic, there would be no recurrence of events, he argued. For when events *re-cur*, they actually *repeat* themselves. Therefore, ‘cyclic time is static time, and static time is no time’. I have already pointed out that the notion of ‘cyclic time’ does not really portray any of the Greek conceptions of it.⁹⁴ Within the context of a suchlike conception nevertheless, what is of main interest is the morally indifferent natural world. Any reflection is preoccupied with the ideal to *know* nature.

The ‘teleological’ view of history betokens a time which is posited to have both a beginning and an end. This end also marks the *end* (τέλος) of what I have called ‘movement’ in history. The existence of this time is spanned between two fixing points: the creation and the final consummation of the world. Incidents are not regularly repeated, or even not repeated at all. The future is contingent; therefore, repetition or non-repetition of certain events is a question of no particular concern. What is of critical importance is the *quality* of action. The measure and criterion of this quality is to be found in the fact that these occurrences are understood in the course of a direction towards an end—both in the sense of attaining to a goal and termination of history. This end (τέλος) actually bears both retrospective and anticipative witness to the significance of conscious and responsible motility in history. Divine and creaturely will encounter each other; what is of interest is not the morally indifferent *nature*,⁹⁵ but the crucial character of free creaturely *action*. In this conception of history, the past prepares for and announces the future and the future accomplishes and

⁹¹ *Physica*, 223b29.

⁹² He explains this right at that point: 223b30–34.

⁹³ Cf. John Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Libros de Generatione et Corruptione Commentaria*, v. 14,2, p. 301. *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 17, pp. 756, 758, 778, 782–4. Plutarch, *De Fato*, (sp.) 569C9–13. Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 3, pp. 75–76. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorías Commentarium*, v. 8, p. 345. *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 9, pp. 769–70, 778; v. 10, pp. 946; 1130–31; 1316. Themistius, *In Aristotelis Physica Paraphrasis*, v. 5,2, pp. 163–64.

⁹⁴ Cf. *COT*, pp. 193–94.

⁹⁵ Cf. *commJohn*, 1, XXV & XXVI; *Cels*, IV, 30 & 74; *deOr*, VI, 1; *commMatt*, 10, 11; *selJob*, 35; *Princ*, (Lat.) II.1.1; II.9.3; (Gr. & Lat.) III.1.1.

explains the past. Past events bring in themselves 'an image' (or 'prefiguration') of the future ones.

Origen's conception of history is a teleological one. All the particular topics canvassed in this part reveal the teleological character of his philosophy of history. His thought is preoccupied with the crucial significance of historical action, especially the perspectives of this in the time to come. He firmly holds a conception of *τέλος*, not only in the sense of end, but mainly in the sense of fulfillment of the promise and realization of the expectation, in an existential state of faith and hope.

This conception of history is neatly characterized by notions such as *providence—prophecy—promise—expectation—realization—anticipation—faith—hope—awaiting for—fulfillment—end*. The progression par excellence underlines the direction of free moral action towards an end, the goal of salvation. The course of history is a dialectical manifestation of the struggle towards redemption. Each action is understood and indeed assessed in view of its relation to this goal of deliverance, either succeeding or failing in the course, or putting the struggle off.

The entire world moves continuously from a beginning to an end. The anacyclogical conception of history is rejected, not only on the grounds of creaturely freedom, but also because this is unacceptable to the Scripture, which teaches a beginning of the world, the significance of its existence, its duration and final objective, and its consummation. Besides, the conviction that the redemptive deed of Christ was an *ἐφ' ἅπαξ* occurrence, which happened once and for all, plays a pivotal role in this teleological conception of history. What happened at the time of Jesus was an event which in itself was performed for all the ages. It was actually a prefiguration of what will happen to the entire 'body' of Christ, namely to the entire world, at the end.

How Origen conceives of human being throughout an aeon, what is the meaning that history acquired after the incarnation of Christ, how he considers the significance of notions such as *prophecy* and *kairos*—all these demonstrate that his conception of history is imbued by the concern for the ultimate implications of free action. History is the milieu where the will of God and that of rational creatures encounter each other. Thus action in history is not a purposeless natural phenomenon: it is a meaningful course in the eschatological direction of the world. This is why, in the introduction of his Commentary on the Psalms, he selected those definitions of *τέλος* which betoken his conviction: it is the *τέλος* that determines the quality of conscious action in history.⁹⁶ The conception of *kairos* is that which most vividly underlines the crucial character of time proper and history.

In Origen's world there is a continuity of time and a discontinuity of space, in the sense that, while time in an unbreakable continuum, space comprises

⁹⁶ *selPs* (preamble), PG.12.1053.12–24.

particular spaces distinct from each other. Accordingly, activity in space-time has two directions:

One is *horizontal* headed for the future. This is a continuous movement and, as far as a certain rational creature is concerned, it takes place throughout and is actually the activity along the temporal course in the flux of time. The second kind of movement I could call *vertical*: this is discontinuous and takes place only at the end of each aeon. Transitions from one existential status to another, according to the divine judgement, are translations from and to divers planes of being. This kind of movement constitutes the realization of the existential causality.⁹⁷

These two kinds of course in space-time have different characteristics.

Horizontal movement takes place in a *certain space* (that is, the certain plane of existential standing) and rational creatures move from one moment of *time* to another moment of *time*. In that case, it is the particular *space* which is constant. This activity is mainly regarded as conscious free action. Thus, once the particular space in which a rational creature lives is determined and remains constant for a period of an aeon, the crucial character of being in space-time is mainly underlined through terms of *time*—as it has been discussed particularly in this chapter.

Vertical movement takes place at a certain moment and it is a passage from a particular *space* to another particular *space*. In that case it is *time* which is constant, since the time of consummation and judgement is one of no-duration. Here space (that is, a certain plane of being) is of the main interest, since the outcome of judgement is realized as a critical transition from one particular space to another. In this case, the dramatic character of being in space-time is underlined in terms of *space*.

I have hitherto discussed the significance of how occurrences in history are considered. This mainly involved the horizontal movement. What I have not discussed, but only alluded to, is the vertical motility in this space-time. While the ultimate possibility of the (horizontal) movement towards the future is the end of history, what is the ultimate potentiality of the vertical movement? The inquiry in this question directs discussion to the notion of *eternal* in Origen's thought.

⁹⁷ *COT*, pp. 327f.

PART II

THE NOTION OF *ETERNAL*

CHAPTER FIVE

ETERNAL LIFE

Origen's conception of eternal life should be regarded in the context of a world comprising sundry 'worlds', or spaces of different quality. The Latin rendering of *Princ* informs about what is abundantly present in all Greek writings:

The entire universe of things that exist, both celestial and super-celestial, earthly and infernal may be spoken of in a general way as a single perfect world, within which, or by which, those other worlds that are in it must be supposed to be contained.¹

There is also reference to the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch*, in which 'seven worlds or heavens' are asserted to exist and 'above' all these 'worlds' 'there is another one', which encloses all the other 'spheres in its yet more magnificent circuit, so that all things are within it as this earth of ours is under the heaven'.²

This assertion, however, is not faithful to Origen's theory, for we have references to the pagan notion of 'seven heavens' averring that this is not acceptable to the Christians since it is not found in the scriptures.³ Although there are different 'heavens', it is not known 'how many' they are,⁴ which is to be expected as a corollary of being 'above our nature' to know the number of planes of being and their precise classification.⁵ All he does is a distinction between 'heavens' and the one 'heaven'.⁶

The idea of a judgement resulting to rearrangement of existential allotment in divers orders of being is illustrated through the following analogy:

God ordained the stars of heaven and arranged them by certain wonderful and ineffable reasons; and indeed he stationed some in the axis of the north, others in the regions of the east, but others in the vaulted part of the south and others in the west. In like manner, I believe that God will probably ordain in the kingdom of heaven, according to the order of the stars and the regions of heavens, those who from the resurrection of the dead will be such 'as the stars of heaven' in

¹ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ *Cels*, VI, 21; VI, 23.

⁴ *excPs*, 17. It then seems that Rufinus largely modified (and perhaps entirely interpolated) this reference to 'seven heavens'.

⁵ *commJohn*, 1, XXXI.

⁶ *commJohn*, 19, XXII.

number and brightness,⁷ and who certainly come from the seed of Abraham.⁸ He will give to some the portion toward the east, to others toward the west, to others toward the south, and those whom he knows he will station toward the north. For indeed 'many will come from the east and from the west out of the four regions of the world, and will recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven'.⁹

This is posited to conform with Paul who uses the term 'heavens' in the Plural, referring to Christ who 'ascended up far above all heavens'.¹⁰ The concept is coupled with the 'ladder' seen by Jacob in a vision.¹¹ The figure of this ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending it and the Lord standing on its top, suits him best, since this is taken as an illustration of the world comprising sundry existential classes.¹² There are 'different dwelling places superior or inferior' (διαφόρων οἰκητηρίων βελτιόνων ἢ χειρόνων),¹³ and after a judgement there is 'difference between those who inherit' a certain existential status (διαφορᾶ τῶν κληρονομούντων):¹⁴ different rational agents are transferred to 'different spaces, in accordance with their sins' (τόπων διαφόρων τυγχάνειν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων).¹⁵

While in subsequent Christian writers either 'heaven' or 'heavens' are treated as synonymous, in Origen a certain difference is introduced: each heaven denotes a certain plane of being.

In view of this world-picture, his conception of eternal life is life in the supreme level of being *within* the world. This is 'the sphere' which 'is called' in the holy scriptures 'good land' and 'land of the living'.¹⁶ This particular 'world... has its own heaven... in which the names of the saints are said to be written, or to have been written by the Saviour'.¹⁷ This is the heaven 'which contains and encloses that 'earth' which the Saviour in the gospel promises to the 'meek' and 'gentle'.¹⁸ This is another world which 'excels in quality and glory but is nevertheless contained within the limits of this world'.¹⁹

⁷ Cf. Daniel, 12, 3; 1 Cor. 15, 41.

⁸ Cf. Gen. 15, 5; Ex. 32, 13.

⁹ Matt. 8, 11. *Homilies on Joshua*, 25.4.

¹⁰ Eph. 4, 10.

¹¹ Gen. 28, 12–13.

¹² *Cels*, VI, 21.

¹³ *Princ*, IV.3.10 (*Philocalia*, 1, 26).

¹⁴ *In Jesu Nave Homiliae xxvi*, p. 415 (*Philocalia*, 12, 1).

¹⁵ *Princ*, IV.3.10 (*Philocalia*, 1, 26).

¹⁶ Ex. 3, 8; Deut. 8, 8; Jer. 11, 19; Psalms, 27, 13; 142, 5. 'There is no little difference' between speaking of 'one heaven' and many ones (*commMatt*, 13, 31), since 'all' the higher places 'have been called heavens' (*commMatt*, 14, 7).

¹⁷ Luke, 10, 20.

¹⁸ Matt. 5, 4.

¹⁹ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6.

At this point, it is obvious that Rufinus is confused with Origen's conception of both the world itself and its relation to the divine reality. Although the Greek texts evince that he draws a sharp line between the world and the transcendent God, at this point Origen is represented as being rather ambiguous about this *hiatus*. Statements in *commJohn*, however, may well elucidate this particular point of *Princ*.²⁰

Eternal life is another 'heaven' and another 'earth' beside the firmament made after the second day; this is the 'dry land', subsequently called 'earth'. This earth of ours, formerly called 'dry land', took its new name from that earth, just as our firmament was called 'heaven' after the designation of that heaven.²¹

There is also that other earth, of which the Scripture speaks, the one that flows with milk and honey, which the Saviour in the Gospel promises to the meek, when he says: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth'. This earth, which we inhabit, is in its true designation called the 'dry land', just as the heaven that we behold is properly called the firmament. But the firmament takes the name of heaven from the appellation of that other heaven, as the Scripture teaches in Genesis.²²

Accordingly the saying, 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth',²³ is taken to refer to the very beginning of creation. What is more, 'that heaven and that earth there spoken of' pertain to the highest class of being; they 'exist as a dwelling place and rest for the pious, so that the saints and the meek may be the first to obtain an inheritance on that earth'.²⁴

Here is one more point attesting to Rufinus' infelicitous rendering: he confused the notion of eternal life (as a certain 'end')²⁵ with the conception of the ultimate end (canvassed in chapter 9). This paragraph then opens with reference to 'the consummation of all things' (that is, the absolute end) and goes on with illustrations of eternal life—which is a different conception, as we shall see in a moment. It is not surprising that many scholars assert that Origen's eschatology is 'notoriously' obscure.²⁶ Once study is confined into the contradictory Latin rendering of *Princ*, such a conclusion is inevitable. The fact is, however, that Origen held crystal-clear eschatological ideas.

²⁰ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²¹ Gen. 1, 10. Cf. *Cels*, VII, 30: "And Haggai clearly shows that the dry land is one thing and the earth another, calling this world in which we live dry land" (*Haggai*, 2, 6).

²² Cited in *FP*, p. 91, n. 6, from *Homilies on Psalms*, 2, 4. This has an almost verbatim parallel in Greek, which is, *homJer*, 9, 3. Other references to this 'earth' as a promised expectation, in Greek: *Cels*, VII, 28 & 29; *commMatt*, 12, 31; *frPs*, 73, 18; *selPs*, 73, PG.12.1532.42–45.

²³ Gen. 1, 1.

²⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.8. Cf. Deut. 4, 38; Psalm 37, 11; Matt. 5, 4; Heb. 4, 9.

²⁵ s. *infra*.

²⁶ Cf. P. Plass, "The Concept of Eternity in Patristic Theology", pp. 11–25.

Eternal life is 'a world of saints and of those who have been completely purified, not of the wicked, as our world is.'²⁷ This is related to a certain 'when', yet its spatial character is always reiterated:

If you retain these things entire, you can have the branches of the bushy and leafy tree, which is the eternal life, when 'the Lord makes you lie down in green pastures beside the water of refreshment'.²⁸

Scriptural authority is once more sought in Paul: "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens".²⁹ Appeal is made also to the Old Testament: "When it is said elsewhere, 'Because I shall see the heaven, the works of thy fingers',³⁰ and when God said through the prophet about all visible things that 'My hand made all these',³¹ he declares that the 'eternal house' which he promises to the saints in heaven was not 'made with hands'. This undoubtedly signifies a difference regarding creation between the 'things which are seen' and the 'things which are not seen'.³² Thus the perception of the promised 'eternal life' pertains to 'that heaven and earth' in which

the *end and perfection* of all things may find a safe and most sure abode. There, for instance, those who have for their offences endured the sharp reproof of punishments by way of purgation and have fulfilled and discharged every obligation may be found worthy of a dwelling-place in the 'earth'; while those who have been obedient to the word of God and have already here by their submission shown themselves receptive to his wisdom may be said to gain the kingdom of that heaven or heavens. Thus a worthier fulfillment may be found for the saying, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven'³³ and for what was said in the psalm, 'He shall exalt thee, and thou shalt inherit the earth'.³⁴ For we speak of descending to this earth, but of being 'exalted' to that one, which is on high.³⁵

Eternal life refers not simply to a personal experience (eternal life being *within* men),³⁶ but to *another world*. This is portrayed by expressions such as, 'to this land belongs that heaven which, with its more magnificent circuit, surrounds and confines it, and this is *the true heaven and the first* so to be called'.³⁷

Therefore, the expression 'kingdom of heavens' is actually perceived in a twofold sense:

²⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6.

²⁸ Cf. Psalms, 22, 2; 1, 3. *Homilies on Exodus*, 9.4.

²⁹ 2 Cor. 5, 1.

³⁰ Psalm 8, 4.

³¹ Is. 65, 2.

³² *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.6

³³ Matt. 5, 5, & 5, 10.

³⁴ Psalm 37, 34.

³⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.7; italics mine.

³⁶ Cf. Luke 17, 21. *frMatt*, 74.

³⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.7; italics mine.

First, it points to the existential atmosphere, so to speak, of the eternal life, as a personal experience characterized by wisdom, logos, truth—which are conceptions of Christ. Sometimes it is averred that this ‘kingdom’ is Christ himself.³⁸ Although this ‘kingdom’ is mostly understood as ‘the goods to be enjoyed *after* the resurrection’ (τὰ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἀγαθά), this can also be reasoned out as the ‘preaching’ (τὸ κήρυγμα).³⁹ As a personal experience, this ‘kingdom of heavens’ is not ‘in some other place’: this is within the ‘disposition’ of a man (οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ ἐστίν, ἐν δὲ διαθέσει)⁴⁰ who accepts and realizes the ‘virtuous life’ (ἐνάρετος ζωή).⁴¹ In the same vein, ‘it is a habit in Scripture to call kingdom of heavens contemplation of the aeon to come’.⁴²

Second, this ‘kingdom’ of God, although experienced now to a certain extent, strictly speaking refers to a *particular world*. A comment on John 3, 5 (‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’), reads thus:

By *kingdom of God* it is the state of those living orderly according to His laws that should be signified. This state will have its abode in a place appropriate to it—I mean, the abode which is in heavens. Nevertheless, since at this point this is called *kingdom of God*, whereas in Matthew it is called *kingdom of heavens*,⁴³ it should be said that Matthew names it after *those* who are under the royal regime rather than after *the places* where they live. On the other hand, John and Luke⁴⁴ have designated this with regard to God who reigns upon it. This is like us speaking about the kingdom of Romans: we call this so out of those who are under the [Roman] rule rather than out *the territory* of this kingdom.⁴⁵

In a sense and to a certain extent, it is possible for eternal life to be experienced individually while being in the human condition. Yet eternal life is another ‘earth’, ‘the land of promise’, an actual locality of its own, designated by a certain *there*. Here is how Deuteronomy 8, 7 (‘For the Lord your God will introduce you in an earth, which is good and fruitful’) is put in use to illustrate the notion:

What Christ promised us was not this kind of earth; rather, it was the kingdom of heavens: an earth good and eternal, whose spring is Christ, who provides drink from the springs of wisdom. . . . The wheat that supports the human heart exists *there*. . . . Christ, the real vineyard, exists *there*. The oil which anoints the heads of the saints, exists *there*. . . . The fig tree, not the fruitless one that has long leaves only,

³⁸ *frMatt*, 38 II. Cf. *frMatt*, 75.

³⁹ *Op. cit.* 75.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* 74.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.* 75. Cf. this ‘kingdom’ being ‘within a man’: *commMatt*, 10, 14; 12, 14; *homJer*, 14, 17; *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.34; *deOr*, XXV, 1–3.

⁴² *selPs*, 142, PG.12.1688.51–53; *frPs*, 142, 8. The notion of ‘contemplation’ with respect to eternal life is discussed on pp. 159f.

⁴³ *Matt*, 3, 2; 4, 17.

⁴⁴ *Luke*, 6, 20; *John*, 3, 3 & 3, 5.

⁴⁵ *frJohn*, XXXVI; italics mine.

but that which is rich in sweetness of the spirit, exists *there*. The desirable sweetness of the Saviour's pharynx exists *there*. The lips of the bride of the Song, which make honeycomb fall drop by drop; and the holy stones, who, during their 'rolling' life on the earth,⁴⁶ were unyielding to temptations, thus imitating the nature of iron [exist *there*], too. The pieces of copper, from which [those holy stones] have constructed their intelligible cuirass [against those temptations] exist *there*. And their principal task of them all is to praise God ceaselessly.⁴⁷

Thus, although eternal life (as a promised land) is to be accomplished in the future, rational natures (at this point called 'holy stones', alluding to the members of the Church being 'one body') live there *now*. Nevertheless eternal life is a certain *there* (ἐκεῖ). When Origen speaks of 'another aeon' set off against 'this aeon', he perceives this not only as a future time, but also as a different space: all those who are not yet there *will* be elevated up to this space in due course. In *homJer* it is pointed out that the term 'aeon' has also a spatial import, meaning 'world'. In this respect, the 'kingdom of God' is not to be found 'in this aeon' (that is, in 'this world'), but it comes from 'the higher spaces' (οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῶν κρειττόνων χωρίων).⁴⁸ This 'aeon' is 'a new heaven and a new earth'.⁴⁹ Furthermore, he reaffirms the also spatial character of this 'aeon', stating that 'there' (ἐκεῖ, not *then*) 'life is entirely different and truly blessed'. After that, all his additional references to that 'aeon' are introduced by a certain *there* (ἐκεῖ), not by any *then*.⁵⁰ Moreover, speaking of 'a new aeon which is hoped for' (καινὸς αἰὼν ἐστὶν ἐλπιζόμενος), the term 'hoped' (ἐλπιζόμενος) betokens the temporal character of this 'aeon', it bespeaks that this hope will come to pass in the future. This is the sense in which the aeon to come constitutes a *hope*.

'Aeon' then is understood both in the sense of a temporal 'age' and in a spatial sense, denoting a certain 'world'.

The term 'earth' (γῆ) is regarded as a 'homonym',⁵¹ since different realities are denoted through the same name. Yet, inasmuch as eternal life is denoted by the term 'earth' or 'aeon', this reality is understood to lie not only *in another*

⁴⁶ Allusion to Zachariah, 9, 16: λίθοι ἄγιοι κυλίωνται ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς αὐτοῦ. The theme occurs in a limited number of Christian authors. Cf. Origen, *comm I Cor*, section 16. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Ecclesiasten (homiliae 8)*, v. 5, p. 396; Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten (3–4.12)*, p. 74; *Commentarii in Zachariam*, 1.261; 3.215, 3.217, 3.222. Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Isaiam*, PG.87(2).2540.52–53; PG.87(2).2544.9. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Ezechielem*, PG.81.1096.17; *Interpretatio in xii Prophetas Minores*, PG.81.1925.41. Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Job*, p. 232; *Commentarii in Jeremiam*, PG.93.720.39. Pseudo-Macarius, *Sermones 64* (collectio B), 2.2.11; *Sermones 1–22; 24–27*, 2.3.

⁴⁷ *selDeut*, PG.12.809.9–32 (comm. on Deut 8, 7); italics mine. Cf. *commEph*, section 31.

⁴⁸ *homJer*, 14, 17.

⁴⁹ Cf. Is. 66, 52. *commMatt*, 17, 33.

⁵⁰ *commMatt*, 17, 33.

⁵¹ *Cels*, VII, 31.

world but also *in the future time*. In Origen's thought there is a definite distinction between Here and Now, on the one hand, and There and Then, on the other.⁵² A human being can experience the existential atmosphere of eternal life; but this is only a limited redolence of eternal life proper.

There is a conception of 'aeon' (αἰὼν) mainly meaning 'time'.⁵³ We now see that it has also the meaning of 'space'. The 'ladder' of Jacob with Christ standing on the top of it can explain what Origen means speaking of the 'span' (διάστημα) stretched out from here (the earth) up to the 'angels who have been elevated' in higher spaces, in the topmost of which Christ himself stands.⁵⁴ On account of this illustration, 'eternal life' is stated as being 'Christ himself'.⁵⁵

In a significant passage in *Cels*, Origen depicts his perception of eternal life mainly in spatial terms, emphasizing that this life is *within* the world. He advances the idea not in the Platonic sense of eternity lacking duration, but eternity as a temporal reality. Speaking of the humans who die during the consummation of an aeon, he argues that this may be taken to support the assertion that these beings are 'banished out of the world' only once 'world' is taken to mean just the earth. In fact, however, they 'are not taken out of the world': the Logos takes a human being 'out of this earthly existence and transfers him to the world beyond the heaven, indeed to contemplation of the realm of goods' (τοῦ λόγου αὐτόν ὑπεξάγοντος ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ὑπερουράνιον ἐπὶ τῇ θῆξ τῶν καλῶν μετατιθέντος τόπον).⁵⁶

Eternal life is therefore defined not only by a *then*; this is also another mode of life designated by a certain *there*, the supreme plane of being and therefore ontologically distinct from the divine life. To speak of 'higher' place refers to its relative *quality* with respect to another (*viz.* lower) existential status. The world is entirely 'material' (ὕλικος γενόμενος) and 'comprises various spaces' (τόπους ἔχει διαφόρους). All these spaces are regarded as being 'down' compared to the divine life. This *down* 'does not imply any *spatial* comparison', but a *qualitative* one to what is 'invisible',⁵⁷ that is, incorporeal.

On account of this conception of eternal life, spatial terms are employed to depict the state of being in that 'life' compared with other spaces in the world. Typical designations used for this purpose, in the form of metaphorical representations and analogies, are those of 'ascending' or 'descending'. The

⁵² Cf. *homLuc*, 15.

⁵³ *COT*, p. 210.

⁵⁴ *deOr*, XXIII, 4.

⁵⁵ *Dial*, 27; *commJohn*, 13, III.

⁵⁶ *Cels*, VI, 69. This expression is redolent of Plato, *Phaedrus* 247c. Origen is aware of this: *Cels*, VI, 19. Cf. also *Respublica*, 582C, Aristotle, *Physica* 209b20. The difference of Origen's conception of eternal life from the Greek thought is canvassed presently. Cf. p. 270, n. 256.

⁵⁷ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

differences between particular spaces are *qualitative*, not geometrical. In a strict spatial sense, they are here *on earth* (ἐν τῇ γῇ),⁵⁸ but they are all ranked and dissimilar to each other.

As there is a difference among the things that are below because something is said to be lowest, so also there is a difference among the things that are above, especially since there is an inheritance of the kingdom of heavens. All the heavens to be inherited are up, but they are not all identical in being above.⁵⁹

This is the sense in which eternal life is regarded as the topmost heaven and the ‘true heaven and the first one.’⁶⁰

Granting the differences between spaces being qualitative, it is interesting to ponder upon the subtleties of spatial terms used. For they not simply point to eternal life, but are also classified so that they allude to different stages of ascending to that life.

In *selPs* there is a comment on Psalm 23, 3 (‘Who shall ascend into the hill of Lord? Or, who shall stand in his holy place?’). This passage is coupled with Psalm 14, 1 (‘Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?’). The former (Psalm 23, 3) connotes that a person *first* ascends to the hill of Lord and *then* stands in His holy place. The latter (Psalm 14, 1) implies that one first abides in the tabernacle of God and then dwells in His holy hill.

There are then three notions to be considered. Firstly, ‘to ascend into the hill of Lord’. Secondly, ‘to dwell in the holy hill’. Thirdly, ‘to stand in the holy place of God’.

It is not accidental that the second passage is upheld to betoken what happens ‘first’ and what ‘second’, what precedes and what is subsequent. For in fact these three perceptions, expressed allegorically, allude to three significant notions of this conception of history, which will be discussed presently. It should be observed that ‘one dwells in many places before he ascends to the holy mountain of God’ (πολλά τις παροικεῖ, ἕως οὗ ἔλθῃ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον ὄρος τοῦ Θεοῦ).⁶¹ I discuss this conception of ‘holy mountain’ later,⁶² quoting a passage of *selPs*, 60, by means of which this ‘holy mountain’ is asserted to be eternal life itself. Nevertheless, there is also a notion of *after* the eternal life, which makes up an essential point for understanding Origen’s eschatological ideas, as we shall see in chapter 9.

On the particular subject which I am discussing now (use of spatial terms in speaking of eternal life) a comment on a certain Psalm verse⁶³ is quite characteristic:

⁵⁸ *selEz*, 8, PG.13.796.42. s. *COT*, pp. 99f.

⁵⁹ *commJohn*, 19, XXII.

⁶⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.7.

⁶¹ *selPs*, 14, PG.12.1208.23–32.

⁶² s. chapter, 6, p. 201, n. 199 and chapter 9, p. 272, n. 268.

⁶³ Psalm 23, 3: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?”

the 'hill of the Lord', on the one hand, and the 'holy place' of God, on the other, are taken as two different places and existential conditions.

What [David] calls hill is the ultimate good (τελικὸν ἀγαθόν) of the Lord and God the Logos; for it is very rare to find one who will attain to the edge of the hill through personal improvement. But when he becomes perfect, and there is no room for further perfection, he then stands steadfast, being himself a holy place of God. For he ascends walking following the Lord, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before',⁶⁴ having the noble goal (τέλος ἔχων ἀγαθόν) of standing next to God, in the holy place of His (ἐν τόπῳ ἀγίῳ αὐτοῦ).⁶⁵

This end and goal is quite clearly related to another place. Yet the view of eternal life being within the world (and, therefore, *out* of God)⁶⁶ is once again latent. For it is not said that one will stand either 'with God' or 'in God': it is said, 'next to God' (μετὰ Θεόν). The difference is by no means insignificant: it underlines the ontological relation of eternal life to the divine reality.

The foregoing notions, such as 'kingdom of God', are considered in a two-fold sense. They may allude to a personal human experience. In that case this experience is restricted to human nature. They may also signify the eschatological reality, as an objective condition of the world in the time to come. A man might be able to experience these eschatological realities now, yet only to a certain extent. For this experience is subject to the limitations imposed on human nature. On the other hand, beings of higher existential standing are also subject to the stipulations that corporeality compels in general.⁶⁷

Therefore, the process towards eternal life may pertain also to humans. In that case it points to a personal procedure during a lifetime which, however, is not always successful: "Judas ascended to the hill of Lord, but he did not stand in His holy place".⁶⁸

The notions involved in the context of this concept signify the eschatological promises (ἐπαγγελιῶν)⁶⁹ which will be fulfilled in the time to come. The final and universal ascent to the paramount existential order is a prospect which is eschatological and yet real and historical: it does not mean just a foretaste, such as mere anticipation through a subjective personal human experience. Quoting

⁶⁴ Phil. 3, 14.

⁶⁵ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.29–53; italics mine. Cf. *frPs*, 67, 7; *excPs*, 23, PG.17.113.35–53.

⁶⁶ The notion of being 'in' and 'out' of God is canvassed on pp. 333f.

⁶⁷ *frJohn*, XIII. s. p. 292.

⁶⁸ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1268.12–13.

⁶⁹ 'The promises of God' (τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ) is a recurring motif. Cf. *commMatt*, 12, 34; *commJohn*, 6, IV; *commEph*, section 4; *Cels*, I, 53; II, 78; IV, 10; VI, 57; VIII, 5; 43. It points either to the 'kingdom of heavens', or to the 'holy land' (ἁγία γῆ) (*homJer*, 4, 2), always accentuating the eschatological character of these 'promises'. He contrasts this *hope* with godlessness, quoting Eph. 2, 12 and referring to those 'strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope'. Cf. *Cels*, II, 78; VIII, 43; *homJer*, 4, 2; *commEph*, section 4.

Matthew 5, 5, is an occasion to set forth the spatio-temporal character of eternal life: “Earth is the exalted inheritance of those ‘who live’ and inherit their bodies in a glorious and incorruptible form”.⁷⁰ The notion of *height* is always implicitly or explicitly present in references to the superlative existential condition.

In *Cels* there is reference to the struggle to attain this life. This engagement is genuinely upheld by those who ‘have done everything possible that they might let nothing desecrated enter their rational nature’. The purpose is that ‘they might appear worthy of ascending to the divine realm and be drawn up by the Logos to the uppermost blessedness’ (ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνωτάτω πάντων μακαριότητα), also illustrated as ‘the topmost mountain edge of goodness’ (ἀκρόρειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν).⁷¹ This is also called ‘topmost heavens’ (ἄκροις οὐρανοῖς), a place of ‘contemplation’⁷² which nevertheless is within the world,⁷³ and this is why the verb ‘elevated’ (ὑψωσε)⁷⁴ is deemed as the most ‘appropriate to [express] perfection’.⁷⁵

Eternal life as an end

With reference to a personal perspective, the term ‘end’ (τέλος) bespeaks accomplishment of a personal goal. The very fact of ascending to the uppermost rank of being after a consummation and judgement constitutes an *end* for a creature. This end, however, has not so much a temporal meaning (although it does not lack a temporal import, too): it mainly denotes the topmost plane of being. Thus eternal life is portrayed as the ‘ultimate good’ (τελικὸν ἀγαθόν); indeed ‘to stand

⁷⁰ Cf. Psalm 26, 13. *frMatt*, 82.

⁷¹ *Cels*, VI, 44. Origen initiated the use of ἀκρόρεια in the vocabulary canvassing any aspect of *progress* by a Christian. Cf. *excPs*, 23, PG.17.113.38; *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.39; *selPs*, 64, PG.12.1497.16. In this metaphorical sense, ἀκρόρεια is a Gnostic term present in Hippolytus: *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium (Philosophumena)*, 7.26.9; 7.27.10 (literally, in 4.4.4; 4.4.5; 4.4.7). Certain authors, with Didymus the Blind being the most faithful follower, upheld Origen’s term and the specific idea of ἀκρόρεια. Cf. Didymus, *Commentarii in Psalmos* 22–26.10, Cod. p. 69; *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (e commentario altero), Fr. 845. Gregory of Nyssa was very keen to using the term: *Orationes viii de Beatitudinibus*, PG.44.1196.11: κατὰ τὴν ἀκρόρειαν τῆς ἐλπίδος. Likewise, in *De Vita Mosis*, 2.313; *In Canticum Canticorum (homiliae 15)*, v. 6, p. 170; *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, v. 5, pp. 44, 160, 166. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 1.6.62; *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 3.14.1; *Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG.23.221.33; PG.23.224.47; PG.23.457.26; *De Laudibus Constantini*, 9.17. Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistulae Paschales sive Homiliae Paschales* (epist. 1–30), PG.77.496.3; *Commentarius in xii Prophetas Minores*, v. 2, p. 92. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos*, PG.80.1357.28. Of philosophers, Michael of Ephesus, *In Ethica Nicomachea ix-x Commentaria*, p. 59: τὸ ἀναφυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς περὶ τὴν ὕλην πτοίας ἐπὶ τὴν νοεράν ἀκρόρειαν. Cf. *infra*, p. 159.

⁷² *Op. cit.* VI, 20.

⁷³ *Op. cit.* VI, 59.

⁷⁴ Quoting Psalm 26, 5.

⁷⁵ *selPs*, 26, PG.12.1280.52.

next to God in a holy place of his' is the good goal (τέλος).⁷⁶ Eternal life is a particular world, which has its own 'heaven and earth'.⁷⁷ In that world, 'the *end and perfection* of all things may find a safe and most sure abode'.⁷⁸

In the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, an articulate point is made discussing the notion of 'friendship' with God: certainly in this life there have been, and still are, humans who deservedly enjoy outstanding proximity to God, being his 'friends'. Still, there are also beings in other existential allotments, in a world where there is a topmost space and a nethermost one, as canvassed in chapter 8.

It is certain that those who have been reconciled through the death of his Son are considered to be friends. Thus one is a friend in the way Moses was called a friend of God;⁷⁹ so were those to whom the Saviour said, 'No longer do I call you servants but friends'.⁸⁰ I believe, however, that in heaven there are certain others who are even more intimate friends of God, whether those who always look upon the face of God,⁸¹ or those who are always standing in the presence of the Most High.⁸² In the way we said above that there exists a certain uttermost enemy,⁸³ so also here certain ones are God's utmost friends because of the merits of their virtues.⁸⁴

Commenting on John, 4, 36, Origen refers to God who after judgement brings all those who deserve it 'to one and the same *end*'.⁸⁵ This end is 'eternal life'.⁸⁶ Similar are the notions found in a comment on Psalm 48, 10 ('that he should still live to the end and not see corruption'):

He shall live the true life in the *end* (εἰς τέλος) and will face no destruction who strives throughout his lifetime in this life... he shall live in knowledge in the *end*, who struggles to conduct a virtuous life.... This is the meaning of [the expression] 'to the end' (εἰς τέλος).⁸⁷... As *end* you should interpret the ensuing aeon, which is the end of the present one. For anyone who had a hard and toilsome life here, shall be found worthy of living the *promised* life in the aeon to come and will not face destruction.⁸⁸

⁷⁶ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.44.

⁷⁷ *s. supra*.

⁷⁸ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.7.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ex. 33, 11.

⁸⁰ John, 15, 15.

⁸¹ Cf. Matt. 18, 10. This status is different from the ensuing one (n. 82): *s.* chapter 9.

⁸² Cf. Daniel, 7, 10; Tobit, 12, 15; Luke, 1, 19.

⁸³ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 26.

⁸⁴ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.12.2. Cf. analogous Greek portions: *expProv*, 5, PG.17.1761.8f; 14, PG.17.193.12f; 17, PG.17.200.1f; 24, PG.17.233.2f; *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264. The notion of 'friendship' with God is scriptural (Wis. 7, 27; James, 2, 23; by contrast, James, 4, 4). Cf. *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.35; *expProv*, 6, PG.17.176.54; 10, PG.17.188.44; 15, PG.17.193.51; 17, PG.200.55; 19, PG.17.205.32. *commLuc*, PG.17.340; *Cels*, IV, 7; VIII, 1.

⁸⁵ *commJohn*, 13, XLVI.

⁸⁶ *Op. cit.* 13, XLVIII.

⁸⁷ Psalm 48, 10.

⁸⁸ *selPs*, 48, PG.12.1445.4–21. He reads 'unto the end' as 'in the end'.

The concept is explained further in the same work:

Whenever one who is aware of the doctrine of impending judgement sees the wise people dying, he will not regard this as a destruction of both soul and body...but only as a translation to another world (μετοικίαν εἰς κόσμον ἕτερον).⁸⁹

A comment on Psalm 139, 13–14 ('I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence') reads thus:

This is a prophecy of the judgement to come, at which the impious will be thrown to fire, whereas the righteous will be taken up to a life of repose (εἰς ἄνεσιν)... Solomon also said 'For God will bring every work into judgement'.⁹⁰ And [David] concluded this [psalm], which is entitled 'unto the end' (εἰς τέλος), by alluding to the hope cherished by the righteous.⁹¹

The actual sense of this 'end' is understood in a qualitative sense, betokening a sweeping and comprehensive abolition of evil.

As it happens with any art and science, for which there is an end (τέλος) and anyone who practices this art or science directs himself towards this, so there must be an end (τέλος) for rational nature.⁹²

Free moral action is considered mainly with reference to its future perspectives. Human life should be mainly seen in the light of 'the future time', for 'it is then that creatures will preeminently praise God'.⁹³ In the prolonged time, sins will be forgiven 'later or sooner'.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the 'end' will be the same for all, either they are now sinful or pious, because there is 'one end from one God through one Christ in one Holy Spirit, being reserved for either of them'.⁹⁵ This is expressed precisely at the point where John 4, 36 is quoted, explaining that this 'end' signifies 'eternal life'. Thus 'end' means an individual ascent to the uppermost level of being. This constitutes a certain 'salvation', although not the ultimate one, as I explain in chapter 9. At any rate, the notions of 'end' (or, 'blessed end'), 'eternal life' and 'salvation' are indeed interwoven with each other.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ *Op. cit.*, PG.12.1445.38; italics mine. An implicit rejection of the Aristotelian view. Cf. *frMatt*, 383.

⁹⁰ Eccl. 12, 14.

⁹¹ *selPs*, 139, PG.12.1664.4f.

⁹² *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1133.1f; the same in *frPs*, 4, 1. Cf. *commJohn*, 13, XLVI. Cf. Aristotle, *Divisiones Aristoteleae*, Page+column 23coll1; Cf. 24coll. Likewise Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 3.96. About Origen echoing Aristotle on *telos*, s. p. 84.

⁹³ *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1628.35.

⁹⁴ *frMatt*, 383; *commMatt*, 14, 5.

⁹⁵ *commJohn*, 13, XLIX.

⁹⁶ *commMatt*, 12, 26; *selPs*, 41, PG.12.1417.10–14.

Ascent to eternal life is illustrated as 'transition' to the paramount existential standing. This 'end' (τέλος) is also called 'topmost mountain edge' (ἀκρόρειαν).⁹⁷ On that account, in relevant references the term 'eternal' (αἰώνιος) is used with verbs denoting spatial transition: "he was a supplier of joy, since he forgave sins and *transferred* those who listened to eternal life".⁹⁸ Christ summons, all one has to do is to respond. In a homily on Job, those attaining to eternal life are 'the eternal sheep' (πρόβατα αἰώνια) who 'listened to the voice' of Christ, who raises them to eternal life in return.⁹⁹ It is also used with words denoting place: "we admit that he can provide an eternal *residence* (βιοτήν) for the soul; and we say not only that he can [provide this life in the future], but also that he already does so [now]".¹⁰⁰

The last passage implies that eternal life is a space, which will be reached *in the future* by those who do not enjoy this *now*. However, there are conscious hypostases that already *live* in that order of being and enjoy this as a result of their action during the previous aeon. This is the meaning of the Present tense *παρέχεται* (provides):¹⁰¹ it accentuates that God not only *will* raise creatures to eternal life, but also he has already granted this to certain of them, who are living there *now*.

Eternal life as contemplation

Once the character of eternal life being the paramount spatio/temporal existential standing has been determined, the question arising relates to the situation of those who have been transferred there. A main existential characteristic of this life is contemplation of the divine wisdom.

Elevation to eternal life is portrayed as a transition to a 'place', which is 'beyond the heaven, unto contemplation of the realm of the good things (τῶν καλῶν)',¹⁰² still this is a place *within* the world. From this uppermost place 'contemplation' (θέαν) of the 'good things' (τῶν καλῶν) is possible. But what are those good things which are contemplated from the point of view of eternal life?

⁹⁷ s. *supra*, p. 156, note 71.

⁹⁸ *friMatt*, 233.

⁹⁹ *Homiliae in Job* (fragmenta in catenis; typus II) (codd. Marc.) PG.17.77.45–50. The expression in Job, 21, 11 is, 'and they stay as eternal sheep' (μένονσι δὲ ὥσπερ πρόβατα αἰώνια). Cf. pp. 175, 194, 196.

¹⁰⁰ *Cels*, V, 24. The term αἰώνιον does not mean 'everlasting', since this 'eternity' is not associated with everlastingness. Origen alludes to eternal life as a different particular location of the world. In *Cels*, II, 77 & V, 14, he uses the same word, namely βιοτήν (as in Homer's *Odyssey*, IV, 563–5), indicating the spatio-temporal character of this specific region.

¹⁰¹ *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1261.54.

¹⁰² *Cels*, VI, 59.

Our Paul, who indeed had been educated in these prophetic writings and desired the things which are beyond the world and beyond the heavens, and always acted accordingly that he might attain to them, says in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporary (πρόσκαιρα), but the things which are not seen are eternal'.¹⁰³

For to those who can comprehend, he plainly represents (ἀντικρυσ παρίστησι) the sensible things calling them 'seen', while calling 'not seen' those things which are intelligible and comprehended by mind alone. Out of his desire to attain to *contemplation* (θέα) of these things and being helped by his yearning for them, he regarded all tribulation (θλίψιν)¹⁰⁴ as nothing and as something light (ἐλαφρόν τινα).¹⁰⁵ Even at the very time of tribulation and affliction he was in no way weighed down by them, but made light of every difficulty because he was *contemplating* (θέαν) that which was to follow these things. For we have a 'great high priest' who by the greatness of his power and of his mind 'has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God'¹⁰⁶ who promised those who would genuinely learn the things of God and who would live lives worthy of them that he will lead them on to realms beyond this world. Thus he says, 'That where I go, you may be also'.¹⁰⁷ This is why we hope that, after the 'tribulation and struggles'¹⁰⁸ here, we shall come to dwell in the topmost heavens (πρὸς ἄκροις γενέσθαι τοῖς οὐρανοῖς), and, according to the teaching of Jesus, will receive 'wells of water springing up into eternal life',¹⁰⁹ and will advance to rivers of *objects of contemplation* (θεωρημάτων) and will live with the waters that are said to be 'above the heavens' which 'praise the name of the Lord'.¹¹⁰ As long as we praise him, we shall not be carried about away from 'the circumference of the heaven',¹¹¹ but we shall always (ἀεὶ) be enjoying the *contemplation* (θέα) of the invisible things of God, which will no longer be seen by us 'from the creation of the world by the things that are made'¹¹² but, as the genuine disciple of Jesus expressed it, saying, 'But then face to face',¹¹³ and 'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away'.¹¹⁴

Eternal life is related to the notion of contemplating 'the invisible things of God'. This contemplation constitutes a view of the wisdom of God in a way which is the clearest possible from a place within the world.

Why, then, do we put off and hesitate to be disengaged from the corruptible body that obstructs us and weighs the soul down, [to be disengaged from] the 'earthly

¹⁰³ 2 Cor. 4, 17–18.

¹⁰⁴ Rom. 5, 3; 2 Cor. 6, 4; Eph. 3, 13; 1 Thess. 3, 3; 2 Thess. 1, 4. Cf. Psalms, 45, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 2 Cor. 4, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Heb. 4, 14.

¹⁰⁷ John, 14, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Respublica*, 413d4; *Phaedrus*, 247b5.

¹⁰⁹ John, 4, 14.

¹¹⁰ John, 7, 38; Psalm 148, 4.

¹¹¹ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247c2; *Timaeus*, 47b7; *Leges*, 898c3.

¹¹² Rom. 1, 20.

¹¹³ 1 Cor. 13, 12.

¹¹⁴ 1 Cor. 13, 10. *Cels*, VI, 19–20: the terms denoting contemplation, in italics.

tabernacle' that fills the mind full of many anxieties,¹¹⁵ and to be released from our bonds and free from the stormy waves that are accompanying flesh and blood? For then we may enjoy with Christ Jesus the repose which is concomitant with blessedness, and *contemplate* (θεωροῦντες) the living Logos himself in his wholeness, and be nourished by him, and comprehend the manifold wisdom which is in him, and be stamped by the original truth, and have our minds enlightened by the true and ceaseless light of knowledge for the purpose of *vision* (θεᾶν) of those things, whose nature is to be viewed by eyes illuminated by the commandment of the Lord.¹¹⁶

This statement should be considered within its context. Origen wrote the *exhMar* as a consolation and support to the morale of his imprisoned friend Ambrose. In his tendency to comfort and boost him, Origen appears to devalue the body. However, as I argue later, his outlook on this issue is not as simple as it appears here. The body plays a crucial role (indeed as significant as that of the soul) in the process towards the eschatological perspectives of human beings.

Eternal life then affords a 'contemplation' (θεωρία) of the divine wisdom, the beatific vision of divine things. The term *θεωρία* denotes what is to be enjoyed by anyone elevated to that high space.¹¹⁷ A comment on Psalm 142, 8 ('cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee') reads thus: "He seeks the contemplation of the aeon to come, which in the Scripture is regularly also called kingdom of heavens." Further, this psalm is said to pertain to 'the learning of the path...on which one walks after he has departed from this life'; and the final destination is a 'land of the living' (γῆ ζώντων), to which 'the Holy Spirit of God leads those who deserve it'.¹¹⁸

The biblical notion of 'land of the living'¹¹⁹ is particularly useful in order to make the point of God being in an ontological status *different* from eternal life. God is beyond the world whereas eternal life is within this. The following comment is pithy: "God in Himself is in heavens, but his goods are in the land of living".¹²⁰

The comment on Matt. 17, 1f ('And after six days Jesus takes Peter, James and John, his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them'), it that the term 'high mountain' points to eternal life: this is where one may 'contemplate' (θεωρήσει) the glory of Christ 'apart' (κατ'

¹¹⁵ Wis. 9, 15.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Psalm 18, 9; Eph. 1, 18. *exhMar*, XLVII; italics mine, emphasizing the notion of *contemplation*.

¹¹⁷ *frPs*, 9, 37–38; 131, 11; 142, 8; 144, 13; *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.25–31; 15, PG.12.1213.1–4; 22, PG.1261.50–54; 142, PG.12.1668.51–53; 144, PG.12.1673.25–27; *expProv*, 24, PG.17.232.5–7.

¹¹⁸ *frPs*, 88, 51–53; *selPs*, 88, PG.12.1549.49; 144, PG.12.1668–9.

¹¹⁹ Cf. 'land of the living' (γῆ ζώντων): Psalms, 26, 13; 51, 7; 141, 6; Jer. 11, 19. Cf. *frPs*, 26, 13; 88, 51–53; *selPs*, 88, PG.12.1549.49; 144, PG.12.1668–69.

¹²⁰ *frPs*, 26, 13.

ἰδίαν). The expression ‘after six days’ was said ‘not pointlessly’ (μὴ μάτην):¹²¹ for the world was made in six days; therefore, in order to reach the ‘eternal’ things, one has to go through these six days. Ultimately one ‘will find himself in a new Sabbath in a high mountain, delighted by seeing Christ transfigured in front of him’.¹²² The theory that Christ, as the Wisdom of God, is the object of contemplation from that uppermost point of view occupies a large part of that section of *commMatt*.¹²³

I should emphasize once more that this is the best contemplation *possible* from a temporal point of view, that is, from a place *within* the world. For corporeality is itself a factor preventing creatures from ‘seeing’ God Himself.¹²⁴ This is a fundamental tenet relevant to the conception of God as radically transcendent to the world.

Mystical experience cannot substitute the actual perspective of attaining to the highest-up existential standing. This accomplishment is the result of a real spatio-temporal, that is historical, process. Eternal life is ‘*now* . . . present in shadow, but *then* it will be a reality face to face’, since eternal life is ‘Christ himself’.¹²⁵

In view of this, R. Sorabji’s opinion that Origen ‘fears’ that a human being could feel ‘satiety’ due to his progress in mystical experience, is erroneous. He did not grasp that ‘progress’ in Origen is only partially perceived as ‘mystical experience’. The actual progress is perceived as a spatio-temporal movement, as action within real history, according to the existential causality. At that point Origen is represented to have left the question of whether ‘progress’ is regarded as a personal experience, or as a real spatio-temporal perspective, moot.¹²⁶ It is he himself however who elsewhere enunciates that mystical experience will never be satisfied, because of the bounded human ability to comprehend the divine mysteries: there are certain θεωρήματα (objects of contemplation) in wisdom which can be comprehended by no created nature.¹²⁷ ‘Knowledge’ of the abundance of visions about God is ‘endless’ (ἄληκτον), not only for ‘human nature’, but also for all creatures.¹²⁸ In searching for the divine truth, one may find the ‘profoundness’ of certain words. But ‘if he rests for a while’, he will subsequently find new questions facing him; and once they are answered, he will subsequently find new questions, and so on.¹²⁹

¹²¹ *commMatt*, 12, 36.

¹²² *Op. cit.* 12, 36–43.

¹²³ Cf. *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1261.44f.

¹²⁴ *frJohn*, XIII; *exhMar*, XIII; *deOr*, I; XVII.1. On human corporeality, s. *Cels*, II, 65 & 66; VI, 17; VII, 62; *commMatt*, 12, 6.

¹²⁵ *Dial*, 27; *commJohn*, 13, III.

¹²⁶ R. Sorabji, *op. cit.*, p. 151. He refers to *Princ* (Lat.), I.3.8.

¹²⁷ *commJohn*, 2, XVIII.

¹²⁸ *commJohn*, 2, XXVIII.

¹²⁹ *commJohn*, 13, III.

R. Sorabji quoted from Gregory of Nyssa, who avers that personal progress towards the search of God is unbounded. It is ironical that he regarded this passage ‘as something of an *answer* to Origen’.¹³⁰ For all Gregory did was to reproduce Origen. Gregory did not *answer* to Origen; he just *repeated* the view of his master. As a matter of fact, this is an additional point on which Origen takes a view antipodal to Platonism, arguing for the incognoscibility of God, still from a different point of view:

Let then Plato say that it is difficult to find the maker and father of the universe, indicating that it is not impossible for human nature to find God in a manner befitting Him, or, if not [entirely] befitting Him, yet at least in a manner more noble than that of *hoi polloi*. . . . But we affirm that human nature is not self-sufficient to seek for God and to find Him in any way in Himself, unless help is granted by the Object of search [sc. God], who is found by those who, after having done the most they can, acknowledge that they need Him, and who presents Himself to those he deems proper to be seen, in the manner that God can be seen by human nature, and in the manner that human soul is able to know God, while still being in a body.¹³¹

If a man ‘contemplates’ the wisdom of God ‘during the present aeon’, this personal experience is not contemplation in a strictly actual sense. This kind of contemplation is more or less a manner of speaking (ἐν μὲν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι . . . ἡ νοητὴ τῆς σοφίας θεωρία). But in the ‘aeon to come’ this will be an objective reality, not just a vague personal experience.¹³²

Speaking of eternal life, in Origen’s thought the real contrast is always between Here/Now and There/Then.¹³³ This spatio-temporal perspective cannot be substituted by any mystical experience. Such an experience, even in its happiest moments, is bound to be incomplete, restricted to the limitations human nature imposes. For a human being seeks to see God *Here and Now*. Paul’s affirmation about *now* seeing God ‘through a glass, darkly’ is quite often contrasted with the *future* ‘face to face’.¹³⁴ In reference to this, an interesting point is made in a comment on John 1, 16 (‘And of his fullness have all we received’):

You should notice the accuracy of what has been written. It is not said ‘his fullness’, but ‘and of his fullness we all have received’. For those who in this life participate in holiness and knowledge and truth [are said to] know a part and to prophesy

¹³⁰ R. Sorabji, *op. cit.* pp. 150–51; italics his.

¹³¹ *Cels*, VII, 42. This should be understood in the context of Origen’s views of God Himself, as discussed in *COT*, pp. 25f *et passim*. When God ‘manifests’ Himself, he appears not as he really is, but according to his dispensation, so that he can be somehow comprehended by creatures. A principal point of this theology is that in all the divine *epiphanies* of the Old Testament it was God the Logos who appeared and spoke.

¹³² *expProv*, 24, PG.17.232.4–5.

¹³³ Cf. *commJohn*, 13, XVIII; 19, XIV; *selDeut*, PG.12.809.9–32.

¹³⁴ 1 Cor. 13, 12; s. *commJohn*, 13, XVIII; *Cels*, VI, 20; VII, 38 & 50; *deOr*, XI, 2, *et passim*.

from a part of his fullness,¹³⁵ but they have not his fullness. They could nevertheless acquire this [fullness] after this temporary life in the aeons to come, according to the apostle, who says, ‘when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away’.¹³⁶ In the catholic [epistle] of John it has been accordingly said; ‘and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is’.¹³⁷ Which means [that we shall see him] *in the way it is possible for creatures to know God* (καθώς ἐστι δυνατόν τοῖς γενητοῖς γνῶναι τὸν Θεόν). For it is not possible to construe the [expression] ‘as he is’ as denoting *God in Himself* (οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε ἐκλαμβάνειν τὸ καθὼς ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς αὐτός). We shall obtain something more than our present standing, since we shall become able to see not what is part, but having shed any ignorance, we shall have access to the purest truth, and we shall be seeing him *inasmuch as is possible* (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν αὐτόν ὁψόμενοι).¹³⁸

This passage maintains the fundamental conception of the transcendence of God, as well as that of *God Himself*, who is beyond any possibility of being known by any creature, no matter how ‘elevated’ this is. There is particular care to emphasize that although ‘contemplation’ of God from eternal life’s point of view is a superior one, still this is a view of God from *within* the world. By reason of this, God cannot be seen as He is *Himself*. This is also why the scriptural passage of ‘seeing’ God is taken to mean ‘seeing God as far as this is possible’ from a place within the world: that is, from a status determined essentially by corporeality and temporality.

Eternal life is the condition of a living being who has disowned all sin and has ascended unto the uppermost existential order of life, wherefrom contemplation of the wisdom of God is superlative. This is the ‘end’ presented as an individual goal in history.

The conception of eternal life and Greek thought

Origen was aware of the the possibility that his tenet of eternal life might be classified as similar to relevant doctrines of Pythagoreans and Platonists, or even Valentinian Gnostics. This is probably why he deemed it necessary to voice his awareness of what Plato says in *Phaedrus*,¹³⁹ or *Phaedo*.¹⁴⁰ Through his answer to Celsus, his teleological view of history is reiterated once more: action is directed by *hope* of reaching an *objective*, in the sense of an *expected end*:

¹³⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 13, 9.

¹³⁶ 1 Cor. 13, 10.

¹³⁷ 1 John, 3, 2.

¹³⁸ *fr* John, X; italics mine.

¹³⁹ *Cels*, VI, 17 & 19.

¹⁴⁰ *Cels*, VII, 28 & 31.

Celsus says that those who conduct a Christian life (χριστιανίζοντες) are led away with false hopes, and challenges the doctrine of the blessed life and of communion (κοινωνία) with God. We shall retort to him that, according to your criticism, oh man, both the Pythagoreans and the Platonists are led away with vain hopes since they have been sustaining the doctrine that the soul can ascend to the arc of heaven and contemplate the super-celestial realm seeing the beatific visions of fortunate spectators.¹⁴¹ But according to you, Celsus, those also who believe in the continuation of the soul and who live so that they may become heroes and become co-dwellers with the gods, are led away with false hopes.¹⁴² And probably also those who have been convinced that the mind from without (τοῦ θύραθεν νοῦ)¹⁴³ is immortal and will have life of its own after death, would be said by Celsus to be led away with false hopes.¹⁴⁴

He states that it is not his purpose 'to raise objections to any good teachings, even if their authors are outside the faith, nor to seek an occasion for a dispute

¹⁴¹ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247, 250.

¹⁴² Cf. *Cels*, III, 37.

¹⁴³ The notion of θύραθεν νοῦς is strangely absent from philosophical discussions in Antiquity. Testimonies ascribe this to Pythagoreans, Anaxagoras, Plato, Xenocrates, and Cleanthes. Cf. Anaxagoras, *Testimonia*, Fr. 93; Xenocrates, *Testimonia; Doctrina et Fragmenta*, Fr. 205; Cleanthes, *Testimonia et Fragmenta*, Fr. 523; Aeneas of Gaza (A.D. cent. 6), *Theophrastus sive De Animarum Immortalitate et Corporum Resurrectione Dialogus*, p. 7). Also, Aëtius, in the anthology by Stobaeus: Aëtius Doxographus (A.D. cent. 1–2), *De Placitis Reliquiae* (Stobaei excerpta), p. 39 (Joannes Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, 1.48.7–8). Probably this was expounded in a dialogue of Plato now lost. There is a testimony by Michael Psellus that it was Socrates who 'said a few things about this': "Σωκράτης περὶ τοῦ θύραθεν νοῦ βραχέα μὲν διαλέγεται". Cf. Michael Psellus, *Opusculum* 106. Hermias of Alexandria (A.D. cent. 5) also testifies to Plato holding the idea: *In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia*, p. 52. Thus Antiquity mostly overlooked this notion. The idea is extant in texts of Aristotle (*De Generatione Animalium*, 736b28; 744b21; *De Respiratione*, 472a22) and in some of his commentators: Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima*, pp. 90–1; Frs. 1 & 16c; John Philoponus, *In Libros De Generatione Animalium Commentaria*, v. 14, 3, pp. 84–85; 87; 115; *In Aristotelis Libros De Anima Commentaria*, v. 15, pp. 10; 163; 518–20; 535–41; 584. Themistius, *In Aristotelis Libros De Anima Paraphrasis*, v. 5, 3, p. 37. Michael of Ephesus (A.D. cent. 11–12), *In Ethica Nicomachea ix-x Commentaria*, p. 580; *In Parva Naturalia Commentaria*, p. 116. It is astonishing that the expression is almost absent from Christian literature. Apart from Origen (the first Christian to mention this, *Cels*, III, 80), only Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodoret of Cyrus, Nemesius of Emesa and Michael Psellus appear to be aware of its existence. Eustathius of Thessaloniki makes an uncertain allusion to this. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *De Spiritu Sancto (orat. 31)*, 5. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, 5.28. Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, 1. Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homerum Odysseam*, v. 1, p. 5. Michael Psellus, *Opuscula Psychologica; Theologica; Daemonologica*, pp. 23; 66–67; 95; *Theologica*, *Opusculum* 106. But none of them, save Psellus, elaborates on the idea. Of other philosophers, Porphyry refers to this in *Eis τὰ Ἀρμονικὰ Πτολεμαίου Ὑπόμνημα*, p. 13. John Laurentius refers to 'three kinds' of 'mind' introduced by Aristotle: *De Mensibus*, 2.8. Cf. also, Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica*, 3.11. Aristocles, *Fragmenta*, Fr. v. 4. John Galen, *Allegoriae in Hesiodi Theogoniam*, p. 337. Meletius, *De Natura Hominis*, p. 150. *Scholia In Lucianum* (scholia vetera et recentiora Arethae), Lucianic work 17, section 34. It is also striking that, of all dictionaries, it is only the *Lexicon* by Pseudo-Zonaras that refers to the term, furnishing a very brief definition. (Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter nu, p. 1405). *Suda* and others are silent about this concept. Cf. nevertheless an extensive analysis in a work ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Anima Libri Mantissa (De Anima liber alter)* (sp.), pp. 108–113.

¹⁴⁴ *Cels*, III, 80.

with them, nor to find a way of overthrowing statements which are sound.¹⁴⁵ The relation of his tenet to Platonism is then defined quite clearly:

These mean¹⁴⁶ that Celsus presumes that we have employed the teaching about the other earth, which is better and far more excellent to this one, from certain men of old times, whom he regards as being divine, and in particular from Plato, who in the *Phaedo* entertained the philosophical idea about a pure earth lying in a pure heaven. He fails to see that Moses, who is far earlier even than the Greek alphabet,¹⁴⁷ introduced the idea of God promising a pure earth, which was 'good and large, flowing with milk and honey',¹⁴⁸ to those who might have lived in accordance with His law. This 'good' land was not, as some think, the regarded as fallen (τὴν κάτω νομιζομένην) land of Judaea, which indeed lies also in the earth, which was cursed from the beginning due to the transgressing works of Adam.¹⁴⁹

If there seems to be any similarity then, this is due to Plato having taken his ideas from the ancient people of the Jews.¹⁵⁰ Even so, Plato preserved only a few notions, whereas he distorted other Jewish perceptions, Origen argues.¹⁵¹ In any event, Plato is contended to be not 'the first to state the truth of a place above the heavens'. David set this forth in his psalms long time ago.¹⁵²

And I myself do not reject the assertion (οὐκ ἀπογινώσκω) about Plato having learnt the words of the *Phaedrus* from some Hebrews, and that, as some writers have written,¹⁵³ it was after the studying of the prophetic words that he wrote the passage where he says, 'But the region above the heaven was never worthily sung by any earthly poet, nor will it ever be', and the following words, among which those ones: 'Truly being, colourless, formless and intangible, visible only to the mind, which is the guide of the soul; around which [sc. mind] the species of true knowledge has its abode.'¹⁵⁴

Having pointed up the general distinction from the Platonic thought, Origen goes ahead with portraying the difference of Christian faith in eternal life as 'end' from that of the pagans in some detail. His chief argument is that this holy land can be attained to only through Jesus Christ:

¹⁴⁵ *Cels*, VII, 46.

¹⁴⁶ In the first half of this section, Origen quotes Celsus's contentions; this is how his reply is set out.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Cels*, IV, 21; VI, 7. Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem* (*De Judaeorum Vetustate*), 1.58–59; 2.1. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum*, 3.26.

¹⁴⁸ Ex. 3, 8.

¹⁴⁹ *Cels*, VII, 28.

¹⁵⁰ *Cels*, IV, 30 & 39; VI, 3 & 7. Likewise, vs. Gnostics, *op. cit.* VI, 35.

¹⁵¹ *de Or*, XIX, 1.

¹⁵² Appealing to Psalm 148, 4–5.

¹⁵³ The view that Plato and the Greeks plagiarized the Hebrew prophets, and sometimes Egyptians, was a common theme among Christian writers. Cf. Justin, *Apologia*, 1.59–60. Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, 6.22.1; 9.17.2; *De Universo*, Fr. 3; *In Canticum Canticorum* (paraphrasis), 1.12. This was also the assertion of Jewish apologetic.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 247c. *Cels*, VI, 19.

Do not assume that it is not consistent with Christian doctrine when in my reply to Celsus I have included opinions of philosophers who have affirmed the immortality or the survival of the soul. For having some in common with them, we shall prove at a more opportune time that *the future blessed life* (ἡ μέλλονσα μακαρία ζοή) will be solely for those who have employed reverence to God according to the teaching of Jesus and reverence toward the Creator, which is a piety sincere and pure and free of relevance to anything created.¹⁵⁵ Let anyone who thinks so prove and show what kind of better things we persuade people to despise; and let him juxtapose (ἀντιπαράθεω) our view of the blessed *end* with God in Christ, that is, the Logos, Wisdom and all virtues, which will come about to those who lived impeccably and purely and engaged in an undivided and unbroken love for the God of all, and which [end] will be attained by God's donation, [let him juxtapose this end] with the *end* sustained by each philosophical sect among the Greeks or barbarians, or by any mystery-cult. Let him show in what respect is the conception of *end*, which the others hold, superior to our own understanding of this; and why one should follow that one [sc. the Greek or barbarian etc. conceptions of *end*] believing this to be true, while the *end* according to our understanding could be held to be bestowed neither by God's donation, nor to those who conducted a good life, or indeed nor was this pronounced by a divine Spirit which filled the souls of the pure *prophets*. And let anyone who so wishes prove that the teaching universally admitted to be human is superior to what was proved to be divine and to have been pronounced by divine inspiration. Besides, what are those better things which we teach those people who accept our teaching to refrain from, on the ground that it will be better for them? For staying far from complacency, we should say that it is self-evident that nothing better could be even conceived than to entrust oneself to the supreme God and to be devoted to a teaching which distances people from everything created and leads to the supreme God of all, through the animate and living Logos, who is both living wisdom and Son of God.¹⁵⁶

Thus it is Origen himself who affirms that his views have something 'in common' with certain non-Christian philosophical perceptions. However, convergence is confined to the single point of his view of eternal life allowing for an *also spatial* character of this. He argues nevertheless that his *end* is far superior to any pagan one, yet he does not set forth any detailed account of the actual import of this end. Besides, the *end* of which he speaks of is not really the ultimate eschatological perception. Eternal life is *an* end, yet not *the* ultimate one, still he eschews any exposition of it, stating that he will not discuss this 'profound' and 'great' mystery with Celsus.¹⁵⁷ It was always apprehensive about divulging profound doctrines, wishing not to 'fling holy things to dogs and cast pearls before swine',¹⁵⁸ since 'it is good to conceal the mystery of the king'.¹⁵⁹ That this was the case with Celsus is explicated in that work, in one way or another.

¹⁵⁵ This is Origen's conception of the *individual* resurrection. Cf. *commMatt*, 13, 21; 17, 33; *Cels*, VI, 29; *homLuc*, 17; *selPs*, 65, PG.12.1497.23, *et passim*.

¹⁵⁶ *Cels*, III, 81; italics are mine, laying stress on the eschatological point of the argument.

¹⁵⁷ *Cels*, V, 59. s. chapter 9, p. 285.

¹⁵⁸ *Matt*, 7, 6. Cf. Introduction, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ *Tobit*, 12, 7.

Thus when he refers to the *end*, he draws the reader's attention to his doctrine being far superior to any pagan one that might be mistaken as similar to this. As a matter of fact, he has in mind a certain teaching, which I explore in chapter 9 adumbrating his eschatological ideas. A major difference is that some comprehension of that mystery can be achieved only through Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁰ This is not just a difference in words or figures of speech, or the imagery employed to depict a reality which would be regarded as virtually the same as the pagan perception of it. Reference to the name of Jesus Christ is but a hint, which points to an eschatological reality standing at variance with any pagan conception. There are indeed substantial differences, such as the following:

Eternal life is not *out* of the world: this is a space *within* the world, having already its own denizens living in a corporeal form. This is not an incorporeal reality, but a *material* one. Eternal life is not only a spatial, but also a *temporal* state of being.

Besides, there is no notion of continuity between the divine reality and the world. Even the inhabitants of eternal life are held to be 'down' in comparison to the divine reality which is 'up'.¹⁶¹ The difference is ontological, since God is as transcendent to that rank as he is to the rest of the world. This life is closer to God, still this is radically *out* of God, since the entire world is a *καταβολή*. This is why the 'contemplation' of God enjoyed from that point of view cannot be a sight of God Himself, but a sight of God offered by him according to his dispensation.

In addition, Origen did not believe (as Platonists did) that 'knowledge' is a *means* to attain to 'virtue'. On the contrary, virtue is realized as *praxis*, which is the indispensable means for attaining to knowledge.

This anti-Platonic attitude should not elude us. Plato could have never been able to take such a view, simply because he did not have any 'knowledge' as a datum, that is, a knowledge *given* or revealed to him. Certainly, in Plato there is a notion of vision of the Idea, indeed of this happening 'all of a sudden' (*ἐξαίφνης*). In *Symposium*, the notion of 'vision' (*θεώμενος*) is there, indeed a marvelous vision, beautiful in its nature' (*θαυμαστόν τὴν φύσιν καλόν*).¹⁶² And in the Seventh Epistle, once again reference is made to 'lessons' (*μαθήματα*) which 'all of a sudden' (*ἐξαίφνης*), like a light which is kindled by a leaping spark, arise within the soul and thereafter is nourished by itself' (*φῶς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γενόμενον αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἤδη τρέφει*).¹⁶³ Still and all, nowhere is there even the slightest hint that this 'vision' (even if this is indeed assumed to be an apocalyptic sign from heaven) is a revelation *by someone*. This is an occurrence happening within the

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Cels*, III, 28 & 81; IV, 22.

¹⁶¹ *commJohn*, 19, XXII. Cf. *Cels*, VI, 35, rejecting Valentinus.

¹⁶² Plato, *Symposium*, 210e.

¹⁶³ Plato, *Seventh Epistle*, 341c. Cf. *Cels*, VI, 3 & 5 (*Philocalia*, 15, 5 & 7).

soul and its metaphysical significance lies in the fact that a soul itself belongs to the *beyond*. In other words, there is continuity from the supreme Idea down to every individual soul, which allows this vision to take place at a moment when, just for this moment, the soul is not lethally hindered by its engagement with the body. The fact remains that there is no relevance between Here and Beyond, but only a momentary and mysterious prevalence of this Beyond, which is nothing else than the soul itself somehow viewing the place of its own origin. There is no pertinence between this Beyond and real History and there is no *someone* entering into history for the purpose of revealing a truth.

Origen was able to take this anti-Platonic attitude since knowledge was already available in the scriptures, which record the divine *theophanies* and the teaching of Jesus Christ. To him ‘knowledge’ had already been *revealed* by the Logos and was available to everyone thereafter. He needed not try to device, or ‘recollect’, knowledge himself. The testimonies through which God reveals himself were available to all Christians. Subsequently, the road to ‘virtue’ had already been enlightened. This is a major point on which Origen confronts Platonism. It is not just a matter of minute dissent on a specific question. It is a distinct attitude holding considerable sway on human existence and conduct.

This contrast is not accidental at all. Origen was perfectly aware of the Platonic conception of ‘virtue’ as ‘knowledge’. He sets forth the accurate Greek definition of virtue,¹⁶⁴ although to him ‘virtue is imitation’¹⁶⁵ of the Son of God. He himself, however, takes a thoroughly different view. Knowledge is given through the scriptures, at least as a ‘beginning’. This means that there is only one way to find the secret truths hidden behind the letter: this is the *practical* exercise of a virtuous life according to the divine commandments. “It is through

¹⁶⁴ Cf. a definition of ‘virtue’ (ἀρετή) in *homJer*, 8, 2: “ἐπιστήμη ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν καὶ οὐθετέρων” (‘a profound knowledge of what is good and evil and neuter’). This is an interesting point with regard to Origen’s sources. He takes it that ‘virtue’ is ‘φρόνησις’. However, according to a work under the name of Andronicus of Rhodes, *De Passiomibus* (Περὶ Παθῶν), 2, 1, *virtue* comprises four species, not only one: φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία. The definition adduced for the first of these terms is that which Origen comes up with for ‘virtue’ in general. This makes Ariston of Chios the source for Origen. Ariston, however, was censured by both Chrysippus and Galen for making virtue ‘one’, while the other virtues are made just ‘relations’ (σχέσεις) to this. (*SVF*, I, 85, 33, Fr. 374, Galen). Chrysippus, on the other hand, was reprimanded by Galen for embarking on a case-study of ‘virtue’, which led to a ‘swarm of virtues’ (σμήνος ἀρετῶν, *SVF*, III, 59–63, Frs. 255–261, and Plutarch, *SVF*, I, 85, 32, Fr. 373). Obviously Origen follows Clement, without naming him, who argued for ‘virtue’ being ‘one’ Cf. *Stromateis*, 1.20.97.3. What is strange is that Origen quotes (probably unconsciously) a definition severely criticized by Chrysippus, whom he otherwise faithfully follows and quotes on other issues. The reason for doing so is probably his view of ‘truth’ being ‘one’, which entails that ‘virtue’, too, should be ‘one’. s. p. 310, note 566; p. 400, notes 106, 107. Cf. relevant discussion *supra*, p. 45, n. 17.

¹⁶⁵ *Cels*, VIII, 17.

praxis that we find God" (διὰ πρακτικῆς εὐρίσκομεν τὸν Θεόν).¹⁶⁶ God can be 'approached' through 'action' (κατ' ἐνέργειαν)¹⁶⁷ and 'praxis is the means for ascending to contemplation' (πρᾶξις γὰρ θεωρίας ἀνάβασις).¹⁶⁸ All in all, 'praxis precedes theoria' (πρὸ τῆς θεωρίας ἡ πρᾶξις).¹⁶⁹

This approach is at odds with either the Platonic dialectics or the Plotinian or Gnostic sinking into mysticism in the hope that the full truth can be contemplated *hic et nunc*. Thus, one can be led to Christ through practice of righteousness: this is how Christ leads to virtue.¹⁷⁰ This fundamental existential attitude stems from the saying, 'Wisdom will not enter into a soul that practices evil neither will this dwell in a body involved in sin' (Εἰς κακότεχνον ψυχὴν οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται σοφία οὐδὲ κατοικήσει ἐν σώματι κατὰ χρεω ἁμαρτίας).¹⁷¹

This attitude profoundly imbues his thought. The relation of Knowledge to Praxis is not just a matter of morality. It is an issue of fundamental ontological significance. In Platonism *knowledge* is a matter of intellectual research and exercise, quite independent from action. To be 'good' simply presupposes to 'know'. In Origen, to know presupposes to be righteous. His conviction is that there is a profound ontological relation between Knowledge and Praxis. In this relation, the condition of the acting *body* is as much important as the disposition and resolution of the *soul*.

With regard to the human perspective to attain to eternal life, two things are emphasized. First, eternal life is a *future* perspective. Second, in this process both *soul* and *body* have a crucial role to play.¹⁷² This is subsequent to that of rational being as an entity,¹⁷³ which allows for this telling comment:

Certainly the knowledge of God is beyond the capacity of human nature (this is why there is so much miscomprehension about God among men); still, by God's benevolence and love to man, and by supreme divine grace, the knowledge of God extends to those who by God's foreknowledge have been known in advance that they would *live lives worthy* of Him Whom they will have cognized.¹⁷⁴

In view of this, it is important to contrast this conception of knowledge from any other one. This knowledge does not allude to the putative intellectual state of 'being aware of' certain things. *Knowledge* in the state of eternal life is not simply an intellectual condition; it is an *existential* one. The same goes for 'eternal life'

¹⁶⁶ *selPs*, 20, PG.12.1249.52; italics mine.

¹⁶⁷ *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1609.37.

¹⁶⁸ *homLuc*, 1.

¹⁶⁹ *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1173.20.

¹⁷⁰ *Cels*, V, 12.

¹⁷¹ *Wis*, 1, 4. Cf. Introduction, p. 25 and ch. 10, p. 376.

¹⁷² *expProv*, 24, PG.17.232.12, quoting once again *Wis*, 1, 4.

¹⁷³ Cf. discussion in chapter 1, pp. 60–61, and *COT*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁴ *Cels*, VII, 44; italics mine.

as a personal human experience. This knowledge is achieved through virtue, and above all, through Christian ‘love’.¹⁷⁵ It is impossible to claim ‘knowledge of divine mysteries’ without at the same time being bowled head over heels by love.¹⁷⁶ For it is indeed love which hankers for the knowledge of God.¹⁷⁷ So ‘the knowledge of God is divided into two [components], action and contemplation... In this statement there is an order... because action precedes contemplation’ (πρὸ τῆς θεωρίας ἢ πρᾶξις).¹⁷⁸ This twofold division of divine knowledge is applied also to the aspects of this knowledge, the ‘visions’, or theoremata (θεωρήματα, objects of contemplation) existing in Wisdom:

Some aspects of the divine knowledge have as an objective (or, end, τέλος) contemplation, while certain others have as their objective praxis (τινῶν μὲν θεωρημάτων τὸ τέλος ἢ θεωρία ἐστίν, τινῶν δὲ θεωρημάτων ἢ πρᾶξις).¹⁷⁹

Origen’s dissent from the Platonic stereotype constitutes a contrast from the conventional aristocratic Platonic opinion, according to which only philosophers are finally worthy of ‘knowing’ and being ‘delivered’ from this life:

I believe that because God saw the presumption or the arrogant attitude towards others, of people who take a pride contending to have known God and to have learnt the divine things through philosophy... He chose the foolish things of the world,¹⁸⁰ the simplest of the Christians, who live lives more moderate and pure than many philosophers, that He might put to shame the wise.¹⁸¹

This is the ground for the wisdom of the gospel to be considered: “the authors of the gospels... have nothing in them that is spurious, cheating, invented, and wicked”.¹⁸² They ‘had not learnt the technique taught by the pernicious

¹⁷⁵ *selPs*, 17, PG.12.1224.44: ‘Like is known by the like, and love is found through love’. ‘Like is known by the like’ was a Pythagorean tenet, sustained by Aristotle, Chrysippus and Galen (Heraclitus held that ‘dissimilar is known by the dissimilar’. Albinus, *Epitome Doctrinae Platonicae* sive *Didaskalikos*, 14.2). Aristotle, *De Anima*, 409b27; 410a9; 410a25; 427b5; *Metaphysica* 1000b6; *Rhetorica*, 135b28. Chrysippus *apud* Galen, *De Usu Partium*, Kühn v. 3, p. 641 (*SVF*, II, 231, 44f). Proclus, Simplicius Damascius and Themistius made much of it, but only the ‘outcast’ Christian thinkers Origen and John Philoponus used the axiom to the letter commenting on this.

¹⁷⁶ *commJohn*, 6, XX. Likewise in *commEph*, section 15; *comm1Cor*, sections 49, 51; *frLuc*, 168; *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1268.46; *frPs*, 105, 5; 146, 10; *expProv*, 5, PG.17.176.27–29; *selPs*, 43, PG.12.1428.25.

¹⁷⁷ *selPs*, 149, PG.12.1681.41. Cf. *selPs*, 20, PG.12.1276.28.

¹⁷⁸ *selPs*, 5 (comm. on Psalm 5, 13), PG.12.1173.9–22: Τέμενεται δὲ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ γνώσις εἰς δύο, εἰς πρᾶξιν καὶ θεωρίαν· καὶ τῆς μὲν πράξεως ὄπλον τῆς εὐδοκίας ἐστὶ, τῆς δὲ θεωρίας ὁ στέφανος. Τετῆρηται δὲ καὶ ἡ τάξις· πρὸ γὰρ τοῦ στεφάνου τὸ ὄπλον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ πρὸ τῆς θεωρίας ἡ πρᾶξις.

¹⁷⁹ *homLuc*, 1.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 27.

¹⁸¹ *Cels*, VII, 44.

¹⁸² *Cels*, III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2).

sophistry of the Greeks'¹⁸³ and this is said as a 'praise' (τὸ ἐπαινετόν).¹⁸⁴ In fact 'this was the reason why Jesus chose to employ such men to teach his doctrine, so that there might be no possible suspicion of plausible sophisms'.¹⁸⁵ They were 'found worthy of being endowed with divine power, which accomplished far more than what appears to be achieved by involved loquacity and stylish compositions, and by logical arguments constructed through divided sections and worked out with Greek technical expertise'.¹⁸⁶ Accordingly, 'it is not the composition of a speech and the utterance of sounds and the exercised beauty of the words that produce persuasion, but the donation of divine power' upon what is uttered by the servants of God.¹⁸⁷ Set off against this background, Origen avers that 'eternal life' is different from the 'common' one, coming as a 'result of faith and virtue'.¹⁸⁸

What, therefore, sheerly contrasts this mode of thought and conception of reality from the Platonic one is this: the way to perfection is not made through *dialectics*, but through proper *action*. The priority of Praxis over Knowledge is not just a question of morality: it has crucial historical and eschatological significance and consequences.

It is beyond my scope to elaborate on this topic further, which nevertheless is of utmost importance, since it is a cardinal point demonstrating how Origen's mentality was at variance with Platonism. There is abundance of evidence about this throughout his works, provided Origen as well as Plato are comprehended, each one on his own merits and grounds. I have made these points only in order to urge that when Origen speaks of 'contemplation' in eternal life, he does not actually echo any Platonic attitude. His view is incompatible with this mindset. The existential status in eternal life is a condition far different from mere intellectual knowledge. It is a quality of existence in which 'knowledge' betokens the result of a certain quality of conduct and standing in love to God and to each other. In that state, the condition of existence actually includes both knowledge and love, in a quality which is portrayed as 'friendship with God'.¹⁸⁹ This is the actual condition which Origen alludes to when he opines that the 'Christians have learned that eternal life is *to know* "the only real God" and "Jesus Christ" who was sent by Him'.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ *Loc. cit.* Cf. Job, 5, 13; Eph. 4, 14; 1 Cor. 3, 19; 2 Cor. 4, 2. *Cels*, III, 39. Cf. *Cels*, III, 24.

¹⁸⁴ *Cels*, III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2).

¹⁸⁵ *Loc. cit.* Cf. *Cels*, I, 62.

¹⁸⁶ *Cels*, III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2). Cf. p. 390.

¹⁸⁷ *commJohn*, 1, VIII.

¹⁸⁸ *frJohn*, XXXIX: ζωὴ δὲ αἰώνιος ἐστὶν οὐχ ἡ κοινὴ ἥτις καὶ ἐτέροις ζώοις ὑπάρχει, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐκ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ἀρετῆς ἐγγινομένη.

¹⁸⁹ *Cels*, III, 28; *frMatt*, 214; *expProv*, 6, PG.17.176.52; 10, PG.17.188.44; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.340.40, *et passim*. Cf. chapter 2, p. 67. s. *supra*, p. 157, n. 84.

¹⁹⁰ Quoting John, 17, 3. *Cels*, III, 36.

The superlative quality of being is not determined by knowledge, but by love to God and to each other. With his heart aflame with a consuming love for Jesus, Origen had made this love an indispensable part of his theology. The purpose of the Incarnation was to make the distanced creatures 'friends of God'.¹⁹¹ Eternal life is designated through the notion of this 'friendship'. For 'those who are friends of God, are also friends to each other.'¹⁹²

These are only some points contrasting Origen's conception of eternal life from the pagan perception. However, they are not the only ones, as I shall argue later. At this point, I emphasize that this 'contemplation' from the point of view of eternal life is an 'end'¹⁹³ which has very little to do with Platonism and this 'little' is pointed out by Origen himself, who employed some Greek terminology but stands in sheer contrast to Greek doctrines. What constitutes the contrast of this *end* from Platonism is both the presuppositions of the way towards this end and the existential status in eternal life.

Going ahead with canvassing this conception of 'view' from eternal life's standpoint, we should bear in mind the fundamental differences of this contemplation from the Greek ideal, which was just an ideal of knowledge. This knowledge related to virtue, but in a causative relation which was an upside-down the Platonic outlook: in Origen virtue is the prerequisite, not the result, of knowledge, while the Platonic conception of attaining to this ideal involves no notion of *love* at all. My next step will be to consider the specific perception of this view, so that certain significant conclusions about the conception of eternal life itself can be reached.

¹⁹¹ *Cels.* IV, 19; VIII, 1.

¹⁹² *expProv.* 10, PG.17.188.44; 17, PG.17.200.55.

¹⁹³ Yet not an *absolute* end; s. chapter 9.

CHAPTER SIX

ETERNAL LIFE AND THE NOTION OF *INFINITE*

Eternal life is illustrated as a ‘topmost mountain edge’ (ἀκρόρειαν).¹ Since the Wisdom of God is contemplated from there, this view should be boundless. It is contemplation of the divine reality, a view of God who is regarded as ‘infinite’.² In order to see the real meaning assigned to the term ‘aeon’, we should peruse a significant passage reading thus:

And he who hates doing his own soul harm will live the long time of the boundless aeon (ὁ δὲ μισῶν ἀδικῆσαι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, τὸν μακρὸν τοῦ ἀπεράντου αἰῶνος χρόνον βιώσεται).³

There are two predications which denote two different conceptions: one, ‘the long time’ (τὸν μακρὸν...χρόνον); second, the ‘boundless aeon’ (τοῦ ἀπεράντου αἰῶνος). Since in Origen there is no notion of ‘infinite’ or ‘endless’ time, any duration of eternal life is finite however ‘long’. The Genitive ‘of the boundless aeon’ (τοῦ ἀπεράντου αἰῶνος), therefore, registers the state in which a ‘long time’ exists and pertains to. This state is the ‘boundless aeon’. It is plain then that the term ‘boundless aeon’ has a spatial import: it betokens the place from which the view is ‘boundless’. ‘Boundless aeon’ then is the spatial point of view, the particular world, that is, the paramount existential order. The term ‘aeon’ is applied to that particular ‘world’ because this promised land is designated as

¹ *Cels*, VI, 44; *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.39; 64, PG.12.1497.16; *excPs*, 23, PG.17.113.38. The term ἀκρόρεια, used by Origen in a metaphorical sense, can be traced back in *Corpus Hermeticum*, (*Fragmenta*, Fr. 25 and *Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν*, section 17) and was upheld by certain Christian authors. Hippolytus adduces evidence of the Gnostic use of the term ἀκρόρεια (*Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, 7.26.9; 7.27.10). Used in a context strikingly similar to Origen’s diction in Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Psalmos* 22–26.10, Cod. p. 69; *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (c commentario altero), Fr. 845; Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 1.6.62; *Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG.23.224.47 & PG.23.457.26; Eustathius of Antioch, *Commentarius in Hexaemeron* (sp.), PG.18.764.16; Gregory of Nyssa, *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, v. 5, pp. 52 & 166; *In Canticum Cantorum* (*Homiliae* 15), v. 6, p. 401. Gregory of Nyssa is the only one to use Origen’s expression ἀκρόρειαν ἐλπίδος (*frMatt*, 78) verbatim; *Orationes viii de Beatitudinibus*, PG.44.1196.11. These are the all the instances in pagan and Christian literature where the term ἀκρόρεια is used in this sense (s. ch. 5, notes 71 & 97, pp. 156, 159, and ch. 9, p. 261, n. 187 and p. 266, n. 229). Michael Psellus (not consciously, to be sure) echoed Origen: *Theologica*, Opusculum 26 and Opusculum 94. Methodius of Olympus attributed the term ‘edge of blessedness’ (μακαριότητος ἀκρότητα) to Origen, in a passage where only this term echoes Origen’s real thought, while the rest is an array of fallacious allegations. Cf. *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, PG.18.205f.

² *COT*, pp. 245f.

³ *expProv*, 28, PG.17.244.45–46.

‘aeonian (αἰωνία; eternal) life’ in the Scriptures⁴ and those living there are also designated as ‘eternal’ by the term of the place.⁵

The term ‘aeon’ means ‘world’ and alludes to sundry levels of being comprising the entire world. This is enunciated in *homJer* where there is reference to those who are ‘stronger’ than Jeremiah ‘here in this aeon’, which means ‘in this world’;⁶ this is so ‘because the kingdom of God is not from this aeon,⁷ but from the higher spaces (ἀπὸ τῶν κρείττονων χωρίων).⁸ Expressions such as, ‘before any *time and aeon*’ (πρὸ γὰρ παντός χρόνου καὶ αἰῶνος),⁹ or, ‘the *time* until the consummation of this *aeon* is long’,¹⁰ or indeed the concluding portion in Matt. 28, 20, ‘until the consummation of the aeon’,¹¹ are all used in the same sense: ‘aeon’ means ‘world’, whereas the temporal notion is expressed through the term ‘time’.

In the foregoing portion of *expProv* it is impossible for the term ‘boundless aeon’ to be attributed any temporal import. For in that case the entire expression would lose its meaning altogether or it would acquire a self-contradictory one. The ‘long time’ stated there is the time *of* the ‘boundless aeon’. This ‘aeon’ in itself cannot betoken ‘time’, since time cannot be ‘boundless’ (ἀπέραντος). Origen enunciates that the term ‘boundless’ (ἀπέραντος) can be applied to no creature:

The contemplation of all creatures (γεγονότων) is finite; it is only the knowledge of Holy Trinity that is boundless (ἀπέραντος).¹²

Even from the point of view of eternal life, contemplation of God is not comprehensive, since ‘there is no end (πέρας) of his greatness’.¹³ The predication ἀπέραντος (boundless) can be applied to God only. Therefore, it makes sense to speak of ‘long time’, whereas it is incongruous with this conception of time to speak of ‘boundless time’, since time is finite. Origen does not indeed speak of infinite time, but of ‘boundless aeon’, alluding to a notion to be discussed anon. The important fact which we should bear in mind is that, speaking of eternal life, he on the one hand *does* use the term ἀπέραντος (boundless) while, on the other, this term cannot be applied to time, since there is no room for any notion of boundless time.

⁴ Cf. *commJohn*, 13, XLIII–XLVIII; *homJer*, 11, 2.

⁵ Cf. quotation on p. 151. *Homiliae in Job* (fragmenta in catenis; typus II) (codd. Marc.) PG.17.77.45–50: ‘the eternal sheep’ (πρόβατα αἰώνια) ‘listen to the voice’ of Christ, who raises them to eternal life in return. Cf. pp. 159, 184, 194, 196.

⁶ *homJer*, 14, 17. It is remarkable that ‘this aeon’ is applied the term *here*, not *now*.

⁷ Cf. *John*, 18, 36.

⁸ *homJer*, 14, 17.

⁹ *commJohn*, 2, I.

¹⁰ *commJohn*, 19, XIV.

¹¹ *commJohn*, 10, X.

¹² *selPs*, 144, PG.12.1673.8–11; *frPs*, 144, 3.

¹³ *selPs*, 144 (*loc. cit.*). The word ἀπέραντος is derived from the privative particle ‘α-’ (‘not-so’) and ‘πέρας’ (end); thus ‘ἀ-πέραντος’ is anything being without ‘πέρας’, that is, ‘endless’. The

Eternal life in itself is then a certain ‘end’¹⁴ in both a *spatial* sense (the superlative rank of being), and a *moral* one (accomplishment of the goal of self-perfection).

In a significant passage of *commMatt*,¹⁵ he uses the term *πέραν* in the sense of ‘shore’ or ‘beach’, in order to furnish an exegesis on Matthew, 14, 22. The manner in which the term *πέραν* is used calls for a comparison between this conception of *αἰών* and the term *αἰών*, which in fact means, ‘shore’, ‘beach’ (that is, the *πέραν* according to the exegesis of Matt. 14, 22), or ‘bank’ (of a river). Both meanings conform to his conception of eternal life, illustrated as a ‘top mountain edge’ (*ἀκρόρεια*) being the ultimate spatial ‘end’ of the world: a point from which a ‘view’ of the infinite Wisdom is possible, and yet this edge is separated from the divine reality by a chasm, that is, by a sheer ontological dissimilarity. The imagery is that of the ‘bank’ of a river wherefrom a view of the opposite side is possible and yet the river itself is the abyss between that point of view and the reality proper which is ‘seen’ from that place.

Origen’s world-picture *vis-à-vis* the divine reality is quite similar to such a perception and can be traced in his expressions. The allegory of ‘Jerusalem’ as ‘mother’ is taken, among others, to allude to the divine reality.¹⁶

The discussion is about human possibility to comprehend certain divine truths through an insight of the soul into this ‘city’ of God.¹⁷ This act of insight is portrayed through the term *δίαρμα*, which means, ‘passage by sea’ or ‘crossing of a channel’, and metaphorically, ‘elevation’ (of style, or of a soul).¹⁸ Thus through a single term he portrays a conception of the divine reality *vis-à-vis* the world.

term *ἄπειρος* (infinite) comes from the same root, according to the same structure, and has more or less the same meaning, but a wider range of imports.

¹⁴ Cf. *πέρας*: *commMatt*, 11, 4–7; *frPs*, 70, 14; 137, 7. *τέλος*: *selPs*, 23, PG.1265.45; *excPs*, 23, PG.17.113.46.

¹⁵ *commMatt*, 11, 4–7, explaining the meaning of the same word in Matt. 14, 22.

¹⁶ A recurring reference to Gal. 4, 26, ‘But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all’. Cf. *Cels*, IV, 44; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.8; *homJer*, 5, 13; 10, 7; *commMatt*, 11, 17; 14, 13; 16, 15; *frPs*, 21, 21; 44, 9–10; 108, 14; 108, 29–31; 118, 100; 130, 2; *selPs*, 115, PG.12.1577.43; *selPs*, 130, 2, PG.12.1649.18; *Philocalia*, 1, 24.

¹⁷ Ref. to Heb. 12, 22–23, in *Cels*, III, 30; VII, 22; VIII, 5; Cf. *Princ* (Gr.), IV.2.1; *commJohn*, VI, XLIII; *homJer*, 12, 3. Ref. to Psalms, 47, 2 & 9, in *commJohn*, VI, XLII; also s. *commEph*, section 12; *Cels*, VII, 29 (ref. to Psalm 75, 3 & 47, 2–3); *frPs*, 44, 9–10; 45, 5; 106, 7; *homJer*, 16, 14 (ref. to Jer. 4, 5); 9, 2; *frJer*, 48; *commJohn*, 28, XXV; *selPs*, 15, PG.12.1212.10; *selPs*, 45, PG.12.1433.27 & 29 & 34; 47, PG.12.1437.50; 9; *selEz*, 9, PG.13.801.30; *Philocalia*, 1, 8; 21, 18.

¹⁸ The term is used in *commJohn*, 10, XXIII: ἡ φυσικὸν ἔχουσα διάρμα ψυχὴ καὶ ὀξύτητα νοητῶν διορατικὴν. The Word of God is analogous to ‘a tower’ whose ‘height and *δίαρμα*’ is enormous (in *frLuc*, 215 and *commMatt*, 17, 7 alike). Clement of Alexandria used this once: *Stromateis*, 7.7.45: μετὰ διάρματος ἐνθέου τῆς εὐχῆς. Of the Cappadocians, only Basil took up the term definitely in his *Homiliae super Psalmos* (PG.29.380.51); possibly he did so in *Enarratio in Prophetam Isaiam*, 9.229 & 9.257, assuming this work is actually his own, which I strongly doubt. Originally, the term *δίαρμα* comes from Heraclitus, Fr. 1 and Melissus, Fr. 10, and was widely used in Geography by Strabo and Agathemerus.

At another point eternal life is depicted as a 'shore'.¹⁹ The figure claims scriptural provenance²⁰ and depicts the entire world as a 'sea': during a consummation, Christ and his angels passing judgement on the world stand by the 'shore', either 'elevating' certain ones to the 'regime' which they deserve, or 'casting' others 'out'.²¹ Likewise, 'as the Holy Spirit proclaims to the Church', Christ has reigned both before the aeons in an incorporeal form and in the aeon (αἰωνίως) in a corporeal form.²² The term αἰωνίως here cannot mean 'eternally', since the Incarnation lasted only for the lifetime of Jesus.

The Logos is present not only in this visible world, but also is the supreme plane of being. He stands 'as it were, midway between uncreated nature and that of all created things; and brings us the benefits of the Father, while as our high priest he conveys our prayers to the supreme God'.²³ The figure of the 'ladder' of Jacob, with the Son standing on the top of it, is a picturesque depiction of the perception: with regard to his function within the world, the Logos stands on top, which is eternal life, having on his right hand the 'so-called invisible creatures' and on his left 'the visible and corporeal' ones. Yet, 'Christ reigns upon them all'.²⁴

This imagery represents the Logos being both in divine reality and in the world. The view of incorporeal creatures (that is, of the 'reasons' of the world), as well as of God inasmuch as he can be comprehended, is the object of contemplation. This is part of what in the Latin rendering of *Princ* is stated as 'eternal gospel'.²⁵ This is why Origen avers that 'the inheritance of rational nature is contemplation of both corporeals and incorporeals'.²⁶ To countenance Christ in that supreme plane of being is to contemplate him in a clear-sighted manner. For 'Christians have learnt that their eternal (αἰώνιον) life consists in knowing that only true supreme God and Jesus Christ whom he sent'.²⁷ Accordingly, the 'inheritance of rational nature is the knowledge of God':²⁸ this is a comment on the passage, 'and their inheritance will be in the aeon'.²⁹ This inheritance

¹⁹ *commMatt*, 10, 12; *frProv*, 1, PG.13.21.29.

²⁰ *Matt*, 13, 47–50.

²¹ *commMatt*, 10, 12–13.

²² *selPs*, 145, PG.12.1676.21–22. *Comm. on Psalm 145*, 10, 'The Lord will reign in the aeon'.

²³ *Cels*, III, 34.

²⁴ *commMatt*, 16, 5.

²⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.8. s. pp. 96f.

²⁶ *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.41; 25, PG.12.1276.5; 54, PG.12.1465.38; 67, PG.12.1508.29; 117, PG.12.1581.51–54; 138, PG.12.1661.42; *frPs*, 83, 3; 138, 14–16; *selGen*, PG.12.125.5; *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.26; 5, 17.176.25; 7, 17.181.3; 31, 17.249.47; 31, 17.252.14.

²⁷ Cf. John, 17, 3. *Cels*, III, 37.

²⁸ *selPs*, 36, PG.12.1317.42–44. Cf. *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.38–44; *selPs*, 15, PG.12.1213.1–3; *selPs*, 44, PG.12.1432.44–51.

²⁹ Psalm 36, 18.

is also portrayed as ‘salvation’.³⁰ This is the sense, in which ‘knowledge’ is an ‘end’, since ‘the destination (πέρας) of a rational nature is knowledge of the Holy Trinity’.³¹

There is a twofold range of vision while being in eternal life. Firstly, contemplation of all the ‘past aeons’ and the events which occurred in them:³² they are finite since they are creatures (γεγονότα).³³ Secondly, contemplation of the wisdom of God, that is, of the divine reality beyond the world. This is the ‘contemplation of the aeon to come’, which is also styled ‘kingdom of heavens’,³⁴ being the ‘contemplation of the corporeals and incorporeals’ on account of the twofold vision from that abode. The term ‘corporeal’ applies to the ‘view’ of the world, both in its constitution and its course in history. The term ‘incorporeal’ bespeaks contemplation of the wisdom of God.

Considering how Origen perceives eternal life, we can conclude that to him the term αἰώνιος (eternal) does not imply ‘duration’ of time; rather it suggests quality of life in the appropriate *place*, which is certainly *in* time. I then assert that he feels that the terms αἰώνιος ζωῇ (eternal life) and αἰὼν (aeon) are not so much derived from ἀεὶ (always) and ὄν (being).³⁵ Rather, the spatial character³⁶ of this ‘land of promise’ is in his mind related to the term αἶα, which means ‘land’ or ‘earth’.³⁷

It should be emphasized that the etymology of αἰὼν posited as derived from ἀεὶ + ὄν should be read with caution and reservation, since this is likely to be misguided. Varro, who ascribes this etymology to Chrysippus, preserves the testimony in a Latin text.³⁸

³⁰ *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1613.17; *frPs*, 86, 1; *Cels*, IV, 8.

³¹ *selPs*, 38, PG.12.1389.1–2; *frPs*, 70, 14.

³² *selPs*, 76, PG.12.1540.4; *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.29; 144, PG.12.1673.26; *frPs*, 9, 37–38; 131, 11; 144, 13.

³³ *selPs*, 54, PG.12.1469.15; *selPs*, 67, PG.12.1508.34; *expProv*, 19, PG.17.209.6.

³⁴ *selPs*, 142, PG.12.1668.51; *frPs*, 142, 8.

³⁵ Cf. *Enneads*, III.7.4.

³⁶ In the structure of Greek words, the final syllable ‘-ὼν’ denotes a ‘greatness’ of what the root of the word indicates. M.X. Οικονόμου, *Γραμματική τῆς Αρχαίας Ελληνικῆς* (Grammar of the Ancient Greek Language), p. 237, §385. The final syllable ‘-ὼν’ added to the root of the word ‘αἶ-α’ (earth) produces ‘αἶ-ων’. Subsequently, αἰὼν means ‘great earth’, or ‘high land’. Taking into account that Origen uses the pattern ‘arc of the heaven’ (ἀψίδα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) (*Cels*, III, 80; VII, 44) this conception of aeon is highly probable. The word πύλ-ων (which, in this context, is synonym to ἀψίς) comes from πύλ-η in the same way that αἶ-ων comes from αἶ-α.

³⁷ Αἶα meaning ‘earth’: Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alphaiota, entry 2. *Etymologicum Genuinum* (α-ἀμωσγένεω), Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 156. *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 27. *Etymologicum Symeonis* (α-ἀμωσγένεω), v. 1, p. 114. Hesychius of Alexandria, *Lexicon* (Α–Ο), Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 1654. Αἶα meaning ‘earth’ as either ‘dry land’ (*Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 27), or, ‘receptacle’ (χωρητική, *op. cit.* p. 222), or ‘giving birth to’ (*op. cit.* p. 222). However, αἶα is also coupled with the meaning of ‘shore’ (αἰγιαλός): *Etymologicum Gudianum* (ἀάλιον-ξεῖα), Alphabetic entry alpha, pp. 34 & 36.

³⁸ Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, VI, 11. (s. *SVF*, II, 47, 28–30). Of course, dictionaries of later times employed the etymology.

The original meaning of αἰὼν is 'vital force'; this is why it is used in reference to the 'soul'.³⁹ Origen quite often uses the term αἰὼν in the sense of 'life'. Later, in the Greek tragic poets, αἰὼν came to mean 'duration of a life'. So, the original meaning of αἰὼν as 'life' is actually a *spatio-temporal* one.⁴⁰ It is only later that the term acquired a primarily *temporal* meaning. Eventually, in the Greek philosophers, αἰὼν came to be used in the sense of 'eternity' set off against 'time'.⁴¹ Only after αἰὼν received this temporal signification is the adverb αἰεὶ used in the sense of 'always'. The adverb αἰεὶ or ᾄει (always) came into use thereafter and the same happened with the term αἰδῖος (eternal).⁴²

Thus the turning point in the original meaning of αἰὼν occurs at the epoch of Classicism. It is not surprising then that, almost seven centuries later, Plotinus asserts αἰὼν to be derived from ᾄει + ὄν.⁴³ It is obvious that he thinks that the term αἰὼν was formed after ᾄει and it denotes only the higher timeless reality; he urges that the real meaning of ᾄει is 'truly' being.⁴⁴ So he asserts that the term αἰὼν came into use only according to this linguistic and philosophical process. It is plain that Plotinus traces the linguistic history of the term αἰὼν only as back as Plato's time.⁴⁵ However, the facts are quite different. For the writings of Homer show that the term αἰὼν is more archaic than Plotinus asserts.

A. Chroust erroneously represented Aristotle urging that αἰὼν is derived from ᾄει and ὄν.⁴⁶ This is one more case of taking Aristotle's passages out of

³⁹ Cf. Homer, *Ilias*, 14, 453: ἐπεὶ δὴ τὸν γε λίπη ψυχὴ τε καὶ αἰὼν. Thus αἰὼν comes to mean 'life'. Cf. *Ilias*, 19, 27: ἐκ δ' αἰὼν πέφασται.

⁴⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 279a11f.

⁴¹ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 37d7–8.

⁴² Whether this means 'timeless' or 'omnitemporal' is a matter of endless dispute.

⁴³ Cf. *Enneads*, III.7.4: αἰὼν γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ ᾄει ὄντος. Likewise in III.7.5 & 6; VI.2.21. Later still, Proclus became obsessed with the idea, stating this every now and then, but he wavers at many points. Damascius, maintaining the idea of aeon meaning 'life', qualifies the notion of everlastingness by introducing a certain *participation* of 'aeon' to 'being': 'aeon' is not 'always being' in itself, but this is called so because the ultimate Being (ὄν) is being 'always'. 'Perpetuality' (τὸ ᾄει) is one thing, but 'being' (τὸ ὄν) is another: Damascius, *In Parmenidem*, pp. 22–23 & 32. Proclus, groping for the actual meaning of ᾄει, had said this, too: *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 1, pp. 234 & 291; v. 3, pp. 15 & 100; *Theologia Platonica (lib. 1–5)*, v. 3, p. 58. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 1, p. 232). So did Porphyry (*Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*, Sententia 44) and Simplicius (*In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 10, p. 1155). Despite the fuss made by Neoplatonists, in Late Antiquity this derivation did not enjoy the currency that one might have imagined. No Christian author upheld the etymology, which was in fact generated by Plotinus, upheld by Proclus who made too much ado about this. Only Theodoret of Cyrus applies the expression 'always being' (τὸν ᾄει ὄντα) to God in relation to Him being αἰώνιος. *De Incarnatione Domini*, PG.75.1456.42. Echoing the Plotinian proposition in a very attenuated manner, Basil of Caesarea teaches that one should 'not inquire into those things which are not always, any more than one does about Him who is always' (μὴ ἐξέταζε τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος). *Adversus Eos qui per Calumniam Dicunt Dicit a Nobis Tres Deos*, PG.31.1493.27, reproduced verbatim by John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela*, PG.95.1081.41–42.

⁴⁴ *Enneads*, III.7.6.

⁴⁵ Once 'aeon' is presumed to suggest atemporality, one could find it all too unexpected for Plato to assign the epithet eternal (αἰώνιος) to time. Cf. *Timaeus* 37d7.

⁴⁶ A. Chroust, "The Meaning of Time in the Ancient World", p. 31, n. 176.

context. In *De Caelo*, he is clear that αἰὼν means *life* in the first place. It also may mean the divine realm, but he enunciates that this meaning is *subsequent* to the fact that the divine realms is ‘immortal and divine’. It is because what is ‘immortal’ exists ‘always’ (αἰεὶ)⁴⁷ that the adverb αἰεὶ is related to αἰὼν. It is then αἰεὶ which should be derived from αἰὼν, not the other way around. This is why αἰεὶ does not necessarily mean ‘always’: it may suggest simply *the mode of divine being*, which is of course assumed to be timeless and spaceless. This can become perfectly clear once one ponders upon this portion of the *Physica*:

It is therefore clear that things that exist timelessly, as such, are not in time. (“Ὡστε φανερόν ὅτι τὰ αἰεὶ ὄντα, ἢ αἰεὶ ὄντα, οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν χρόνῳ.”)⁴⁸

I quote this portion also in the original because αἰεὶ cannot be translated as ‘always’. For what Aristotle says at this point is that those which are αἰεὶ, are being αἰεὶ on account of them being timeless. In fact he points to atemporal life, not to everlasting duration. Thus, what he means by αἰεὶ in the first place is a notion *subsequent* to being in the divine realm. This is what Porphyry, Damascius (even Proclus at points) did, as shown a moment ago. It is *after* this meaning that αἰεὶ acquired the meaning of ‘always’, just because (as Aristotle explains in *De Caelo*) the divine realm is ‘immortal’ and hence it exists ‘always’. I emphasize, therefore, that *it is not αἰὼν which came from αἰεὶ*, but it is the adverb αἰεὶ (always) that was derived from αἰὼν. Therefore, αἰεὶ is by no means the root of αἰὼν, but αἰὼν is the root of αἰεὶ.⁴⁹

In dictionaries the term αἰὼν is stated to mean ‘life’ and, in the second place, ‘a lifetime’. It is through that notion that *time* enters into the import of αἰὼν.

In the *Etymologicum Magnum* we read this meaning, but what is more important is the etymology provided there: αἰὼν comes from ἄειν, which means ‘to blow’, in the sense that ‘wind’ does so. The word for ‘wind’ is πνεῦμα (spirit) just because an animate being breathes in order to live.⁵⁰ This means that the lexicon holds fast to the meaning of αἰὼν as ‘life’.⁵¹ At the same point, the noisy derivation of αἰὼν from αἰεὶ + ὄν is stated, but only as the third alternative,⁵² while it was

⁴⁷ Cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 279a11f. Equally clear is Aristotle in *Metaphysica*: Φαμέν δὲ τὸν θεὸν εἶναι ζῶν ἄϊδιον ἄριστον, ὥστε ζωὴ καὶ αἰὼν συνεχὴς καὶ ἄϊδιος ὑπάρχει τῷ θεῷ. (1072b28–30). The synonymity of ζωὴ and αἰὼν is obvious.

⁴⁸ *Physica*, 221b3–5.

⁴⁹ In his *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque* (vol. 1, p. 42), P. Chantraine makes some conjectures, not opting for any solution and leaving the question moot. He does not anyway couple αἰὼν with αἶα (earth, land). Taking into account the spatio-temporal meaning attributed to αἰὼν by Origen, and considering the initial import of αἰὼν (as in Homer’s *Ilias*, 14.453, 19.27), and αἰεὶ (as in Homer’s *Odyssey*, 21.69, 9.74 etc.), I assert that αἰὼν may well be derived from the term αἶα.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Etymologicum Gudianum*, Alphabetic entry epsilon, p. 465.

⁵¹ So does *Etymologicum Genuinum*, (9 cent. A.D.) Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 263.

⁵² *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 41. Cf. *Etymologicum Gudianum*, *Addimenta in Etymologicum Gudianum*, Alphabetic entry alpha, p. 61.

deemed necessary to note that ‘aeon is neither time nor part of time, since this cannot be counted’. It is significantly added that this is the interpretation urged by ‘the theologian’.⁵³ Still, the standard definition maintained throughout the lexicon is αἰὼν meaning ‘life’.⁵⁴ In *Etymologicum Symeonis* the interesting remark is made: the adverb αἰεὶ is ‘found in twelve voices (φωναί)’, which means twelve different ‘pronunciations’, of which though only eleven are stated.⁵⁵

Αἰώνιος (eternal) is what pertains to that holy αἰῶν (land). Besides, the etymology of αἰώνιος from ‘earth’ should not be regarded as unexpected.⁵⁶ For it seems that this ‘eternal life’ has a spatial character matching the old Greek word αἰών (or, ἡϊών, shore, beach, bank).⁵⁷ When, therefore, Origen speaks of ‘boundless aeon’ (ἄπεραντος αἰὼν) this should in no case be interpreted as ‘infinite time’, since the notion has no place in his thought. With reference to eternal life, the use of the term αἰὼν alludes to another *quality of life*, not another *quantity of time*. If there is a notion of *infinity* (and certainly there is one, since the term ‘boundless’ is used), this pertains only to the infinity of the divine wisdom, which is the object of contemplation.⁵⁸

Thus Origen makes the contradistinction between the ‘aeons’ on the grounds of the quality of life. To cite an instance, he speaks of the ‘deceit of this aeon’,⁵⁹ or of the ‘present aeon which is evil’,⁶⁰ or ‘evil will not exist in the aeon’,⁶¹ alluding to the eschatological perspective of abolition of evil, which will be expounded in chapter 9. Accordingly, he refers to a certain ‘heavenly and better aeon’ (ἐπουρανίου καὶ κρείττονος αἰῶνος)⁶² in the same sense that he speaks of ‘another aeon’, that is, another particular world.⁶³

⁵³ *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 41. The author refers to Gregory of Nazianzus (called ‘Gregory the Theologos’ in Eastern Christianity). Cf. *op. cit.* pp. 470, 261, 329, 455, 490, 552, 689, 804. John of Damascus (who lived almost in the era of publication of this lexicon) employed his expressions (*Expositio Fidei*, sections 17, 54, 60, 61, 65, 79). Both Gregory and John had upheld the terminology from Origen, although the idea of a timeless aeon (which they at points maintained) is contrary to Origen. *COT*, p. 262, notes 365 & 374.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 266.

⁵⁵ Let me record them: αἰεὶ, αἰεὶ, αἰέν, αἰές, αἰί, αἰέ, αἰ (from which τὸ αἰίδιος is derived), ἡί, αἰή, ἄέ, ἄές. *Etymologicum Symeonis*, (A.D. cent. 12), v. 1, p. 176.

⁵⁶ I discuss later that the perception of eternal life being a kind of ‘edge’ is consistent with Origen’s notion of ‘after’ the eternal life, which is canvassed in chapter 9.

⁵⁷ Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter eta, entry 143. *Etymologicum Gudianum* (Ζεῖδωρος-ῶμαι), alphabetic entry eta, p. 238. *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 422. *Etymologicum Symeonis*, (α-άμωσγέπως), v. 1, p. 296. Hesychius of Alexandria, *Lexicon* (Α-Ο), Alphabetic letter eta, entry 279.

⁵⁸ This is stated in *exhMar*, XLVII. Origen here uses the term ἀλήκτω (endless) explicitly referring to the ‘contemplation’ (θεᾶν) of the ‘living Logos’ (ἔμψυχον λόγον).

⁵⁹ *frMatt*, 3.

⁶⁰ Quoting Gal. 1, 4. *homJer*, 17, 3.

⁶¹ *commJohn*, 2, XIII.

⁶² *Cels*, VI, 35. At that point Origen once again distances himself from the Gnostic views. *s. infra*.

⁶³ *homJer*, 14, 17.

The duration of living in the supreme particular space is the same as that of all the other ones: it lasts for the period of an aeon and abode therein is subject to judgement. Sundry spaces notwithstanding, the time of the entire world is one and the same, being itself a natural element.⁶⁴ Certainly there is relativity in the perception of time by the various orders of being, still the duration of the aeon is marked by the same moment for all ranks of life.

Thus, when Origen speaks of 'ἄπεραντος (limitless) aeon', he alludes to an attribute applying only to the paramount existential standing; this unique feature is the 'infinity' of the sight enjoyed from that point of view. To be in eternal life means to live a life which is temporal. Subsequently, there is not only one aeon to come, but also many of them, marked by consummations and judgements. Therefore, as the time to come comprises many aeons, there can be no notion of one 'infinite aeon'. There is no aeon of infinite duration: all the aeons last for a finite period of time and each of them is marked by two consecutive consummations.

There is a point, however, where the term 'infinite aeon' is used, in a passage in *Princ*, where questions might arise. For the expression 'infinite aeon', or 'boundless aeon', is a figure of speech used to compare the 'fifty years of a lifetime here' to the entirety of time. Out of this comparison, 'aeon' (which is used instead of the term 'time') is stated as 'infinite' (ἄπεραντον αἰῶνα, ad perpetuum et aeternum tempus).⁶⁵ The way in which the term 'infinite' is used allows for no doubt that this is but a figure of speech. In the same way he speaks of 'infinite souls, as it were',⁶⁶ simply meaning a vast multitude of creatures, since he subsequently uses the expression ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, which effectively means 'so to speak'.⁶⁷ In this text, preserved in the *Philocalia*, the term 'infinite' is used all too loosely. This stands in remarkable contrast to other Greek writings, where he constantly applies the term 'infinite' to God only. In any case his views that both time and creatures are finite are indeed enunciated in his works in Greek. The fact, however, that the term 'infinite' (ἄπειρος) is used three times in two short consecutive paragraphs is quite strange. In the light of the rest of his works extant in the original, this is unlike Origen. This invites some questions as to the precision with which did the Cappadocians who compiled *Philocalia* render Origen's own words.

As for the translation (the parallel Latin text is extant) there are critical mistakes. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti translated ἄπειρον αἰῶνα as 'l'éternité sans fin',⁶⁸ which is erroneous and misleading. The very word 'éternité' is never used by Origen and here the term 'aeon' means just 'time'. The Latin translation of Rufinus at this point (he applies the term 'aeon' to soul as 'aeternum'),

⁶⁴ *COT*, pp. 206f, 219f, 259f.

⁶⁵ *Princ*, III.1.13 (Gr. & Lat.).

⁶⁶ *Princ*, III.1.14. (Gr.), but 'innumerabiles sunt animae' in the parallel Latin.

⁶⁷ *Cels*, I, 51; II, 25; III, 37; VIII, 39; *commJohn*, 10, V; 19, II; 32, II; *selEz*, 7, PG.13.788.56.

⁶⁸ H. Crouzel – M. Simonetti, *Origène: Traité des Principes*, v. III, p. 77.

compared to its Greek parallel, show that he distorted Origen's account. In addition, H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti once again translated ἀπέραντον αἰῶνα as 'l'éternité sans fin'⁶⁹ quite falsely. The Latin translation by Rufinus, 'ad perpetuum et aeternum tempus' is misleading once again.

The term ἀπέραντος αἰὼν (boundless aeon) pertains to the quality of life in the superlative existential status. This life will last for one aeon at least, and during this term a 'boundless vision'⁷⁰ of the Logos is enjoyed. In case that a specific being maintains the same existential allotment after consummation and judgement, then one should speak not of one 'boundless aeon', but of two or more 'boundless *aeons*'. Thus the *duration* of time is not expressed by the term 'boundless' (which pertains only to the *quality* of eternal life), but simply by the term 'aeons' used in the Plural.⁷¹ When Origen wishes to denote abode in the topmost existential order, he uses the term 'boundless *aeons*.' If the term 'boundless aeon' implied a notion of everlasting duration, then the expression 'boundless aeon' would simply mean 'infinite time'. In that case, however, it would be absurd to speak of 'boundless *aeons*'. For the time thereafter should be understood to comprise *one* infinite 'aeon', that is, an infinite duration in eternal life, which is an incongruous hypothesis in this theological context.

All these comments can be confirmed by Origen's own words. In *frLuc* he expounds his view of eternal life in terms of both space and time. In the same work, 'boundless *aeons*' bespeak how residence in eternal life is perceived in terms of time. Quoting Luke 12, 19 ('And I will say to my soul', "Soul you have many goods laid down for many years") he states:

He was saying, 'You have many goods laid down' since he himself was laid down; [and he was saying] 'you have goods laid down for many years', being himself led astray on the judgement of what is good; for he did not know that the real goods do not exist in the cursed earth, but in the heaven. It is there that the rest and merriment of the blessed in Christ Jesus exists, not 'in many years' but in boundless *aeons*.⁷²

Hence, the expression 'boundless aeon' is in fact a figure of speech: according to this, the adjective accompanying the noun, does not actually pertain to the noun itself, but to the *existential state* of a denizen of that space. What is 'boundless' is not 'aeon' itself, but the experience (*viz.* vision) enjoyed while dwelling in that place. This figure of speech is generally termed 'metonymy'. According to this, a container, or receptacle, is named after its content (ἀπὸ τοῦ περιεχομένου τὸ

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.* III, 79–80 (515).

⁷⁰ *exhMar*, XLVII.

⁷¹ Cf. *frLuc*, 193: 'the repose of the blessed takes place in boundless aeons' (εἰς ἀπέραντους αἰῶνας ἢ τῶν μακαρίων ἐστὶν ἀνάπαυσις καὶ εὐφροσύνη ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ)—commenting on Luke 12, 19.

⁷² *frLuc*, 58.

περιέχον),⁷³ or vice versa.⁷⁴ Origen was aware of this idiomatic use of Greek and was always able to trace the meaning denoted by a phrase where a ‘metonymy’ was found.⁷⁵ When he explains the expression, ‘All the commandments of His are faithful’ (Psalm 110, 7), the comment is, ‘[David] designated the commandments faithful because they are worthy of faith, since they fulfil what they promise’.⁷⁶ In the same way he takes the expression, ‘God is faithful’, in 1 Cor. 1, 9 to advise, ‘you should perpetually believe in him’,⁷⁷ extolling God’s fidelity after the covenant recorded in the scriptures. In like manner he comments on the meaning of the terms ‘evil day’ and ‘good day’, stating that the term ‘day’ ‘here does not denote the course of the sun, but the feasts occurring during this [period]’.⁷⁸

What all these expressions have in common is that the adjective, although applied to the noun, does not actually refer to the noun itself; it rather pertains to the *existential state* of the human subject in its relation to the noun. Thus, ‘evil’ or ‘good’ does not point to the day (although literally the term is applied to it), but to the concomitant existential standing *in* the day. Likewise, ‘faith’ does not allude to God himself (although literally the term is applied to him): ‘faith’ betokens the existential condition of men in their relation to God. In like manner, ‘faith’ insinuates not the ‘commandments’ themselves, but the disposition towards them. Accordingly, ‘boundless’ does not actually denote the ‘aeon’ (although literally the term is applied to it), but the existential status of enjoying a ‘boundless’ vision from the point of view of eternal life. From that region one can contemplate the divine life, yet ontologically standing *outside* this, since this location is within the world. This notwithstanding, another perception of time is appropriate to this abode. Commenting on Psalm 22, 6 (‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for a long period of time’), eternal life is depicted as a place ‘in the right hand of wisdom’:

[We speak of] length of time and, further, of life [existing] in the right hand of wisdom, whereas days of life are the various degrees of enlightenment of the truth.⁷⁹

⁷³ *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 460, line 45. *Etymologicum Gudianum* (Ξείδωρος-ῶμαι), Alphabetic entry theta, p. 268, line 36. Cf. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik*, p. 344, §685.

⁷⁴ *Vice versa* means that the content is named after the receptacle. On p. 175 we saw those attaining to eternal life called ‘the eternal sheep’ (πρόβατα αἰώνια): they are those who ‘listened to the voice’ of Christ, who raises them to eternal life in return. *Homiliae in Job* (fragmenta in catenis; typus II) (e codd. Marc.) PG.17.77.45–50.

⁷⁵ He refers to ‘metonymy’ by name. In *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 123, ‘those who live in either the heaven or on earth, are themselves called *heaven* or *earth*, after metonymy (μετωνυμικῶς)’. In *commJohn*, 6, XIV and *commMatt*, 13, 2 the term μετωνυμία is used in a literal sense (‘change of one’s name’).

⁷⁶ *selPs*, 110, PG.12.1569.38.

⁷⁷ *commICor*, p. 234.

⁷⁸ *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1584.21.

⁷⁹ *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.53.

What exists in eternal life is 'length of time' and 'life'. This is why, at the same point, he regards the contemplation of wisdom as a 'table of rational foods' which Christ 'prepared' (as in Psalm 22, 5) for those who ascend there. This is the 'table' regarded as 'immortality' and 'life' in the right hand of wisdom.⁸⁰ However, there is a further distinction made between 'length of time' (applied to eternal life) and 'days of life', which pertain to 'various degrees of enlightenment of the truth'.⁸¹

I have argued for a notion of relativity in the perception of time in divers existential allotments.⁸² In addition, there is a unique feature of this perception: in that place, there is no perspective of a further spatial 'ascending'.⁸³ 'Horizontal' activity is directed towards the future, but the 'vertical' perspective, as a 'goal', has been accomplished. Thus 'movement' in that space has a specific sense which is distinct from the one referring to the rest of particular 'worlds'. In the latter ones, the spatio-temporal movement is both a 'horizontal' (that is, the course in time) and a 'vertical' one (that is, the prospect of changing class of being). In eternal life there is only the 'horizontal' perspective, which is direction towards the future. There are no higher stages to be reached and there is no 'clearer' sight (from a worldly point of view) to be achieved either. The hierarchy of this worldly is related to the clarity of contemplation of the divine wisdom: the lower a plane of life, the dimmer the sight of truth. This is why he regards attaining to eternal life at the nearest possible 'reaching the truth face to face'. This is far superior to the sight 'in this life', which is a perception 'through a glass, darkly'.⁸⁴

The term αἰώνιος as a homonym

Origen, like so many writers, regards 'aeon' also in a temporal sense designating 'time'. Discussion in this section shows that 'aeon' has also the meaning of 'world'. In this denotation, the spatial sense is prominent. Certainly, it is not only in Origen that 'aeon' means either a period of time or 'world'. It can be found also in the Scripture itself in this or that meaning here and there.

In Origen the term αἰώνιος (eternal) is a homonym. There are indeed three distinct cases where the term αἰώνιος is applied: 'eternal God', 'eternal life' and 'eternal death'. Each of these terms pertains to a different reality of its own

⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁸¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁸² *COT*, pp. 259f.

⁸³ The meaning of *hope* while being in eternal life is discussed in chapter 9.

⁸⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 13, 12. *Cels*, VII, 38; 50. *commJohn*, 1, XVI; 2, XXXVII; 10, XLIII; LVIII; 13, XXV. *exhMar*, XIII. *deOr*, XI, 2. *homJer*, 8, 7. *commMatt*, 15, 23. *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 183 (*Cant*, 2, PG.17.261.28). *commICor*, section 53. *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5-V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), pp. 138; 228. *homJob*, PG.12:1044.41; 1264.4; *frPs*, 22, 5; 88, 2-3; *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.4; 75, PG.12.1536.28.

existential characteristics. Thus the term αἰώνιος may refer to either the natural or the transcendent reality.

Beyond these distinct significations of αἰώνιος, the term αἰὼν itself is at points used in a sense pertaining to the world only. In that case αἰὼν has both a spatial and temporal meaning: this is a *natural* reality.

To speak of Origen's 'concept of eternity' in general is therefore an abstraction that could be misleading, since there is no universal conception of 'eternity' in his thought. In fact, the very term 'eternity' (αἰωνιότης) is never used, as it is never used in the New Testament either. The problem should be perused in some detail, in order to see how Origen uses the terms related to αἰὼν. Then some significant conclusions might be reached.

The term αἰωνιότης (eternity) is not used at all.⁸⁵ This is why I entitle this part 'the notion of *eternal*', eschewing the term 'eternity'. Instead, Origen uses the term *Jerusalem*.⁸⁶ The different meanings applied to this is a point calling for special attention. Certainly this is a homonym and there are different imports attributed to it. We can nevertheless find something in common in the varying implications: 'Jerusalem' is styled any reality in which 'friendship with God' is established. A *soul*, which is a 'friend of God', is termed 'Jerusalem'.⁸⁷ The *Church* is titled 'Jerusalem', too.⁸⁸ The scriptural term 'upper Jerusalem'⁸⁹ is used in order to signify the actual state of *eternal life*.⁹⁰ In most cases, however, this expression is used to denote the created reality. This 'upper Jerusalem'⁹¹ is also termed by means of the scriptural expression 'city of God'.⁹² This is the reality from which the Fall occurred,⁹³ therefore, this is a 'fatherland'⁹⁴ and a

⁸⁵ It is then quite absurd that P. Plass describes no less than five kinds of 'eternity' asserting that this term appears in Origen with all these meanings. P. Plass, "The Concept of Eternity in Patristic Theology", pp. 11–13.

⁸⁶ R. Sorabji's (*op. cit.* p. 122) emphasis on the expression of *Princ* that God is 'not only above time but also above eternity' is pointless. The expression is evidently an interpolation of Rufinus, since Origen never used the term 'eternity'. God being transcendent to the world was depicted by means of different diction.

⁸⁷ *selPs*, 147, PG.12.1677.3 & 7. A man who has made progress and experiences eternal life 'within' himself, is called 'the holy place of God'. *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.39; *excPs*, 23, PG.17.113.39.

⁸⁸ *deOr*, XV, 3; *commJohn*, 6, XLII.

⁸⁹ *Gal*, 4, 26.

⁹⁰ *Cels*, VI, 25; *selPs*, 115, PG.12.1577.46.

⁹¹ *Cels*, IV, 44; VII, 29; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.8; *commJohn*, 6, XLV; 10, XXIX; *homJer*, 5, 13; 10, 7; *frLuc*, 168; *Philocalia*, 1, 24; *Cant*, PG.17.256.44; 17.269.32; *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum (fragmenta)*, p. 131; *commMatt*, 11, 17; 14, 13; 14, 17; 16, 15; *frPs*, 21, 21; 44, 9–10; 75, 3; 108, 29–31; 118, 7; 118, 100; 124, 1; 130, 2; 136, 6; *selPs*, 75, PG.12.1536.25 & 26; *selPs*, 115, PG.12.1577.44; 118, PG.12.1592.30; 120, PG.12.1649.18; 139, PG.12.1680.50; *excPs*, 36, PG.17.125.54; *expProv*, PG.17.200.6.

⁹² *s.* pp. 208, 330.

⁹³ *Cels*, VII, 28 & 29.

⁹⁴ *Cels*, VIII, 75; *s.* pp. 288f, discussion on the notion of 'fatherland'.

‘mother’.⁹⁵ For what now exists was ‘conceived’ in her womb and came into being out of non-being.⁹⁶ This metaphor is applied either to a soul loved by God, or to the Church, or to the ἡγεμονικόν of Christ.⁹⁷ At that point, the term commented on is ‘chamber’ (ταμιεῖον—as in the Song of Songs, 1, 3) which is taken as a synonym to the ‘upper Jerusalem’. The existential state befitting *eternal life* (as the topmost abode in the superlative existential status) is suggested through the term ‘Jerusalem’, too.⁹⁸ Likewise, the original state into the divine life, is over and again specified as ‘Jerusalem’, its denizens are ‘holy stones’ (λίθοι ἅγιοι)⁹⁹ or ‘living stones’, and this is why Jerusalem is stated as ‘mother’.¹⁰⁰

These designations of Jerusalem stand for the term *eternity* which is never used: once eternal life is present *within* a man, this blessed soul is called ‘Jerusalem’; so is the *Church*, which is portrayed as having been built of ‘living stones’ (λίθοι ζῶντες).¹⁰¹ A soul is a ‘living stone’; the earthly Church is made of ‘living stones’; beings in eternal life comprise a ‘Church’ of living stones,¹⁰² and providential creation is illustrated through the imagery of ‘living stones’, too.

Christ is called the first or ‘firstborn from the dead’.¹⁰³ We should ponder on whether he alone is the firstborn or first from the dead, with no others sharing this standing of being first with him. On this the Apostle says, ‘and he raised us up with Christ and made us sit in heavenly places with him’.¹⁰⁴ It is possible that those who are said to be raised up with Christ, and seated with him in a heavenly place, are the firstborn or first from the dead. They are like those people who are said to have been raised with him when ‘the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints appeared and went into the holy city’.¹⁰⁵ Possibly, the Apostle refers to such persons when he calls that city ‘the church of the firstborn ones’¹⁰⁶ which, he remarks, is written in heaven.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁵ Cf. Gal. 4, 26; s. p. 301, note 499.

⁹⁶ *Cant*, 3, PG.17.269.36.

⁹⁷ *Cant*, 1, PG.17.253.44.

⁹⁸ *Cels*, VI, 25; *commJohn*, 13, XIII.

⁹⁹ ‘Holy stones’ (οἱ λίθοι οἱ ἅγιοι) is a scriptural expression used as synonymous to ‘precious stones’ (λίθοι τίμιοι, s. chapter 1, p. 55, n. 104). Cf. Lam. 4, 1; Zachariach, 9, 16. Origen uses this twice, in both instances using the language of Zachariach, 9, 16: *comm1Cor*, section 16; *selDeut*, PG.12.809.26. s. chapter 9, note 536.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Gal. 4, 26.

¹⁰¹ Cf. 1 Peter, 2, 5 and Eph. 2, 20. *Cels*, VIII, 19; *commJohn*, 1, XXXVI; 10, XXXV; 10, XXXIX; 10, XL; 13, XIII; *exhMar*, XLI; *deOr*, X, 2; *fiJer*, 48; *homJos* (Baehrens), p. 463; *commMatt*, 15, 25; 16, 3; 16, 21; *comm1Cor*, section 16; *commEph*, sections 12, 17; *selGen*, PG.12.128.6; *selPs*, 26, PG.12.1280.2.

¹⁰² It should be emphasized, however, that Origen does not accept the (Gnostic) view of the Church as ‘emanation from a higher world’ (Cf. *Cels*, VI, 35). Ἐκκλησία (Church) was the eighth member of the Valentinian Ogdoad: Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 1.1.1; 1.2.2; 1.5.6; Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos*, 25.

¹⁰³ Col. 1, 18; Rev. 1, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Eph. 2, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Matt. 27, 52–53. Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.37; 5.10.3.

¹⁰⁶ Heb. 12, 23.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Tim. 2, 5. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.6.3.

‘Jerusalem’ as a homonym is assigned different imports at the same time. A comment points to what is in common in the miscellaneous allegorical exegeses of the term: “Jerusalem is a symbol of knowledge, of the holy Church and of virtue”.¹⁰⁸ The Church is our ‘fatherland in God’.¹⁰⁹ Hence, ‘Jerusalem’ may mean ‘eternal life’, either as a personal experience, or as the highest-up plane of being, or indeed as the providential creation into the divine being. Subsequently, the term αἰώνιος (eternal) points to either a natural or a supra-natural reality, as it may well refer to the world, or to God.

The term αἰὼν (aeon) itself has a natural import and points exclusively to the world as a spatio-temporal reality. The passage of Psalm 5, 12, ‘They will exceedingly rejoice in the aeon and you will encamp in them’, provides the theologian with the chance to afford a definition:

Aeon is a natural system, comprising various bodies [and] containing logical differentia (λογικὰς διαφοράς) on account of knowledge of God.¹¹⁰

This epigrammatic dictum sets Origen’s thought apart from the import attributed to ‘aeon’ by Platonists, as well as by other Greeks and Christians alike. After all, this definition preserves the original Homeric *natural* import of the term, which is *life*. Only later did this come to mean the *time* of a life. Since a lifetime is pretty long, later still it came to mean a very *long time*, which arrived to *endless* time, and eventually to timelessness. Thus, whereas Origen applies the term αἰὼν to the world, other writers took this as indicating the divine realm, which is in fact a paraphrase of what the foregoing wavering Neoplatonists suggested. I have argued that Gregory of Nazianzus and John of Damascus (although utilized the temporal nomenclature of Origen) assigned to αἰὼν a timeless sense—as against to what Origen himself did.¹¹¹

Philo used the term αἰὼν, stating that it refers to God; its nature is an eternal *today*. Origen provided an exegesis of the term ‘today’ pertaining to God: to Him there is neither ‘morning nor evening’,¹¹² but only his atemporal life.¹¹³ By no means, however, does this exegesis constitute any kind of influence of Philo upon Origen. First, Origen does *not* use the term αἰὼν in such a sense.

¹⁰⁸ *selEz*, 17, PG.13.813.19.

¹⁰⁹ *Cels*, VIII, 75. Cf. about the primeval state before the Fall being ‘our ancient fatherland’ (pp. 288f.) and ‘mother’ (about this recurring reference to Gal. 4, 26, s. p. 301, n. 499).

¹¹⁰ *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46–49.

¹¹¹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Theophania (orat. 38)*, PG.36.320.14–18; *In Sanctum Pascha (orat. 45)*, PG.36.628.30–35. John of Damascus (quoting Gregory, without naming him), *Expositio Fidei*, section 15. *COT*, pp. 264 & 370.

¹¹² *commJohn*, 1, XXIX.

¹¹³ For ‘today’ indicating ‘eternity’, but interpreting different instances, Cf. Philo, *De Fuga*, 57. Philo however is hardly clear as to whether he means atemporality or everlasting duration. Cf. also, his reference to the inheritance of ‘heaven’, which is said to be ‘an eternal day’ (ἡμέραν αἰώνιον), *De Josepho*, 146.

In references to the divine reality he employs no noun at all. Secondly, Philo's conception of αἰὼν is entirely formed under Plato's influence. He regards αἰὼν as the 'exemplar and archetype of time' (τὸ χρόνου παράδειγμα καὶ ἀρχέτυπον), therefore¹¹⁴ his view of time is the same as that of Plato's: time, by being an 'imitation' of an 'archetype', is something which constitutes an affinity between God and the world. The single difference is that αἰὼν, compared with time, is 'boundless' (ἄπέρατος)¹¹⁵ and 'infinite' (ἄπειρος).¹¹⁶ The divine reality is a kind of endless time. C. Dodd urged that when Philo uses the term ζωὴ αἰώνιος (eternal life)¹¹⁷ he means a life which, like that of God's, is 'eternal' in the sense of 'timeless'.¹¹⁸ I subscribe to this opinion for this particular instance, noting however that this is the sole one in Philo's entire work where the expression ζωὴ αἰώνιος (eternal life) appears. Nevertheless, he uses the term αἰώνιος (eternal) in the sense of endless duration, speaking of 'eternal darkness' (σκότους αἰωνίου),¹¹⁹ or 'eternal freedom' (αἰώνιον ἐλευθερίαν)¹²⁰ to be attained, while elsewhere it is unclear whether αἰώνιος bespeaks everlasting duration or atemporality.¹²¹ Philo definitely uses αἰὼν to mean 'life', which is indeed the divine timelessness,¹²² but certainly there are instances where the term is used simply meaning 'time'.¹²³

Set off against this, Origen regards time as the element that par excellence *contrasts* the divine reality from the world. Time establishes no affinity between these two sheer different realities. This is why he eschews the term αἰὼν in order to depict the divine reality, although he does use the scriptural term αἰώνιος for God. Furthermore, against the background of Philo, he regards eternal life not as a timeless state, but as a spatio-temporal reality, a state *within* the world. C. Dodd suggests that in the Fourth Gospel there is an 'affiliation' of John's thought to Hebraic antecedents which regarded 'eternal life' as a life 'of action, movement and enjoyment'.¹²⁴ Certainly Dodd does not regard this life as one within the world, as Origen does. But these notions (action, movement, enjoyment) actually register prevalent existential characteristics of living in eternal life, as I discuss anon.

¹¹⁴ Philo, *De Mutatione Nominum*, 267; *Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 32; Cf. *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit*, 165: χρόνος is the βίος of the κόσμος αἰσθητός, whereas αἰὼν is the βίος of God and of the κόσμος νοητός. This is the same definition of αἰὼν adduced by Gregory of Nazianzus and John of Damascus in a virtually Platonic vein, and yet it was Origen who was regarded as a Platonist.

¹¹⁵ Philo, *De Fuga*, 57.

¹¹⁶ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium*, 85.

¹¹⁷ Philo, *De Fuga*, 78.

¹¹⁸ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit*, 290.

¹²⁰ Philo, *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 127.

¹²¹ Cf. Philo, *De Somniis* (lib. i-ii), 2.285: 'eternal kingdom' (αἰωνίου βασιλείας).

¹²² Philo, *De Mutatione Nominum*, 267.

¹²³ Philo, *Legum Allegoriarum Libri i-iii*, 3.25; *De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 76.8; *De Somniis* (lib. i-ii), 2.36; *De Specialibus Legibus* (lib. i-iv), 1.282.

¹²⁴ C.H. Dodd, *loc. cit.*

Thus, the definition of αἰὼν is expounded in a way denoting its spatio-temporal import. In *expProv* he tells us that ‘in his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul described the heavens by the notion of height’; this expression is a symbol of ‘rational natures’ that ‘are classified in worlds and have a body in accordance with their existential state.’¹²⁵ A ‘soul’ that ‘constantly makes progress, prepares for itself a heaven, which is a creature most pure and a dwelling place of angels where the intelligible substances are found’. In that place, the soul will find itself receiving ‘the apprehension of Being (τοῦ ὄντος) and will have comprehended the accurate cognition of things, that is, the renowned (πολύμυθον) judgements of God.’¹²⁶

The definition of ‘aeon’ as a ‘natural system’ bespeaks the temporal, as well as spatial, character of it. Αἰὼν is both the period of time and action between two consummations and judgements (the ‘horizontal’ motility) and the construction of the world during the same period (the ‘vertical’ structure).

In this sense, *aeon* points to what nowadays is known as *space-time*. Certainly, this is a rather static conception. For it considers an aeon as a definite period marked by two consecutive consummations. Nevertheless, this ‘system’ is thought over in a broader scale, that is, in the flux of time. In *selPs* it is explained how God is ‘known as creator and wise and provident and judge’. When the exegesis comes to the last of these conceptions of God, it is stated that He ‘is a Judge because of the sundry bodies of the rational beings (τῶν λογικῶν) and the various worlds and those containing the aeons.’¹²⁷

The expression ‘sundry bodies of rational beings’ betokens a particular ‘world’, that is, a certain aeon, perceived as a spatio-temporal reality. This is why Origen, speaking of time, makes the distinction not between ‘time’ and ‘the world’, but between time and ‘the *structure* of this world’.¹²⁸ The ‘world’ is a reality which is made of two agents interwoven with each other: ‘the structure of the world’ (the *spatial* element of space-time) and ‘time’ (the *temporal* element

¹²⁵ *expProv*, 3, PG.17.168.46.

¹²⁶ *loc. cit.* The expression τοῦ ὄντος betokening the absolute Being is of Platonic provenance, *Respublica* 582c (s. chapter 7, p. 209). Origen however appeals to the *Shepherd* of Hermas and 2 Macc. 7, 28 (s. p. 410, n. 170). Availing himself of Eph. 1,1, he asserts that it is only Paul who calls ‘the saints’ ‘those who are’ (τοῖς οὖσιν) and makes much of it in his commentaries on Romans and Ephesians. Naturally, the portion of Exodus 3, 14, ‘I am who I am’, is there making its own contribution. The idea of ‘coming to being out of non-being’ is there, too. I have canvassed the notion of God who ‘summons non-beings to being’ in *COT*, pp. 50–51, along with the influence of Origen upon Athanasius on this point. Cf. *commEph*, section 2: οἱ μετέχοντες τοῦ ὄντος γίνονται ὄντες, καλούμενοι οἰονεῖ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι. *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 25: καλεῖ δὲ τὰ ὄντα ἵνα ὑπακούσασιν αὐτοῖς χαρίσεται τὸ εἶναι. Likewise, in the *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 210.

¹²⁷ *selPs*, 138, PG.12.1661.51; the same in *frPs*, 138, 14–16.

¹²⁸ *commEph*, section 9: ‘the structure of this world’ (τῇ τοῦ κόσμου κατασκευῇ).

of space-time). This reality he designates as *aeon*. In like manner, he makes the distinction between the ‘constitution of life’ (τῇ συστάσει τῆς ζωῆς)¹²⁹ and time, which is illustrated as extended alongside with the ‘constitution’ of life. Thus, ‘constitution of life’ points to space proper, whereas time is defined as a distinct objective reality. The entirety of this indissoluble space-time is described as ‘life’, which is the most ancient and accurate (actually Homeric) sense of αἰὼν incisively treated by Origen.

However, there is something more connoted through the expression ‘the sundry bodies of rational beings’. This is the *one* world in the period between two consummations, whereas the expression ‘and the various worlds’ denotes the dynamics of this spatio-temporal reality. These ‘various worlds’ are regarded in a ‘horizontal’ succession, that is, as sequential worlds, one *after* another. It is through the varying successive worlds that God can be conceived as a Judge. This implies the outcome of a judgement as rearrangement of free and responsible historical subjects in the divers planes of being, and assumption of different bodies in accordance with one’s merits. It is only once the world is regarded in its movement and its subsequent transformations and rearrangements in the flux of time, that God may be regarded as a Judge.

In this context, the expression, ‘and those [worlds], which contain the aeons’ designates ‘aeons’ as particular spaces. The passage is a comment on Psalm 137, 16, ‘And in your book will all be written’. The comment is that ‘book of God is the contemplation of the corporeals and incorporeals’; in that book, ‘the reasons of Providence and Judgement are written and through this [book] God is known as creator and wise and provident and judge’.¹³⁰ This portion alludes to eternal life and bespeaks the ‘vision’ enjoyed from that existential standing. Therefore, the expression ‘the aeons’ pertains to the highest-up level of being, regarded in the flux of prolonged time. This is why the term ‘aeons’ is in the Plural once again.

In the Commentary on Romans¹³¹ there is a point where Origen has an opportunity to provide an account of what eternal life is. This passage is preserved only in Latin and should be studied with some caution. With regard to eternal life, it is stated that in the Scripture the term ‘eternity’ is sometimes employed to denote that which has no end and, sometimes, that which has no end in the present world but it has an end in the aeon to come.¹³² As regards ‘eternal life’, the attention of the reader is drawn upon three scriptural passages. The first is the saying of Jesus, ‘This is life eternal, that they should know You the only

¹²⁹ *expProv*, 10, PG.17.189.10.

¹³⁰ *selPs*, 138, PG.12.1661.51.

¹³¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.5, quoted in R. Tollinton, *Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen*, pp. 125–26.

¹³² Rufinus’ unawareness is plain: he considers ‘eternity’ although Origen never used such a term.

true God, and Him whom You did send, even Jesus Christ'.¹³³ The second is also a saying of Jesus, 'I am the way and the truth and the life'.¹³⁴ The third is Paul's statement, 'We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord'.¹³⁵

There are three fundamental notions, which constitute Origen's conception of eternal life, and they are indeed all implied at this point. The first scriptural passage denotes that eternal life entails *knowledge* of God and particularly his wisdom, namely, Christ. The second alludes to eternal life being Christ himself,¹³⁶ also being 'truth' (allusion to eternal life as knowledge) and 'life' (eternal life as 'immortality').¹³⁷ Also, eternal life is the result of a *walk* 'after' Christ, who is the 'way'.

No scriptural passage where Christ is stated as the 'gate' is quoted at that point, which purports to deal with eternal life. This is not incidental. For to human beings Christ is the 'way'. In general, he is the 'way' to those for whom he is not yet the 'gate', and he is the 'gate' only to those for whom he is no longer the 'way'. The third passage testifies to eternal life being a 'translation' to a superior space and residence with Christ.

It should be noticed that it is mainly to the *quality* of life, and the way towards this, that the reader's attention is drawn. On this point Rufinus seems confused and feels it necessary to add, as a kind of conclusion: "As therefore to be ever with the Lord has no end, so too we must believe that life eternal has no end".¹³⁸

R. Tollinton found this statement inconsistent.¹³⁹ His observation was that the word used in the Greek text of 1 Thess. 4, 17 is πάντοτε (ever), not εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (in the aeon). What he remarks is this: how can the notion of eternal life be treated through a passage where the term 'eternal' does not appear at all? I myself could add that in the second passage (John, 17, 3) there is no notion of 'duration' at all and yet this passage is also adduced as an account of eternal life.

What eluded Tollinton is that the question at this point is not one of duration, but of *quality* of life. As a matter of fact, the passage John, 17, 3 involves no notion of duration, whereas in 1 Thess. 4, 17 there is no notion of 'eternity' at all. And yet *these* are the portions that Origen quoted as most appropriate to expound his conception of eternal life. His eschatology entirely eluded Rufinus, as it does modern scholars seeking to compose Origen's eschatology out of

¹³³ John, 17, 3.

¹³⁴ John, 14, 6.

¹³⁵ 1 Thess. 4, 17.

¹³⁶ *Dial*, 27; *commJohn*, 13, III; *frJohn*, XCV; *frMatt*, 38 II; Cf. *frMatt*, 75.

¹³⁷ *Dial*, 27.

¹³⁸ R. Tollinton, *op. cit.* pp. 125–26.

¹³⁹ *Op. cit.* p. 126, n. 5.

Princ regarded as a main source. R. Tollinton is right in pointing out that this conclusion actually constitutes a discrepancy into the whole text. But it is also obvious that Tollinton, along with Rufinus and modern scholarship, did not grasp Origen's conception of eternal life. For even if (hypothetically) Origen adduced a scriptural passage where the expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα appeared, this would not entail that he implies any notion of everlasting duration. Not only because time is clearly held to be finite, but also because Origen treats the very expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα as not implying everlasting duration. At one point, for example, he regards the expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (as in Psalm 48, 9) as denoting the duration of a lifetime only.¹⁴⁰

Accordingly, the expression 'always' (ἀεὶ) does not imply everlastingness. It may mean 'always, as long as time exists', or simply 'each time' without any implication of duration.¹⁴¹ In that case it alludes mainly to the principles according to which the world exists (for example, the existential causality), as well as to the relation of the world to God. Also, ἀεὶ may mean 'always, during a certain period of history',¹⁴² or 'always, during the span of a lifetime'.¹⁴³ The real question, therefore, it is not the absence of the expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, which Tollinton looks for. The real point is Origen's actual conception of eternal life.

The term 'aeon' then, pertaining to *natural* reality, may point to three aspects of this reality:

Firstly, 'aeon' may allude to the 'vertical' structure of a certain world ('on account of the sundry bodies of rational beings').

Secondly, it may denote the course of the world in the flux of the prolonged time ('and the various worlds').¹⁴⁴ Thus, 'aeon' may signify the dynamic process of the world, through which the perception of God as Judge can be portrayed. Regarding the entirety of space-time, which is a finite series of 'aeons', Origen feels that he may well speak of 'eternal law' (νόμον αἰώνιον)¹⁴⁵ alluding to the existential causality as a law established throughout the whole *time* (horizontal view of space-time), as well as throughout the whole *world* (vertical view of space-time). These two expressions can be couched in one, which is, *throughout the aeons*. This is precisely the analysis made at that point of *commJohn*. Quite plausibly, the notion of 'eternal law' is related to a notion of 'always' (ἀεὶ): God has established this 'eternal law' in the entire space-time, in both *the whole time* and *the entire order of the world*, that is, in all planes of being.

¹⁴⁰ *selPs*, 48, PG.1444.52. Cf. Aristotle, in *De Caelo*, 279a11ff: τὸ γὰρ τέλος τὸ περιέχον τὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἐκάστου χρόνον... αἶων ἐκάστου κέκληται.

¹⁴¹ *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX; *Cels*, VI, 70; *commMatt*, 11, 17.

¹⁴² *Cels*, II, 77.

¹⁴³ *deOr*, XXV, 2; *Cels*, III, 38; III, 64.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοι κόσμοι ἐν τῇ γῇ: *selEz*, 8, PG.13.796.42. τοὺς ποικίλους κόσμους: *selPs*, 138, PG.12.1661.52 and *fiPs*, 138, 14–16 alike.

¹⁴⁵ *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX. Cf. Lev. 6, 15; Num. 15, 15; Is. 24, 5.

According to this spatio-temporal perception of 'aeons', Origen speaks of Christ as the 'eternal judge who is coming' (τοῦ αἰωνίου κριτοῦ ἐρχομένου).¹⁴⁶ Obviously, 'eternal judge' cannot mean that the act of judging will be an 'endless' one, as indeed 'eternal sheep'¹⁴⁷ does not introduce creatures of everlasting lifetimes. The act of judgement takes no time at all.¹⁴⁸ What αἰώνιος really means is that *the entire aeon* (*id est*, the entire time, as well as the totality of ranks of being of the aeon) will be put under judgement. Hence, αἰώνιος suggests 'that which pertains to the aeons'. In fact Origen considers the scriptural expression 'eternal years' (ἔτη αἰώνια)¹⁴⁹ and certainly does not regard the expression as denoting 'endless' years. His exegesis is that the years are called αἰώνια just because they are *into the aeons* (καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐτῶν); that is, because *aeons* are consisted of *years*, and *years* are consisted of *days*.¹⁵⁰

Regarding the similar scriptural expression 'eternal years' (χρόνοι αἰώνιοι),¹⁵¹ H. Sasse was confused and thought that by such an expression the biblical 'concept of eternity is weakened'.¹⁵² He averred that 'the concepts of time and eternity merge',¹⁵³ and 'the concepts of limited and unlimited time merge in the word αἰὼν'. He saw this as an 'inner contradiction', since in the expression χρόνοι αἰώνιοι there is 'strictly a contradiction in terms'.¹⁵⁴ In view of the foregoing analyses, the meaning attached by Origen to the expression 'eternal years' (ἔτη αἰώνια) excludes obscurity and 'inner contradiction'. The term 'eternal' is used as a homonym. Once this homonym is 'clarified'¹⁵⁵ his thought emerges in its limpidity, too.

Thirdly, the notion of 'aeon' may allude specifically to the highest-up plane of being'. There are two points implied therein. First, this place is contained *within* the world ('and the [worlds] which *contain* the aeons'). Second, the term can be placed in the Plural ('...the aeons') in the same sense that 'world' is placed in the Plural, too (... 'worlds'). 'Aeons' then denotes eternal life, as the being of honour, the paramount class of existence.

We can now see what is actually advanced through the passage where the foregoing definition of 'aeon' as 'a natural system' occurs. This is a comment attached to Psalm 5, 12 ('Εἰς αἰῶνα ἀγαλλιάσονται καὶ κατασκηνώσεις ἐν αὐτοῖς'). I find the English translation of this verse being 'let them ever shout

¹⁴⁶ *selPs*, 60, PG.12.1484.29–30.

¹⁴⁷ s. p. 159 and note 99.

¹⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 15, 52. Cf. *COT*, pp. 256–57.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Psalm 76, 6. s. the telling quotation on p. 104.

¹⁵⁰ *selPs*, 76, PG.12.1540.4.

¹⁵¹ Rom. 16, 25; 2 Tim. 1, 9; Tit. 1, 2.

¹⁵² H. Sasse, "Αἰὼν", p. 209.

¹⁵³ *Op. cit.* p. 198.

¹⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 199.

¹⁵⁵ *commGen*, 3, PG.12.89.13 (*Philocalia*, 14, 2).

for joy, because thou defendest them'. This translation, however, does not contain the term 'aeon' (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) which is the significant expression on which Origen (always using the Septuagint) focuses his exegesis. This can be followed either through the Greek passage (quoted by Origen) or through a literal English translation of it, which reads thus: "They will exceedingly rejoice in aeon and you will encamp in them". His comment provides his conception of 'aeon' as both the entire reality of space-time in the period between two consummations and eternal life, the paramount existential allotment within the world:

Aeon is a natural system, comprising various bodies [and] containing logical *differentia* (λογικὰς διαφοράς) on account of knowledge of God. He [sc. David] says that they will exceedingly rejoice in the aeon (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) because [there will be] an αἰώνιος dwelling (κατασκήνωσις) for them.¹⁵⁶

I translate διαφοράς (differences) as 'the differentia' in order to abide by the strict meaning of the word. Origen uses this in the Plural, meaning 'the differentia of a species' (the differences of species), in the same sense as Aristotle does in *Metaphysica*, 1057b7 and *Topica* 139a29. This is precisely how the term is used at this point. However, it seems to me that things might be somewhat different. Maybe a scribe rendering Origen's real thought used a slightly different word, which nevertheless does not change the meaning of the entire proposition, as I explain in a moment. The same definition for 'aeon' is found in the writings of John Zonaras, the lexicographer and scholar of Constantinople, born in late 11th century and flourished in the 12th century. In his *Lexicon* he indisputably appears to be aware of Origen's writings. First, he mentions Origen's name in a certain lemma.¹⁵⁷ Secondly, we owe to him the testimony to a word used by Origen, which apparently belongs to Greek writings that did not survive. The word ζητρεῖον means 'a place of punishment for slaves' and is thereby attested to have been used by Origen,¹⁵⁸ whereas Orus of Miletus is reported to have used the same word as ζήτηρειον.¹⁵⁹

Zonaras (or, Pseudo-Zonaras) is the sole ancient source to record the definition of αἰὼν which Origen had afforded in his commentary on the Fifth Psalm. Nowhere else in the entire Greek literature does this definition appear. In the source attested by Zonaras, however, instead of 'logical differentia' (λογικὰς

¹⁵⁶ *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46–47. Cf. *exProv*, 3, PG.17.168.46f, a similar representation of 'rational creatures, being classified in different worlds and different bodies, by reason of their condition' (λογικῶν φύσεων σύμβολα, διαιρουμένων κόσμοις κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς καταστάσεως).

¹⁵⁷ *Lexicon*, ed. J.A.H. Tittmann, *Iohannis Zonarae Lexicon ex Tribus Codicibus Manuscriptis*, Alphabetic letter omega, page 1890. Some commentators regard this work as written by another unknown author, attributed the name Pseudo-Zonaras. This however is insignificant to my point.

¹⁵⁸ *Op. cit.* Alphabetic letter zeta, p. 957.

¹⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.*

διαφοράς) we find ‘sundry rational beings’ (λογικὰ διάφορα).¹⁶⁰ That is, in the former case, reference is made to the ‘differences’ among rational creatures in diverse ranks of life, whereas, in the latter, the point of reference is the rational creatures themselves. Nevertheless, the idea is quite the same in every respect and it renders Origen’s view unerringly. It would have been all too easy for any scribe to omit the final sigma from both words (λογικάς and διαφοράς), so that the expression λογικὰ διάφορα comes up, making no difference in the exposition of the idea of a world comprising sundry conscious free animals. It is noteworthy though is that an assiduous writer (be that John Zonaras, or anyone else) recorded the view in his *Lexicon*, and this writer was evidently aware of Origen’s personality and writings. Apart from Zonaras’ recording in 12th century and Origen’s commentary on the Fifth Psalm, nowhere does this definition, and indeed the expression, appear in Greek literature. This portion, although from a Catena,¹⁶¹ is proven genuine. After all, that *aeon* is a natural system should follow as a matter of course for Christians at least, since this is a tradition originated in Scripture. Yet it did not, with Origen standing as an exception in solitude.

This point was made in order to correlate the scriptural expression εἰς αἰῶνα (in aeon) with αἰώνιος (eternal). The two terms are evidently closely related, since the latter is derived from the former. Once again Origen scrutinizes the Greek language of Scripture.

With regards to the foregoing portion on Psalm 5, 12, if one were apt to translating the term ‘in aeon’ (εἰς αἰῶνα) as ‘for ever’ (which is normally the case), this could result to ‘aeon’ being posited as everlasting, which is incongruous with this philosophy of history. The case is, however, that ‘in aeon’ does not testify to *when*, but *where* the enjoyment will come to pass. The *temporal* implication is denoted by means of the Future tense in the expression ‘they *will* exceedingly rejoice’, not through the term ‘in aeon’. This expression points to Origen’s belief that ascending to eternal life is an *anticipation* in terms of actual realization of a historical perspective: this will be accomplished in space-time; it is not just a mystical experience which could take place fully *hic et nunc* in a Plotinian sense. The expression ‘in aeon’, therefore, betokens the conception of eternal life as a particular space into the entire spatio-temporal reality. The ‘dwelling’ (κατασκήνωσις) is called ‘eternal’ by metonymy, out of the *place* which the blessed shall inhabit, in the same sense that the ‘sheep’¹⁶² are called ‘eternal’, too.

¹⁶⁰ *Op. cit.* Alphabetic letter alpha, p. 64.

¹⁶¹ *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46–49.

¹⁶² s. pp. 159, 175, 194.

Eternal life then is portrayed as being both *there*¹⁶³ and *then*.¹⁶⁴ This is *another place*, which will be attained in the *future time*.¹⁶⁵ The land of promise is associated with ‘the future day’ (ἐν τῇ μελλούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ).¹⁶⁶ The day of God alludes to the resurrection of the saints: this is to be awaited in anticipation, since it marks attainment to the blessedness in Christ.¹⁶⁷ When Christ speaks of receiving a multifold,¹⁶⁸ he refers to this aeon, whereas when he speaks of ‘eternal life’ he refers to the aeon to come.¹⁶⁹

An apt comment by W.R. Inge pointing out a stark differentiation between Origen and Plotinus deserves a quotation:

Plotinus could not even console himself with the delusive hope of an approaching end of the world. The apocalyptic dream, which has been the strangest legacy of the later Judaism to Christianity, never consoled or troubled the mind of Pagan philosophers. They must have felt that *tempora pessima sunt*, but they could not say *hora novissima*. Deliverance, for them, was not hoped for in the future, but half-seen beyond the veil in the present. It was a different kind of *Weltflucht* from that of monastic Christianity; both alike rest on truth mixed with illusion, on faith and courage which are still not faithful and courageous enough. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, which Augustine sought for and could not find in the Platonists, puts the keystone in the arch.¹⁷⁰

There is indeed a startling feature in Plotinus’ concept of eternity, for he defines time and eternity as two kinds of *life*.¹⁷¹ When he takes up the idea that time and eternity are lives, he makes time to be the life of the Soul and eternity the life of the Intellect.

In Origen, Now is related to Here, whereas Future, as *hope*, is related to There,¹⁷² which is an attitude conflicting with the Gnostic one. To them ‘perfection’ (τελειώσις), ‘consummation’ (συντέλεια), ‘restoration’ (ἀποκατάστασις) are already present in the person of a Gnostic. The ‘perfect’ man (τέλειος) is already ‘consummated’. This is a manifestation of the general Gnostic view of time as something evil, untrue and a kind of slavery. Generally, the Gnostic

¹⁶³ *homLuc*, 15; also *selDeut*, PG.12.809.16–22, commenting on the recurrent scriptural promise, ‘thy God shall bring thee into the land’. Cf. Deut. 6, 10; 7, 1; 11, 29.

¹⁶⁴ *commJohn*, 13, XXXII; 32, III.

¹⁶⁵ *Cant*, 4, PG.17.172.4.

¹⁶⁶ *selEz*, 13, PG.13.805.21.

¹⁶⁷ *homJer*, 18, 6. Cf. *Cels*, VIII, 72.

¹⁶⁸ Reference to Matt. 19, 29, ‘And everyone that has forsaken houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a *hundredfold* and shall inherit eternal life’.

¹⁶⁹ *frMatt*, 393—quoting the parallel passage of Mark, 10, 30.

¹⁷⁰ W.R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, v. I, p. 259.

¹⁷¹ *COT*, pp. 202f.

¹⁷² Einar Molland was right in arguing that Origen’s thought does deal with history: “Not only is salvation according to him based upon historical events, the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, but it is conceived of as the end of all history.” *The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology*, p. 157.

conception of 'salvation' is wholly exempt from temporal conditions. It is not only the anticosmic feeling of extraneity and alienation from the cosmos, but also the acosmic tendency to escape from this world of exile all but through history. Subsequent to this comes the Gnostic tendency to negate time or, at least, to dispense with it in order to surpass it. In the Gnostic thought, the role of time is reduced to a minimum and the tendency is to annul it, since this, like the entire world, is a pallid copy, indeed an actual abortion. Knowledge of one implies redemption from oneself, just as knowledge of the universe implies the means of freeing oneself from the world, and the way to dominate upon it.¹⁷³ In Platonism, this knowledge was, in the final analysis, the mathematical knowledge.¹⁷⁴

In view of this, the persistence of certain scholars that Origen's conception of redemption is essentially identical to the Gnostic and Platonic one is only a fanciful extrapolation. H. Jonas¹⁷⁵ and A. Nygren¹⁷⁶ made allegations in this vein. Not only did these authors not see the spatio-temporal element in Origen's thought, but also they did not even attempt to distinguish between what has been presumed as 'spatial' and 'temporal' thought forms. What is more, they did not see Origen's terminology in its deeper significance, hence the outstanding characteristic of his thought eluded them. They did not see that *progress* is perceived as a real evolution within the drama of historical life. History is an actual *development* in the process of the world, a spatio-temporal reality firmly correlated to *future time*, this is not simply a subjective personal experience, which at any rate is regarded as possible only to a limited extent.

For Origen there are two kinds of 'knowledge':

Firstly, natural science (φυσιολογεῖν):¹⁷⁷ 'to know the constitution of the world, the energy of its elements, the beginning and end and middle of times and the sort, which is stated in the Wisdom [of Solomon]'.¹⁷⁸ His erudition on this knowledge notwithstanding, he desisted from elaborate accounts of the kind.¹⁷⁹ In *Princ* there is a reference to this knowledge rendered through the scriptural term 'wisdom of this world':¹⁸⁰

Now this wisdom contains in itself nothing which can enable it to decide on questions of the divine nature, or of the cause of the world, or of any higher matters whatsoever, or of the principles of a good and blessed life; but is such, for instance,

¹⁷³ Cf. H. Puech, "Gnosis and Time", pp. 75–82.

¹⁷⁴ A.H. Armstrong – R.A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁵ H. Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* ("Die Rolle der zeit bei Origenes"), pp. 211–13.

¹⁷⁶ A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, pp. 375f.

¹⁷⁷ *Cels*, IV, 40 & 77; V, 36; VII, 21; *commGen*, 3, PG.12.89.5–9 (*Philocalia*, 14, 2); *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1097.13; *commMatt*, 13, 6; 17, 7; *Scholia in Matthaeum*, PG.17.301.11; *commEph*, section 29.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *Wis.* 7, 17–18. *frLuc*, 50.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *Cels*, IV, 60.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 6–8.

as deals wholly with the arts of poetry, grammar, rhetoric, geometry and music, to which we should probably add the art of medicine.¹⁸¹

Secondly, knowledge being ‘nourishment of the soul, without which no one can be saved’. This is ‘the exact teaching of *how to live*’ (ὁ περὶ τοῦ πῶς βιωτέον ἀκριβὴς λόγος),¹⁸² a knowledge which is more important, since it bears upon the requisites of salvation.

As for the arcane knowledge of pagans, reference to this is made by means of the scriptural expression ‘wisdom of the rulers of this world’.¹⁸³ This involves ‘the secret and hidden philosophy of the Egyptians and the astrology of the Chaldaeans and Indians, who profess a knowledge of higher things, and further the diverse opinions of the Greeks concerning the divine nature’.¹⁸⁴

Therefore, A. Harnack’s allegation that Origen’s ‘Gnosis... is in fact the Hellenic one’ is absurd.¹⁸⁵ It is currently maintained as a matter of course that to the Greeks the ideal was to know the cosmic process as a whole, to render *nature* wholly transparent to understanding. A Greek is commonly believed to be indifferent to the ‘particular’, while there is no state of definitive rest, of accomplished task and fulfilled destiny.¹⁸⁶ As opposed to this, putative Christian thought regards Providence as a concern with each unique event and action.¹⁸⁷

What is the character of Origen’s thought with respect to those attitudes? It is ironical that his thought has been assessed as ‘too a Greek’ one, despite all the characteristics currently ascribed to Christian thought standing out in this theology.

It is not knowledge of *nature* that is of interest to Origen.¹⁸⁸ Besides, it is he who spoke of τὸ λεπτομερὲς τῆς προνοίας (the detailed care of Providence), that is, the immediate care of God for the most particular and petty things, even for a

¹⁸¹ *Princ* (Lat.), III.3.2.

¹⁸² *frLuc*, 50; s. also *frMatt*, 140.

¹⁸³ Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 20; 3, 19.

¹⁸⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), III.3.2.

¹⁸⁵ A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, v. II, pp. 319f; 340–2. He employed an unqualified consent to Porphyry’s judgement of Origen, of which the culminating point reads thus: “His (sc. Origen’s) outward life was that of a Christian and opposed to the law, but in regard to his view of things and of the Deity, he thought like the Greeks, inasmuch as he introduced their ideas into the myths of other peoples” (in *op. cit.*, p. 341). The whole statement is preserved by Eusebius in *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.19. Harnack’s erroneous allegation becomes all the more striking since not only did he subscribe to the statement of Porphyry, but also stressed that this observation can be verified everywhere from Origen’s works; *op. cit.* v. II, p. 241. Cf. relevant claims by E. de Faye and H. Koch, who were evidently influenced by these allegations: E. de Faye “De l’influence du Gnosticisme chez Origène”, pp. 181–235. E. de Faye, *Origen and His Work*, pp. 121–141 & 146–165. Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, pp. 14, 47, 140; particularly, on redemption, eschatology and history, s. pp. 33, 39f, 89f & 158.

¹⁸⁶ A.H. Armstrong – R.A. Markus, *op. cit.* pp. 121–22.

¹⁸⁷ *Op. cit.* p. 129.

¹⁸⁸ *Cels*, IV, 60.

sparrow, even for what seems to be of no account.¹⁸⁹ Above all, it is in him that a certain task to be accomplished and a destiny to be fulfilled constitute the cardinal and foremost concern. His thought was not ‘too a Greek’ one. On the contrary, the fundamental existential bearings that set Christian thought apart from the Greek one predominate throughout his writings and profoundly imbue them all. ‘Knowledge’ worthy of being pursued is neither abstract intellectual activity nor reflection on nature. True knowledge can be found only in Scripture recording a meaningful historical course and proposing a purposeful way of living, not as a question of dialectics, but as a crucial existential and historical desideratum.

This is the dramatic break between Origen and any Gnostic or Greek concept of ‘knowledge’: its content, its logic, and the way for attaining to this knowledge, are all originated in (and deeply imbued by) a sheer different concept of history.

This is why eternal life, as a real proposition, is perceived in both spatial and temporal terms. This is why ‘this aeon on the earth’ is contrasted to ‘the aeon to come and in heavens’, since ‘the kingdom of heavens is there’.¹⁹⁰ Eternal life is an actual perspective, perceived as another place to be reached in the future.¹⁹¹

In view of this, R. Hanson’s allegation,¹⁹² that Origen dissolves the historical significance of the eschatological, is absurd. Origen did not ‘demythologize’ eschatology, as he alleged.¹⁹³ Surely he did not ‘abandon’ eschatology, as M. Werner claimed,¹⁹⁴ who saw in Origen ‘a process of the de-eschatologizing of Primitive Christianity in the course of its Hellenization’.¹⁹⁵ In fact, however, all Werner did was to postulate a verdict without providing an account of what this ‘Hellenistic-Neoplatonic eschatology’ of Origen¹⁹⁶ really is. The only clear point of his analysis is the distinction between ‘individuelle’ and ‘kosmisch-orienterten Eschatologie’. However, Origen’s eschatology retains its ‘cosmic’ features, since the notion of the ‘perfection of resurrection’ applies to the world, not to the individual, as chapter 9 shall make clear.

On that account, the study of Origen’s conception of αἰὼν and αἰώνιος must always take into account the context in which these ‘homonyms’ are used. Their real meaning can be discerned only once the context, into which they are each time used, is grasped.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *fMatt*, 212; *fLuc*, 57; *Homilies on Luke*, 32.3. For a detailed discussion of this point, s. *COT*, pp. 349–51.

¹⁹⁰ *commJohn*, 10, XIV.

¹⁹¹ Cf. *commJohn*, 2, XVII; *Cels*, IV, 10.

¹⁹² Cf. R. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, pp. 332–56 & 364f.

¹⁹³ *Op. cit.* pp. 364f.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma*, pp. 117, 293–4.

¹⁹⁵ *Op. cit.* p. 297.

¹⁹⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 294.

If then we are to ‘clarify the homonyms’,¹⁹⁷ we could say that αἰὼν means the entire world. Yet the same term may imply eternal life, as the highest ‘edge’ of the world, from where the clearest view possible can be enjoyed. In this sense, this is the ‘edge’ of the ‘aeon’ (world) or, as Origen calls it, the ‘aeon (edge) of the aeon’ (world) (εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος).¹⁹⁸ To be ‘eternal’ is to be located in the ‘holy mountain’ of God and this place is the *hope* and *expectation* of all Christians,¹⁹⁹ in a place which is *within* the world and *out* of God.²⁰⁰

It is worth-following the comment on Psalm 144, 21 (‘My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless his name in the aeon and in the aeon of the aeon’). The last expression is currently translated as ‘for ever and ever’. In the Psalm, the expression ‘in the aeon and in the aeon of the aeon’ is coupled with an implication of ‘now’: the verb εὐλογεῖτω (let be blessed) is in the Present Imperative. Origen, however, considers this expression in the following way:

Any flesh that praises the name of the Lord will be in the aeon and in the aeon of the aeon, which means that it will see the Saviour of God in the aeon and in the aeon of the aeon.²⁰¹

It is clear that the ‘aeon and the aeon of the aeon’ is understood to lie in the *future* (‘will be’, ‘will see’). What he implies is a certain *where* the ‘flesh’ (which now ‘praises the name of the Lord’) will be. This ‘where’ lies in the ‘aeon’ (that is, *in* the world) and particularly in the ‘aeon’ (‘edge’) of the ‘aeon’ (‘world’), according to the foregoing definition of ‘aeon’, which is made in the same work.²⁰²

The case is not so much that Origen regards ‘aeon’ as a synonym to the ‘world’. What is important is the view of the ‘world’ as a spatio-temporal reality. The reality of time involves that of space, and vice versa. None of them can be regarded in itself in the absence of the other. This is the deeper conception denoted by the expression about time ‘extended alongside with’ the ‘structure’ of the world.²⁰³ The expression in *Princ* is quite characteristic: “This world, however, which is itself called an ‘age’,²⁰⁴ is said to be the end of many ages.”²⁰⁵ This view is expressed once more after the foregoing comment in *selPs*.²⁰⁶ Speaking of the ‘world’, there can be no actual abstraction of space apart from time, or

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *commGen*, 3 (comm. on Gen. 1, 16f), PG.12.89.13–16 & 34–40. Cf. *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.I–XII.21)* section 36a. *Philocalia*, 9, 1; 14, 2; *Cels*, VII, 34; *excPs*, 13, PG.17.108.22; *fiLuc*, 186; *homJer*, 10, 6; *Dial*, 11; 22; *fiPs*, 95, 13; *deOr*, XXIX, 2.

¹⁹⁸ *Cels*, VII, 29 (Ps. 36, 29); *selPs*, 18, PG.12.1244.38; 18, PG.12.1245.2; 20, PG.12.1249.23. *fiPs*, 20, 7; Cf. *Pslams*, 18, 10; 20, 5 & 7; 21, 27; 36, 27; 131, 14; Susanna, 63.

¹⁹⁹ *selPs*, 60, PG.12.1481.33.

²⁰⁰ Cf. chapter 5, p. 66; chapter 9, p. 273 and pp. 333f.

²⁰¹ *selPs*, 144, PG.12.1673.38.

²⁰² *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46.

²⁰³ *COT*, pp. 210f.

²⁰⁴ *Wis*, 13, 9.

²⁰⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.5.

²⁰⁶ *selPs*, 5, PG.13.803.1.

of time apart from space. They are indissolubly involved with each other comprising one reality and their end will mark the conclusion of one single physical existence. It is then interesting to see how conjunction of space with time appears in his wording. The portion of Ezekiel 16, 26, ‘You committed fornication in threefold (τρισσως)’, is an instance to receive a telling comment. The adverb ‘in threefold’ (τρισσως) is said to be used ‘instead of [the term] “in many places” (πολλαχοῦ); for the entire aeon comprises three times (χρόνοι).’²⁰⁷ The term τρισσως, although literally meaning ‘in three ways’, is taken to intend the ‘three tenses’ (χρόνοι), past, present and future. At the same time, nevertheless, it is pointed out that the same verb is used to imply ‘in many places’.

To act ‘in many places’ is therefore a surrogate expression for acting ‘throughout time’. Accordingly, the expression ‘in threefold’ is used instead of ‘in many places’ *because* the three parts of time comprise the entire aeon.²⁰⁸ This means that even in this case, in which ‘aeon’ is attributed a *temporal* sense, the *spatial* import is implied, too. Likewise, when ‘aeon’ is used in a mainly *spatial* sense, its *temporal* meaning is somehow implied.

H. Sasse did not detect any ambiguity in the biblical use of the term αἰών, apart from the current distinction of αἰών meaning either ‘time’ or ‘world’. To him, ‘in the Bible the same word αἰών is used to signify two things which are really profoundly antithetical, namely, the eternity of God and the duration of the world’. His mistake though was that he failed to grasp the spatio-temporal purport of the terms αἰών and αἰώνιος, when they do not refer to God. He thought that αἰών may mean ‘time’ *or* ‘world’. He did not suspect any inherent concomitance of them, which may be rendered through one and the same term. This is why he doubts whether ‘the full significance of “eternity” ... can ever be answered with any certainty.’²⁰⁹

Origen has an unwavering grasp of the use and applicability of αἰών, although subsequent writers did not. For indeed the Neoplatonists I mentioned earlier appear confounded and although today called *Neoplatonists*, they were in fact groping for the idea somewhere between Plato and Aristotle, via Plotinus.

The real issue is not the terms ‘age’ and ‘world’ being synonymous; rather, it is a matter of conceiving of ‘aeon’ in a spatio-temporal sense.²¹⁰ The designations ‘aeon’, ‘world’ and ‘time’ are connately interrelated. Consequently, in expressions such as ‘the things of this world and of this aeon’ (τὰ κατὰ τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦτον),²¹¹ ‘aeon’ mainly implies time. Elsewhere, as in the expression ‘before any time and aeon’ (πρὸ γὰρ παντὸς χρόνου καὶ αἰῶνος),²¹² ‘aeon’ mainly

²⁰⁷ Cf. Ez. 16, 30. *selEz*, 16, PG.13.812.57–813.1.

²⁰⁸ Some authors in Antiquity used to call past, present and future, ‘parts of time’. Origen maintains the designation: ‘today is a part of time’. *frPs*, 2: χρόνου δέ μέρος ἐστὶ τὸ σήμερον.

²⁰⁹ H. Sasse, *op. cit.* p. 199.

²¹⁰ Cf. *homJer*, 14, 17.

²¹¹ *commMatt*, 14, 5.

²¹² *commJohn*, 2, 1.

implies space. In reference of the *expectation* and *hope* for attaining to *eternal life*, he says: “But we look forward to another aeon of life” (ἡμεῖς δὲ εἰς ἄλλον αἰῶνα βλέπομεν ζῶης).²¹³ In this case the spatial and temporal characteristics of aeon are indissolubly interwoven together, so that ‘aeon’ points to the spatio-temporal reality of eternal life being a reality expected and hoped for.

Concluding this issue, I can say this: whenever ‘aeon’ is regarded with respect to the ‘horizontal’ perspectives of historical agents, it has a *predominantly temporal* meaning.²¹⁴ Whenever ‘aeon’ is regarded with respect to their ‘vertical’ perspectives, it has a *predominantly spatial* meaning.²¹⁵ In either case, the spatio-temporal character of ‘aeon’ is maintained: neither of them is altogether put down, even if only the spatial, or only the temporal, characteristic of ‘aeon’ is given some emphasis in making a particular point.

There is a distinction, which has gained much currency among certain scholars. It has been argued that ‘for the Hebrews, who have their existence in the temporal, the content of time plays the same role as the content of space plays for the Greeks’.²¹⁶ On this, T. Boman follows E. von Dobschütz.²¹⁷ This view actually stems from the writings of von Orelli,²¹⁸ Johannes Petersen,²¹⁹ W.H. Robinson,²²⁰ and John Marsh.²²¹ J. Muilenberg²²² took up the same view, which also constitutes an essential premise for O. Cullmann.²²³ T. Boman states: “as the Greeks gave attention to the peculiarity of things, so the Hebrews minded the peculiarity of events; ... for them time is determined by its content. Time is the notion of occurrence; it is the stream of events.”²²⁴

Thus a sharp distinction has been drawn: notions such as ‘space’ and ‘nature’ determine Greek thought, whereas predominant sentiments about ‘time’ and ‘history’ and ‘events’ designate Hebrew cast of mind.

I shall not deal with this question itself, although there are certain questions to be considered, such as the following: Hebrew language lacks the very word ‘time’.²²⁵ It is the Greeks who appear to have developed the problematique of time. The

²¹³ *excPs*, 36, PG.17.124.38.

²¹⁴ Cf. *selEz*, 16, PG.13.813.1–2.

²¹⁵ Cf. *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1169.27–29.

²¹⁶ T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, p. 139.

²¹⁷ E. von Dobschütz, “Zeit und Raum im Denken des Urchristentums”, pp. 212–23.

²¹⁸ C. von Orelli, *Die hebräischen Synonyma der Zeit und Ewigkeit genetisch und sprachvergleichend dargestellt*, pp. 9f.

²¹⁹ J. Petersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture*, pp. 488f.

²²⁰ W.H. Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, pp. 106f.

²²¹ J. Marsh, *The Fullness of Time*, pp. 19–34.

²²² J. Muilenberg, “The Biblical View of Time”, pp. 225–52.

²²³ O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* p. 66.

²²⁴ T. Boman, *op. cit.* p. 139.

²²⁵ This was pointed out by E. von Orelli, *op. cit.* p. 64; J. Marsh, *op. cit.* p. 179. For a ‘Vocabulary of Time’ in Hebraic thought, s. Wheeler H. Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, pp. 120–21. Along with many others, the author draws on von Orelli.

‘father of history’, Herodotus, was a Greek and so was Thucydides, who for all his genius in pointing out universal principles determining political and social phenomena, never saw any cyclicity in history. On the other hand, hardly could someone find a more ‘cyclic’ history than the Book of Chronicles. I will however refrain from dealing with suchlike questions.

It has been argued that the fact that the Greeks developed the problematique of *time*, whereas the Hebrews had no inkling of any word for ‘time’, shows that it was the Greeks who were preoccupied with *space*! This is a contention of E. von Dobschütz,²²⁶ who also argued that the *spatial* notions (regarded as the Greek vantage point) set off against *temporal* ones (regarded as the Hebraic emblem) is the criterion which might be used as a scale for measuring the extent of Hellenization in Christian thought. I regard these ‘distinctions’, ‘scales’ and ‘measures’ as extremely over-simplistic and utterly misleading. Putting them in use in order to construe Origen’s thought demonstrates how misleading they are.

The study of the relevant works asserting these distinctions show that the foregoing view has not been established through independent approaches of scholars. It is not the case of each one having made for himself an assessment in terms of philosophy of history and having reached the same conclusion, which scrutiny by independent quarters renders valid. Rather, this is the case of fissiparous yet trite claims, of an anemophilous receptivity to one scholars’ idle conjectures.

As far as I know, this was E. von Orelli and the dictum was transmitted thereafter. In this simplistic and attractive dress, the philological exposition of the notion is rather elegant and tempting. Besides, this is convenient. For all one has to do is reject any notion of space and adhere to notions such as time and history and thus he can safely expect to be sanctioned as thinking as a ‘Christian’. This is not an expedient, however.

Origen was not haunted by obsessions of this kind, presumably because he had a good command of Greek thought. For, in fact, the better one knows something the less he is afraid of it. He was then able to make radical transformations of Greek conceptions, making them functional within his own reasoning and his own priorities. In this respect, both space and time play a role in the development of his thought, as my ensuing discussion will confirm.

It is important to bear in mind that Origen did not unify the divers usages of the terms αἰὼν or αἰώνιος under the non-biblical term of αἰωνιότης (eternity). H. Sasse’s confusion about the meaning of (what he posits as) ‘eternity’ is that he essays to interpret this non-biblical term (which is a misleading abstraction) through biblical passages. This fusion constitutes a serious mistake. Origen did precisely the opposite. Not only did he eschew ‘eternity’, but also he *distinguished* the different meanings of αἰὼν and αἰώνιος, which are treated as homonyms.

²²⁶ E. von Dobschütz, *op. cit.*

The unification which is portrayed by the term ‘eternity’ leads only to impasse and confusion, and Sasse’s case is only paradigmatic of a widespread phenomenon regarding this point. Origen avoided this and was always meticulous in using these terms. What is more, he made further distinction in the meaning of the term αἰών. In case that the term αἰώνιος does not pertain to the divine reality, he had grasped the essentially *spatio-temporal* character of it.

This is a valuable, still neglected, legacy to Christian thinking. Christian scholars were preoccupied with the obsession to abolish any spatial implication in the conception of the world and its course in time, haunted by a nebulous phantom called ‘Platonism’, which has hardly anything to do with Plato himself. H. Puech regarded the spatial element as a ‘contamination’²²⁷ and O. Cullmann as a ‘danger’ from Greek thought.²²⁸ There is a contradiction, however. To H. Puech, the ‘vertical interpretation’ of the course of the world (which he took to be the Greek attitude) with Christianity ‘gives way... to a horizontal interpretation of the segments of time through one another’.²²⁹ At the same time though he refers to a ‘plan of God’, adding that ‘the total history of the human race’ is ‘willed and governed by God’.²³⁰ I shall not pursue questions touching on creaturely freedom out of averments such as this. After all, the idea of a certain ‘plan of God’ is a favourite theme to Christian scholarship. I only ask this question: is the perception of a ‘plan of God’ in itself not a ‘vertical’ conception of the meaning of history? I think it is. Origen did hold such a vertical conception, too.²³¹ It was himself though who, after Paul, instilled what is currently termed a ‘horizontal’ interpretation of history. When Puech says that in Christian view of time ‘the image anticipates the model’,²³² all he does is to recite what Origen instituted as a Christian meaning of history: “Those former bear in themselves an *image* of those latter” (τῶν γὰρ δευτέρων εἰκόνα φέρει τὰ πρῶτα).²³³ That Puech was not aware of this could not matter at all. The irony of the case is that Origen is adduced as an example of Greek rather than Christian conception of time.²³⁴ Besides, in order to differentiate these two conceptions of time, he appeals to Augustine, who nevertheless was profoundly (yet fractionally) influenced by Origen’s concept of time, as I have shown.²³⁵

²²⁷ H. Puech, *op. cit.* p. 52.

²²⁸ O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* pp. 64f & 73.

²²⁹ H. Puech, *op. cit.* p. 47.

²³⁰ H. Puech, *op. cit.* p. 46.

²³¹ Origen, however, eschewed unwary expressions such as ‘history... governed by God’. His concept of Providence stands side by side with the ‘principle of divine impartiality’. (*Princ* [Lat.], II.9.8), discussed in *COT*, pp. 321–24, 331.

²³² H. Puech, *op. cit.* p. 47.

²³³ *JrMatt*, 57. The ‘plan’ of God in the Latin text (*Princ*, II.1.2) is dubious.

²³⁴ H. Puech, *op. cit.* pp. 49f.

²³⁵ *COT*, pp. 225f. Cf. P. Tzamalikos, “Origen and the Stoic View of Time”, pp. 535–561. P. Tzamalikos, “Origen: The Source of Augustine’s Theory of Time”, pp. 396–418.

In Christian thinkers after Origen the perception of the world as a spatio-temporal reality, in which history not only advances towards a goal and conclusion but also has a thoroughly dramatic character, fades. The disintegration of an ingenious perception is mainly due to the dismissal of the *spatial* element. This inevitably led to a deformed conception of the relation of time to space, indeed to a crippled conception of reality itself. The discoveries of modern science prove how the renunciation of Origen's incisive conception of space-time has rendered assertions about time proper jejune. A theological treatment of history could not be sound without a thorough grasp of time proper as well as of space. This is what the Greek philosophers profoundly knew. This is what Origen accomplished, forming a *Christian* concept of time. This is what modern scholars who offer theological treatments of time and history do not want to know. This knowledge though is what constituted Origen's background in instituting his view of history. Perhaps this is the reason why he is justified by modern science. The innovations he launched will eventually be acknowledged as a penetrating composition of the Christian conception of time and history. Origen's ideas subterraneously prepare the way for the forthcoming scientific challenges to religion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ETERNAL LIFE AND FREEDOM

Rational creatures that reach a state of blessedness through a certain progress in a prolonged time can attain to the order of being called eternal life.¹ Souls advancing and ascending little by little in due measure and order, first attain to that other earth and the instruction that is in it, for those better percepts to which nothing can ever be added.²

Eternal life is the result of progression within history. This notion of *development* is illustrated by means of a simile: the 'kingdom of heavens' is like a 'goodly pearl'.³ The analogy is employed in consideration of a pearl produced through a gradual process. Eternal life is attained through 'many changes' and 'alterations' until one is 'made perfect'.

It is said that the formation of the pearls in Indies takes place gradually through long time as the animal takes many changes and alterations until it becomes perfect.⁴

Eternal life is the existential state which is achieved as the result of betterment, the upshot of a gradual evolution towards perfection. The advance of this course (if not eternal life itself) is portrayed thus:

Let us not be amazed that the wonderful blessedness of the martyrs, which [blessedness] exists in deep peace and serenity and brightness has to be begun from being in an apparently dim, and, so to speak, wintry dwelling (καταστήματος). For it will be at first necessary to show the self-control (κυβέρνησιν) that each one of the blessed gained by journeying in winter on the straight and narrow road.⁵ After this, the word said in the Song of Songs to the bride who has come through the winter may be fulfilled: 'My beloved', she says, 'answers and says to me, Arise, come my companion, my dearest, my dove. Behold, the winter is past, the rain has dispersed and gone away.'⁶ You should also bear in mind that there is no way to hear the saying 'the winter is past' unless you have struggled bravely and vigorously during the present winter. And, after the winter is past and rain is run along and [after] having progressed (πορευθῆναι), then flowers will appear. 'Planted in the house of the Lord they shall flower in the halls of our God'.⁷

¹ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.6.

² *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.9.

³ Cf. Matt. 13, 45–46.

⁴ *commMatt*, 10, 3.

⁵ Cf. Matt. 7, 14.

⁶ Song of Songs, 2, 10–11.

⁷ Psalm 91, 14. *exhMar*, XXXI.

This notion of ‘walking’ towards eternal life is consonant with the conception of time as *extension* of a teleological character, as well as with the view that eternal life is a temporal state to be reached within the setting of existential causality. The idea is manifestly expounded in *Cels*:

If anyone should want to have arguments (ἀφορμὰς) concerning the mystical teaching about the souls entering into the contemplation of the divine things, which is derived not from the utterly minor sect which he has mentioned [sc. the Orphites], but from books, some of which are Jewish and read in their synagogues, and of which Christians also approve, and some of which are exclusively Christian, let him read what is written by the end of the prophecies of Ezekiel, about the visions seen by him, in which different gates are related, suggesting certain doctrines about the different degrees of access of more divine souls into the higher realms.⁸ Let him also read from the Apocalypse of John about the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and about its foundations and gates.⁹ And if he is also able to learn by the intermediacy of symbols about the declared way (ὁδὸν δεδηλωμένην) for those who will proceed to the divine realms, let him read the book of Moses entitled *Numbers*, and let him ask anyone who is able to initiate him into the mysteries (μυσταγωγῆσαι) about the encampments of the children of Israel,¹⁰ which of them were fixed on the eastern side which are mentioned first, and which were those on the south-west or south, and which were those facing the sea, and which were those on the north side which are mentioned last. For in these passages he will perceive truths, which are all but of inconsiderable profoundness.¹¹

In *commMatt* reference is made to him who will become ‘perfect’ through proper action: he shall have a treasure reserved for him in heavens, thus becoming himself a heavenly [creature].¹²

Eternal life is therefore associated to conscious and responsible action. Virtuous operation is the ‘beginning’¹³ of a ‘walking’ which leads to eternal life. This relation of freedom to eternal life is underscored through the averment

⁸ Ez. 48, 31–35.

⁹ Rev. 21, 1f.

¹⁰ Num. 2, 1f. Cf. *Homilies on Numbers*, I.3: the position of tribes at the four points of the compass is taken to imply the resurrection of the dead. Cf. *loc. cit.* III, 3: at that point Heb. 12, 18–23 is taken to suggest four different qualities of life: 1. Mount Zion. 2. Heavenly Jerusalem. 3. The multitude of angels. 4. The Church of the Firstborn. What is important in this imagery is his notion of the outcome of Judgement in a world of classified ranks of being. This view however vacillates: in *homJer*, 12, 3, ‘the church of the firstborn, Mount Zion, and heavenly Jerusalem’ are all regarded to point to *one* rank of life, namely, eternal life, where ‘the blessed shall be gathered’ (οἱ μακάριοι ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται). The ‘Church of the Firstborn’ (ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων) is a theme favourite to Origen: Cf. *Cels*, 8, 5; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.8; *comm-John*, 10, XIV; *adnotDeut*, PG.17.32.55; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 226. (*Philocalia*, 1, 24). Cf. p. 286, note 394.

¹¹ *Cels*, VI, 23. Origen refers to the soul which ‘enters into the contemplation of divine things’, not into Deity proper. Cf. chapter 9.

¹² *commMatt*, 15, 18.

¹³ *Op. cit.* 15, 17.

that anyone who *wills* to become perfect, shall have a heavenly treasure in the place of the Lord.¹⁴

This *will* is an essential constituent of the process towards this goal. This is why eternal life is designated as a ‘elected life’ (αἰρετὴ ζωή).¹⁵ In the same manner, men are urged to make this choice: “Let us then take up the eternal life; let us take it up by our free will. God does not grant this us, but He sets it before us”.¹⁶

Although this *will* (θέλειν) is indispensable, man is not connately capable of accomplishing the feat without assistance. Human will is not sufficient in order to attain to the end (οὐκ ἄρκει τὸ ἀνθρώπινον θέλειν πρὸς τὸ τυχεῖν τοῦ τέλους).¹⁷ Those who think that they are self-sufficient to attain to the end delude themselves.¹⁸

This is an attitude opposite not only to Platonism, but also to Gnosticism. Whereas to Gnostics salvation is obtained *by* knowledge,¹⁹ to Origen ‘knowledge’ is only a *by-product* of salvation, obtained through praxis. That man is not self-sufficient to capture knowledge means that he is in need of the divine grace: God is found only by those who, after doing what they can, admit that they need Him.²⁰

A comparison with Platonism is elucidating at this point. In the *Respublica*, we read that it is impossible for anyone except for the philosopher to have enjoyed the contemplation of the real being and to have seen how delightful this is (τῆς δὲ τοῦ ὄντος θεάς, οἷαν ἡδονὴν ἔχει, ἀδύνατον ἄλλω γεγεῖσθαι ἢ τῷ φιλοσόφῳ).²¹ Many scholars could regard the use of the word θεά (used by Plato here) as a Platonic ring in Origen. However, there are substantial differences. In him there is nothing of the aristocratic character of Platonism: salvation is possible *to anyone* (even to the simplest illiterate man) once he is a faithful who has *acted* according to the word of Jesus.²² The causative relation between Praxis and Knowledge is reversed: no philosopher will be able to ‘see’ Christ unless he has *acted* properly. On the other hand, any simple-minded man who follows this teaching *in action* will be saved. On this point Origen is at odds with the Platonic dialectics and its entire conception regarding the destiny of a human being. Hence his recurring quotation of Wisdom of Solomon’s 1, 4,

¹⁴ That is, ‘in the place of’ Christ, who is ‘of heaven’ (quoting 1 Cor. 15, 48). *commMatt*, 15, 18.

¹⁵ *fiJohn*, XCV.

¹⁶ *Dial.* 27. Cf. *Cels.* IV, 3; VIII, 72; *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.35–37; *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.8; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1152.8 (*Philocalia*, 26, 1).

¹⁷ *Princ*, III.1.19.

¹⁸ *exhMar*, V.

¹⁹ Cf. H. Puech, “Gnosis and Time”, pp. 55f.

²⁰ *Cels.* VII, 42.

²¹ Plato, *Respublica*, 582c. Cf. chapter 6, n. 126.

²² *Cels.* III, 49 (*Philocalia*, 18, 20); *Cels.* VII, 41.

‘Wisdom will not enter into a soul that practices evil neither will this dwell in a body involved in sin’.²³

Ascent to eternal life is possible by means of both free will and support by the Logos. This idea allows for two fundamental assertions of his theology to be couched. Firstly, eternal life is an ‘elected life’. Secondly, cognition of God can be accomplished not only through virtuous action, but also through divine tutelage. The idea is advanced by averments such as ‘he who can ascend to the mountain edge through self-improvement, he ascends walking following the Lord’.²⁴ This is elaborated further in *commJohn*: Christ is to us the entirety of flights of steps (πάντες εἰσὶν οἱ ἀναβαθμοὶ ὁ σωτήρ);²⁵ walking through him, we can ascend (ὃ ἐπιβαίνοντες ὁδεύομεν). Likewise, the Son conceived as a ‘road’ is different from him being a ‘gate’,²⁶ since one has to go forth and meet the road first, so that he can subsequently reach the gate.²⁷

Since the Logos is present in the entire world, he is also present in eternal life. In that space, however, he is the ‘gate’, while in the rest of the world he is present as the ‘road’.²⁸

Although he [sc. Christ] somewhere points out that he is both road and gate,²⁹ he is clear that he is not gate yet to those that he is still the road,³⁰ and he is no more the road to those that he is already a gate.³¹

Christ is a ‘gate’ only to those who have already reached eternal life. This is how Origen portrays the conception of the presence of Christ in the world and points out the difference between his presence in eternal life and his presence in the rest of ranks of life.

Eternal life as a mutable state of action

Since eternal life is *within* the world, this is subject to the general rules established for all planes of being: temporality, corporeality, existential causality, judgement, outcome of judgement. In line with his fundamental premises, Origen teaches that no one can ever enjoy an unconditional abode in that state of blessedness. Creaturely freedom, accountability, therefore mutability of status, is a

²³ Cf. *Cels*, III, 60; V, 29; *frJohn*, LXXVI; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *commICor*, section 11; *selPs*, 88, PG.12.1549.27; *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1621.31; *expProv*, 1, PG.17.164.14; 24, 17.232.11.

²⁴ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.39&42; *excPs*, PG.17.113.43 & 46. Cf. the role of grace pointed out in *frMatt*, 300.

²⁵ *commJohn*, 19, VI.

²⁶ Cf. *John*, 10, 7–9.

²⁷ *commJohn*, 19, VI. Cf. 6, XLIII; *De Engastrimytho*, section 9; *expProv*, 4, PG.17.172.23f.

²⁸ *commJohn*, 6, XIX.

²⁹ Cf. *John*, 14, 6.

³⁰ Cf. *John*, 10, 7.

³¹ *commJohn*, 6, XLIII.

likelihood in this superlative being of honour. He refers to certain 'conditions of the blessedness' (τῶν ὄρων τῆς μακαριότητος) coupling them with the 'word' of Christ 'who convinced' the faithful about eternal life.³² What he actually means referring to 'those who have fallen from blessedness (ἀποπεσόντες τῆς μακαριότητος), dying as men, although previously they were not men',³³ is that abode in the uppermost quality of being, like in any other plane of existential standing, is conditioned by the notion of existential causality.

It is nonetheless possible for one who has become at the present time a vessel of honour in consequence of certain former righteous deeds and yet has not acted similarly here nor in a way befitting a vessel of honour, to become in another age a vessel of dishonour; just as on the other hand it is possible for one who by reason of acts older than this life has become here a vessel of dishonour to become, if he amends his ways in the 'new creation', a 'vessel of honour sanctified and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work'.³⁴

Jerome rendered this passage as follows:

And in another place: But according to us a vessel which has by reason of pre-existing merits been fashioned for honour may, if it fails to do work worthy of its title, become in another age a vessel of dishonour; and on the other hand a vessel which as a result of former sin has received a name of dishonour may, if in the present life it has willed to receive correction, become in the new creation a vessel sanctified and useful to the Lord, prepared unto every good work.³⁵

Consequent to fundamental principles, dwelling in a certain condition of being requires action befitting the merits of this status. Although a state of supreme quality and blessedness, eternal life is an active state since 'no living creature can be altogether inactive and immovable'.³⁶ The nature of action in the eternal life is different, yet it is *action* still:

And what would the city of the great king, the real Jerusalem, be other than the Church built of living stones,³⁷ where spiritual sacrifices are offered to God by those who are spiritual and have comprehended the spiritual law, in that holy priesthood?³⁸ When his fullness of time is indeed come (ὅτε ἐνστί),³⁹ then no one should think the real worship and perfect piety to be offered in Jerusalem. For when one has become (ὅταν τις γένηται) no longer in the flesh, but is in the Spirit, and one is not any more still in the type but lives entirely in truth, this person has been made

³² *commMatt*, 12, 26.

³³ *commJohn*, 32, XVIII.

³⁴ 2 Tim. 2, 21. *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), III.1.23.

³⁵ *epAv*, 8, *apud FP*, p. 206.

³⁶ *Princ* (Lat.), II.11.1.

³⁷ s. chapter 6, p. 187.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Peter 2, 5.

³⁹ Cf. Gal. 4, 4.

of such quality (τοιούτος κατεσκευασμένος) so as to be identical (ἐξομοιοῦσθαι) to that kind of worshipers which God requires them to be.⁴⁰

Those who live in eternal life are portrayed as ‘holy stones’ (λίθοι ἅγιοι),⁴¹ whose ‘main task is to praise God ceaselessly’ (καὶ τὸ τούτων κεφάλαιον τὸ ἀπαύστως εὐλογεῖν τὸν Θεόν).⁴² This is why the ‘daily bread’, which is entreated through the Lord’s prayer, is a bread needed not only for the present aeon, but also for the aeon to come. Those who will be resurrected (that is, those who will be found worthy of ascending to eternal life) will be also in need of a ‘bread befitting the aeon to come’ (τὸν ἄρτον τὸν οἰκεῖον τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος),⁴³ since they continue to live in a state of action.

Functioning in eternal life is therefore portrayed as ‘spiritual sacrifices’ and ‘perfect piety’, or acting so as ‘to bless God ceaselessly’. This is a good reason for the existential state in this life to be illustrated as ‘altar’ (θυσιαστήριον),⁴⁴ indeed a ‘heavenly altar’,⁴⁵ of which the homonym in the Old Testament is only a shadow. The contemplation from the point of view of eternal life is not a state of idleness, but a dynamic condition. Praise offered to God along with entreaties for those still in lower ranks of being, in anxiety for their salvation, is a token of this activity.⁴⁶ This is why this ‘altar’ makes the contemplation of the corporeal and incorporeal⁴⁷ possible. Even the condition of contemplation is in itself understood as one of strenuous activity.⁴⁸

Let us each of us recall how many times⁴⁹ we have been in danger of dying the common death (ἀποθανεῖν τὸν κοινὸν θάνατον)⁵⁰ and consider whether we have possibly come through (ἐτηρήθημεν) in order that, baptized in our own blood and washed from all sin, we may come to dwell in the heavenly altar with our comrades in battle.⁵¹

In this passage not only the conception of eternal life as having *also* a spatial character (τὰς διατριβάς... ποιησώμεθα)⁵² is reiterated, but also allusion is made to the keenly operative character of this life, described as ‘the heavenly altar’ (τῷ ἐν οὐρανοῖς θυσιαστηρίῳ). Conformably, the ‘life of the soul’ is predominantly

⁴⁰ Cf. John, 4, 21. *commJohn*, 13, XIII.

⁴¹ s. chapter 6, p. 187.

⁴² *selDeut*, (comm. on Deut. 8, 7), PG.12.809.31.

⁴³ *deOr*, XXVII, 13.

⁴⁴ Cf. *commJohn*, 20, X.

⁴⁵ *commJohn*, 6, LIV; *exhMar*, XXX; XXXIX; *Scholia in Matthaem*, PG.17.300.52.

⁴⁶ s. p. 152 and note 47.

⁴⁷ *selPs*, 25, PG.12.1276.4.

⁴⁸ Cf. *fījer*, 11.

⁴⁹ Read ποσάκις (how many times), instead of ὁσάκις (whenever) which could make no sense at this point.

⁵⁰ Alluding to the distinction of three kinds of death. Cf. *Dial*, 27 and *infra*, chapter 8.

⁵¹ Cf. Rev. 6, 9. *exhMar*, XXXIX.

⁵² *Loc. cit.*

considered in anticipation of ‘the aeon to come’ since it is ‘then that it will praise God’.⁵³

Being an active condition, eternal life is a reversible circumstance: it may change once the activity of a certain dweller is not befitting that quality of life. This is why its denizens should hold fast to the conditions befitting this existential standing.

God ‘judges’ the world through his holy angels: ‘kings are said to be those saints who judge the earth’.⁵⁴ Those who are ‘judges of the earth’, nevertheless, might ‘rejoice exceedingly’ yet ‘carelessly’, and forget that this is rapture in God. They then might fall in ‘weakening out of careless relaxation’ (χαλύνωσιν) and arrogance (οἷησιν). These characteristics constitute a cause of ‘fall’ (ἐκπέσωσιν). Hence a saint *‘may fall’*, once the divine visitation abandons him who had been judged to deserve to be reasonably exalted in consideration of certain meritorious deeds he had committed previously.⁵⁵

A ‘soul’ lives in anticipation of ‘eternal life’ and of the ‘boundless aeon’. In the following passage, Origen not only confirms this, but also expounds the notion of a ‘second’ fall, after having ascended to the existential status described as the ‘topmost mountain edge of goodness’ (ἀκρόρειαν ἀγαθῶν).

I therefore believe that God administers every rational soul in view of *its perspective to eternal life*, although it always retains its free will, and, by reason of self-motivation, it either attains to the better places (ἐν τοῖς κρείττοσι), until it reaches *the topmost mountain edge of goodness*, or it descends to different degrees (διαφόρως) to this or that excess of wickedness because of carelessness. Since then a quick and expeditious cure causes some people to regard lightly the diseases which occurred to them, taking them to be easily curable (εὐθεραπεύτων), they *fall for a second time* into the same things [sc. excess of wickedness] after they have been restored to health. Quite reasonably then God will disregard evil being somewhat (ἐπὶ τι) increased in those people, and, He will even overlook this even if indeed it has grown to the degree of being incurable, so that, through their very persistence in their involvement (προσδιατρῖψαι) with evil and in their sinking head over heels (ἐμφορηθῆναι) in the sin they desire, and after they have been satiated (κορεσθέντες) by this, they may realize the harm done to them, and having hated what they had formerly indulged in, and having been after all cured, they can possess more firmly the health that came about to their souls by being healed.⁵⁶

This text certainly refers to what happens to a man during his lifetime. It nonetheless pertains to the soul ‘in view of its eternal life’, that is, to its life throughout the *aeons*. In order that no doubt should remain about this consideration referring to the prospect of eternal life, this notion is further elaborated in the

⁵³ *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1628.35. Cf. *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1581.43; *epAfr*, PG.11.52.5.

⁵⁴ Commenting on Psalm 2, 11.

⁵⁵ *selPs*, 2, PG.12.116.21.

⁵⁶ *deOr*, XXIX, 13; italics mine.

next paragraph of the same work. Reference is made to human beings ‘departed’ (ἐξελθόντες) from ‘this life’ and to their existence ‘in long periods of time’.⁵⁷ Those who ‘pass away’ from the human condition ‘remember through how much pain they have got rid of’ living here. It is possible ‘never to fall in this [order of life] again’. It is also possible though that ‘after long periods of time’ certain ones, ‘if they are not vigilant’, might ‘forget what they suffered in this life’ and come to this class of life once again. In that case, they will encounter ‘for a second time’ the evil desires, which again arose in them, because of their oblivion of what they suffered in the human existential order, due to the elapse of ‘long period of time’.⁵⁸

Thus the notion of fall ‘for a second time’ from the ‘topmost mountain edge of goodness’ (ἀκρόρειαν ἀγαθῶν) refers to the actual existence in the divers orders of being, it refers to their real *historicity* throughout time, not simply to some subjective or esoteric human experience. Particularly at this point, mention is made to a ‘fall’ from eternal life. This notion is also expounded in a relevant analysis in *commJohn* adduced as an exegesis to John 8, 51 (‘verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death’).⁵⁹ The kind of ‘death’ implied is the same as that in the saying, ‘the last enemy destroyed [is] death’.⁶⁰ This ‘death’ is ‘the enemy of him who said “I am the life”’.⁶¹ This ‘death is by nature an obstacle’ and ‘this is the death which will never be seen by anyone who holds to the word’ of Christ.⁶²

There is therefore a notion of *conditionality* in this biblical passage, expressed through the clauses ‘if’ (ἐάν) and ‘as long as’ (ὥσον):

At the same time, as I examine this point, I inquire whether in this portion the [expression] ‘in the aeon’⁶³ is to be taken with both clauses (ἀπό κοινοῦ),⁶⁴ so that

⁵⁷ *deOr*, XXIX, 14: μακραῖς χρόνων περιόδοις (long periods of time). The expression is used to denote a period of time stretched out in many aeons. Cf. *commJohn*, 10, XLII, alluding to the notion of recurring worlds: οὐκ οἶδα δέ, εἰ μακραῖς χρόνων περιόδοις ἀνακυκλουμέναις τὰ παραπλήσια πάλιν δυνατόν γενέσθαι.

⁵⁸ *deOr*, XXIX, 14. The expression τῆς γενέσεως ἐπιθυμήσαντες (those who desired physical things) denotes assuming human nature following a certain judgement after a ‘lapse of long periods of time’. This implies ‘falling’ down to human condition. Cf. ‘angels’ ‘falling’ and human beings ‘ascending’ to the heavens on the ‘day of judgement’. *commMatt*, 15, 27.

⁵⁹ *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX. The John, 8, 51 word translated as ‘never’ is ‘in the aeon’ (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).

⁶⁰ 1 Cor. 15, 26.

⁶¹ John, 11, 25.

⁶² *commJohn*, 20, XXXIX.

⁶³ John, 8, 51.

⁶⁴ For the meaning of ἀπό κοινοῦ in this case, Cf. *Suda*, Alphabetic letter (a.l.) alpha, entry 3046; a.l. iota, entry 215; a.l. pi, entry 1331; *Lexica Segueriana*, *De Syntacticis* (e cod. Coislín. 345), Alphabetic entry epsilon, p. 138, lines 22, 30–32. By ἀπό κοινοῦ ληπτέον he means the expression ‘in the aeon’ to be common in two different syntaxes. However, two different versions of expression convey two different imports. Cf. use of ἀπό κοινοῦ ληπτέον in other authors:

the whole sentence would read thus: If a man hold to my word unceasingly,⁶⁵ he will not face death. For indeed it seems that one does not face death *as long as* he holds to the word of Jesus; but one has faced death upon loosing this [word].

Nevertheless, if one can also avail oneself of the deeper teaching, and can grasp the sense in which the statement, 'And thou hast brought me into the dust of death'⁶⁶ might be said by a human being, and in what sense the statement, 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death?'⁶⁷ is said by Paul, he will see how one who holds to the word will not face death *as long as* (ὡςόν) he holds fast to this. But *when* someone held to it *no more*, because he got wearied of being attentive and holding to the word, or he lost watchfulness about holding to it, then he faced death, not because of anyone else but because of himself. Anyone then should regard this to be a doctrine and an eternal law, since the statement, 'If anyone shall hold to my word, he will not face death in the aeon',⁶⁸ will always (ἀεὶ) be said to us who have received the word.⁶⁹

According to the existential causality, eternal life is portrayed as a state which can be attained and continuously enjoyed *on certain conditions* which are as sound as a sublime 'eternal law' (νόμον αἰώνιον). Origen feels so strongly about this that he uses this Old Testament expression,⁷⁰ in order to emphasize the solemnity and sublimity of this principle. 'Eternal law' is a synecdoche expressing all the truths which make up the 'spiritual' meaning of the Scripture, veiled behind the literal and moral sense.⁷¹ 'Eternal law is everything that is mystical'. It is the truth which stands behind 'things present and visible' which are 'temporary' and are destined 'to come to an end'; for 'the fashion of this world passes away',⁷² but this eternal law will not pass away, since this is about 'things which are eternal and contain spiritual truths'.⁷³

Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.27.420.9. Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, v. 1, p. 367; v. 3, p. 877; *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, v. 1, p. 399; v. 2, p. 240. Michael of Ephesus, *In Aristotelis Sophisticos Elenchos Commentarius*, p. 113. Photius, *Fragmenta in Epistulam ad Galatas* (in catenis), p. 606; *Fragmenta in Epistulam I ad Thessalonicenses* (in catenis), p. 633; *Fragmenta in Epistulam ad Hebraeos*, pp. 648–49. Theodorus Studites, *Epistulae*, Epistle 380. Damascius, *De Principiis*, v. 1, p. 212. John Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 17, p. 856.

⁶⁵ In consideration of the context, the expression 'in the aeon' rendered as 'unceasingly' can mean no unconditional endless duration.

⁶⁶ Psalm 21, 16.

⁶⁷ Rom. 7, 24.

⁶⁸ John, 8, 51.

⁶⁹ *comm. John*, 20, XXXIX; my italics underscore the *conditionality* of eternal life as a specific existential state.

⁷⁰ The expression 'eternal law' (νόμον αἰώνιον) is used in some sublime instances of the Old Testament: Leviticus, 6, 15; Numbers, 15, 15; Wis. 18, 4; Isaiah, 24, 5.

⁷¹ *Homiliae in Leviticum*, p. 334 (*Philocalia*, 1, 30): τοῖς 'ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι κληρονομήσουσι ζωὴν αἰώνιον' καὶ μέλλουσι ἥκειν ἐπὶ τὰ ἐπουράνια καὶ ἀληθινὰ τοῦ νόμου, ἐρευνήσωμεν οὐ τὸ γράμμα.

⁷² 1 Cor. 7, 31.

⁷³ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 13.6.2.

Eternal life is enjoyed *as long as* these conditions are fulfilled and honoured. The *also spatial* character of eternal life is based on this account, too. The core of his conviction (*id est*, attaining to eternal life is a reversible process) is tellingly expressed through his '*as long as...*' notion in the foregoing passage: eternal life is a mutable status. This is not the single point where this '*as long as...*' notion is set forth. The same clause (ὅσον) is also used in order to depict the conditional character of residence in eternal life:

For we have a 'great high priest' who by the greatness of his power and of his mind 'has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God'⁷⁴ who promised those who would genuinely learn the things of God and who would live lives worthy of them that he will lead them on to realms beyond this world. Thus he says, 'That where I go, you may be also'.⁷⁵ This is why we hope that, after the 'tribulation and struggles'⁷⁶ here, we shall come to dwell in the topmost heavens (πρὸς ἄκροις γενέσθαι τοῖς οὐρανοῖς), and, according to the teaching of Jesus, will receive 'wells of water springing up into eternal life',⁷⁷ and will advance to rivers of objects of contemplation (θεωρημάτων) and will live with the waters that are said to be 'above the heavens' which 'praise the name of the Lord'.⁷⁸ *As long as* we praise him (ὅσον γε αἰνῶμεν αὐτόν), we shall not be carried about away from 'the circumference of the heaven',⁷⁹ but we shall always (ἀεὶ) be enjoying the contemplation (θέα) of the invisible things of God, which will no longer be seen by us 'from the creation of the world by the things that are made'⁸⁰ but, as the genuine disciple of Jesus expressed it, saying, 'But then face to face',⁸¹ and 'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away'.⁸²

In accord with his (as well as scriptural) view that eternal life is also a personal experience achieved, to a certain extent, in this life, Origen applies the same conditionality also to this concept of eternal life:

And if you believe that Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and was caught up to paradise and heard unspeakable words which is not lawful for a man to utter,⁸³ you will subsequently realize that you will immediately know more and loftier things than the unspeakable words revealed to Paul. For he descended from the third heaven, after having seen them; but you, after having received this knowledge, will not descend again, *if* you follow Jesus whom we have as 'a great high priest who has passed through the heavens',⁸⁴ taking up your cross. And *if you do not fall*

⁷⁴ Heb. 4, 14. Cf. *Cels*, III, 34.

⁷⁵ John, 14, 3.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Respublica*, 413d4; *Phaedrus*, 247b5.

⁷⁷ John, 4, 14.

⁷⁸ John, 7, 38; Psalm 148, 4.

⁷⁹ Origen couches his own phrases using Celsus' expressions, such as this one, which is Platonic. Cf. *Phaedrus*, 247c2; *Timaeus*, 47b7; *Leges*, 898c3.

⁸⁰ Rom. 1, 20.

⁸¹ 1 Cor. 13, 12.

⁸² 1 Cor. 13, 10. *Cels*, VI, 20.

⁸³ 2 Cor. 12, 2–4.

⁸⁴ Heb. 4, 14.

away from those who follow him, you yourselves will pass through the heavens, surpassing (ὑπερβαίνοντες) not only earth and the mysteries about the earth, but also the heavens and everything about them.⁸⁵

Regarding this point, it is worth-following a comment on Psalm 29, 7 ('during my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved'). In the Greek text there is a semicolon after the word 'my' [prosperity]; thus the meaning of the passage is, 'I will never (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) be moved; this is what I said in my prosperity'. Origen, however, opts for a different reading: the semicolon is put after the word 'said', not after the word 'my'. So the passage reads thus: 'And I said: in my prosperity, I shall never be moved'. This reading provides him with his comment:

It is either Christ or a righteous man who says the phrase 'I said'. Then, after the semicolon in this word (εἶτα μετὰ τὴν ἐπὶ τούτῳ στιγμὴν) [he says] 'in my prosperity I shall not be moved in the aeon' (ἐν τῇ εὐθηνίᾳ μου οὐ μὴ σαλευθῶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). It is appropriate to be said that he who is in prosperity is not moved. As we have said many times, this pertains to the human nature of the Saviour. And according to Symmachus, in case the expression is 'in my quietude', it may indicate the calmness and impassiveness of the soul which has been made perfect: anyone who has reached this condition will no more be moved. For *if* one is in spiritual prosperity, he will never be moved.⁸⁶

The exegesis is expressed in a manner maintaining the *contingency* of 'not being moved in the aeon'. Generally, this '*as long as...*' clause accentuates eternal life as an *active* state, subject to the terms of a certain conditionality.

In view of this discussion, the opinion of H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti that Origen seems to regard eternal life as an immutable state⁸⁷ is erroneous. When Origen refers to 'rest' in the higher places of the world, he does not imply idleness. Rather he has the exigencies of human life in mind. Perpetual motility is a fundamental characteristic of his entire world. When he speaks of 'rest', he speaks relatively, comparing the quality of life on earth (which is a life of suffering and toil for the pious, particularly those of his era) with the life in the supreme place of the world. He does not regard that life as inactive. To those who are in flesh and blood, there is a precarious life of *more* pain *than* for those who live in an aethereal body (πλείους γὰρ οἱ πόνοι καὶ ἐπισφαλὴς ἡ ζωὴ τῶν ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι παρὰ τοὺς ἐν αἰθερίῳ σώματι).⁸⁸ Eternal life is a 'life of relaxation' (εἰς ἄνεσιν),⁸⁹ but not a static life of inertia. When Origen speaks of

⁸⁵ *exhMar*, XIII; my italics underline the implicit notion of *conditionality*.

⁸⁶ *selPs*, 29, PG.12.1293.50–3; *fiPs*, 29, 7; once again, italics mine.

⁸⁷ H. Crouzel – M. Simonetti, *Origène Traité Des Principes*, v, I, p. 164.

⁸⁸ *commJohn*, 1, XXVI.

⁸⁹ *selPs*, 139, PG.12.1664.50.

‘rest’ in eternal life, he does not fail to point out that this is not sheer inactivity, but a kind of ‘rest befitting blessedness’ (τὴν οἰκείαν τῇ μακαριότητι ἀνάπαυσιν ἀναπαυσώμεθα),⁹⁰ which does not remove the precariousness of being in the world as a free and responsible being.

Commenting on John 14, 3 (‘And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also’), his remark is that this ‘place’ has been prepared by the providence of the Father, so that those who live virtuously and according to rigid discipline may perpetually dwell in those prepared favourable circumstances.⁹¹ It is obvious that, at this point too, Origen maintains the notion of conditionality regarding residence in eternal life. Once in that quality of life, one has to live according to a rigid discipline (κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀκρίβειαν), that is, according to the ‘conditions of blessedness’ (τῶν ὅρων τῆς μακαριότητος).⁹² The reference to those ‘conditions’ (ὅρων) underlines the *conditionality* of residence in eternal life. Using the language of the Evangelist, he states that

those who genuinely hear Jesus, they first follow him, then ask about his dwelling-place and are allowed to see this; further, once they come in, they see this⁹³ and stay ‘in him’. All of them stay ‘on that day’,⁹⁴ and certainly some of them stay for longer.⁹⁵

The contingency of staying in eternal life is pointed out once again through this allegorical exegesis of Matthew 13, 36. This is a life in a place where one may stay either ‘for one day’ or for a longer time. To ascend and live there (this ‘there’ is also termed ‘immortality’)⁹⁶ is a contingent and reversible condition.

In the same vein, he takes the portions, ‘Who alone has immortality’⁹⁷ and ‘as I live, says the Lord’,⁹⁸ to mean that none of those who live beside God has the kind of life which is absolutely unchangeable and unalterable (οὐδενὸς τῶν παρὰ τὸν Θεὸν ζώντων ἔχοντος τὴν ἀτρεπτον πάντῃ καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον ζωὴν).⁹⁹ They are those who live in their own space (καὶ ζώντων ἐν χώρᾳ ἰδίᾳ

⁹⁰ *exhMar*, XLVII. Cf. the idea of eschatological ‘rest’ (ἀνάπαυσις): *Cels*, III, 63; *commJohn*, I, XII; 2, XXXIII; 13, XLI; 13, XLIV; *frLuc*, 154; *homJer*, 14, 14; 16, 4; 20, 3; *commMatt*, 14, 5; *frPs*, 114, 7; 131, 8; *Fragmenta Alia De Principiis*, Fr. 3 (*apud* Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 64.4.7–8); *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.349.36.

⁹¹ *frJohn*, CV.

⁹² *commMatt*, 12, 26.

⁹³ Cf. John, 1, 37–39.

⁹⁴ John, 1, 40.

⁹⁵ *commMatt*, 10, 1.

⁹⁶ *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.38.

⁹⁷ 1 Tim. 6, 16.

⁹⁸ Num. 14, 28; Ez. 34, 8.

⁹⁹ *commJohn*, 2, XVII.

τυγχανόντων),¹⁰⁰ viz. in eternal life.¹⁰¹ Let us then see how further elaboration on this point goes:

Following from what has been said, the saying, 'I live, said the Lord'¹⁰² should be understood through a search for higher truths (κατ' ἐπανάβασιν).¹⁰³ Following what has been said about living, perhaps living proper applies to God alone.¹⁰⁴ ... At the same time, as we examine the things about the living God and life, which the Christ is, and about living beings, which are in their particular region (ζώντων ἐν χώρᾳ),¹⁰⁵ and about living beings not justified before God,¹⁰⁶ subsequent to these, quoting the saying, 'Who alone has immortality',¹⁰⁷ we shall embody in our consideration our implication (τὰ ὑπονοούμενα) that no rational being whatever possesses blessedness (μακαριότητα) as an inseparable attribute of his essence (μὴ οὐσιωδῶς ἔχειν ὡς ἀχώριστον συμβεβηκός). For had anyone blessedness and pre-eminent life as an inseparable attribute (ἐάν γὰρ ἀχώριστον ἔχη τὴν μακαριότητα καὶ τὴν προηγουμένην ζωὴν), how would that which is said of God, 'Who alone has immortality', still be true?¹⁰⁸

In *Cels* the notion of 'falling' from eternal life is enunciated also, and so is the world comprising sundry planes of existential standing, of which eternal life is the 'supreme' one:

It was necessary for God, who knows very well (ἐπιστάμενον) how to accommodate even the consequences of evil toward what is appropriate, to place those who so became evil in some place of the whole [world] (κατατάξαι πού τοῦ παντός),¹⁰⁹ and to make a training of virtue to be set up for those who wished to strive 'lawfully'¹¹⁰ in order to take this over. So that, like gold in the fire, once they had been tried by the evil and done everything appropriate so that they might allow nothing impure

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Psalm 114, 9.

¹⁰¹ One should notice the difference from Augustine, who imagined the saints rapt in changeless contemplation and concluded his Book XIII of the *Confessions* with the hope of repose there. In Book XI, he upheld a view of the saints being able to escape a certain sense of temporality. In Book XII, he described the realm in which the saints and others dwell, the heaven of heaven, and furnished a fuller account of the way in which this heaven is divorced from ordinary time. This digression has some value in giving an idea of a certain attitude and aspiration, with which Origen's thought is contrasted.

¹⁰² Sophonias, 2, 9; Is. 49, 18; Jer. 22, 24; 26, 18; Ez. 5, 11; 14, 16; 14, 18; 14, 20; 16, 48; 17, 16; 18, 3; 20, 3; 20, 31; 20, 33; 33, 11; 34, 8; 35, 6; 35, 11. Rom. 14, 11.

¹⁰³ *commJohn*, 2, XVII. 'Searching for higher truths' (κατ' ἐπανάβασιν) (also, *deOr*, XXIX, 13) is an interesting expression, which has eluded Origen's translators. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI.7.25. This is used only a few times in literature: Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 2.12.53.3; 4.6.29.4; 4.25.159.2; 5.6.39.4; 6.8.68.1; 7.7.36.1; Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, p. 142. Hence, unless there is some earlier non-extant common source, Origen probably upheld the expression from Clement.

¹⁰⁴ *commJohn*, 2, XVII.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Psalm 114, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Psalm 142, 2.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Tim. 6, 16.

¹⁰⁸ *commJohn*, 2, XVIII.

¹⁰⁹ Origen studiously uses indefinite terms, since he refers not only to the 'earth', but also to any 'place' of his world: πού τοῦ παντός ('in a some place of the whole world').

¹¹⁰ 2 Tim. 2, 5.

enter their rational nature, and, having appeared worthy of ascending to the divine realm, they might be drawn up by the Logos to the supreme blessedness which is above all (τὴν ἀνωτάτω πάντων) and, to call this so, to the topmost mountain edge of goodness (ἀκρόρειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν).¹¹¹

In the same section, the possibility of retrogression from this ‘ascending’ precedes this statement and reads thus:

For it is not possible for that which is good by accident (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) and appeared subsequently (ἐξ ἐπιγενήματος)¹¹² to be good in the same sense as that which is good by essence (τῷ οὐσιωδῶς ἀγαθῷ);¹¹³ goodness in the former sense will never abandon him who, so to call this, receives the living bread for his preservation. And if it goes away from someone, it is himself who caused this, because he neglected (ῥαθυμήσαντος) to partake of the living bread and of the true drink.¹¹⁴

What Origen actually depicts is the ontological dissimilarity between God and the world: God is immutable, what was created is changeable and convertible. The notion is consonant with the principle of universe being cared for by God in accordance with the ways in which individual free will is realized in action. Creatures are always led on to be better, to the degree this is possible, which means, to the extent free will is not errant. For the nature of free will is to admit of various possibilities, since its contingent character cannot be like the entirely unchangeable nature of God.¹¹⁵

This is the sense in which ‘goodness’ is ‘in essence’ attributed to God alone (οὐσιωδῶς ἀγαθῷ), whereas anyone can have this only *per accidens* (κατὰ συμβεβηκός).¹¹⁶ Although ‘angels are of a race which is superior to the human one’, still ‘many among the angels become lower than human beings’. Likewise, ‘many among men, who are lower than angels in nature, become superior to certain angels, who were superior but became lower by reason of certain causes’.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ *Cels*, VI, 44.

¹¹² In fact ἐξ ἐπιγενήματος suggests something which occurred subsequently, then it is ‘accidental’, that is, κατὰ συμβεβηκός. The two expressions are virtually synonymous, laying stress on the idea expressed at this point.

¹¹³ Using the Aristotelian distinction ‘essence/accident’. Cf. *Metaphysica*, 990b34; 1002b29; 1003b32; 1007a31; 1015b22, 31; 1031b17; 1038a26; 1039b8; 1066b3, 17; 1068a11; 1079a31; *Physica*, 185b3; 192b33; 193a16; 203a5; 203b33; 204a10, 24, 27; 263b8; *De Anima*, 406b7, 17; 407b9; 416b13; *Ethica Eudemia*, 1219b36; *De Partibus Animalium*, 643a27, et passim. Cf. *commJohn*, 2, XVIII; *Princ* (Gr.), I.2.4; II.9.2; *Philocalia*, 24, 2; 24, 4. The same idea, but not through this terminology, in *commMatt*, 15, 10.

¹¹⁴ *John*, 6, 51. *Cels*, VI, 44.

¹¹⁵ *Cels*, V, 21.

¹¹⁶ *Celc*, VI, 44; s. *supra*. Cf. *commJohn*, 2, XVIII: The condition of blessedness is proper to God ‘by essence’, while this is ‘accidental’ to all creatures: πᾶν ὅτι ποιοῦν λογικὸν μὴ οὐσιωδῶς ἔχειν ὡς ἀχώριστον συμβεβηκός τὴν μακαριότητα.

¹¹⁷ *commMatt*, 15, 27.

Once again the ‘*as long as...*’ notion expresses rearrangement in divers planes of being: “*As long as* they were keeping ‘their first state’ and did not leave ‘their own habitation’,¹¹⁸ they were far more different than human beings and superior to them”. Conversely, human beings may ‘become superior to angels’ and ascend to ‘the dwelling place of angels’ ‘once they do everything that may raise them to the kingdom of heavens’.¹¹⁹ This, because ‘an existential state of high rationality may alter to a less rational one, because of too much laziness and negligence. Accordingly, a less rational character may revert to being rational, despite its former negligence of the word of God’.¹²⁰

This general principle of existential mutability applies to eternal life nonetheless. The theory can be traced also in *Princ* and the relevant passage can be confirmed as expressing Origen’s authentic thought:

These are they who dwell ‘in heaven and on the earth and under the earth’,¹²¹ the three terms indicating the entire universe, that is all those beings who started from one beginning, but were drawn in various directions by their own individual impulses and were distributed throughout the different ranks of existence in accordance with their merit; for in them goodness does not reside *essentially*, as it does in God and his Christ and in the Holy Spirit. For goodness resides *essentially* only in this Trinity, which is the source of all things. All other beings possess this as an *accident*, liable to be *lost*.¹²²

Holiness is an accident, not an element of creaturely essence.¹²³ Every nature is alterable and changeable. Even though it may be glorified in works of righteousness or wisdom, it cannot be said to possess a glory that is sincere and bright, by reason of the fact that its righteousness and wisdom are accidents, and whatever is accidental may also be separated and lost.¹²⁴ With respect to the holy powers, goodness (ἀγαθότης) is not in them as part of their essence; for essential goodness is found solely in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and of course in the Father also.¹²⁵

Speaking of the creatures which are in the hand of God, it is stated that *if* they do not fall from the hand of God, in this way taking themselves away from it, they will not be plucked out; for no one plucks out of the hand of the Father.¹²⁶ Likewise, one can distance himself from God only by his own free will, since it is written that no one plucks of the hands of the Father; it is not written that

¹¹⁸ Jude, 6.

¹¹⁹ *commMatt*, 15, 27.

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.* 11, 17.

¹²¹ Phil. 2, 10.

¹²² *Princ* (Lat.), I.4.2; my italics underline the crucial terms (essence, accident) used in the Greek writings.

¹²³ *Princ* (Lat.), I.2.4.

¹²⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), I.2.10.

¹²⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), I.5.3. Cf. *supra*, *Cels*, VI, 44 and *commJohn*, 2, XVII.

¹²⁶ Cf. John, 10, 29. *commJohn*, 19, IV.

no one *falls* away of his hands (οὐ μὴν γέγραπται ὅτι ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀρπάζει, οὕτως οὐδεὶς διαπίπτει ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ).¹²⁷ The danger is to take oneself away from God out of one's own free will, not because of external coercion:

For self-determination is subject to free will (τὸ γὰρ αὐτεξούσιον ἐλεύθερόν ἐστι). And I say; no one plucks out of the hand of the shepherd, no one can take us out of the hand of God; but it is we who can fall from his hands because of our negligence.¹²⁸

The cardinal notion of freedom of will is maintained with reference to being in eternal life. Attaining to this 'end' is the result of creaturely freedom and divine grace concurring in the course of history. Thus, considering the meaning of 'end' (τέλος) which is found in the title of many Psalms in the LXX text, he comments:

Victory is the 'end' (τέλος) for anyone who struggles.... Thus the psalms, which are entitled 'unto the end' (εἰς τέλος), proclaim the victory of Christ, who shall be called victory-maker (νικοποιῶν), according to Akylas. For he will have brought about victory to all those who had been conquered (νενικημένῳ). Anyone who is conquered (νικώμενος) by Christ has conquered (νενίκηκε) that evil which took place in him: he eradicates this by means of being subject to Christ. Certainly, Christ conquers no one who does not will so (ἄκοντα). For Christ conquers by persuading, since he is the Logos of God.¹²⁹

The conviction that eternal life is a reversible state stems from two fundamental notions. Firstly, eternal life is a spatio-temporal situation, a particular location within the world. Secondly, conscious and alive beings are endowed with free will. Eternal life does not denote everlasting duration, which is harmonious with the conception of time as finite.

¹²⁷ *homJer*, 18, 3, quoting John, 10, 29, 'No one is able to pluck out of my Father's hands'.

¹²⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹²⁹ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1133.12.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ETERNAL DEATH

Like other notions, ‘death’ also is a homonym, which means that this predication applies to more than one conditions. In *Dial*, the notion of death is understood in a threefold way.

The first kind of death is to live unto God and to die unto sin, according to Rom. 6, 10. This is certainly a ‘blessed death’, the death that Jesus died, ‘for in that he died, he died unto sin’.¹

The second is the death a man dies to God, as in the saying ‘the soul that sins, it shall die’.²

Third, it is the common death: ‘Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years and died’.³ This is just the natural death, which Origen calls ‘the common death’ (κοινὸς θάνατος).⁴

Whereas the first kind of death constitutes the way for ascending to eternal life, the second one is that through which one may come down to the nethermost and dimmest plane of being. Recalling the scriptural illustration of the ‘ladder’ of Jacob, this could be said: whereas eternal life is ‘Christ himself’⁵ who is on the top of that ladder, eternal death is the lowest step of it. This is the space that is the remotest one from the Logos, the undermost existential standing. Eternal death,⁶ therefore, is a particular underworld, the antipode of eternal life in terms of existential quality, that is, of rationality: the nethermost space of the world.

¹ Rom. 6, 10. *Dial*, 25–27.

² Ez. 18, 4.

³ Gen. 5, 5.

⁴ *commJohn*, 20, XL; XLI; *Princ*, IV.3.10; *exhMar*, XXIX; XXXIX; *Dial*, 16; 25; *Philocalia*, 1, 26; *commMatt*, 12, 26; 15, 15; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, sections 30; 52; *frPs*, 22, 4; 81, 6 & 7; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1128.22. In Latin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.19; 5.8.8.

⁵ *Dial*, 27.

⁶ Although it would be beyond my scope to elaborate, I just note that Thomas Aquinas pointed out the notion of ‘eternity’ involving discussion of the eternity not only of God, but also of creatures; indeed not only of the creatures saved, but also of those damned. This, according to Aquinas, would render three different kinds of eternity. (Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a,q.10,a.3; *apud* R. Sorabji, *op. cit.* p. 98). Certainly, the conception of those ‘eternities’ is not the same as that of Origen’s who does not even use the very term ‘eternity’ at all. Nevertheless, the idea of ‘eternal’ being a homonym applicable to three distinct conditions is there.

In a passage where 'heavenly Jerusalem' is ascribed the meaning of eternal life,⁷ Origen affirms that the counterpoint of this place must be the scriptural 'Gehenna':

Having found Gehenna in the Gospel described as a place of punishment,⁸ we searched to find out if it was mentioned at any point of the ancient writings, especially because the Jews use this word. We found certain points (ὅπου) where the Scripture mentions a Chasm of the 'Son of Ennom';⁹ for which we have learnt that, referring to the same subject (κατὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὑποκειμένου), the Hebrew text reads 'the Chasm of Ennom and Gehenna', instead of the word 'Chasm'. By careful study of the texts, we also find that Gehenna, or the Chasm of Ennom, is included in the property assigned to the tribe of Benjamin,¹⁰ of which Jerusalem was also a part. And by correlating the existence of a heavenly Jerusalem from the property assigned to Benjamin,¹¹ with the Chasm of Ennom, we find something pertaining to the doctrine of punishments (περὶ τῶν κολάσεων),¹² which are employed as a means for the purification through torment of souls apropos of their quality (τῶν τοιωνδὶ ψυχῶν).¹³

In *commJohn* he speaks of a place 'down to Hades or to a space of such a sort' (ἐν ἄδου κάτω ἢ τινι τοιούτῳ χωρίῳ)¹⁴ which is regarded as an 'end' (τέλος) in the sense of being the most remote from God. Whereas eternal life is a qualitative end nearest God, eternal death is the nethermost space, the utter irrationality (ἐσχάτη ἀλογία),¹⁵ the remotest one from God.¹⁶ The 'spaces' below the human existential status are classified according to their quality, in the same way that the 'heavens' are classified. So there is categorical reference of the undermost 'space' (τόπον) which is the 'darkest' among the dark ones (σκοτός ἦν τὸ ἐν σκότεσι βαθύτερον).¹⁷

⁷ *Cels*, VI, 25.

⁸ Matt. 5: 22, 29, 30; 10, 28; 18, 9; 23, 15; Mark, 9, 43; 9: 45, 47; Luke, 12, 5; James, 3, 6.

⁹ Jer. 7, 31–32; 39, 35; 4 Kings (Regum 2, in Masoretic text), 23, 10. Cf. Jer. 19, 6.

¹⁰ Joshua, 18, 16. This is the sole point where Γέεννα is referred to as Γάτεννα. *Septuagint*, (Cod. Vaticanus & Cod. Alexandrinus).

¹¹ Cf. Joshua, 18, 11–28. Cf. Judges (Cod. Vaticanus), 21: 17, 23, Paralipomenon 2 (Chronicon 2), 31, 1.

¹² The Plural implies different kinds of bodies assumed after a Judgement. Cf. *COT*, pp. 296f.

¹³ *Cels*, VI, 25.

¹⁴ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVII. Cf. *Princ*, IV.3.10 (*Philocalia*, 1, 26): τοῦ καλουμένου χωρίου ἄδου. *selPs*, 68, PG.12.1512.27: τὰ τοῦ ἄδου χωρία.

¹⁵ *expProv*, 19, PG.17.209.14.

¹⁶ Reference to 'distance' and 'location' suggests *qualitative* categories. This is all about different participation in the Logos and in the Holy Spirit, understood 'not spatially' (οὐ τοπικῶς), not in terms of geometrical 'dimensions' (οὐ τοπικὰς σημαίνουσι διαστάσεις): *commJohn*, 19, XX; XXII; *fiJohn*, XXXVII; XLII; LXXXVII; CXXXIII; CXXXIX; *deOr*, XXIII; *commEph*, section 11; *fiPs*, 72, 27. Cf. *COT*, p. 107.

¹⁷ *commMatth*, 17, 16: εἰς τὸν ἀλλότριον φωτός <παντός> καταδικασθῆναι τόπον, ἐνθα σκότος ἦν τὸ ἐν σκότεσι βαθύτερον καὶ καλούμενον 'σκότος ἐξώτερον'. For the classification of different spaces, s. *commJohn*, 19, XXII.

There are then ‘two extremes, so to call them’ (δύο, ἓν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω, ἀκρότητας).¹⁸ The former alludes to the quality of being ‘Son of God’; the latter refers to being a ‘diametrically opposed son’ (κατὰ διάμετρον ἐναντίον υἱόν), a ‘son of the evil daemon and Satan and devil’.¹⁹

This classification is mostly expressed in terms of ‘rationality’. This is why ‘various bodies’ exist on account of ‘logical *differentia*’, which are due to different ‘knowledge of God’.²⁰ The ‘translation’ of bodies to a lower rank is portrayed as an alteration from a ‘more rational state’ to a ‘more irrational’ (κατάστασις λογικωτέρα μεταβάλλει εἰς ἀλογωτέραν).²¹ Subsequently, the worst damage that a rational being may incur is to be transposed to the ‘utmost irrationality’ (ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν).²² In general, utmost wickedness is identified with utmost irrationality (ἀλογία).²³

This is the state portrayed as ‘eternal death’.²⁴ Similar terminology, such as ‘eternal punishment’ (αἰώνιος κόλασις),²⁵ or ‘incurable punishments’ (ταῖς ἀνηκέστοις κολάσεσιν) is also used.²⁶ Authority is certainly scriptural, since prophets ‘uttered many threats about the eternal punishment’ and the Gospel refers to the ‘Gehenna and the other endless tortures’ (ἀτελευτήτων βασάνων).²⁷

In fact, however, these references do not imply any notion of endless duration. His deeper conviction is that the statements about ‘endless’ punishment have a tutorial and edifying purpose, particularly for those who are not willing to conduct a Christian way of living. His conviction and outlook is that the primary task of Christian teaching is not to threaten, but to try to persuade about the truth of this belief:

For it is certainly our will to do all in our power in order to make all men familiar with the whole of Christian doctrine, on account of so many, indeed innumerable, facts which have persuaded us to conduct a life according to Christian principles. But when we encounter people who are prejudiced by slander against the Christians, believing that Christians are not pious people, so that these people are unwilling

¹⁸ *Cels*, VI, 45. The phrase ἓν’ οὕτως ὀνομάσω (‘so to call them’) implies once again that those particular spaces of the world, although diverse, are perceived in terms of different quality. By the way, Origen uses this expression abundantly.

¹⁹ *Cels*, VI, 45.

²⁰ *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46–49; s. analysis in chapter 6, pp. 188, 195–96.

²¹ *commMatt*, 11, 17.

²² *expProv*, 19, PG.19.207.14.

²³ *Cels*, II, 79; III, 75; IV, 85 (*Philocalia*, 20, 12); *Homiliae in Lucam*, 17, p. 104; *frLuc*, 216; *selEz*, 18, PG.13.817.29; *expProv*, PG.17.209.8.

²⁴ *Dial*, 27; *selEz*, 29, PG.13.824.2; *expProv*, 24, PG.225.41; *commJohn*, 20, XLIII.

²⁵ *pace Matt*, 25, 46. *Cels*, III, 78; VI, 26; VIII, 48 & 52; *homJer*, 19, 15; 20, 4; *frPs*, 72, 16, 17; *selEz*, 7, PG.13.793.34; *expProv*, 1, PG.17.164.36.

²⁶ *frMatt*, 102 II.

²⁷ *selEz*, 7, PG.13.793.35.

to listen to those who assert to teach about the divine word, there, as far as we can, we stand in accordance with the principle of loving other people, in order to make even those who are unwilling to become Christians accept the doctrine, even though we have introduced the doctrines about eternal punishment of those who are irreverent.²⁸

Likewise, reference is made to the 'simple-minded' and 'unsophisticated'. They 'try to devote themselves to piety according to the Christian teaching just out of fear of the threatened punishments'. It is out of such a fear that those people are successfully overcome by the Gospel. For what in Scripture is proclaimed as 'eternal punishments' make them despise every torture devised against them, to despise even countless agonies and death occurring out of torture.²⁹

The purpose of these 'threats' is therefore pedagogical, especially for the simple-minded folk. The prime concern, however, is to guide human race towards the proposed different quality of life through persuasion, not intimidation.

We regard the rectification of human race as our main task, whether by means of threats of punishments which, we have been persuaded, are necessary for everyone (τῷ παντί) and probably not worthless to those who will incur them, or whether we use promises of what is reserved for those who have conducted good lives, which include promises of the blessed life after death in the kingdom of God for those worthy to be under His rule³⁰

It is no accident that at this point, where he refers to the implementation of punishments, he does not apply the term 'eternal' to them at all. He uses the figure of discipline as 'cure', in order to urge that the purpose of punishment is not an everlasting suffering: penalization is only a manifestation of the loving divine dispensation aiming at abolition of evil.

Moreover, the 'threats' are simply proclamations of what evil people will incur. It is as if one might call threats the words of a physician, when he says to patients, 'I will cut you and apply cauterizing irons if you do not obey my orders and regulate and conduct yourself in this way or that'.³¹

Origen does not sustain everlasting punishment. What actually constitutes 'punishment' is translation to a lower plane of being and assumption of a body befitting this particular space of the world. At the end of the aeon there will be a new judgement and the possibility of self-improvement still exists. His conviction is that there will be a final state, in which evil will have been abolished.³² This truth, however, should not be explicated too often, or to the ears of anyone:

²⁸ *Cels.*, VIII, 52.

²⁹ *Op. cit.* III, 78.

³⁰ *Op. cit.* IV, 10.

³¹ *Op. cit.* IV, 72; Cf. *homJer.*, 20, 3.

³² s. chapter 9, pp. 237f.

And according to the saying about the punishments that occur round Jerusalem, they are for those who are consumed in order to be refined (χωνευομένων);³³ . . . All the teaching that might be said concerning this point should be said not to everyone, and it is not the appropriate moment to expound this. It is dangerous to commit full explanation of those matters to writing, since it is not necessary for the multitude to be given any further teaching than just the one about punishment of those who commit sin. For it is not advantageous to proceed to higher truths which lie beyond this, since there are people who are scarcely restrained by fear of eternal punishment (διὰ τοὺς μόγις φόβῳ τῆς αἰωνίου κολάσεως) from the vast flood of evil and sins that stem from it.³⁴

His real tenet on the duration of 'death' is explicated in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, where everlasting duration of eternal death is enjoined. The argument is pretty simple and anti-Manichean in essence. Eternal death is denied endlessness, which is exclusive only to the life of restoration, the divine life, after everyone will have attained return to the 'ancient fatherland', that is, to the state preceding the Fall:

However a person may continue to sin, no matter how much he should maintain resistance under the dominion and influence of death, I do not think that the kingdom of death is of eternal duration in the same way life and holiness are, especially when I learn from the Apostle that the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.³⁵ For if the duration of the eternity of death is taken to be the same as that of life, death will no longer be the adversary to life, but its equal. For an eternal will not be contrary to an eternal, but identical. It is plain that death is contrary to life.³⁶ Therefore, if life is eternal, definitely death cannot be eternal, wherefrom also the resurrection of the dead clearly takes place. For when the death of the soul, who is the last enemy, shall be destroyed,³⁷ likewise this common death, which, we have said³⁸ to be like the shadow of the other one, shall necessarily be annulled. It is reasonable that, at that time, room will be made for the resurrection of the dead, when the dominion of death has been destroyed no less than death himself.³⁹

To deliver sermons before an audience of simple-minded people is for Origen one thing, to pen commentaries is quite another. In the former case he is reticent and remains silent about facets of doctrine which should not be divulged.⁴⁰

The doctrine of punishment and purification is one of those expounded very cautiously, in an oblique rather than express manner. At a telling point, where

³³ Cf. Malachi, 3, 2.

³⁴ *Cels*, VI, 26; 'eternal' is used in the sense of everlasting duration, meaning 'endless', while at the same time the pedagogical purpose of this is evidently implied.

³⁵ 1 Cor. 15, 26. Cf. p. 157, quotation and note 83.

³⁶ *commJohn*, 2, XX; XXXVII; 10, VI; 20, XXXIX; *exhMar*, XLI; *Dial*, 27; *Cels*, VI, 36; *Princ* (Gr.), III.1.6; *commMatt*, 12, 33; 13, 9 *et passim*.

³⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 26.

³⁸ Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.19.

³⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.8.8f.

⁴⁰ s. chapter 5, notes 158, 159, Origen appealing to Matt. 7, 6 and Tobit, 12, 7.

the purgatorial ‘mystery’ is expounded, the reader is reminded to be circumspect and attentive so as to ‘silently harbour’ the deeper ‘meaning’ hidden therein, which refers to the ‘grievous things’ spoken about transgressors.

Since the *end* is distressful to all, even to those who are blessed, whether they come from Israel or indeed from the Gentiles, the word of evangelical teaching *purifies* in the present aeon, so that they might be like those to whom the Lord was saying, ‘Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you’.⁴¹ But anyone who should despise the purification through the Word of God and through evangelical teaching, he reserves for himself pain and penal purification, when the fire of the Gehenna purifies with torments those who were not purified neither by apostolic teaching, not by the evangelical word, according to what is written, ‘And through fire I will purely purge you’.⁴² But *for how long a time and how many aeons this purging*, which is applied through penal fire, demands torture from sinners, only he to whom ‘the Father gave all judgement’⁴³ is able to know. . . . Nevertheless, we should always bear in mind that the apostle intended the present passage to be held as a mystery, so that that each of the faithful and perfect might in silence *harbour its meaning within himself, as the mystery of God, and not divulge these views offhandedly to the imperfect and to the less receptive*. For the Scripture says, ‘It is good to conceal the mystery of the king’.⁴⁴

‘Eternal’ death is antipodal to ‘eternal’ life. Origen claims⁴⁵ that they cannot be ‘identical’, in the sense that life is endless, whereas death is not. Eternal death will be terminated, according to the prophecies of Paul to the Corinthians, whereas eternal life is the prelude to the divine eternity itself, that is, divine life. The expression ‘life is eternal’ refers to the life which ‘became’ *in* the Son.⁴⁶ This life had a beginning, but will have no end, as contrasted with ‘eternal death’ which will eventually be abolished, as canvassed in the next chapter.

This is the light under which certain statements of Origen in the Commentary on Romans should be understood—statements which otherwise could hardly make sense. The following passage makes the point that the term ‘eternity’ has different imports, depending on the case this is applied to. Thus the same point is made, if in different words: the term ‘eternal’ can have the sense of duration which will definitely will have an end, whereas, in another case, it can have the sense of an endless state. This first state (of that having an end) pertains

⁴¹ John, 15, 3.

⁴² Isaiah, 1, 25.

⁴³ John, 5, 22.

⁴⁴ Tobit, 12, 7. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.12.8 (comm. on Rom. 11, 25–27), italics mine.

⁴⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.8.8; s. *supra*.

⁴⁶ John, 1, 4. *fr* John, II. In fact John says ‘In him was life’. In Fr. II, however, the opening statement of the Gospel is read with a full stop: ‘without him was not any thing made. What became in him, was life’ (Χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδέν. Ὅ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν). s. *COT*, chapter 4, p. 136.

to eternal death. The second (endlessness) pertains to the promise of 'life', not simply in the highest existential order, but in the divine life itself.

With regard to eternal life, although we have many times spoken about this topic in other places, I have to make a short reference to this at the present point. In the Scriptures, 'in the aeon' is sometimes stated because the end is not known, but sometimes because the period of time indicated does not have an end in the present aeon, though it does end in the future. . . . Where it says eternal life, we must take into account what the Saviour himself has said, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent';⁴⁷ and again, 'I am the way, the truth and the life'.⁴⁸ At another point, the same apostle says, 'We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord'.⁴⁹ Therefore, in the same way that our ever being with the Lord has no end, so also we must believe that eternal life also has no end.⁵⁰

Are then references to endless punishment a kind of stratagem? Origen has no difficulty in conceding something of the sort, if not put that bluntly. Nevertheless, even if that were the case, this is a kind of beneficial device. In the twentieth of his Homilies on Jeremiah, he considers the cases of a monogamous (μονόγαμος) and a bigamous (δίγαμος). The former believes that the latter will suffer an endless punishment (κολάζεσθαι καὶ αἰωνίῳ κολάσει). This is certainly not true, Origen argues, since the bigamous does 'participate to a certain salvation' (μετέχει μὲν σωτηρίας τινός). Is then a monogamous deceived? Maybe he is, but he is 'beneficially deceived'. The same goes for the 'real doctrine of punishment' (τὸ περὶ κολάσεως ἀληθές). It is better for people to believe that the scriptural statements bespeak endlessness. For what is the benefit for someone to discover the 'real doctrine of punishment' if, as a consequence, he lapses into a 'worse life'?⁵¹

In the light of this thesis, it is worth-considering certain passages in which contradictions seem to emerge. In *expProv* the 'utmost irrationality' is coupled with what is styled as 'boundless death' (ἀπέραντον θάνατον).⁵² At the same point though the conviction about the eventual abolition of evil makes its implicit mark: sinners will 'of necessity' (ἀναγκαίως) be purged of their sin in the aeon to come. In another section of the same work, he affirms that 'virtue destroys evil and this will happen in the aeon to come until evil is abolished'.⁵³ Thus, there is no notion of everlasting duration, even at points of discussion about 'eternal' death. There are key premises of his concept of time (and of

⁴⁷ John, 17, 3.

⁴⁸ John, 14, 6.

⁴⁹ 1 Thess. 4, 17.

⁵⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6.6.9.

⁵¹ *homJer*, 20, 4.

⁵² *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.53.

⁵³ *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.30.

his theology, in general) that disallow any notion of unending perpetuation. Such premises are the conception of time being finite,⁵⁴ that of corporeality, as well as the conviction about the eventual abolition of evil and the restoration of all, which will be discussed anon.

Reference to *eternal* in the first place alludes not to a quantity of time, but to the quality of a certain existential state. There is an intrinsic similarity between the notions of eternal life and eternal death. They both obliquely refer to quality of life rather than quantity of time. They are also cognate on account of these two qualities of life being antipodean, marking the two extremes of the range of divers planes and qualities of being which comprise the entire world.

This renders certain comments not incongruous: “An impious wanders about, being in a state of eternal destruction (ἀπωλεία αἰωνία), desiring and committing what is not pleasing to God”.⁵⁵ In expressions such as this, the term ‘eternal’ cannot be taken to imply any notion of everlasting duration; rather it betokens a certain quality of life. In that case ‘eternal’ attests to the extremity of wicked quality, not to the duration of a lifetime.

The assertion of H. Crouzel,⁵⁶ therefore, that Origen is not quite sure about the meaning of the term αἰώνιος stemmed from insufficient understanding of how Origen grasps this homonym. It is not a case of ‘hesitation’ as Crouzel takes it. What appears to vary is the manner in which the theologian delineates his propositions, depending on the audience he addresses. Yet, as far as theology proper is concerned, he has no ‘hesitations’ whatever. It is the different senses in which the term αἰώνιος is used that eluded H. Crouzel, who did not grasp the crucial role that homonyms play in Origen’s theology, ‘death’ being one of them. What also eluded him is that this term is used either for pedagogical reasons (in such a sense the term αἰώνιος is found in scriptural instances), or in order to designate a quality of life rather than a quantity of time. Failure to grasp this fact is the reason for assumptions that Origen is not sure and has ‘hesitations . . . apropos the devil’s salvation’.⁵⁷ Postponing discussion about the ultimate abolition of evil until chapter 9, I only note that the statement that ‘Origen continually hesitates about the meaning of αἰώνιος’ is not correct.

Gehenna is a place for punishment, a particular location of the world. To be transposed there means that a certain consummation and judgement took place. Punishment implies judgement, and judgement implies consummation of an aeon. These episodes are inherently correlated. Defining ‘judgement’ as ‘transition’ to bodies (either ‘angelic’, or ‘dark and dim’ ones), is followed

⁵⁴ *COT*, pp. 245f.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.* 10, PG.17.188.48: ὁ δὲ ἀσεβής, ἀπωλεία αἰωνία περιφέρεται ἐν τῷ ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ πράττειν τὰ μὴ Θεῷ φίλα.

⁵⁶ H. Crouzel, “L’Hadès et la Géhenne selon Origène”, pp. 330–31.

⁵⁷ *Loc. cit.*

by the remark that a 'the impious will not be resurrected in the former judgement, but [they will be resurrected] in the subsequent one'.⁵⁸ Gehenna is then a place where rational beings are transposed *only after* a judgement. The same goes for eternal life, since there are two extremities concerning the particular spaces which comprise the world: the 'paradise, or kingdom of heaven' and the 'Gehenna'.⁵⁹ H. Crouzel's assertion that Origen seems to be the first to open paradise up to the saints before the resurrection⁶⁰ is an egregious error of fact. Origen's riposte to such allegations is clear: to believe that any 'alteration' (μεταβολή),⁶¹ that is, translation to another order of being,⁶² may take place 'before the consummation of the aeon' (πρὸ τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος), is an opinion urged by those who 'have not grasped the meaning of the Scripture and desire things which are impossible' (μήτε τὴν γραφὴν νενοηκέναι καὶ τῶν ἄδυνάτων ἐπιθυμεῖν).⁶³ This is a pivotal tenet of this theology: due to the existential causality, any transformation of bodies can take place only after a consummation and judgement.⁶⁴ Accordingly, a human being remains in this plane of existential standing throughout the entire duration of an aeon, 'from its beginning until its end' (ἀρχῆθεν μέχρι τέλους).⁶⁵ Thus, against Crouzel's claims, 'human beings are in a state between angels and daemons, being neither daemons nor angels until the consummation of the aeon'.⁶⁶

When Origen speaks of the dead being in Christ, he does not mean that they have been transposed to another status of being. Christ is present in all ranks of life. The dead are still human beings living in the interim between their death and the expected consummation and judgement, as discussed in chapter 1. Eternal life (in the 'upper Jerusalem') or eternal death (in the Gehenna) is a spatio-temporal state, in which a human creature will be transposed only after consummation and judgement of the entire world.

⁵⁸ *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1092.4, comm. on Psalm 1, 5; the same in *frPs*, 1, 5. Cf. *homJob* (Pitra), p. 390.

⁵⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 9.42.11.

⁶⁰ H. Crouzel, *op. cit.* p. 330.

⁶¹ *commJohn*, 10, XXX.

⁶² Cf. *selPs*, 1, referring to 'translation of bodies, either to angelic (ἀγγελικά), or dark and dim (σκοτεινά καὶ ζοφερά) ones'. PG.12.1097.52–54.

⁶³ *commMatt*, 10, 13.

⁶⁴ H. Crouzel stuck to the letter of *Princ* and referred to 'three levels, heaven, earth and hades, which make up the world', *loc. cit.* This is a mistake, from which many of the misconstructions in that article flow, due to failure to grasp Origen's perception of the world and its movement in time. This world comprises not 'three levels', but an undefined number of particular spaces. As Origen points out, the number and precise classification of these spaces is incognoscible to humans. The expression in *Princ* is only a succinct rendering of this concept. Due to this miscomprehension, he mistook Origen's thought as allegedly dealing only with a time extended just between now and the end of this aeon, which he called 'resurrection'. H. Crouzel, *op. cit.* and "Mort et Immortalité selon Origène", pp. 19–38, 81–96, 181–196.

⁶⁵ *deOr*, XXVII, 15.

⁶⁶ *expProv*, 1, PG.165.10–11.

Unless this import of 'eternal death' is clear, misapprehension is inevitable. In a homily on Joshua, there is a strange passage, which can be grasped only in the light of my foregoing analysis. For within a few lines he speaks both of 'eternal fire', for which however there is a certain 'until', that is, a moment when this 'eternal' is terminated. Here is how the portion reads:

The place of demons will be impossible to dwell in. Then the devil and his angels will be transferred to the eternal fire with our Lord Jesus Christ sitting as ruler and judge, and saying to those who overcame before and afterwards, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you by my Father.'⁶⁷ But to the others he will say, 'Depart ye into the eternal fire that God prepared for the devil and his angels,'⁶⁸ *until* he takes care of every soul with the remedies he himself knows and 'all Israel will be saved'.⁶⁹

How is in fact possible for 'eternal' fire to be endless, and at the same time a notion of 'until' is stipulated concerning its duration? Quite evidently, 'eternal' does not imply everlasting duration: this 'eternal' is not endless. As he does elsewhere, Origen over and again alludes to the remedial nature of divine punishments,⁷⁰ while at the same time he insinuates his notion of restoration ('all Israel will be saved'). It is important and characteristic of how principal this doctrine of his theology is, that he refers to it even in a homily addressed to a congregation, not in a treatise or a commentary, which were intended for audience or readers that were more educated.

Conclusion

Origen considers eternal life and eternal death as specific qualities of life, not as temporal stretches of existence. When he expounds the objective (expressed in the language of Gal. 6, 7–8), 'so that we shall reap not corruption from the flesh but eternal life from the spirit',⁷¹ he primarily refers to a quality of existence and so he does referring to eternal death. As far as duration is concerned, this is determined by the existential causality, which applies to the entirety of his world. Hence the temporal implication of the term αἰώνιος (eternal) is only of minor importance, since there is nothing special with the duration of either the supreme or the nethermost existential standing. Certainly there are points where scriptural statements about endless punishment are echoed in Origen's works. However, he quite clearly takes the ostensible notion of everlastingness

⁶⁷ Matt. 25, 34.

⁶⁸ Matt. 25, 41.

⁶⁹ *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.5. Rom. 11, 26; italics mine.

⁷⁰ References in the same vein recur in the *Homilies on Joshua*. Cf. 3.4 & 10.1.

⁷¹ *homJer*, 11, 2.

to have been spelled out for sermonic and didactic reasons. Strictly speaking, his conception of *eternal* with reference to creatures does not introduce any notion of everlastingness. In the third case of this homonym being used, 'eternal God' suggests the atemporal God, which means that the case is about timelessness, not everlasting duration. The terms αἰὼν (aeon) and αἰώνιος (eternal) are homonyms. Unless this critical point is grasped, miscomprehension is inevitable. For it is one thing to speak of eternal God, but to speak of eternal life is quite another, whereas eternal death is a third proposition.

Thus the notion of 'eternal' may allude either to the timeless divine reality or to two different temporal conditions within the world. Eternal life, as a certain quality of existential status, it is a promise of God to all free and responsible hypostases. This is therefore a goal, an end for all those who strive for salvation and hope to attain to eternal life. This hope is a fundamental characteristic of Origen's concept of history.

Once the notion of eternal life is canvassed, the content of *hope* is now clearer. The fact is, nevertheless, that eternal life itself is also a temporal reality. The question which then arises is this: once the 'end' of a certain individual is achieved and the hope for attaining to eternal life is fulfilled, is there any kind of hope for those who are already there? Time does not cease to exist in the world, even if certain creatures have realized their objective of ascending to eternal life. They are still within the world, which means they are within time. Can this time (the time of eternal life) be somehow different from the time of the rest of the world? Certainly not, since there is no different time in different planes of being. Since *hope* is a fundamental notion in Origen's philosophy of history, this hope should exist in all ranks of life, therefore also in the supreme one, which is a temporal condition. The question which is then invited is this: what is the actual content of *hope* in that plane of existential standing? This introduces us to the study of Origen's eschatological conceptions, that is, the ultimate perspectives of history. This is what I shall discuss next.

PART III

ESCHATOLOGY

CHAPTER NINE

THE END OF HISTORY

The eventual extinction of evil

Eternal life as an end is a goal which has an individual character. Attaining to this personal perspective means that wickedness is overcome by a certain responsible being, but evil is not universally extinguished. There are still other planes of being where evil does exist as a scandalous antithesis to the created nature. The world remains in a teleological spatio—temporal process.

The notion of *end* (τέλος) which has been canvassed thus far pertains therefore to an *individual* hypostasis. It is certainly no accident that, in Greek, the term τέλειος (perfect) is derived from the word τέλος.

We assert that it is impossible for any man to look up to God virtuously right from the start. For of necessity evil must at first exist among men, according to that which Paul says, ‘But when the commandment came sin revived and I died.’¹ Moreover, we do not teach that for the unrighteous man to be accepted by God it is enough for him, just because of his wickedness, to humble himself. God will accept him only *after* he has denounced himself for his *past actions*, *walking* humbly on account of the *past* and in a descent way in respect of the future.²

The conception of τέλος is also depicted thus:

One should know that, for every art or science there is an *end* (τέλος) sought eagerly by him who genuinely pursues it. Likewise, there must be an end for the rational nature. This [end] is to be made alive in Christ, according to the saying of the Apostle.³

Beyond this individual ‘end’, nevertheless, there is an eschatological reality in which evil will be totally abolished and we have this comment through the hand of Evagrius: “There was [a reality] in which there was no evil and there will be [a reality] in which evil will exist no more; for the seeds of virtue are ineradicable”.⁴ Likewise, “as there was [a reality] when cheese was not cheese, so there was [a reality] when daemons were not evil. And if milk precedes cheese, it is obvious

¹ Rom. 7, 9–10.

² *Cels*, III, 62; italics mine.

³ *frPs*, 4, 1. Cf. *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1133.2.

⁴ *expProv*, 5, PG.17.173.33–34. The ‘seeds of virtue’ (σπέρματα ἀρετῆς). Cf. *Cels*, IV, 25; *frPs*, 36, 35; *selPs*, 130, PG.12.1657.49. The notion comes from Plutarch and Philo.

that virtue is prior to evil”.⁵ Similar is the comment⁶ on another Psalm: a ‘sinner will not vanish into non-being (οὐ τῷ ἐξ ὅλου διαλύεσθαι τὴν σύστασιν αὐτῶν)’, but ‘he will not exist inasmuch as he is a sinner’. It is wickedness in him that shall be extinguished.⁷ For ‘evil did not exist in the beginning and it will not exist for ever’.⁸ Recall the statement quoted in the previous chapter: the duration of the eternity of death cannot be the same as that of life, since in that case death would no longer be the adversary to life, but its equal. For an eternal will not be contrary to an eternal, but identical: if life is eternal, definitely death cannot be eternal and shall necessarily be overruled.⁹

We have then one and the same notion evident throughout. However long the series of recurrent worlds may be, there is an ultimate prospect that will for sure come to pass eventually; a reality in which all cognizant and responsible beings will have been purified, out of their own free moral action, along with the gracious guidance and support by God. No matter how strong evil appears at present, this shall be *enfin* invalidated. This calls for quoting an account of Origen’s views by Augustine:

But there are other teachings of this Origen which the Catholic Church altogether rejects, and as regards that which does not accuse him falsely and is not to be put off by those who defend him; in particular, his teachings regarding purging and deliverance and the cyclical return of the rational creation after a long period of time to the same evils. For what Catholic Christian, learned or unlearned, is not utterly repelled by what he calls the purging of evils, namely, that even those who have ended this life in crime and wickedness and sacrilege, and the greatest of impieties—yea, more, the devil himself and his angels—shall, though after a very long time, be purged and set free and restored to the kingdom and the light of God; and again that after a very long time all those who have been set free shall once more fall and return to these evils; and that these alternate cycles of blessedness and misery for the rational creation always have been and always will be? Against the philosophers from whom Origen learned this impiety I have argued strenuously in my book ‘The City of God’.¹⁰

In this tendentious paraphrase coined by Augustine it is not easy to explain immediately why these lines concentrate so heavily on disproving not only Origen’s doctrine of creation, but also his philosophy of history. Since he was slow in Greek and rather disinclined to this abstruse language, it is plausible that Greek discussions had been retailed to him. Still it is hard to surmise that he regarded them as an adequate means for claiming knowledge of the relevant tenets. Rather, it is the typical psychological detest towards one from whom a

⁵ *selPs*, 118, PG.1600.56–1601.2.

⁶ Psalm 36, 10: ‘For yet a little while and the wicked shall not exist’.

⁷ *selPs*, 36, PG.12.1320.4.

⁸ *commJohn*, 2, XIII. Cf. *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1148.50–53.

⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.8.8; italics mine. s. quotation on p. 227.

¹⁰ Augustine, *De Haeresibus*, XLIII; Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, XLII.

certain expropriation takes place, given that Origen is the source of what is styled ‘Augustine’s theory of time’,¹¹ which actually never existed on its own merits. To echo Origen’s postulatam that time is a ‘creature’ can hardly make Augustine’s conjecture a ‘theory’. Otherwise, he was groping for ‘something’ about time, which I think he never found. He did not resolve anything about the ontology of time proper and he is too suggestive and tentative (as he himself sometimes candidly acknowledges) about too many things surrounding the question. For instance, Augustine wavers on whether God’s changeless will should be viewed as timeless or as existing in advance. I doubt whether he made up his mind conclusively at last. Whatever he said on the issue was an audible resonance of Origen’s penetrating breakthroughs. But hearsay knowledge through retailed discussions could hardly make his appropriation of Origen’s theory an accurate echo of his Alexandrian source. Augustine’s strictures on Origen then should be read as an invidious hurling rather than a considered scholarly asseveration.

Be that as it may, Origen never spoke of ‘cyclical return’, nor did he presume any ‘alternate cycles of blessedness and misery for the rational creation’. The future is simply unknown. Least of all did he say that ‘these alternate cycles. . . have always been and always will be’. Far to the contrary.

In the light of Origen’s own statements similar ones ascribed to him may be regarded as expressing his genuine position. Once again Justinian supplies P. Koetschau with his text: “there was when that which has been lost was not lost and there will be when it will not be lost”.¹² In *frLuc* we read that ‘full power’¹³ has been given to Jesus Christ,¹⁴ ‘so that he brings about peace through the blood of his cross to all those who are either on earth or in the heavens’,¹⁵ adding this:

Certainly, he has not established peace yet; this becomes obvious from the fact that there is still war due to the existence of evil; yet there will *definitely* be an absolute peace.¹⁶

The state envisioned in this portion pertains to the entire world, thus introducing another conception of ‘end’ (τέλος):

For if it is necessary to refer to this, I will say a few things about this matter, because it needs much too much investigation and argument, in order to demonstrate that

¹¹ Cf. *COT*, pp. 225f and P. Tzamalikos, “Origen: The Source of Augustine’s Theory of Time”, pp. 396–418.

¹² Fr. 21, Koetschau, from Justinian, *libOr*, Mansi 532; Jerome, in *epAv*, 6, quotes the same passage. *apud FP*, p. 122, n. 5.

¹³ Cf. Matt. 28, 18.

¹⁴ Cf. Luke, 10, 22; Matt. 28, 18.

¹⁵ Cf. Col. 1, 20. *commJohn*, 32, XXV; *frJohn*, LXXXIX; *homLuc*, 10, 61; *commEph*, section 12; *selPs*, 70, PG.12.1521.32.

¹⁶ *homLuc*, 36; italics mine. The same notion, in similar diction, in *frMatt*, 571.

this remark about every rational creature coming to be under one law *is not only possible but even true*. . . . We indeed profess that at some time the Logos will have become dominant upon the entire rational nature and will have transformed every soul to his own perfection, when each one, by exercising his own freedom alone, will make his own choices and will arrive at the state he has chosen. And we assert that the case is not such as that which happens to physical bodies, when some diseases and wounds that occur in them are not curable by the capacity of any medical art. This is not quite the case with the diseases which stem from evil, so as not to be possible for the supreme God, who is predominant upon all rational creatures, to cure them. For since the Logos is more powerful than all evils which may exist in the soul, he applies to each individual that cure [which is necessary] according to the will of God. *And the end of things is the abolition of evil* (καὶ τὸ τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων ἀναireθῆναι ἐστὶ τὴν κακίαν).¹⁷

Appeal to Scripture (Wisdom of Solomon, 3, 7–13) is sought in order to buttress up the opinion that ‘the prophecies say much, if obscurely, about the total abolition of the evil things and the rectification of each soul’.¹⁸ At other points, the circumstances call for expressing his theory in an implicit rather than explicit manner. To cite an instance, his Homilies on Luke were addressed to an audience comprising many catechumens; since the doctrine was too precarious to be explicated to them, it had to be connoted rather than manifestly expounded. The portion from Luke 3, 6, ‘And all flesh will see the salvation of God’ is indeed challenging:

In the past you were flesh; and you who were flesh before (or rather, you are still in the flesh, if I may say something more superb) see ‘the salvation of God’. But what does Scripture mean when it says ‘all flesh’? No flesh is excluded from seeing ‘God’s salvation’. I leave this to be grasped by those who comprehend the mysteries of the Scriptures and can draw forth its veins.¹⁹

In like manner (that is, by allusion) Origen advances this thesis at other points, such as the following, where he comments on the saying, ‘To set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord’:²⁰

‘To set at liberty those who are bruised’. Who was so bruised and crushed as a human being, whom Jesus healed and sent forth? ‘To preach an acceptable year of the Lord’. Following the simple sense of the text, some say that the Saviour

¹⁷ *Cels*, VIII, 72. The notion of ‘end of things’ (τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων) has a specific connotation in this conception of history. Cf. chapter 11, n. 103.

¹⁸ *Cels*, VIII, 72. Biblical authority for the ‘altogether elimination of evil’ (παντελοῦς ἀναρέσεως τῶν κακῶν) is also found in prophet Sophonias (Soph. 3, 7–19, *loc. cit.* and Soph. 3, 9–10, in *homJer*, 5, 5). Similar statements, in *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.28 and *expProv*, 24, PG.17.225.45.

¹⁹ *Homilies on Luke*, 22.5 (Latin). The Greek extant text is brief in reference of Luke, 3, 6, and this point is absent. Cf. *homLuc*, (M. Rauer), p. 135.

²⁰ Luke 4, 18–19. Cf. Is. 61, 1–2.

preached the Gospel in Judaea for only one year,²¹ and that this is what the passage, ‘To preach an acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance’,²² means. Perhaps the divine teaching has concealed a certain mystery in the proclamation of a year of the Lord. For, other days are to come, not days like these we now see in the world: there will be other months, and a different order of Calends.²³ Just as those will be different, so too will there be a year agreeable to the Lord. For indeed all this has been proclaimed so that we may come to ‘the acceptable year of the Lord’, when we can see after blindness, when we are released from our chains, and when we have been healed of our wounds.²⁴

This is a way for him to connote the doctrine of *apokatastasis* obliquely, without having to explicate this to his audience:

I do not know whether we should divulge such mystical things before this sort of audience, particularly among those who do not examine the essence of the Scriptures, but are happy with the bare sense alone. It is dangerous.²⁵

What the ‘danger’ was is stated at another point:

If I publish before the populace what the Holy Spirit has revealed and entrusted to me, if I sell it [sc. a dove] for a price and do not teach without payment, what else am I doing except selling doves,²⁶ that is, the Holy Spirit? When I sell the Spirit, I am cast out of God’s temple.²⁷

It was not difficult for Origen to avail himself of scriptural support in order to bolster up this thesis. In the same work he refers to the Evangelist who refrained from explicating deeper truths:

Luke was unwilling to record these things explicitly, whereas John proclaimed some things that were too sublime to be committed to writing.²⁸

²¹ A Gnostic interpretation of Luke 4, 19, which Irenaeus had rejected. Cf. *Adversus Haereses*, 2.22.1.

²² Cf. partially Luke, 4, 19; ‘the day of vengeance’ in Isaiah, 61, 2.

²³ The calends were the first day of each month in the Roman calendar. The term *καλένδαι* entered Greek only in 6th cent. A.D. through John Laurentius Lydus. This short expression may well be an interpolation by Jerome essaying to communicate the implied notion to Latin readers.

²⁴ *Homilies on Luke*, 32.5.

²⁵ *Homilies on Luke*, 23.5. Cf. *Homilies on Numbers*, 13.7. With reference to ‘danger’, recall use of the verb *παρακινδυνεύειν* (‘putting oneself into great tisk’), pp. 20f and note 65. Also, *οὐκ ἀκίνδυνον* (‘not without danger’), *Princ*, IV.2.3 (*Philocalia*, 1, 10); *commJohn*, 10, XXX; *commMatt*, 10, 6; 13, 15.

²⁶ Comm. on Luke, 19, 45, but ‘selling doves’ actually appears only in Matt. 21, 12; Mark, 11, 15; John, 2, 14–16.

²⁷ *Homilies on Luke*, 38.5, ref. to Luke, 19, 45–46. Cf. Matt. 21, 12–13; Mark 11, 15–17; John 2, 14–16.

²⁸ *Op. cit.* 27.2. Cf. *commJohn*, 13, V.

I deem it necessary and worthwhile to assemble some expressive quotations from *Cels*, demonstrating that final abolition of evil was in fact a conviction of Origen, all the more so since there have been claims for the contrary:²⁹

We reply also to this that it is not easy to know the origin of evils, even for one who has studied philosophy, and probably it is impossible even for these men to know it clearly, unless what evils are and how they came to exist and how they will be removed is clearly shown by inspiration of God. . . .³⁰

. . . We have exposed a few of our views according to our faith in Scripture; we did so having committed a bold venture upon the subject, and putting ourself in jeopardy; in fact, however, we have said nothing. And if anyone affording the time to inquire into the holy scriptures were to collect texts from all their points and were to give a systematic account of evil, both how it first came to exist and *how it is destroyed*, he should see that the meaning of Moses and the prophets with regard to Satan has not even been dreamt by Celsus. . . .³¹

There is nothing objectionable in the fact that a man died, and in that his death should stand not only as an example of dying for the sake of piousness, but also should effect a beginning and advance in *the destruction of the one who is evil* and devil, who dominated the whole earth.³²

And since the Logos is master not of those who do not will so, and as there are still some evil beings, not only men but also angels and all daemons, we maintain that he does not *yet* dominate upon them, since they do not yield to him of their own free will.³³

It is remarkable that all these statements are found in *Cels*, where somehow Origen epitomizes his entire theology, even though this is not a normal treatise but a polemical piece of work. The tenet means that evil will be ultimately extinguished and all rational nature will be subjected to Christ. The comment on Psalm 71, 11 ('all nations shall serve him') once again bespeaks this conception:

If all nations are to serve him, then surely shall serve him those nations that are currently at war. If this is so, then all rational natures shall serve Christ. This is precisely what Paul said, that every knee should bow³⁴ before him.³⁵

There can be no doubt about the real meaning of this subjection to Christ, since in the same work this is spelled out: "At this point by subjection he means the overthrow of evils. For no one of those who still commit sin has as yet been subjected to Christ."³⁶

²⁹ H. Crouzel, *Origen*, pp. 20f.

³⁰ *Cels*, IV, 65; italics mine. An allusion to the mystical doctrine of the Fall.

³¹ *Op. cit.* VI, 44; italics mine.

³² *Op. cit.* VII, 17; italics mine.

³³ *Op. cit.* VIII, 15; italics mine.

³⁴ Phil. 2, 10.

³⁵ *selPs*, 71, PG.12.1524.47–8. Cf. *fr̄John*, CXIII.

³⁶ *excPs*, 36, comm. on Psalm 36, 7: 'Subject yourself to the Lord and implore him', PG.17.124.19. Cf. *selPs*, 36, PG.12.1316.45.

This conviction is a recurrent motif in the exposition of different aspects of this theology.

Perhaps we could say that 'death in the world is stopped when the sin of the world dies' in explaining the mysterious words of the apostle that read as follows: 'And when he has put all his enemies under his feet, then death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed'.³⁷ It has also been said and this, 'When this corruptible body puts on incorruption', then the word that is written shall come to pass, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'.³⁸

It should be comprehended what the meaning of tasting death is. He is life who said about himself, 'I am the life'.³⁹ ... And the enemy of this life is 'death' who is 'the last enemy' of all his enemies that 'shall be destroyed'.⁴⁰

The comment on Psalm 51, 7, 'God shall likewise destroy thee at the end, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living', corroborates a definitive thesis:

God, who demolishes the evil structures, will demolish Doeg himself. ... Since the worst [stones] are placed last in the building, and Doeg is the worst of all, he will be demolished at the end, almost at the time when the last enemy, that is death, shall be destroyed.⁴¹

Statements alluding to the conviction that evil will at last be eradicated are also found in other works:

For in God there are treasured up much more sublime visions than these, which no nature of those being in a material body can hold, before it is separated from any body at all.⁴² For I am persuaded that God is keeping and storing in Himself far greater marvels than those seen by sun, moon, and the choir of stars, and even by the holy angels whom God made 'spirit' and 'flame of fire',⁴³ so that he may reveal them when 'the whole creation' is 'delivered from the bondage of the enemy into the glorious liberty of the children of God'.⁴⁴

Considering this evidence, no doubt should remain that Origen did definitely believe that evil shall be eventually abolished. On no account, however, does this suggest any all-embracing fatalism of any kind, be this moral or historical or existential, or whatever.

³⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 25–26.

³⁸ 1 Cor. 15, 54; *Cels*, VI, 36.

³⁹ John, 11, 25.

⁴⁰ 1 Cor. 15, 26. *commMatt*, 12, 33.

⁴¹ *selPs*, 51, PG.12.1457.43.

⁴² Cf. discussion of this delicate point, which does not actually suggest any incorporeality of personal creatures, in chapter 1, pp. 56f.

⁴³ Psalm 103, 4.

⁴⁴ Rom. 8, 21. *exhMar*, XIII.

There is a certain existential *causality* in Origen's view of time, which is established as a principle throughout history in the broader sense, *viz.* time comprising serial aeons. Time is nonetheless the extension of freedom.⁴⁵ What is more, this causality is dependent upon human will. This by definition on no account makes this principle a *fatalism*, which would mean that a certain internal force dominates upon history, driving this to a certain end. There is no such a notion whatever. For one thing, free will is stressed as the moving force of history. This is one of the facets of his onslaught on Gnostics, particularly the determinism of Valentinians: opposite them, he asserts free will, affirming personal responsibility and renouncing any idea of predestination being a law of nature. Furthermore, there is no built-in essentiality of history proper being destined to an end, an indispensability which is congenital with history *per se*, being elemental of its nature and instrumental of its function. This necessity is not a fate presuming irresistibility of the historical process: it suggests only irresistibility of wickedness to endure forever. It is inevitable for evil to be extinguished, due to its own nature as 'non-being'.

On the other hand, this is not a mere soteriological optimism, but anticipation out of historical occurrences staged in history—the history of Jesus's lifetime. This philosophy of history is singularly dramatic due to its dialectical character, since a certain end is anticipated and yet *any* next moment is unpredictable. Any stern faith restraining wise providence, let alone blind capricious fortune, does not rule over the destiny of humankind. History is directed according to the dialectical relation between unrestricted creaturely freedom and divine will, with providence expressing this divine will, but not coercing any historical eventuality.

Evil is not a 'substance', it is only 'actions of a substance' (τὰ δὲ κακά ἐνέργειαι ὑπάρχουσί τινος). These actions need a certain substance in order to exist. A 'murder' is not a 'substance' (οὔτε γὰρ φόνοϛ ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία); it is an *act* of the murderer, who is a 'substance' inasmuch as he is a human being. This human being may be either a murderer, at the time that he commits a crime, or a benefactor, in the event that he carries out good deeds. The mistake people make is that they 'jumble the appellation of a substance with accidents which occur in this substance, which accidents however do not belong to this substance' (πέπλεκται ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἐκ τῶν συμβεβηκότων αὐτῇ, ἅτινα οὐκ ἔστι αὐτῇ).⁴⁶

Origen's thought on the renowned *apokatastasis* is in fact a usage of Aristotelian argument, unnoticed hitherto as it seems. To Aristotle nothing exists in act alone, but only as a actualized potential. An οὐσία is what it is because this is a δυνάμει (an inchoate being, as it were) which came to be a real and tangible

⁴⁵ *COT*, pp. 327f.

⁴⁶ *Philocalia*, 24, 4.

being by actualization (ἐνεργεία) of this potentiality. The only case exempt from this general principle is the divine mind, which is free from all tincture of potentiality. We know that the *logoi*, which is the object of creation, originate in the divine mind and therefore there is no notion of 'potentiality' of evil to be actualized. For any actualized οὐσία can be really οὐσία only as an actualized potentiality. Evil is an accident, it *cannot* be οὐσία (that is, a real being), because evil *cannot* arise as the actualization of a certain potentiality. According to Aristotle, there must always be more than nothing (a certain potentiality is presumed) before there can be anything. According to Origen, the potentiality that allows individual objects (sentient animals, or inanimate objects) to be brought about is the 'system' of *logoi*.⁴⁷ Evil is not coeval with the created *logoi*, but subsequent to them as a scandalous 'accident', not as an actualized potentiality. Evil then is 'nothing' because God did not create this, which means there are no created *logoi* of wickedness. Corruption falls short of existence proper. Speaking of 'everything' (τὰ πάντα), one should not include 'lies' (τὰ ψευδῆ) in them. For 'beings' (ὄντα) are only those which are 'true' (ἀληθῆ). 'Lies' are not 'beings' (ὄντα), since they 'did not exist in the beginning' (τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐδὲ ὄντα).⁴⁸ Definitely there will be a time when (τότε) 'there will be no sinner, since there will be no sin'.⁴⁹ Still corruption is present into history as *action* and its results cannot be denied. This question nevertheless has received a clear reply by Origen. If God through the Logos made 'all things',⁵⁰ one could take this to imply that if all things were made through the Logos evil and all profusion of sin belong to the 'all things', indeed that these, too, were made through the Logos. He makes an extensive analysis in order to show that 'this is a false conclusion'.⁵¹ Reference is made to 'some' who, 'because evil is unsubstantial (ἀνυπόστατον), have understood' things such as 'acts of sin and falling away' to be 'the *nothings*' (τὰ μηδὲν). And 'as certain Greeks say that the genus and species, such as the abstract notions of *living being* and *man*, belong to the category of *nothings* (τῶν οὐτινων τὰ γένη καὶ τὰ εἶδη),⁵² so they have posited *nothing*

⁴⁷ *commJohn*, 1, XIX; 2, XVIII. *COT*, chapter 2.

⁴⁸ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1148.50–53.

⁴⁹ *expProv*, 5, PG.17.173.33. Cf. *frPs*, 1503–5.

⁵⁰ *John*, 1, 3.

⁵¹ *commJohn*, 2, XIII. The ensuing analysis is from this point.

⁵² The problematique on whether 'vile and worthless' things (ἀτιμωτάτων τε καὶ φανυλότατων) are indeed 'beings' is introduced in Plato's *Parmenides*, 130c. For a discussion of 'nothings' (οὐτινα) in Stoicism, s. *COT*, p. 198. The best account on the issue is afforded by Elias of Alexandria (6th cent. A.D.): he attributes to Archytas the view that 'any quality is susceptible of its opposite or of deprivation of itself' (τῇ ποιότητι ἴδιον τὸ ἐπιδέχεσθαι τὰ ἐναντία ἢ στέρησιν). He also represents Aristotle 'to doubt as to whether righteousness is standing opposite to wickedness' (εἰ ἐναντία ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῇ ἀδικίᾳ), which might make 'wickedness' a being, or 'substance'. His opinion is however that 'deprivation confronts a species', not as a substance *vis-à-vis* an opposite substance, but 'as an accident confronting an accident' (ὡς συμβεβηκὸς συμβεβηκότι). Elias of Alexandria, *In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, p. 236.

(οὐδὲν) to be everything which has received its apparent constitution neither from God not through the Logos. Scripture bolsters up the opinion that 'the meaning of *nothing* (οὐδὲν) and *not being* (οὐκ ὄν) are synonymous', indeed they are interchangeable, since '*not being* would be signified through *nothing* and *nothing* through *not being*'. For 'the Apostle' appears to use the expression '*those things that are not*' not for things which exist nowhere, but for things which are wicked, considering '*those that are not* to be things which are evil.' This is drawn from Paul saying that 'God called those things that are not as those that are'.⁵³ In the same vein, recourse is had to the Septuagint, where Mordochai calls Israel's enemies 'those that are not' (τοῖς μὴ οὖσιν), saying, 'Lord do not hand your scepter over to those who are not'. Also, to Exodus, 3, 14, where God said to Moses, 'He who is, this is my name'. Here is then Origen's conclusion:

Now according to us who wish to belong to the Church, it is the good God who speaks these words. This is the same God whom the Saviour glorifies, when he says 'No one is good except the one God the Father'. 'The one who is good', therefore, is the same as 'the one who is'. But evil or vileness is opposite to the good and 'not being' (οὐκ ὄν) is opposite to 'being' (τῷ ὄντι). It follows that vileness and evil are 'not being' (οὐκ ὄν).⁵⁴

'Not-being' is a daemonic distraction.⁵⁵ This is not a 'being' (ὄν) or an 'essence' (οὐσία), but only a 'non-being' (μὴ ὄν).⁵⁶ There is no needfulness dragging history to an end. There is a definitive conviction that evil, regarded as 'non-being', does not belong to creation, that is, to the 'system' of created *logoi*⁵⁷ which was made 'in the beginning'. The 'soul' (meaning 'life') was made by 'God alone' and stands 'outside evil' (ψυχὴν, ἣν ἐποίησε μόνος ὁ Θεός, κακίας ἐκτός).⁵⁸ What is 'non-being' cannot prevail over 'being' forever. Evil is 'non-existent', it is a kind of absence; it is no part of creation. The fact that depravity prevails for the time being is an anomaly in the world.

Eventual extinction of evil is asserted on account of reasons which are ontological, not historical or moral. Virtue is invincible not because this is more robust and powerful in an ongoing *moral* struggle in terms of mundane power (*qua non* in the present aeon dominated by the 'rulers of this world',⁵⁹ a world which 'lies in wickedness'),⁶⁰ but in consideration of virtue having a sound *ontological*

⁵³ Rom. 4, 17; 1 Cor. 1, 28. *Comm. in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 25.

⁵⁴ *commJohn*, 2, XIII. *Comm. in Romanos (III.5–V.7)*, (P. Cair.), p. 210; (*cod Athon. Laura 184 B64*), chapter 4, section 17.

⁵⁵ *frEph*, section 2. Cf. *De Engastrimytho (Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25)*, section 4: The 'daemon which was pretending to be Samuel' was in fact 'non-being' (μὴ ὄν). Cf. 1 Kings (1 Samuel, in Masoretic text), 28, 14.

⁵⁶ Cf. μὴ ὄν: *frLuc*, 176; μὴ ὄν contrasted with οὐσία: *frPs*, 1, 6; 67, 3.

⁵⁷ Cf. *COT*, pp. 39f.

⁵⁸ *frPs*, 138, 14–16.

⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 2, 6 & 8. 'Non-beings' of 1 Cor. 1, 27, receive a different exegesis.

⁶⁰ 1 John, 5, 19. *commGen*, 3, PG.12.89.19 (*Philocalia*, 14, 2). Cf. *commJohn*, 20, XXV.

ground, whereas evil has no such ground at all. A downfalling course for the ‘ruler of this world’⁶¹ has already begun.

No one other than Gregory of Nyssa grasped Origen’s notion in all its profundity, particularly the accurate meaning of Origen’s crucial term ‘of necessity’ (ἀναγκαίως). Gregory expounded his account apropos of Paul proclaiming universal resurrection (τῆς καθόλου τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀναστάσεως), invariably adhering to the *ipsissima verba* of Origen’s on critical points.⁶² Universal resurrection is a palpable conviction: if anyone should doubt this, he at the same time disputes the resurrection of Christ (τὸν ἀπιστοῦντα τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀναστάσει μηδὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσδέχεσθαι τὴν ἀνάστασιν).⁶³ This historical fact is in itself the ‘proof’ about what will come to pass at the end, since what is ‘true in partial proof’ this is also true in reference ‘to the whole’ (τῇ γὰρ μερικῇ ἀποδείξει καὶ τὸ καθόλου συναποδεικνύεται).⁶⁴ By the same token, if what will happen to the whole were disputed, this should also be discredited for the part (εἰ γὰρ καθόλου ἀδύνατον, οὐδὲ ἔν τινι δυνατόν ἐστι πάντως).⁶⁵ Hence the case is not about a *hope* that a certain end will happen; it is about an eventuality already staged in real history.

This will apply to all men ‘of necessity’ (ἀναγκαίως), since the process towards this end has already started. Conviction about Jesus having been resurrected is *of necessity* interwoven with the certitude that the same will come about to all beings (ἀναγκαίως ἐν τῇ μερικῇ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστει καὶ ἡ καθόλου τὸ πιστόν ἔξει).⁶⁶ What we have is not just a mere hope, but a syllogism in an Aristotelian vein: in case something is impossible for ‘the part’, this is also impossible for ‘the whole’ (τὸ γὰρ καθόλου μὴ ὄν οὐδὲ ἔν τινι δυνατόν εἶναι).⁶⁷ This line of syllogism is in fact a ‘proof’ (ἀπόδειξις) about the ‘universal resurrection of men’ (τῆς καθόλου τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀναστάσεως).⁶⁸ This logic granted, Gregory elaborates on the content of this proposition. Since in Jesus ‘all nature of evil was dissolved’ (ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἐν ἐκείνῳ πᾶσα κακίας φύσις ἐξηφανίσθη), the time will come when ‘the nature of evil’ will vanish from the realm of Being into nothingness (πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὄν), and divine goodness will contain in herself ‘every rational nature’. From this goodness no one will fall ever again, and all conscious and alive free beings will have become anew what they were made in the beginning, when they had not yet given way to evil.⁶⁹

⁶¹ Cf. John, 12, 31; 14, 30; 16, 11. *Cels*, VIII, 54; *frJer*, 61; *commMatt*, 12, 18; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21), sections 50, 52.

⁶² Gregory of Nyssa, *In illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius*, p. 13. Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 15–17.

⁶³ *Op. cit.* p. 12.

⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁵ *Op. cit.* pp. 12–13.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 13.

⁶⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *In illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius*, p. 13. Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 15–17.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.* pp. 13–14: ὅτι ποτὲ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὄν ἡ τοῦ κακοῦ φύσις μεταχωρήσει, παντελῶς

The contrast is not about history either ending or not. Rather, it is about 'non-being' prevailing or not prevailing enduringly. Origen's answer is adduced in the level of an *ontological necessity*, not of a *historical* one. History shall be 'cleared' of this anomaly. This, not in consideration of the Logos imposing a compelled end, but because evil, which was not part of the original creation, has no ontological power to perpetuate the scandal of its pervert action in the drama of history. This ontological eventuality is what determines the teleological character of history; it is not any inherent characteristic of history proper. 'Non-being' is congenitally unable to perpetuate the scandal of 'evil', which is not a 'substance' but only 'accidental action'. It is not a characteristic of history to come to an end of necessity, but it is a characteristic of Christ to be able to overpower the adversary.⁷⁰ Thus abolition of evil actually professes not the disappearance of a certain actual being, but termination of all transgression.⁷¹

To the question whether this is a variety of *determinism* I would reply thus: Determinism denotes a certain philosophical doctrine that every event, act, or decision is held to be the inevitable consequence of antecedents, such as physical, psychological, or environmental conditions, that are independent of the individual human will. Determinism is held to differ from fatalism in allowing that certain outcomes *may* be due precisely to the efforts we make, or we fail to. I am sure Origen would be utterly uninterested to a label for his philosophy of history. The need to 'define' appeared well after him and was called for by the Arian controversy, making a mark in the councils under the influence of Roman law mentality. The rule of faith was gradually but virtually assimilated by the civil law, so as to have the doctrine enunciated in the clearest terms possible and to leave no loophole to the enemy of heresy. This mentality resulted in considering Origen under the most adverse conditions for understanding and judging him. In regard of *determinism* therefore, although the question is anachronistic, it would be said that, if such a principle were to be instilled in this philosophy of history, this applies to the 'nothingness' of evil and its eventual extinction 'of necessity', not to any inevitable prediction of the dialectical relation between creaturely and divine will.

ἐξαφανισθεῖσα τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ πᾶσαν λογικὴν φύσιν ἢ θεία τε καὶ ἀκήρατος ἀγαθότης ἐν ἑαυτῇ περιέξει, μηδενὸς τῶν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγονότων τῆς βασιλείας ἀποπίπτοντος, ὅταν πάσης τῆς ἐμμιχθείσης τοῖς οὐσίς κακίας οἷον τινος ὕλης κιβδύλου διὰ τῆς τοῦ καθαρσίου πυρὸς χωνείας ἀναλωθείσης, τοιοῦτον γένηται πᾶν ὃ παρὰ θεοῦ ἔσχε τὴν γένεσιν, οἷον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἦν ὅτε οὐπὼ τὴν κακίαν ἐδέξατο. Gregory at this point also avers that no other Fall will ever happen again. Cf. *infra*, p. 348f.

⁷⁰ An alternative exegesis on Psalm 9, 26 which refers to the adversary power ('he shall prevail over all his enemies') speculates this to bespeak 'the devil's will, which is to bring about an end of his own, but which he is unable to carry through' (εἰς πέρας ἀγαγεῖν τὸ οὐκ ἐνδεχόμενον), since according to Psalm 20, 12, 'they imagined a mischevious device, which they are not able to sustain'. *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1193.12–13.

⁷¹ The comment on Psalm 111, 10, 'the desire of the wicked shall perish' is this: since the desire of the wicked is evil itself, it follows that evil shall perish. *selPs* 111, PG.12.1572. 13–15.

The ‘end’ will *of necessity* come to pass as a concrete spatio—temporal reality in the future. The exegesis on Psalm 40, 9 (‘He who now is sleeping will not raise up?’) is pretty telling:

He says that resurrection follows sleeping *of necessity* (ἀναγκαίως). For sleeping denotes death. Resurrection will follow death *of necessity* (ἀναγκαίως).⁷²

This necessity flows from the ontological inferiority of (the ‘non-being’, μὴ ὄν) evil and from the conviction that resurrection has been promised, indeed ‘prefigured’⁷³ and ‘exemplified’⁷⁴ by Jesus Christ. In this sense, there is a prophecy that resurrection will come to pass for sure. This necessity then is not an innate force coercing the course of history toward a certain direction, but an inherent ontological inferiority of evil proper, which inevitably will lead its *ontological* non-existence to *historical* non-existence. To recognize this fact is tantamount to recognizing the actual nature of creation, which is in fact what stands behind important prophecies and promises in Scripture. It is then reasonable to believe that the prophesied end will be fulfilled by virtue of the fact that many of the prophecies of Scripture have already been fulfilled.⁷⁵ This is the sense in which resurrection is said to follow ‘of necessity’. God has foreseen this eventuality, which does not indicate restriction of creaturely freedom.⁷⁶ All considerations about this eschatological expectation are, in one way or another, grounded on scriptural announcements. To believe in the final abolition of evil means to believe that the prophetic announcement of this prospect will finally be fulfilled. There is good reason for all the prophecies about the future to be believed, since all those referring to the past have in fact been fulfilled:

Since then, as we have said above,⁷⁷ the prophets, who said many things about the future, are proved to have had their sayings verified concerning things which have come to pass, and gave proof that there was a divine Spirit who came upon them, it is obvious that we also have to believe them, or rather the divine Spirit in them, concerning things about the which are still future.⁷⁸

Besides, the book of the Wisdom of Solomon, of which he makes abundant use, is clear that ‘evil does not overpower wisdom’,⁷⁹ that is, wickedness will not prevail over the Logos. Moreover, the doctrine stems immediately from Origen’s persistent statement that God is not the author of evil, which was a commonplace

⁷² *selPs*, 40, PG.12.1413.40; italics mine. Cf this notion of *necessity* (ἀναγκαίως) in *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.29.

⁷³ *frJohn*, CXL.

⁷⁴ *Cels*, II, 77.

⁷⁵ *Cels*, IV, 21, s. *supra*.

⁷⁶ Cf. *frMatt*, 375.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Cels*, I, 36–7; III, 2–4.

⁷⁸ *Cels*, IV, 21.

⁷⁹ Wis. 7, 30. Cf. Matt. 16, 18. *frPs*, 9, 14; 77, 19–25; *excPs*, 77, PG.17.147.8.

also among the Greeks. Plato held god to be not responsible for evil, the source of which should be sought for anywhere but in god. This 'anywhere' alludes to the 'cause' being only the will of a man who 'chooses evil' (αἰτία ἐλομένου).⁸⁰ In the same vein, Origen sustains the axiom that God is not responsible for evil, he is only the author of the 'righteous things, which emerge in human soul'.⁸¹ Evil will be finally abolished, on account of this being 'powerless' and 'weak'⁸² destined to be overtaken by the Logos.

Universal Perfection

The notion of universal perfection is grounded on the authority of 1 Cor. 15, 28: 'And when all things shall be subdued to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all'. Also, on 1 Cor. 15, 25: 'Then comes the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.' In *commJohn*, the exposition is couched in a phraseology firmly abiding by scriptural language:

Nevertheless, although the Father gave 'all things' into his hands,⁸³ and in Christ 'all shall be made alive',⁸⁴ neither the justice of God nor everyone's treatment in accordance with his merits is confounded. This is declared when the statement 'but each in his own order'⁸⁵ is added to the saying, 'so in Christ shall all be made alive'.⁸⁶ What is more, you will grasp the different orders of those who will be made alive in Christ when the statement, 'The Father has given all things into his hands'⁸⁷ is fulfilled, paying attention to the saying, 'Christ the firstfruits; then those

⁸⁰ Cf. Plato, *Respublica*, 617e5; 379c4; *Timaeus*, 42d4. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, 44.8. Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium (Philosophumena)*, 1.19.19. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 5.14.136.4. Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelica*, 13.3.11. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion (Adversus Haereses)*, v. 2, p. 445; v. 3, p. 199. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, 5.35; 5.38; 6.57. *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, p. 254. Nemesius of Emesa, *De Natura Hominis*, 37. Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon (lib. 1-4)*, p. 85; *Chronicon Breve (lib. 1-6)*, PG.110.129.25. Julian the Arian, *Commentarius in Job*, p. 253. Corpus Hermeticum, *Πρὸς τὰ ὁ κρατὴρ ἢ μονάς*, 8. Plotinus, *Enneades*, 3.2.7. Porphyry, *Ad Marcellam*, 12. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 4.6. Proclus, *Theologia Platonica (lib. 1-5)*, v. 1, p. 81; *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 3, p. 303. *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, v. 2, pp. 268, 277, 289, 323, 355. *De Malorum Subsistentia*, 61. Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *In Platonis Alcibiadem Commentarii*, 45. John Laurentius Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.35.

⁸¹ *commMatt*, 10, 2.

⁸² *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Gr. fr.), 45: 'virtue in its own nature is powerful, evil and its offsprings is powerless and weak'. Cf. *Fragmenta ex Commentariis in Epistulam ad Ephesios*, section 32; *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1193.13; *selEx*, PG.12.284.5: reference to the 'falsely called power of evil' (ψευδονύμου ισχύος).

⁸³ Cf. John, 13, 3.

⁸⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 22.

⁸⁵ 1 Cor. 15, 23.

⁸⁶ 1 Cor. 15, 22.

⁸⁷ Cf. John, 13, 3. By means of the 1 Cor. 15, 23 term 'orders' (τάγματα), Origen alludes to his conception of the world comprising sundry ranks of life.

who are Christ's at his coming, then the end'.⁸⁸ This end will actually come to pass with Christ upon his coming, when 'he shall deliver the kingdom to God and the Father',⁸⁹ having previously destroyed 'every principality and every authority and power'.⁹⁰ I think it is against these that the wrestling takes place,⁹¹ so that there will be no more any principality and authority and power with which the wrestling takes place, and therefore there will be no wrestling at all, since every principality and authority and power will have been destroyed. What moves me to take the saying about 'every principality and every authority and power' being destroyed to refer to those against which the wrestling takes place, is Paul's addition to these words, 'For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet',⁹² and then, 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death'.⁹³ Certainly this is consonant with the [saying], 'The Father has given all things unto his hands',⁹⁴ which the apostle expresses more clearly, saying, 'But when he says that all things have been subjected, it is clear that he who subjected all things to him is exempt'.⁹⁵ And if all things have been subjected, it is clear that all things have been subjected except for the one 'who subjected all things to him'.⁹⁶ Then again, he of whom it is written, 'He exalted himself before the Lord almighty',⁹⁷ will be among those subjected to him, conquered by having yielded to the Logos, and having been subjected to the image of God,⁹⁸ becoming Christ's footstool.⁹⁹

'Perfection of all' is subjection of all the 'enemies' of Christ to him. We have at this point another notion of the 'end' which is, so to speak, the *ultimate* end: this comes to pass when Christ 'delivers the kingdom' to the Father. This is a remarkable passage, highly designative of his eschatological conceptions and nonetheless of Origen's overall way of thinking as a theologian, with his entire eschatology couched by means of scriptural quotations.

Coming to the precarious text, only once the distinction of sundry imports of 'end' is made, a study of *Princ* could be possible. This is in fact a critical case of 'clarifying the homonyms'.¹⁰⁰ For much of the miscomprehension surrounding this theology originates in failure to grasp the homonymity of the term 'end', to 'clarify' this properly, and to determine the specific import of 'end' at each point where the term is used. In the light of the preceding discussion, we are now in a position to consider how Origen's eschatology appears in *Princ*:

⁸⁸ 1 Cor. 15, 23.

⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 15, 24.

⁹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁹¹ Cf. Eph. 6, 12.

⁹² 1 Cor. 15, 25.

⁹³ 1 Cor. 15, 26.

⁹⁴ John, 13, 3.

⁹⁵ 1 Cor. 15, 27.

⁹⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁹⁷ Job, 15, 25.

⁹⁸ Col. 1, 15.

⁹⁹ *comm* John, 32, III.

¹⁰⁰ *comm* Gen, 3, PG.12.89.18; *Philocalia*, 14, 2. s. Introduction, pp. 2f.

The end of the world and the consummation will come when every soul shall be visited with the penalties due for its sins. God alone knows this time, when everyone shall pay what he owes. We believe, however, that the goodness of God through Christ will restore this entire creation to one end,¹⁰¹ even his enemies being conquered and subdued. For so says the Holy Scripture, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet'.¹⁰² And if it is not very evident what the prophetic language here means, let us learn from Paul the Apostle, who says more openly, 'Christ must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet'.¹⁰³ But if even this clear declaration of the Apostle is not sufficient to inform us what is the meaning of 'putting enemies under his feet', hear further what he says in the words that follow: 'For all things must be made subject to him'.¹⁰⁴ What then is this 'subjection', by which 'all things must be made subject' to Christ? In my opinion it is the same subjection by which we too desire to be subjected to him and by which the apostles and all the saints who have followed Christ were subject to him. For the word subjection, when used of our subjection to Christ, implies the salvation, proceeding from Christ, of those who are subject; as David also said, 'Shall not my soul be subject to God? For of him cometh my salvation'.¹⁰⁵

The actual signification of this 'subjection' is a delicate point. Since the question seems contestable, there is reference to 'the heretics' who do not understand the real meaning of the apostolic words. Consequently, some further steps are taken towards clarifying the meaning of the Son's 'subjection' to the Father. This subjection of Christ to the Father reveals the blessedness of our perfection and announces the crowning glory of the work undertaken by him, since he offers to the Father not only the sum total of all ruling and reigning which he has amended throughout the entire universe, but also the laws, corrected and renewed, of the obedience and subjection due from the human race. Therefore, 'when the Son is said to be subjected to the Father the perfect restoration of the entire creation is announced, so when his enemies are said to be subjected to the Son of God we are to understand this to involve the salvation of those subjected and the restoration of those that have been lost'.¹⁰⁶

Reference to Christ being he who 'must reign till he puts his enemies under his feet'¹⁰⁷ is found in the writings in Greek in the same context.¹⁰⁸ In the Latin

¹⁰¹ The expression 'to one end' is also found, with the same meaning, in Greek: εἰς ἓν τέλος; *commJohn*, 13, XLVI; πρὸς ἓν τέλος, *frLuc*, 146.

¹⁰² Psalm 109, 1.

¹⁰³ 1 Cor. 15, 25.

¹⁰⁴ 1 Cor. 15, 27–28.

¹⁰⁵ Psalm 62, 1. *Princ*, I.6.1.

¹⁰⁶ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.7.

¹⁰⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.6.

¹⁰⁸ *commJohn*, 6, LVII; 10, X & XXXIX; 13, VIII; 32, III. *deOr*, XXV, 3; *commMatt*, 15, 23; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 138; *frPs*, 9, 37–38; 109, 1–6.

translation of *Princ*, we find also considerations about Christ who was incarnate in order 'to renew the capacity not only for ruling and reigning, but also for obeying'. It was he who 'first fulfilled in himself what he wished to be fulfilled by others' and not only became obedient to the Father 'even unto the death of the cross',¹⁰⁹ but also at the consummation of the aeon, by his inclusion in himself of all those whom he subjected to the Father and who through him come to salvation, he himself, with them and in them, is also said to be 'subjected' to the Father, when 'all things' shall 'subsist in him' and he shall be the 'head of all things' and in him shall be the 'fullness' of those who obtain salvation, since this is what the apostle says of him: "When all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected unto him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."¹¹⁰

When, therefore, it is stated that 'in all those periods and ages to come . . . the dispersion and division of the one beginning is to be restored to one and the same end',¹¹¹ it is the 'end' as 'restoration' that this passage refers to. The notion of 'subjection' of the entire world to Christ implies *perfection* of the world, that is, it pertains to the *moral* status of the world. The *natural* status of this, however, remains unchanged: the world does exist, as it previously did, as a natural reality. The 'subjection' to Christ bespeaks 'salvation' of all persons, pointing to them all ascending to the superlative existential order. By the same token, following the analysis of 'that earth' which is eternal life,¹¹² the text concludes thus:

This, then, is how we must suppose that events happen in the consummation and restitution of all things, namely, that souls, advancing and ascending little by little in due measure and order, first attain to that other earth and the instruction that is in it, and are prepared for those better precepts to which nothing can ever be added. For in the place of 'stewards' and 'governors',¹¹³ Christ the Lord, who is king of all, will himself take over the kingdom; . . . and will reign in them until such time as he subjects them to the Father who subjected all things to him;¹¹⁴ or in other words, when they have been rendered capable of receiving God, then God will be to them 'all in all'.¹¹⁵

It is then clear that the term 'end' can be properly grasped only once this has been recognized as a homonym. The varied realities denoted by τέλος are expressively indicated through the scriptural passages on which they are grounded. The τέλος understood as eternal life¹¹⁶ is buttressed on Psalm 109,

¹⁰⁹ Phil. 2, 8.

¹¹⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28; Col. 1, 17–19; Eph. 1, 22f. *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.6.

¹¹¹ *Princ* (Lat.), I.6.4.

¹¹² *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.8.

¹¹³ Cf. Gal. 4, 2.

¹¹⁴ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor. 15, 28. *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.9.

¹¹⁶ "But that universal resurrection of the flesh which pertains to all is still yet to come".

1: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit you at my right hand, until I put your enemies a footstool under your feet'.¹¹⁷

The comment on Psalm 9, 27 ('The Lord will reign in the aeon and in the aeon of the aeon—Βασιλεύσει Κύριος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος') reads thus:

For the Lord must reign throughout the aeons (διὰ τῶν αἰώνων) until he has put all the enemies under his feet. . . . The Lord reigns in the aeon (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), and it is befitting kings to provide for those who are their subjects.¹¹⁸

Jesus said to Peter, 'whither I go you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterwards'.¹¹⁹ This is the portion advancing the assertion that 'You shall follow me afterwards' will be said 'to each one of all which the Father gave in the hands of the Son' (πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν πάντων ὃ δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ ὁ πατήρ εἰς τὰς χεῖρας), that is, to all cognizant hypostases; still this will not be said to all at the same time (ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρόν) and this is the meaning of the scriptural expression 'afterwards'.¹²⁰ It is out of this promise of Jesus Christ that the entire world will follow him in due course, that resurrection is said to follow 'of necessity'. Thus historical activity is directed by what Origen calls 'the end of the promise' (τὸ τέλος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας), which is illustrated as 'restoration' (ἀποκατάστασις) in the Acts of the Apostles:

Until the times of restoration of all things (ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων), which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began¹²¹ in Jesus Christ.¹²²

There is a teleological process, which is determined by the anticipated end. In this drama, a divine promise has been given and realized in the first place in the person of Jesus Christ. Following that event, faith, awaiting for and expectation were established in history, so that this promise might definitely be fulfilled. This is the ground on which Origen enunciates his conviction that the entire 'body' of Christ will be definitely resurrected: the bones will be put together

Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 5.9.12. This reference to 'flesh' implies being in 'eternal life' as in a space *within* the world, indeed the supreme one, in which corporeality exists nonetheless. This universal resurrection, as ascent of all to eternal life, is the stage before the ultimate end, which will be discussed anon.

¹¹⁷ Also, similar expressions in Heb. 10, 13 and 1 Cor. 15, 25.

¹¹⁸ *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.26; *frPs*, 9, 37–38. This passage is one more point indicating that the expression 'in the aeon' does not mean 'for ever', that is, it does not denote everlasting duration. The expression 'in the aeon' (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) may well stand side by side with a notion of 'until', suggesting an *end* of duration. The terms 'aeon' and 'aeons' have a spatio—temporal significance once again.

¹¹⁹ John, 13, 36.

¹²⁰ *commJohn*, 32, III.

¹²¹ Acts, 3, 21.

¹²² *homJer*, 14, 18.

anew ‘as it is written in the Twenty First psalm’.¹²³ He can then reiterate that this eschatological expectation is a ‘promise’ (ἐπαγγελίαν) expressed in the book of Revelation.¹²⁴

H. Crouzel’s assertion, that the eschatological reality which Origen visualizes through the notion of total abolition of evil is not a positive affirmation but just a ‘great hope’, is not accurate. It could be so, only in case this eventuality were considered on *historical* grounds. The case is however that the conclusion of history is determined on *ontological* grounds. Certainly this is a ‘hope’, but Crouzel took it in the sense that Origen wavers as to whether this hope is a definitive proposition, a positive outcome of the drama of history, or there is a certain reservation and uncertainty about such an eventuality—which is not quite the case. This opinion stems from H. Crouzel confining his argument in passages from *Princ* only. Hence the fallacious claim that this opinion of Origen has ‘its antithesis in the same work’, and Origen is represented to have ‘hesitations and alternating positions’.¹²⁵ This is one more example supporting my thesis that the Latin rendering of *Princ* should be used only as an ancillary source; and even so this should be read with caution. Arguments grounded on *Princ* only are most likely to lead to mistakes. There is abundance of points leaving no room for indecisiveness: the final abolition of evil is not just a ‘great hope’, but a firm conviction that this eschatological reality will definitely come to pass.

The notion of perfection of all, portrayed as ‘the resurrection of the real and more perfect body of Christ’, is indicative of Origen’s concept of resurrection being ‘a mystery great and difficult to speculate’.¹²⁶ An oblique reference to this doctrine is made through a comment on Ezekiel, 37, 1–11, where reference is made to the ‘dry bones’:

But when the resurrection itself (αὐτὴ) of the real and more perfect body of Christ takes place, then the members of Christ, the bones which at present are dry regarded in relation to what they will be in the future, will be brought together, bone to bone in harmony¹²⁷ unto the perfect man, while none of those who have been bereft of harmony will attain to the perfect man, ‘unto the measure of the stature of the fullness’ of the body ‘of Christ’.¹²⁸ And then the many members will be one body, when all the members of the body, who are indeed many, will become one body.¹²⁹ And it is God alone who can make the judgement about foot and hand and eye and

¹²³ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹²⁴ Rev. 21, 11 and 3, 12. *commJohn*, 10, XLII.

¹²⁵ H. Crouzel, “L’Hadès et la Géhenne selon Origène”, p. 331. The allegation that Origen appears to have ‘hesitations and alternating positions’ is also applied to his notions of ‘eternal’ and ‘aeon’, due to failure to grasp them as homonyms. s. chapter 8, pp. 230–31.

¹²⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI. In *Cels*, IV, 30, ‘resurrection’ is asserted to be comprehended by ‘wise men’ only.

¹²⁷ Cf. Ez. 37, 7.

¹²⁸ Cf. Eph. 4, 13.

¹²⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 12.

hearing and sense of smell of those who complete the head in the one case, and the feet in the other, and the rest of the members, the weaker and humbler, and the dishonourable and the honourable, it is He who shall arrange the body together.¹³⁰ And it is at that time, rather than now, that He bestows greater honour to the one who is in want of this, so that by no means 'should there be schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another';¹³¹ and if a member is susceptible to a certain suffering, all the members share the same susceptibility, or if one member is glorified, they all rejoice¹³² together.¹³³

The vision of the prophet Ezekiel plays a vital part in expounding this mystical doctrine of the universal resurrection. When the prophet says, 'bone must be joined to bone, joint to joint, and nerves and veins and skin',¹³⁴ he obviously argues that each member must be *restored* to its place, Origen asserts. It is indeed by no means accidental that the prophet said, 'These bones are the house of Israel'.¹³⁵ He did not say all men are, but he said 'these bones are', which means that the delight will be full when no member of the body will be missing. The delight cannot be complete for one member, if another member is missing. Therefore, each one should wait for others, just as each one was waited for. In this respect, the Logos who is the 'head'¹³⁶ and the originator of the whole body considers his delight to be incomplete as long as he sees one of the members to be missing from his body. It is perhaps for this reason that he poured out this prayer to the Father: 'Holy Father, glorify me with that glory that I had with you before the world was.'¹³⁷ Thus the Logos does not want to receive his complete glory without us, that is, without his people who are his body and his members. For he himself wants to live in this body of his Church and in these members of his people as in their soul, that he can have all impulses and all works according to his own will, so that the saying of the prophet may be truly fulfilled in us, 'I will live in them and walk among them'.¹³⁸

This is how the course of history is visualized. The empirical malaise does not win over: it is not the past which determines the future, but the converse way around—it is the future which has a bearing on the past, rendering upon time and history a *teleological* character. Obviously, this bearing upon the character of history is ontological, not historical, since it stems from an eventuality not yet realized. The end reveals the process of history, but it does not coerce historical process. The tension in history arises from us at present being *not yet*

¹³⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 23–24.

¹³¹ 1 Cor. 12, 15–25.

¹³² Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 26.

¹³³ *comm/John*, 10, XXXVI.

¹³⁴ Ez. 37, 7–8.

¹³⁵ Ez. 37, 11.

¹³⁶ Cf. Eph. 4, 15–16.

¹³⁷ John, 17, 5.

¹³⁸ Lev. 26, 12. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.10.

perfected, indeed being 'still in our sins',¹³⁹ while we definitely know the end of this process, however long and no matter how many setbacks may occur during the course towards this end.

This is the sense in which the Logos is in us 'in part' and therefore 'we know in part and we prophecy in part',¹⁴⁰ until each one is worthy to come to that measure which the Apostle says, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'.¹⁴¹ At present then, 'in part' we are 'his members' and 'in part we are his bones'.¹⁴² But when 'bones will have been joined to bones and joints to joints',¹⁴³ the restoration of all will have come to pass. The hardship of this fallen world consists in these bones being 'scattered in Hell'¹⁴⁴ before he came who 'collects and brings them together in one'.¹⁴⁵ Here is then the eschatological expectation, which constitutes the goal towards which history is moving: the expectation for the Logos to come for a second time and in a glorious form, the Logos who 'draws together what was dispersed and joins together what was scattered', assembling 'bone to bone and joint to joint'. When this appears in history, then it can be said that the holy body of the Logos is rebuilt up.¹⁴⁶

This notion of *awaiting* for features in this philosophy of history. The dramatic character of time and history stems from free persons struggling for their own catharsis, knowing however that 'purification cannot happen without the mystery of the Trinity'.¹⁴⁷ Those striving in history know what the end will be; still this has to be striven for.

Conscious and responsible (that is, free) action in history is indispensable for attaining the end; nevertheless this action is not sufficient on its own merits. To be endowed with freedom does not take away the *dependent* ontological character of any creature. In this sense, historical agents are understood to struggle, to have faith, to anticipate, to hope for, and above all, to *await for*. Origen points out the dramatic character of this expectation through this poetic imagery:

The Day of Atonement is put off for us *until* the sun sets,¹⁴⁸ that is, *until the world comes to an end*. For let us stand 'before the gates'¹⁴⁹ *waiting* for our high priest who remains within 'the Holy of Holies', that is, 'before the Father';¹⁵⁰ and who mediates not for the sins of everyone, but 'for the sins' of those 'who *wait* for him'.¹⁵¹

¹³⁹ Cf. Phil. 3, 15; Rom. 5, 8. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.11.

¹⁴⁰ 1 Cor. 13, 9.

¹⁴¹ Gal. 2, 20.

¹⁴² Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 27. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.11.

¹⁴³ Cf. Ez. 37, 7–8.

¹⁴⁴ Psalm 140, 7. Cf. *Dial*, 21; *frPs*, 140, 7. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.12.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. John, 11, 52.

¹⁴⁶ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.12.

¹⁴⁷ *Op. cit.* 8.11.10.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Lev. 11, 25.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. James, 5, 9.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. 1 John, 2, 1–2.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Heb. 9, 28.

For he does not mediate for those who come into the lot of that goat which is sent 'into the wilderness'.¹⁵² He mediates only for those who 'are the lot of the Lord',¹⁵³ who 'await for him before the gates', who 'do not depart from the Temple, who are not absent from fasting and prayers'.¹⁵⁴

The concept of 'resurrection' of the entire 'body' of Christ is indispensable for understanding the meaning of the 'end'. The Pauline notion of 'body' of Christ¹⁵⁵ is pivotal to Origen's theology of history. In *Cels*, he points out the sublimity of this doctrine, essaying to remain faithful to its mysterious character:

The divine scriptures teach the doctrine of the resurrection in a mystical manner (μυστικῶς) to those who are capable of hearing the words of God through a more divine faculty of hearing: they refer to [a temple being] rebuilt with living and precious stones. Through this riddle they say that each of those who are united through the same Logos in the piousness according to Him, is a precious stone of the entire temple of God.¹⁵⁶

This illustration is buttressed on scriptural passages such as 1 Peter 2, 5 and Eph. 2, 20. The conception of the 'end' is over and again expounded:

Some suchlike mysterious meaning (τινά μυστικόν ἔχει νοῦν) has also the passage of Isaiah addressed to Jerusalem, which goes thus: 'Behold I prepare for thee a carbuncle as thy stone and sapphire as thy foundations, and I will make thy battlements of jasper and thy gates stones of crystal and thy wall of chosen stones. And all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established'.¹⁵⁷

That point of *Cels* is deemed as 'not the appropriate moment' to explain the deeper meaning of these stones and their nature.¹⁵⁸ Yet in *commJohn* the same passage of Isaiah (Is. 54, 11–14) is quoted along with Isaiah, 60, 13–20. The inference is that these sayings point to the resurrection of the entire body of Christ. 'Those who are now in captivity, will receive' what is promised 'in their fatherland', in consideration of

¹⁵² Cf. Lev. 16, 9–10.

¹⁵³ Lev. 16, 9.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Luke, 2, 37. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 9.5.9; italics mine, accentuating the dramatic character of Time in an eschatological perception of History.

¹⁵⁵ Rom. 12, 4–5; 1 Cor. 6, 15; 10, 17; 12, 12; 6, 15; 10, 17; 12, 12–27; Eph. 1, 23; 2, 16; 4: 4, 12, 16; 5, 30; Col. 1, 18; 1, 24; 2, 10; 2, 17; 3, 15. Cf. *Cels*, IV, 26; VI, 48; 79; *commJohn*, 1, XIII; 10, XXXV; XXXVI; XXXVII; XLI; 13, VIII; *frLuc*, 186; *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum* (fragmenta), pp. 175, 184; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 126; *commMatt*, 11, 18; 13, 21; 13, 24; 14: 1, 8, 17; 15, 23; *comm1Cor*, sections 20, 29, 30, 44, 84, *commEph*, sections 9, 16, 17, *frPs*, 77, 52; 83, 9–10; *Cant*, PG.17:260.36; 261.38; 265.39; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1069.1; 16, PG.12.1220.17; 29, PG.12.1292.52; 29, PG.12.1293.3; 48, PG.12.1441.54.

¹⁵⁶ *Cels*, VIII, 19.

¹⁵⁷ Is. 54, 11–14. *Cels*, VIII, 19.

¹⁵⁸ *Cels*, VIII, 20.

those who are in captivity were once in the temple and there they will return again; once they are rebuilt, they will have become the most precious¹⁵⁹ of all stones; for it is also in the Revelation of John that one has received the promise (ἐπαγγελίαν) that once he prevails, he will be a pillar in the temple of God, which will not go out (μὴ ἐξελευσόμενος ἔξω).¹⁶⁰

These are exegeses of ‘the temple and house of God and the Church and Jerusalem’, the entire exposition being about the portion of John 2, 21, referring to the ‘temple of his [sc. Christ’s] body’.¹⁶¹ This is the context of the comment about ‘the great resurrection of the body of Christ, [the resurrection of] his holy church’.¹⁶² Origen’s thesis is that the notion of ‘body’ of Christ is expounded ‘mystically and in obscure way in the divine scriptures’.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, he does not refrain completely from giving an exegesis of its meaning:

According to the teaching of the divine scriptures, the entire Church of God,¹⁶⁴ the soul of which is the Son of God, is the body of Christ, and the members of this body, which is regarded as constituting a whole, are those who are faithful, whoever they may be. For indeed, as the soul gives life to the body and moves it, since this [sc. the body] has not the power of moving out of a vital force of its own, so does the Logos, who moves [the body] toward what is necessary and acts upon the whole body, moves the Church and each member of those who belong to the Church, who do nothing apart from the Logos.¹⁶⁵

The Incarnation was a historical event that staged the end at the present time. This event enables all men to experience the *future* at *present* time within the Church. As Paul put it in the epistle to the Colossians, the Son was manifestly crucified in flesh, but it was the devil ‘with his principalities and authorities’ that ‘was affixed to the cross’.¹⁶⁶

This is a point to be considered not only with respect to the significance of Incarnation (which was done in chapter 2), but also apropos of the eschatological anticipation. After Paul saying, ‘as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive’,¹⁶⁷ Origen goes ahead with his own assessment of the historical process. Paul no doubt alludes to ‘a mystery of future resurrection’.¹⁶⁸ The devil then will be no more, ‘because death will be no more’.¹⁶⁹ This ‘future resurrection’ is the final victory over demonic forces and Origen (*pace* Heb. 2, 14) is wont to

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Rev. 21, 11.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Rev. 3, 12. *commJohn*, 10, XLII. Cf. p. 351.

¹⁶¹ *commJohn*, 10, XLII.

¹⁶² *Op. cit.* 10, XLIII.

¹⁶³ *Cels*, 6, 48.

¹⁶⁴ Col. 1, 24.

¹⁶⁵ *Cels*, VI, 48.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Col. 2, 14–15. *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.3.

¹⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 22.

¹⁶⁸ *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.4.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Rev. 21, 4.

identify the devil with death,¹⁷⁰ which will be destroyed.¹⁷¹ This is the reality in which 'no one will sin and sin will not rule in any one'.¹⁷²

In *commMatt*, the notion of consummation is intimated as 'end' of an aeon, yet not end of history. The exposition of the divine judgement is made on this premise.¹⁷³ Consequent on the theory of the outcome of judgement, he avers that 'the righteous will shine',¹⁷⁴ yet not all of them alike, but 'differently' (διαφόρως) from each other. This 'difference' nevertheless pertains to what will happen not at the end, but only 'in the former stages' (κατὰ τὰς ἀρχάς).¹⁷⁵ He urges that when Jesus says that 'the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father',¹⁷⁶ he 'indicates a certain secret truth' (μυστήριον) which should be elucidated.¹⁷⁷

At this point he provides an account of his concept of history again. The saying of Jesus, 'Let your light so shine before men'¹⁷⁸ may betoken three distinct existential states: it may refer to his disciples during their lifetime. It may nonetheless point to the period 'after the departure from this life until the resurrection', that is, to the period until the end of the aeon. Finally, it may refer to the time 'after the resurrection',¹⁷⁹ which will continue 'until' all become 'a perfect man',¹⁸⁰ *and they all become one sun*; it is then that they will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.¹⁸¹

By means of the notion of '*after the resurrection . . . until . . . all become one sun*' the conception of history until the time of universal perfection is expounded. He refers to that state through the illustration of those who 'will no more shine differently, as in the early stages', but will '*all [shine] like one sun*'.¹⁸²

He is aware of the various meanings that the term 'one' (ἓν) may have, observing that 'the [term] "one" is used in many ways and in many figures of speech'.¹⁸³ When this indicates the universal perfection, it has a particular import befitting this notion: this is the 'one body', whose 'head' is Christ. This 'one' body, however, is not yet a historical reality. Evil is still present in the world, which

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.5 & 6. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.3.

¹⁷¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 26.

¹⁷² *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.5.

¹⁷³ *commMatt*, 10, 2.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Matt. 5, 16.

¹⁷⁵ *commMatt*, 10, 2.

¹⁷⁶ Matt. 5, 16.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Matt. 5, 16.

¹⁷⁹ Origen reiterates his conviction that time will continue after the end of the present aeon.

¹⁸⁰ Eph. 4, 13.

¹⁸¹ *commMatt*, 10, 3; italics mine.

¹⁸² *Op. cit.* 10, 2.

¹⁸³ *frJohn*, CXL.

entails ‘diversity’, a condition antithetical to the desired ‘one’ body. Still evil will be ultimately abolished; the entire ‘body’ of Christ will be ‘resurrected’ as this was ‘exemplified’¹⁸⁴ at the time of his incarnation. Christ is the ‘head according to a prefiguration of his resurrection’ (κατὰ προτύπωσιν).¹⁸⁵ This resurrection will come to pass at the time when all cognizant hypostases will be restored to ‘one’ body. That moment marks the final victory over those who ‘combat against the unity of the temple’, the unity of the ‘body’ of Christ.¹⁸⁶

There will be a future time at which all will be ‘saved’, that is, they will all ascend to the paramount class of being. But even in that condition the ontological chasm between God and the world will still exist. A passage commenting on Matt. 3, 2 portrays the relation to God in that state:

Kingdom of heavens . . . is his [sc. Christ’s] presence itself; for it is this [presence] which grants us communion with the spirit and elevation to heavens; and to the saints [it grants] facing the immutable good in the aeon to come (καὶ τὸ εἰς ἀγαθὸν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν τῷ ἐσομένῳ αἰῶνι ἄτρεπτον).¹⁸⁷

The preposition εἰς indicates a state *near* the reality of God, which is ‘good’ and ‘unchangeable’, since it is only He who is ‘essentially good’ and ‘unchangeable’. It should be noticed that this state of the ‘saints in the aeon to come’ is not portrayed as *in* (which would be ἐν) the ‘unchangeable good’: instead, the preposition εἰς denotes the place from which a beatific view is possible, still from *outside* of the reality which is contemplated.

History as acting and awaiting ‘until’ . . .

There is a point which should be made. Origen frequently uses the expression ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι (in the aeon to come) in order to denote the ultimate eschatological reality. This happens mainly in his commentaries where certain passages are explained. In his treatises though (such as *Cels* or *deOr*) he is clear that

¹⁸⁴ *Cels*, II, 77.

¹⁸⁵ *frJohn*, XCL.

¹⁸⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

¹⁸⁷ *frMatt*, 38 II. I have used *selPs* and *frPs* as authentically voicing Origen. The reader can see for himself that at numerous points Origen’s views are confirmed through citations involving those works along with many others of his. Just an example: on the τελικὸν ἀγαθὸν and ἀκρόρεια (discussed in chapter 6) one can see the credibility of the foregoing works. Portions from *selPs*, indeed parts of the *Philocalia*, are used *verbatim* by Origen’s followers such as Eusebius, Didymus the Blind and Gregory of Nyssa. Thus *selPs*, 4, 7, PG.12.1160.18, is the text of *Philocalia*, 26, 6 (where τελικὸν ἀγαθὸν is discussed), commenting on Psalm 4, 7. Besides, the text of *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.37f, as well as that in *excPs*, PG.17.113.37f, is the text of Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG.23.221.33f, both commenting on Psalm 23, 3: once again the notion of τὸ τελικὸν ἀγαθὸν is there. Furthermore, the expression ἀγαθὸν τέλος (as in *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1265.44 and in *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1604.20) is invariably used in *commICor*, section 20, and by clear allusion in *selGen*, (comm. on Gen., 46, 4), PG.12.140.28.

there is an unknown number of 'aeons' to come before the eschatological reality (stated as 'the aeon to come') will actually come to pass. Thus, although he holds that there are many 'aeons' to come and speaks of a 'former judgement' (at the end of this aeon), as well as of a 'second' one (δευτέρῃ κρίσει),¹⁸⁸ in *expProv* he alludes to the time of the final abolition of evil through the expression 'in the aeon to come' (ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι),¹⁸⁹ meaning the final aeon of the entire finite continuum of time. In general, when he employs the scriptural expression 'the aeon to come' (ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν) he implies the eschatological reality, which constitutes to goal of action throughout all history. Thus the 'aeon to come' (ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν) does not necessarily mean 'the *next* aeon'. More often it means the '*last* aeon' in the series of aeons, which all time comprises.

In like manner he portrays the eschatological reality through the scriptural expression 'end of aeon'. In that case he alludes to the end of the *reality* of the aeon, that is, the end of the world as a spatio—temporal existence. This is the context in which he explains the state 'after the resurrection'. In this passage his notion of Christ and the resurrected 'body', which is 'in one flesh', is once again manifestly present:

It is natural, however, that there will be some who will wonder, not indeed without reason, whether, after all the days of this aeon, he who said, 'And, lo, I am with you', will no longer be with those who received him 'until the end of the aeon';¹⁹⁰ for [the word] 'until' (ἕως) somehow denotes a certain reference pertaining to time (περιγραφὴν χρόνου). To this, it has to be replied that the expression 'I am with you' is not the same [as the expression, 'I am in you']. If we were to speak more accurately then, we might say that the Saviour is not 'in' those who are still learners, but he is 'with' them, as long as, regarding the state of their mind, they have not yet arrived at the end of the aeon. But once they see vividly, in proportion to their own preparation, the consummation of the world which has been crucified to them,¹⁹¹ then, because Jesus is no longer with them, but in them, they will say, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me',¹⁹² as well as, 'Do you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?'¹⁹³ We make these comments while somehow in private upholding for ourselves the interpretation which has been sustained, that 'all days' means those days 'until the end of the aeon', to the extent that human nature is capable of grasping those things while it is still (ἔτι) here (ἐνταῦθα). For it is also possible, if that interpretation is to be maintained, to focus attention on the 'I (ἐγὼ)', so that the one who is with those sent to make disciples of all the

¹⁸⁸ *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1100.2.

¹⁸⁹ *expProv*, 19, PG.17.192.51. Cf. *expProv*, 24, PG.17.225.45. The expression denoting the universal resurrection, in *commJohn*, 13, XLVII; 19, XIV; *fiJohn*, XXXVIII; *Homiliae in Leviticum* (W.A. Baehrens), (Gr.) p. 334; *commMatt*, 12, 3; 17, 33; 17, 34; *selPs*, 5, PG.12.1169.29; *selPs*, 60, PG.12.1481.47; *selPs*, 127, PG.12.1645.3; *excPs*, 36, PG.17.121.52; *Philocalia*, 1, 30.

¹⁹⁰ Matt. 28, 20.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Gal. 6, 14.

¹⁹² Gal. 2, 20.

¹⁹³ 2 Cor. 13, 3.

nations until the consummation of the aeon is the one who emptied himself and took the form of a servant.¹⁹⁴ But being different, as it were, in standing from this one, before he emptied himself, he has come to be with them after the end of the aeon, until all his 'enemies will be subjected a footstool under his feet'¹⁹⁵ by the Father. *Afterwards*,¹⁹⁶ when the Son delivers the kingdom to God the Father, the Father will say to them 'Lo, I am with you'. But whether it is all the days until that time, or simply all the days,¹⁹⁷ or indeed *all day*,¹⁹⁸ this is left to be considered by whom who wishes to do so.¹⁹⁹

Thus the 'rational nature' (ἡ λογικὴ φύσις)²⁰⁰ is in need of a certain venue to strive for its own restoration. This is the *raison d'être* of history. For however 'diverse . . . the motions may be . . . they nevertheless combine to make up the fullness and perfection of a single world, the very variety of minds tending to one end, perfection.'²⁰¹ This course towards 'perfection' takes place 'in time' (διὰ χρόνου).²⁰² It is exactly through this notion that the *reason of existence* of time and history, as well as its *teleological* character are underlined. Time came into being in order to 'serve'²⁰³ free and responsible action. History, understood as space-time in a dynamic way, is an operative process, 'until' all the enemies of the Logos are put a footstool under his feet. As for the term 'until' (ἕως), this is understood to indicate the 'most urgent character of the time of what is indicated' (τὸν κατεπείγοντα περὶ τοῦ δηλουμένου χρόνον).²⁰⁴

It is noteworthy that he speaks of Christ reigning 'throughout the aeons' (διὰ τῶν αἰώνων) conjoining this to a notion of 'until'.²⁰⁵ This means that it would be misleading to translate the expression διὰ τῶν αἰώνων as 'eternally'.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Phil. 2, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Psalm 109, 1; Heb. 10, 13.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. the notion of *after* the eternal life; pp. 264f.

¹⁹⁷ In *frPs*, 109, 1–6, this 'until' (ἕως) is assumed to 'suggest no time' (οὐ χρόνου σημαντικόν), but simply Christ being 'continually' (ἀδιαλείπτως) present. In *frPs*, 122, 2, the Christian eschatological *hope* (ἐλπίδα) is 'not restricted into an explicit stretch of time' (οὐ ρητῶ δὲ χρόνῳ), but it stems from *expectation* until men are found worthy of attaining to the end. Cf. "He is not only with us for a doubled day, but 'he is with us for all days until the end of the aeon', until we prevail over our adversaries". *Homilies on Joshua*, 1.5. s. p. 287, n. 400.

¹⁹⁸ An implicit reference to the Eighth Day of God (Ἡμέρα Κυρίου), s. pp. 294f. Cf. *homJer*, 17, 6; *Cels*, VI, 61. Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 8. Also, *apud* Rom. 2, 5, Cf. *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 2, section 5. This is the 'day of resurrection', which indicates 'the aeon to come': *homLev* (Baehrens), p. 414; *selJos*, PG.12.821.15; *frPs*, 118, 6; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1061.51; 118, PG.12.1588.15; 118, PG.12.1624.29. This is also called κυριακή ἡμέρα. s. chapter 2, p. 85, note 173.

¹⁹⁹ *commJohn*, 10, X; s. also, *commMatt*, 12, 34; italics mine.

²⁰⁰ *commJohn*, 2, XXIII; *frLuc*, 216; *commMatt*, 16, 23; *frPs*, 88, 9; *selPs*, 150, PG.12.1685.8.

²⁰¹ *Princ* (Lat.), II.1.2.

²⁰² *Cels*, IV, 99.

²⁰³ Cf. *commEph*, section 1: The preposition διὰ denotes the notion of 'to minister to' or 'to serve to'. This also indicates duration. *op. cit.* section 5.

²⁰⁴ *commMatt*, 12, 34. The same in *Scholia in Lucan*, PG.17.341.26.

²⁰⁵ *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.26; *frPs*, 9, 37–38.

The anticipation of universal perfection is reflected in considerations of the deeper significance of the term 'until' (ἕως) which 'denotes a notion of time'. (περιγραφὴν τινὰ δηλοῖ χρόνον)²⁰⁶ He points out that 'after the consummation of the aeon' Christ will 'be with' his disciples *until* all his enemies are put by the Father a footstool under 'his feet'; and '*after that*', when the Son delivers the kingdom to God and Father, he [sc. the Father] will tell them 'Lo, I am with you'.²⁰⁷ Origen sticks to the scriptural 'until' which actually denotes the time when a certain state comes to an end. He is certainly aware of the meaning of the term 'until' (ἕως) since he makes this remark:

The term 'until' is found in the Scripture frequently denoting a continuous stretch of time, like 'until I put your enemies a footstool under your feet',²⁰⁸ and 'until you grow old I am',²⁰⁹ and the dove to Noah 'did not return' 'until the waters were dried up'.²¹⁰ Those [expressions] were used in order to denote a continuous stretch of time. This also may be understood in this way in the phrase 'he knew her not', which means that [Joseph] did not know how did 'she' [sc. Mary] conceive, 'until she brought forth' and he [sc. Joseph] saw the signs which occurred.²¹¹

The scriptural pronouncement²¹² about Christ who will reign 'throughout the aeons' *until* all his enemies are put a footstool under his feet is a recurrent theme,²¹³ considered on both theological and philological grounds. The *ad hoc* philological analysis of the temporal signification of the preposition 'until' (ἕως) testifies to awareness of its connotations.²¹⁴

The notion of 'after' the eternal life

The 'until'-notion is related to a conception of a certain 'after that'. Thus the order of understanding is this: '*Christ reigns throughout the aeons . . . until . . . after that.*' This indicates that a certain 'after that' follows the 'end', perceived as the 'subjection of all the enemies' to Christ; which means that this 'subjection' (the perfection of all) does not in itself mark an absolute end. Through the expression 'after that' Origen depicts his notion of the ultimate end, which marks the reality in which Christ will deliver the kingdom to the Father:

²⁰⁶ *commJohn*, 10, X.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Psalm 109, 1.

²⁰⁹ Is. 46, 4.

²¹⁰ Gen. 8, 7.

²¹¹ Cf. Matt. 1, 25; *frMatt*, 22.

²¹² Psalm 109, 1; Luke, 20, 43; Acts, 2, 35; Heb. 1, 13; 10, 13.

²¹³ *commJohn*, 6, LVII; 32, III; *commMatt*, 15, 23; *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5-V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 138; *frPs*, 109, 1-6; *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1196.28.

²¹⁴ *commJohn*, 10, X; Cf. 10, XV; *commMatt*, 12, 34; *frPs*, 109, 1-6; *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.341.25.

And I do believe that *this is the end*, that is, when the Son delivers the kingdom to God the Father and when God becomes all in all.²¹⁵

This exposes Augustine as unfair to Origen in attributing to him an infinite recurrence of worlds. This seems to me surprising, since during Augustine's lifetime (354–430) Jerome had translated (between 403 and 405) Origen's Homilies on Leviticus in Latin. Despite the wonted debate surrounding all Latin renderings of Origenistic work, hints of his eschatology are expounded there to a considerable extent.²¹⁶ The only plausible solution to this question is that Augustine never read this translation of the Homilies on Leviticus, although it has been argued that he had used a translation of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, translated by Rufinus, in 406/7.²¹⁷ Furthermore, the exposition of eschatological ideas in this book complies with any Greek text of Origen's, and to one extent or another contributes to understanding his eschatology. In Homily 7, he refers to the portion of John 17, 4, about Jesus who shall have finished 'the work' which the Father assigned him with. 'When does he finish his work?' is Origen's rhetorical question, with the reply to this coming forthwith: Jesus finishes his work when he makes even the last and most vile of sinners righteous and perfect. For the time being, and so long as a sinner remains imperfect, his work is still imperfect. As long as even a single rational creature is not subjected to Christ, neither is Christ himself subjected to the Father.²¹⁸ Not that Christ himself is in need of subjection before the Father. This is what sinners need. For any sinner in whom Christ has not yet completed his work is not subjected, since 'we are the body of Christ and members in part'.²¹⁹ Thus, Origen goes on, although we are all said to be his body and members, Christ is not 'subjected' as long as there are some among us who have not yet been subjected by the perfect subjection. But when 'he shall have completed' his 'work', and brought his whole creation to the height of perfection, then he is said to be 'subjected' in these whom he subjected to the Father.²²⁰ In these 'he finished the work that God had given to him that God may be all in all'.²²¹ For the time being, Christ 'does not drink wine',²²² because he stands at the altar and mourns for our sins. Still, he shall drink later, when 'all things will have been subjected to him', after the salvation of all which is marked by the death of sin.²²³

²¹⁵ *commJohn*, 20, VII; italics mine. Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 24 & 1 Cor. 15, 28.

²¹⁶ Like all the aspects of his theology, Origen's eschatology was never expounded in an *ad hoc* treatise.

²¹⁷ Cf. C.P. Bammel, "Augustine, Origen and the Exegesis of St. Paul", pp. 341–68; *id.*, "Justification in Augustine and Origen", p. 231.

²¹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.4 & 7.2.6.

²¹⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 27. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.4 & 7.2.11.

²²⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 24 & 1 Cor. 15, 28. s. *infra*, p. 277f.

²²¹ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.6. Cf. John, 17, 4 & 1 Cor. 15, 28.

²²² Cf. Lev. 10, 9.

²²³ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28; Rom. 6, 6. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.7.

The universal perfection is not the ultimate end. This end follows the perfection of all:

Celsus did not see the meaning of our scriptures at all. Hence he censures his own interpretation rather than that of the scriptures. Had he understood *what follows upon a soul which will be in eternal life* (τὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ψυχῇ ἐν αἰωνίῳ ἐσομένη ζωῇ) and what should be sustained about its essence and the principal doctrines (τῶν ἀρχῶν) about it, he would not have so ridiculed the idea of an immortal entering a mortal body, which though does not take place according to Plato's doctrine of transmigration, but according to another and more sublime theory.²²⁴

What constitutes the content of 'hope' in eternal life is not to enjoy contemplation of the beatific vision of the divine reality *ad infinitum*, but to enter into the timeless life of God. This hope may be fulfilled only through Christ. This is the sense in which Christ is said to be not only the 'road', but also the 'gate' to God.²²⁵ This is why the Logos 'is not yet the gate for those to whom he is still the road and he is no more the road for those to whom he is the gate'.²²⁶ Christ is then the 'road' leading to a certain 'end', which is eternal life. Still this is not the ultimate end. To those who have reached this 'end' he is the 'gate' through which they will enter into the timeless life of God. Quoting John 11, 25, 'I am the resurrection', he observes that Christ 'is the resurrection . . . but also he is the gate through which one enters into the ultimate blessedness'.²²⁷

'Hope' in eternal life suggests accession into the divine reality through Christ. Hence the place of eternal life is illustrated not only as 'topmost mountain edge' (ἀκρόρεια),²²⁸ but also as the 'topmost mountain edge of hope' (ἀκρόρειαν ἐλπίδος).²²⁹ A portion in *homJer* runs in this vein:

Since then the Scripture uses examples so that it can teach that the body of God 'the one above' is more precious whereas the body 'the one below' is inferior, this is why he [sc. Ezekiel] introduced God as being composed of 'fire' and 'electrum'.²³⁰ By generation each of us is 'fire' as well as body of God.²³¹ We are not 'electrum' by generation, but we may get higher and progress. For it is possible to pass from

²²⁴ *Cels*, IV, 17.

²²⁵ For those *conceptions* of the Son, s. *Cels*, II, 9; 64; VII, 16; *commJohn*, 1, IV; VIII; IX; XXI; XXIV; XXVII; 2, XVIII; XXXIV; 6, XLIII; 10, XXX; 19, VI; 32, X; *De Engastrimytho* (*Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25*), section 9; *commMatt*, 12, 12; *selfJob*, PG.17.73.28.

²²⁶ *commJohn*, 6, XLIII.

²²⁷ *Op. cit.* 1, IX.

²²⁸ *Cels*, VI, 44.

²²⁹ *frMatt*, 78. In a striking yet not surprising instance, Gregory of Nyssa uses Origen's expression verbatim: *Orationes viii de Beatitudinibus*, PG.44.1196.11. These are the only instances in pagan and Christian literature where the expression ἀκρόρειαν ἐλπίδος is used. s. chapter 6, n. 1, p. 174.

²³⁰ Cf. Ez. 1, 4; 1, 27; 8, 2.

²³¹ Following a reconstruction by P. Nautin. The Greek text of Klostermann has a lacuna.

today being 'below' (κατωτέρω) and become the body of God 'the one above' (τὸ ἄνωτέρω). Having left 'fire' behind, we shall be 'electrum', which refers to the highest (τὸ ὑψηλότερον) body of God.²³²

Therefore, the ultimate hope is not just contemplation of the divine life, but becoming 'the body of God', that is, sharing the divine life itself. This means that fundamental characteristics of this philosophy of history, such as *hope* and *expectation*, are maintained in eternal life, even though in that state these notions acquire a different import. A comment on Psalm 56, 2 ('In the shadow of your wings I shall hope until evil passes away') reveals God to be the ultimate objective of this hope:

Until evil is abolished a righteous person maintains his hope in the shadow of the wings of God; but once evil is abolished and annihilated into non-being, he shall be hoping no more in shadow, but in God himself.²³³

In *commJohn* there is a comment on the saying, 'but the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life'.²³⁴ This 'springing' appears to be redolent of a resembling image: the 'skipping' of the bridegroom in the Song of Songs, the book which Origen holds to embody the innermost truths of Christian faith.²³⁵ The promise of Jesus to the Samaritan woman (as in John 4, 14) is the promise of Christ to humanity about its elevation to the eternal life through him. Yet, it is added, although this promised eternal life constitutes a fulfillment of Christ's promise to the world, there is a certain 'after' the eternal life, which will come subsequently.

And surely he [sc. who will inherit eternal life] will after the eternal life jump (πηδήσει) unto the Father who is beyond the eternal life. For Christ is life,²³⁶ but he who is greater than Christ²³⁷ is greater than life.²³⁸

Rational hypostases are destined to a certain *beyond* eternal life. The spatio-temporal character of eternal life is implied here once again. The temporal element is indicated by the term *after* the eternal life, whereas the spatial one is alluded to by the term *above* the eternal life. These two notions bespeak the divine reality being *beyond* the world. It is also significant that this prospect is portrayed as 'greater' than 'life', which means that this 'jump' marks the 'end' of the world's existence. That 'Christ is life' and the Father 'is greater than life' alludes to the Father having placed the object of creation 'in wisdom', that is, in the Son.

²³² *homJer*, 11, 5.

²³³ *selPs*, 56, PG.12.1472.5.

²³⁴ John, 4, 14. *commJohn*, 13, III.

²³⁵ *expProv*, 22, PG.17.220.50–60.

²³⁶ Cf. John, 11, 25.

²³⁷ Cf. John, 14, 28.

²³⁸ *commJohn*, 13, III. The verb πηδᾶν used after Song of Songs, 2, 8.

It should be recalled that of all the conceptions of the Son it is only Wisdom and Logos that are held to be not related to the existence of the world: even in the absence of creation, the Son is Wisdom and Logos. These conceptions (ἐπίνοιαι) do not proceed from the action of the Son in history.²³⁹ Therefore, to ‘jump’ into a reality which is *after* and *above* the world, is to join a reality that is ‘greater’ than ‘life’, a reality beyond the world—which is the divine one.

The notion of an expected ‘jump’ after the eternal life is significant in order to comprehend the concept of the eschatological perspectives of the world. This is why Jesus Christ is stated as he who ‘passed through the heavens’²⁴⁰ and ‘promised’ those that had genuinely learnt the things of God and who conducted lives worthy of them that he would lead them on to what is *above the world*; for he says: “So that *where* I go, you may be also”.²⁴¹ This is the context for the ‘perfection’ of resurrection to be understood. Speaking of ‘spaces’ (τόπους) literally,²⁴² Origen refers to Christ thus:

For since the Saviour is come to seek and save that which is lost,²⁴³ he came to transfer those who are below, and who have been recorded as citizens of the things that are below, to the things that are above. For it is he who descended into the lower places of the earth,²⁴⁴ for the sake of those in the lowest parts of the earth;²⁴⁵ but also it is he who ascended above all the heavens, paving the way (ὁδοποιῶν) that leads to the things that are above all the heavens, that is, to the things that are beyond corporeality (ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω σωμαίων), for those who desire this and who genuinely remain his disciples.²⁴⁶

This analysis has an express literal spatial meaning. However, going ahead with this analysis and speaking ‘not spatially’ (οὐ τοπικῶς),²⁴⁷ he explains the passage ‘[He who] ascended up far above all heavens’²⁴⁸ using the same language as in the case of speaking of ‘space’ literally: ‘For the intelligible ascent of that [sc. Christ’s] soul *leaped over all the heavens* so that it can be said that it reached *God Himself*’.²⁴⁹

It is generally known that figures of speech indicate one’s overall perception of reality. This is quite the case, too. Origen uses the same expressions not only when he speaks allegorically, but also when he expounds his eschatological perceptions literally. He finds it fit that certain scriptural affirmations may at

²³⁹ *COT*, p. 37.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Heb. 4, 14.

²⁴¹ John, 14, 3. *Cels*, VI, 20.

²⁴² *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²⁴³ Luke, 19, 10.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Eph. 4, 9.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Eph. 4, 9–10.

²⁴⁶ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²⁴⁷ *Op. cit.* 19, XXII.

²⁴⁸ Eph. 4, 10.

²⁴⁹ *commJohn*, 19, XXII.

the same time be understood ‘non-spatially’ (οὐδὲ τοπικῶς) as well as ‘spatially’ (τοπικῶς), according to the concept of the world comprising particular ‘spaces’ (χωρίοις) of diverse qualities.²⁵⁰ In *selPs*, commenting on Psalm 23, 8 (‘and be ye lifted up eternal gates’), there is further reference to the ‘entering’ of Christ into the divine reality after his resurrection:

He says to them, ‘be ye lifted up’ as if they were rational beings; and certainly they are spiritual and not temporal, since they are immaterial and undefiled (διὰ τὸ ἄϋλον καὶ ἀκήρατον).²⁵¹

This is an illustration through which Christ’s ‘return’ to the Father is depicted, which is also called ‘the perfection of resurrection’ (canvassed anon): the resurrection of Christ exemplified that which will happen at the end; it was a prefiguration of the eschatological resurrection of the entirety of the world, of his resurrected ‘body’, which will ‘enter’ into the divine reality.

An assiduous study of a portion of *Cels* reveals Origen implying the same notion: there is a reality above ‘the arc of heavens’ (which, in the same work, denotes eternal life).²⁵² This reality is ‘above the heavens’ (ὑπερουράνιον) and ‘outside the world’:²⁵³

Even a simple-minded Christian is satisfied that any place in the world is a part of the whole, since the whole world is a temple of God. Therefore, praying in any place,²⁵⁴ and having shut the eyes of sense while having raised those of the soul, he *ascends above the entire world* (ὑπεραναβαίνει τὸν ὅλον κόσμον). He does not stop even at *the arc of heaven* (καὶ οὐδ’ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀψίδα ἵσταται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ),²⁵⁵ but

²⁵⁰ Cf. *commJohn*, 19, XX; XXII; *frJohn*, XXXVII; XLII; LXXXVII; CXXIII; CXXXIX; *deOr*, XXIII; *commEph*, section 11; *frPs*, 72, 27; s. chapter 8, n. 14 and *COT*, p. 107.

²⁵¹ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1269.8.

²⁵² *Cels*, VI, 20.

²⁵³ *Op. cit.* VII, 44.

²⁵⁴ 1 Tim. 2, 8. At the time of Origen it was a commonplace that prayer may be offered anywhere, not restrictively in temples. Cf. *deOr*, XXXI, 4. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 7.43.1. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *de Fato*, I.

²⁵⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247b1: ὑπουράνιον ἀψίδα. Cf. *Cels*, I, 20 (ἀψίδα οὐρανοῦ); III, 80; IV, 83; V, 2; VII, 44. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, PG.26.948.6. Basil of Seleucia, *Sermones xli*, pp. PG.85.36&428. Basil of Caesarea, *Constitutiones Asceticae* (sp.), PG.31.1372. 34. Cyril of Alexandria, *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate*, PG.68.48.34. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 1.3.11; 13.16.3; *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 10.4.69; *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 3.7.3; *Commentarius in Isaiam*, 1.68; 2.18; *Vita Constantini*, 1.2.2; 4.69.2; *De Laudibus Constantini*, 1.1; 1.5; 5.5; 12.5. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orationes viii de Beatitudinibus*, PG.44.1209.6; *Encomium in Sanctum Stephanum Protomartyrem ii*, PG.46.728.20; *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, p. 65. Ephraem Syrus, *Sermo de Sacerdotio*, p. 70. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Homilia in Divini Corporis Sepulturam* (sp.), PG.43.460;23; *Homilia in Assumptionem Christi* (Sp.), PG.43.480.41. Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 1576. Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Homilia i in Sanctum Pascha* (*homilia 3*) (e cod. Sinaitico gr. 49), section 4. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, 3.105; *Explanatio in Canticum Canticorum*, PG.81.196.1; *De Providentia Orationes Decem*, PG.83.564.1. Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Job*, p. 378; *Commentarii in Baruch* (in catenis), PG.93.768.30; *Commentarii in Jeremiae Epistulam*, PG.93.777.23. Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, v. 2, p. 183. John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela*,

through his mind he reaches *the super-celestial region* (ὑπερουράνιον . . . τόπον),²⁵⁶ being guided by the divine Spirit and, standing *outside the world*, as it were, he sends his prayer up to God, entreating him of no trivial things. For he learnt by Jesus to ask nothing frivolous, that is sensible, [to ask] only things that are important and truly divine; that is, those things which, once given, contribute to *the walking towards the blessedness with Him* (παρ' αὐτῷ μακαριότητα) attained *through His Son* who is the Logos of God.²⁵⁷

Certainly this passage refers to a human personal experience during prayer. This experience, however, is the forerunner of the actual final destination of the world, which is to live 'with' God in his eternal being. This is a state analogous to the eschatological experience, which takes place within the Church.

This final goal of living 'with' God is found in the same work couched in a manner befitting the punctilious use of language. It is characteristic that, in order to denote the final being 'with' God, Origen eschews using any word indicating *place* explicitly: he just uses the word διεξαγωγή, which generally alludes to 'living' during a certain time or at a certain place.²⁵⁸ He refers again to the souls striving 'to come to communion (κοινωνίαν) with God' and 'to attain to

PG.95.1433.39; PG.96.120.35; *Orationes de Imaginibus Tres*, section 3,78. John Chrysostom, always prone to flowery prose, uses the expression more than fifty times, Cf. *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.55.45.48; 55.273.4; *In Matthaeum (homiliae 1–90)*, PG.57.272 9, PG.58.537.57, etc. Origen probably upheld the expression, slightly modified, from Philo, *De Cherubim*, 23; *Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat*, 85 and Corpus Hermeticum, *Fragmenta*, Fr. 23, section 59 (John Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, 1.49.44, line 458). Cf. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1, 8. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 10, p. 966. Damascius, *Vita Isidori* (ap. Photium; *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 242, Bekker p. 335b), Fr. 7. It is strange that pagan authors did not make much use of Plato's expression. Cf. Hermias of Alexandria, *In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia*, p. 146. Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, v. 2, pp. 200; 215; *Theologia Platonica (lib. 1–5)*, v. 4, p. 107; *In Platonis Parmenidem*, p. 949; *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 3, p. 96. As a matter of fact, Plato's very expression was upheld only by Hermias of Alexandria, *In Platonis Phaedrum Scholia*, pp. 142; 144, 145; 157 and Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, v. 2, pp. 190; 192; 200; *Theologia Platonica (lib. 1–5)*, v. 4, pp. 18; 19; 24; 25; 28; 40; 60; 62; 63; 68–74; v. 5, p. 15.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247c3. Origen was aware of this Platonic expression and quotes this in *Cels*, III, 80; VI, 19; VI, LIX. Cf. *homJer*, 8, 8. His conception of it, however, is different from that of Plato's, since this 'arc' refers to the uppermost place of the entire multi-spaced world, not only to the visible firmament, and it underlines the ontological chasm between God and the world, be it 'seen' or 'not seen'. The expression is found in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses (libri 1–2)*, 1.1.10. Clement, *Protrepticus*, 4.56.4; *Stromateis*, 1.15.67.4 and Numenius (ap. Proclus), *Fragmenta*, Fr. 35. It was upheld by three typical reproducers of Origen's vocabulary: Eusebius, *De Laudibus Constantini*, 14.12; Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homerum Iliadem*, v. 1, p. 587, and Oecumenius, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, p. 91. Later, it was a common coin in Proclus, Damascius and Simplicius, but this is absent from writers earlier to Origen, save those mentioned.

²⁵⁷ *Cels*, VII, 44.

²⁵⁸ A Stoic term ascribed to Chrysippus, transmitted to us through the doxographer Arius Didymus (*Physica*, Fr. 37) and Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 15.19.2. *SVF*, II, 184,36. It is characteristic that the term is used at the point where Chrysippus' doctrine of *apokatastasis* is expounded. Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, 1.55; 7.166; 7.435.

living with God and with everything befitting divine life'.²⁵⁹ For the end of the world lies not simply in reaching an 'abode' which is nearest God, but also to become 'associated with' God. Correspondingly, he who runs a life according to the word of Christ 'will not only be an associate (προσομιλήσει) with God, but also he will dwell in the same place (σύνοικος) with him'.²⁶⁰

This portion requires attentiveness and cautious reflection on the terms used, since their nuances are vital. The translation above, although not far from the original text, is only the nearest way possible to render this into English. The terms used are προσομιλῶ and σύνοικος. Both of them by and large may mean 'to be associated with'. But there is a difference, which is very significant for the subject discussed here. The verb προσομιλῶ means 'to hold an intercourse with' or 'to converse with'. In the passage above, this term alludes to eternal life and denotes the best communication of creatures with God; yet creatures are regarded to live in a 'place' which is 'outside' the divine being. The adjective σύνοικος, on the other hand, denotes something slightly (but significantly) different and the nuance should not elude us: to be σύνοικος means 'to share one's tent', 'to dwell in the same house with', or 'to enter the house as an inmate'.²⁶¹ This is the notion set forth here: the ultimate perspective is to 'enter' into the divine reality, to be deified by grace. Expressions such as 'the teaching about the blessed life and [the teaching about] the communion with God' (τῷ περὶ τῆς μακαρίας ζωῆς λόγῳ καὶ τῷ περὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον κοινωνίας)²⁶² should be understood in the light of 'end' denoting two distinct eschatological realities: eternal life and the ultimate end. Likewise, in the context of the theory that to be *in* the world is in itself an obstacle to 'seeing' God,²⁶³ he avers that in order to 'see' the 'face of God' a human being has to be 'altered' (μεταβάλλειν σε δεῖ) and to become not just an 'angel', but indeed 'to become God' (ἤδη καὶ Θεὸν).²⁶⁴ This is the final goal, which, in another work is adumbrated through the expression 'to be deified'.²⁶⁵

There is, therefore, a final 'end' expressed by means of expressions such as '*will jump after the eternal life* unto the Father who is *above the eternal life*'; '*promised . . . that he would lead them to the things that are above all heavens*, that is, to the things that are incorporeal'; '*leaped over all the heavens* and . . . reached *God Himself*'; 'He does not stop even at *the arc of heaven*, but comes through his to *the super-celestial region* . . . being . . . *outside the world* . . . in the walking towards to the blessedness with Him

²⁵⁹ *Cels*, III, 56. Cf. διεξαγωγή: *Cels*, III, 80; IV, 10; *selEz*, 3, PG.13.773.16.

²⁶⁰ *expProv*, 5, PG.17.176.33.

²⁶¹ *Etymologicum Gudianum*, Alphabetic entry gamma, p. 310. Hesychius, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter omicron, entries 745, 794; alphabetic letter sigma, entries 2652, 2805.

²⁶² *Cels*, III, 80.

²⁶³ *exhMar*, III; XIII. *frJohn*, XIII. s. *supra*, p. 162.

²⁶⁴ *selPs*, 23; PG.12.1268.25. Cf. 'becoming an angel', Clement, *Stromateis*, 4.25.155.4.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *deOr*, XXVII, 13.

attained *through His Son*; also, reference to anyone who follows Christ, who ‘will not only be an associate (προσομιλήσει) with God, but also he will dwell in the same place (σύνοικος) with God; to *become God*; and, to become *deified*’.

This is the kind of life (the life with the Trinity) which is termed ‘calm and dimensionless life’ (ἀταράχου καὶ ἀδιαστάτου ζωῆς),²⁶⁶ bespeaking a reality transcendent to both space and time. Until this comes to pass, however, even the more noble condition of being is within the world and, therefore, ‘outside’ the divine life.

At this point, I quote a statement which expressly epitomizes Origen’s conception of eternal life with respect to the divine life. In this passage there is reference to the notion of ‘holy mountain’ signifying eternal life, according to previous analyses. It is also here that the notion of *after* the eternal life is enunciated once again:

The Saviour is the real and constant *hope* of the saints; . . . Once one is perfected, he sojourns (παροικεῖ) in the aeons in that tabernacle (ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ σκηνώματι). This is suggested by the [saying] ‘Who will encamp in your holy mountain’?²⁶⁷ For what is *eternal* is this tabernacle, which was made by the Lord not by man (Αἰώνιον γὰρ τοῦτο ταῦτόν ὄν τῇ σκηνῇ, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ Κύριος καὶ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος). However, whilst this tabernacle is a state of perfection, which makes this the Holy of Holies, there is a state *after that*, which is superior to rational creatures. In that state, they [sc. rational creatures] will be *in* the Father and the Son, or rather, *in the Trinity*. This is why it has been said about *sojourning* in the aeons and not *inhabiting* in the tabernacle. (Πλὴν εἰ καὶ οὕτω τελειότητος ἔχει ἡ τοιαύτη σκηνή, ὡς καὶ Ἁγία τῶν ἁγίων εἶναι, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἐστι μετ’ αὐτὴν κατάστασις ὑπερέχουσα τῶν λογικῶν, καθ’ ἣν ἔσονται ἐν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τῇ Τριάδι· διὸ παροικεῖν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀλλ’ οὐ κατοικεῖν ἐν τῷ σκηνώματι εἴρηται).²⁶⁸

The ultimate destination is a state *after* the eternal life: this state is the divine reality itself. To exist in space-time is *sojourning*, that is, a *temporary* status, which had a beginning and will come to an end. The absolute *end* is styled as ‘entering into’ the divine life.

Only once this perception of eternal life is grasped, what seems paradoxical can be understood: Origen regards this higher life as both *eternal* and *temporary*, explicated in the foregoing passage. If one considers the conception of *eternal* only in terms of *duration* (and, more specifically, as everlasting duration), then the association of the terms ‘eternal’ and ‘temporary’ may seem incongruous. But this is not quite the case. This can be evident once the real meaning of eternal life (as canvassed in the foregoing pages) is properly understood.

Eternal life then is the place of those who *await* for joining the divine reality through Christ. This prospect constitutes their *hope* while dwelling in that state.

²⁶⁶ *expProv*, 2, PG.17.168.1. Cf. *COT*, pp. 219f.

²⁶⁷ Psalm 14, 1.

²⁶⁸ *selPs*, 60, PG.12.1481.26–42; italics mine.

To those still in lower ranks of life, Christ is the ‘road’, being not yet the ‘gate’ to them. He will be the ‘gate’ (being not the ‘road’ any more) to those who will finally ‘jump’ from the eternal life unto the Father, who is *after* and *above* eternal life. For Christ is s the *gate* leading to God.²⁶⁹ The exegesis on Psalm 21, 28 (‘For the kingdom is of the Lord and he reigns upon the nations’) runs in the same vein:

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. It is the same as if he were saying that [this will come to pass] when all the wicked will become righteous, having stopped to be earthly and corruptible.²⁷⁰

It is remarkable how a comment on Psalm 21, 31 (‘And my soul liveth in him’) goes: the expression ‘*in him*’ (that is, in God) is a challenge to his exegesis, still he does address himself to it. Once again he alludes to his statement in *commJohn* about the soul of Christ:

For the intelligible ascent of that soul *leaped over all the heavens* so that it can be said that it reached God Himself.²⁷¹

The exegesis on the foregoing portion of Psalm 21, 31 is consonant with the statement of *commJohn*:

It is only the soul of God that lives in God, having knowledge not only of what is created, but also of God Himself.²⁷²

Thus, in a passage portraying a notion of being *in* God, Origen remains consistent with his fundamental tenet that the world is ontologically *out* of God. He does so, even though at this point he has to entertain allegory for the term ‘soul’. For, strictly speaking, the designation ‘soul’ is applied only to the human existential status.²⁷³

The fact that he makes references to the ‘soul’ of Jesus is indicative of his doctrine that the Logos assumed the human nature fully and really. Hence E. de Faye’s assertion²⁷⁴ that this shows Origen sometimes treating ‘soul’ as a synonym with νοῦς (mind) is incorrect. Origen never uses the term νοῦς in the sense his younger contemporary Plotinus did—least of all does he so to indicate the divine reality in which the ‘soul’ of Jesus is originated. To assert Origen holding ‘soul’ to be a synonym to νοῦς is an extrapolation current in scholarship, normally wanted to brand Origen with all epithets including the theme ‘Platonism’. He himself, however, makes it clear that the term ‘soul’ cannot pertain to the divine reality, not even to creatures of superior existential position. The term ‘soul’ is exclusive

²⁶⁹ *commJohn*, 1, VIII.

²⁷⁰ *selPs*, 21, PG.12.1260.12–16.

²⁷¹ *commJohn*, 19, XXII.

²⁷² *selPs*, 21, PG.12.1260.17.

²⁷³ *Cels*, VII, 38; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.7.

²⁷⁴ E. de Faye, “De l’ influence du Gnosticisme chez Origène”, p. 221, n. 1.

to humans indicating this existential class only.²⁷⁵ Speaking of more elevated beings, he uses terms such as ‘hypostasis’ contrasting this with ‘soul’.²⁷⁶ In no case does he use the term νοῦς in this context. This term can be found only in expressions such as ‘the νοῦς of a scriptural passage’ or similar ones, meaning just the ‘truth’ or the ‘deeper meaning’ of the scriptural text. The instance of *homJer*, 15, 4, which de Faye cited (yet he failed to *quote*) proves exactly the opposite of what he claimed this to do. As a matter of fact, it is there that Origen stresses that the term ‘soul’ applies to Jesus, not inasmuch as he is God and Wisdom, but only ‘inasmuch as he is a man’. In the most extreme case, the term νοῦς is used to indicate the ‘comprehensive capacity’ of cognizant natures.²⁷⁷

In portraying this, Origen maintains his idea of the ontological chasm between God and the world. In *commJohn* he speaks of the ‘world’ which was created as entirely ‘material . . . for those who were in need of material life’; this world nevertheless ‘has various particular spaces’.²⁷⁸ Since to be in the world means to be material, the entire world (even the highest of the particular worlds) is regarded as being ‘down’ compared with the incorporeal divine reality. Eternal life is then ‘down’, too, ‘not so much in a spatial sense’ (οὐ τοσοῦτον τόπω) (for there can be no spatial comparison between incorporeal and corporeal nature), but compared with the ‘immaterial and invisible and incorporeal’ (τὰ ἄυλα καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα καὶ τὰ ἀσώματα)²⁷⁹ reality, which is ‘up’ (ἄνω). When, therefore, it is said that ‘Christ came to seek and save that which was lost’,²⁸⁰ it should be understood that ‘he came to transfer those who are below, and who have been recorded as citizens of the things that are below, to the things that are above’.²⁸¹ For he is also the one who descended into the lower parts of the earth,²⁸² for the sake of those dwelling in those regions.²⁸³ He also ascended above all the heavens, paving the way (ὁδοποιῶν) that leads to the things that are above all heavens, that is to the things that are incorporeal (ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω σωμάτων),²⁸⁴ for those who desire this and who have genuinely become his disciples. This passage has a literal *spatial* significance and is stated at the point where the spatial structure of the world and its relation to God is expounded. Nevertheless, even at points where Origen speaks allegorically and ‘not spatially’,²⁸⁵ he uses the same phraseology. Thus the struggle for salvation has as its final goal not to stay in the eternal life forever, but to enter into the divine reality.

²⁷⁵ *Cels*, VI, 71; VII, 38; *commJohn*, 1, XXV.

²⁷⁶ *Cels*, VI, 71.

²⁷⁷ *frJohn*, I.

²⁷⁸ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²⁷⁹ *Loc. cit.*

²⁸⁰ Luke, 19, 10.

²⁸¹ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²⁸² Cf. Eph. 4, 9.

²⁸³ Cf. Eph. 4, 9–10.

²⁸⁴ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

²⁸⁵ *Op. cit.* 19, XXII.

The delayed Judgement

According to this understanding of the *not yet* – notion applied to the final end, ‘even the apostles have not yet received their joy’, but they await for all rational natures to become partakers of their rapture. For the saints, when they leave this place, do not immediately obtain full reward for their merits: they also wait for all creatures, however they delay. They cannot enjoy perfect delight so long as they grieve for the errors and mourn for the sins of those who are still governed by wickedness. In his favourite mystical approach, Origen provides a sublime allegory of this reality, which portrays a broader understanding of history.

Repose is not granted to those who receive the inheritance through Moses (that is, those who gratified God through the Law) unless they assist their brothers in the battles. Only women and infants receive ease through Moses. The others do not repose, but move out to the aid of their brothers. . . . Thus those who are strong men, their loins armed and girded with truth, go forth to our aid and fight with us.²⁸⁶

Authority is once again sought in the Epistle to the Hebrews: following reference to the holy fathers who were justified by faith, his mind is with Paul saying this: “But those who had every witness through the faith did not yet obtain the new promise, since God was looking forward toward something better for us that they might not obtain perfection without us”.²⁸⁷ So the conclusion comes up: Abraham is still waiting for obtaining the perfect things. Isaac waits, and Jacob and all the prophets wait for us, that they may lay hold of the perfect blessedness with us.²⁸⁸ This recurring theme boldfaces the non-egoistic character of the final resurrection.

We have already explained first about how those who had pleased God through the Law do not yet arrive at those things that have been perfected. They antecede those who attain to the promises through faith in Jesus, but must wait for those coming afterwards who will please God in a different time but by one faith, just as the apostle says, ‘They might not attain perfection without us’.²⁸⁹ This seems to denote the mystery that ‘until the fullness of the nations be come in’²⁹⁰ they receive from the Lord Jesus what was promised to them, those who had been instructed and guided by Moses and who by prayers and petitions brought help to us who are placed in the battle. They have not yet ‘attained the promises’,²⁹¹ waiting for our vocation to be also fulfilled, as the apostle says.²⁹² But now at last

²⁸⁶ *Homilies on Joshua*, 3.1. This is a figure of the fighting ‘body’ of the Logos, dispersed in sundry ranks of life. The same analogy, in *Homilies on Numbers*, 26.6.

²⁸⁷ Heb. 11, 39–40. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.8. The same idea commenting on the same scriptural portion, in *Homilies on Joshua*, 16.5.

²⁸⁸ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.8.

²⁸⁹ Heb. 11, 40. *Homilies on Joshua*, 17.2.

²⁹⁰ Rom. 11, 25.

²⁹¹ Heb. 11, 39.

²⁹² 2 Thess. 1, 11.

with the gifts they receive from Jesus they may arrive at the perfection that had been deferred for them, so that each one may dwell in peace with every war and every combat ceasing.²⁹³

This is what Origen calls ‘mystery of the delayed judgment’²⁹⁴ which is kept until the last day.²⁹⁵ There is ‘one body’²⁹⁶ which is awaiting for justification.²⁹⁷ Still, ‘although the entire creation is awaiting for the grace of the redeemer,²⁹⁸ nevertheless each one shall come to salvation in his own order’.²⁹⁹

Regarding the fathers of Israel, who received their inheritance through Moses and the Law, Origen emphasizes that those saints are not complete without Christians and the work of Christ.³⁰⁰ The apostles and saints also await for us,³⁰¹ grieving for our errors, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets. They all continue to assist Christians through their prayers and entreaties.³⁰²

In view of the mystery of the delayed judgement, and since there are many members, but one body, some members must wait to be justified and to enter into full delight until the body is complete.³⁰³ Therefore, there is no ‘division and detachment between us and those who were righteous before the coming of Christ’: they will reveal themselves to still be our brothers even if they lived before the coming of Christ. The holy men of the Old Testament will all be ‘made one flock and one shepherd’,³⁰⁴ those former righteous ones and these who are now Christians.³⁰⁵ There is ‘one body’ which shall rise from the dead at the moment of Judgment. ‘For although there are many members, there is only one

²⁹³ *Homilies on Joshua*, 26, 2.

²⁹⁴ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.9.

²⁹⁵ Origen was the first to apply the idea of ‘delay’, *pace* Heb. 11, 40, to the future. This holds for ‘all the saints’ (πάντων τῶν δικαίων) (*comm1Cor*, section 19 & *selDeut*, PG.12.808.4–5), ‘not just some of them’ (*selDeut*, *loc. cit.*). The idea of Heb. 11, 40, understood as a *typos* pertaining to the end was upheld by Cyril of Alexandria (τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῖς μέλλουσι τύπους, *Commentarii in Joannem*, v. 1, p. 297), who stressed that all ‘the peoples’ will receive ‘the kingdom of heavens together’ (ὁμοῦ, *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*, PG.69.325.27–32.). So did Theodoret of Cyrus: ‘God waits for the strives of all’, so that he will elevate them all *concurrently*’ (κοινη, *Interpretatio in xiv Epistulas Sancti Pauli*, PG.82.769.24–26). A work ascribed to Athanasius argues that ‘all the saints shall enter the kingdom of heavens *coincidentally*’ (ἐν ἐνὶ καιρῷ). *Quaestiones in Scripturam Sacram*, PG.28.772.36–37.

²⁹⁶ *Loc. cit.* Cf. Rom. 12, 5.

²⁹⁷ Didymus had grasped his eschatological ideas of the delayed judgement and of a certain ‘after’ the eternal life. Coupling Heb. 11, 40 with Psalm 141, 3, he comments that ‘the saints are happy, since they have attained to the *end* and live in this, *after* which the kingdom of heavens will ensue’: πῶς οὐ περιχαρεῖς οἱ ἅγιοι κατατυχόντες τοῦ τέλους τοῦ ζῆν τούτου, μεθ’ ὃ ἡ τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλεία διαδέξεται; *Commentarii in Job (1–4)*, Cod. pp. 84–85.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Rom. 8, 9.

²⁹⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.9.13.

³⁰⁰ *Homilies on Joshua*, 16.5 & 17.2.

³⁰¹ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.8.

³⁰² *Homilies on Joshua*, 3.1 & 16.5. Cf. *Homilies on Numbers*, 26.6. Cf. chapter 7, p. 212.

³⁰³ *Homilies on Joshua*, 26.2.

³⁰⁴ John, 10, 16.

³⁰⁵ *Homilies on Joshua*, 26.3.

body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you'.³⁰⁶ For if the eye is healthy and is not harassed in what pertains to seeing, what delight will there be for this eye if the rest of the members are absent? That is, how can the eye seem to be perfect if it does not have a hand, if the feet are absent, or the other members are not present? If there is some excellent glory of the eye, it is particularly in this: that either it is the guide of the body or it is not abandoned by the functions of the other members. This idea Origen finds to be taught through the vision of the prophet Ezekiel who says that 'bone must be joined to bone, joint to joint, and nerves and veins and skin' each must be restored to its place.³⁰⁷

The saying of Ezekiel, 'these bones are the house of Israel',³⁰⁸ is understood to be pregnant with meaning: the prophet did not say 'all men', but 'these bones', referring to realities wider than the human condition. If a righteous man is justified, he will also wait for others, just as he was also waited for. Now, if the delight does not seem to be complete for anyone who is a member, if another member is missing, how much more does Christ, who is 'the head'³⁰⁹ and the originator of the whole body? Therefore, his delight should be considered to be incomplete, as long as he sees any of the members to be missing from his body.

With implicit, yet direct, reference to his theory of Providential Creation, Origen associates this notion with the prayer that Jesus poured out to the Father: 'Holy Father, glorify me with that glory that I had with you before the world was.'³¹⁰ This is taken to imply that Christ does not want to receive his complete glory without us, that is, without his people who are his body and his members. Now, however, as long as creatures are not all 'perfect' and we 'are still in [our] sins',³¹¹ he is in us 'in part'. For this reason, 'we know in part and we prophesy in part',³¹² until each one is worthy to come to that measure which the Apostle says, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'.³¹³ The words of Paul, 'in part we are his members and in part we are his bones',³¹⁴ is one more opportunity for extensive reference to Ezekiel's vision,³¹⁵ taking this as an apposite description of his own eschatological ideas. Besides, a sublime rendering of the entire body of Christ is interwoven with the eschatological idea of universal resurrection in this Homily on Leviticus, referring to Jesus's 'finishing the work' assigned to him by the Father.³¹⁶

³⁰⁶ 1 Cor. 12, 20–21; *loc. cit.*

³⁰⁷ Cf. Ezek. 37, 7–8.

³⁰⁸ Ez. 37, 11. *loc. cit.*

³⁰⁹ Cf. Eph. 4, 15–16; *homLev*, 7.2.10.

³¹⁰ John, 17, 5. *loc. cit.*

³¹¹ Cf. Phil. 3, 15; Rom. 5, 8.

³¹² 1 Cor. 13, 9.

³¹³ Gal. 2, 20.

³¹⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 27; *loc. cit.*

³¹⁵ Ez. 37, 7–8. The prophecy is put in use in order to depict the 'mystical doctrine of resurrection'. Cf. *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI.

³¹⁶ Cf. John, 17, 4. s. *supra*, p. 235.

When 'does he finish this work'? When he makes me, who am the last and most base of all sinners, complete and perfect, then 'he finishes his work'. At present, his work is still imperfect so long as I remain imperfect. As long as I am not subjected to the Father, neither is he said to be 'subjected' to the Father.³¹⁷ It is not the case that he himself is in need of subjection to the Father, but he is said not to be subjected because of me, in whom he has not yet completed his work, for, as we read, 'we are the body of Christ and members in part'.³¹⁸

In view of this conception of 'resurrection', Origen repeatedly refers to the concern of higher creatures, which are close to God (called 'friends of God'),³¹⁹ for the salvation of lower creatures: 'the friends of God, angels and souls and spirits . . . work together' and 'pray together and join in petition'. Consequently, 'together with men' who wholeheartedly and genuinely pray to God, 'countless sacred powers pray together, although uninvited, thus assisting our mortal race' and 'feeling agony together with us, seeing the daemons confronting and fighting against the salvation of those who have most dedicated themselves to God'.³²⁰ It is the 'characteristic of a saint' to 'weep with them who weep',³²¹ for it is 'a weeping flowing from love'.³²² Due to this love, 'many times the saints also suffer together with those who suffer because of their sins'.³²³ Accordingly, 'angels rejoice at those who repent',³²⁴ and the 'saints, being raised up by angels, enter into the marvelous tabernacle of God'; they reach 'the blessed end' which they 'expected to occur sequentially to them'; and 'when a soul, after its trial, enters into the heavenly holies, a triumphant loud voice is shouted, as there is a crowd which celebrates at the salvation of him who has been saved'.³²⁵

Not only are 'angels and souls and spirits'³²⁶ concerned about the course of those lesser in rank. Christ himself is so, too. He prays together with those praying and it is he who conveys the prayers to the Father.³²⁷ It is also he who 'laments and mourns at our sins',³²⁸ and 'it is God the Logos who confers prayer up to the Father taking up to himself the passions of man, of whom he undertook the [human] nature'.³²⁹

³¹⁷ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28.

³¹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 12, 27. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.2.4. Cf. pp. 106 & 332.

³¹⁹ *Cels*, VIII, 64. Cf. p. 157, note 84.

³²⁰ *Cels*, VIII, 64; also, *deOr*, IX, 1; XI, 5; XXXI, 5–6; *exhMar*, XVIII.

³²¹ Cf. Rom. 12, 15.

³²² *frLam*, 4.

³²³ *frLam*, 39.

³²⁴ *selPs*, 37, PG.12.1204.34.

³²⁵ *selPs*, 41, PG.12.1417.3f. Cf. *selPs*, 113, PG.12.1572.47f.

³²⁶ *Cels*, VIII, 64. An allusion to three distinct existential states of rational beings: 'angels' are beings of higher ranks of life; 'souls' are human beings; 'spirits' alludes to the beings of eternal life.

³²⁷ *deOr*, X, 2; XI, 1.

³²⁸ *homJer*, 15, 3. s. *supra*, p. 111.

³²⁹ *selPs*, 68, PG.12.1512.25–7: Αὐτὸς τοίνυν ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος εὐχὴν ἀναπέμπει τῷ Πατρὶ, ἰδιοποιούμενος τὰ καθ' ὃν εἴληφε ἀνθρώπων πάθη. Cf. *deOr*, X, 2.

The notions of ‘pre-crucifixion’ and ‘re-crucifixion’ of Christ, as discussed in chapter 2, should be recalled and understood in the light of this conception. The passion and resurrection of Christ was a real historical event pertaining to the person of Jesus. Besides, this was a prefiguration of what shall happen to the entire world at the end. Although ‘knowledge’ plays a part in the ideal of cognizant beings, this is secondary to the notion of ‘love’ in Christ. Fulfillment of the eschatological hope will be realized through love. This is why it is emphasized that ‘all the saints hope for receiving everything, because of the love in them’.³³⁰ Although Moses is admired for his prophetic charisma and knowledge, it is his ‘love’ that is exalted: “Behold the love of Moses!” (ἴδε τὴν ἀγάπην Μωϋσέως).³³¹ Using the language of Eph. 3, 19, where ‘knowledge’ and ‘love’ appear side by side (‘the love of Christ surpasses all knowledge’), Origen makes an interesting treatment of the scriptural words, in order to conclude that ‘the main task of a saint is to know the love of Christ’.³³² Apropos of the eschatological anticipation and in respect of significance and value towards this goal, this saying renders knowledge inferior to love. If a saint cherishes this Christian hope, he can ‘hope’ for this to come to pass ‘because of love’ in him (διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην), not in consideration of his knowledge.³³³

Love is the existential characteristic through which, and due to which, the restoration and ‘perfection of resurrection’ will come to pass. Until this end comes, the ‘body’ of Christ suffers and is being in the condition in which Jesus was at the time of his passion. This is the dramatic tension between the *already* and *not yet* of salvation that I have pointed out. The restoration, which will continue to be ‘hoped for’ until the end, was prefigured in Jesus’ own hope for his own restoration during his sojourn in human nature. It is remarkable that Origen applies the notion of ‘hope for restoration’ to the human Jesus: “It is not astonishing that [the Saviour] hopes for his own restoration, according to the [saying], ‘O Father, you glorify me with the glory which I had before the world existed beside you’;”³³⁴ for it is possible that he said this ‘in solitude’, at the time when all his disciples were given scandal and abandoned him.”³³⁵ This is the sense in which not only the resurrection, but also the ‘hope for restoration’ was ‘exemplified’³³⁶ in the person of Jesus. Subsequent to his resurrection, his ‘body’ will be restored, too. However, until this eschatological expectation is realized, Christ will be suffering:

³³⁰ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1168.38: ... παντὸς ἁγίου διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην πάντα ἐλπίζοντος. The teleological character of history is expressed through the notion of ‘hope’ (ἐλπίζοντος). Besides, *love* (ἀγάπην) is the principal existential requisite for the *fulfillment of hope*.

³³¹ *commICor*, section 51.

³³² *commEph*, section 15.

³³³ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1168.38.

³³⁴ John, 17, 5.

³³⁵ *selPs*, 4, quoting Psalm 4, 9.

³³⁶ *Cels*, II, 77.

John [the Baptist] says showing him: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which bears and takes away the sin of the world'.³³⁷ He does not say either 'he who will bear but is not already bearing', or 'he who bore and no more bears'. For this *bearing* acts upon each one of those living in the world, until sin is removed from the entire world and the Saviour delivers the kingdom prepared to the Father; so that not even the slightest sin may exist under the rule of the Father, but [the kingdom] to be able to accept 'all in all' of God in all of itself and everywhere in this, when the saying 'That God may be all in all'³³⁸ is fulfilled.³³⁹

The hope for restoration will be realized when everyone will be raised up to eternal life. What will enter into the divine reality at the end will be not individual beings, but that which is illustrated as 'resurrected body' of Christ: the entire restored world united in love to God and to each other. This is the sense in which resurrection has no individualistic character.

The world will come to an end by its own free action, supported by the divine grace. This is the *τέλος* and history is the milieu for realization of it. For God 'has ordered everything so that each spirit or soul, or whatever else rational existence ought to be called, should not be compelled by force contra its free choice to any action except that to which the motions of its own mind lead it, for in that case the power of free choice would seem to be taken from them, which would certainly alter the quality of their nature itself'.³⁴⁰ But 'at the same time', 'through the ineffable plan' of God's 'word and wisdom, . . . the motions of their free wills should work suitably and usefully together to produce the harmony of a single world, some being in need of help, others able to give help, others again to provide struggles and conflicts for those who make progress, whose diligence will be accounted the more praiseworthy and whose rank and position recovered after their victory will be held more securely, as it has been won through difficulty and toil'.³⁴¹

It is therefore evident that rational hypostases that attain to eternal life have a twofold hope and expectation. The fulfillment of their hope to 'jump' onto the timeless divine reality through Christ has an indispensable prerequisite: this eschatological 'jump' will not be realized until *all* rational natures have attained to eternal life. The 'perfection of resurrection',³⁴² that is, 'entering' into the divine reality through Christ (who is the 'gate' to them) will not take place until and unless all 'enemies' will have been 'subjected' to Christ and the 'last enemy', namely 'death', will have been 'abolished'.³⁴³ This is the sense in which

³³⁷ John, 1, 29.

³³⁸ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

³³⁹ *commJohn*, 1, XXXII.

³⁴⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), II.1.2. The term 'plan' is to be doubted. Cf. p. 205.

³⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*

³⁴² *commJohn*, 10, XXXVII.

³⁴³ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 26.

all perfect and resurrected beings are understood to be ‘co-heirs of Christ’,³⁴⁴ at the time when ‘he will transform the body of our humility to be conformed to the body of his brightness’.³⁴⁵ This is the supreme and sublime sense of all becoming ‘one’ in the Son.

The apostle now devises a reasoning based upon logical inference and says: If we are children, then we are also heirs. For a slave expects a wage, but a child hopes for an inheritance. Furthermore, he augments his conclusion saying, ‘Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ’. A person becomes an heir of God when he deserves to receive the things that belong to God, that is, the glory of incorruption and immortality,³⁴⁶ the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.³⁴⁷ But one becomes joint-heir with Christ when ‘he will transform the body of our humility, so that it is fashioned unto the body of his glory’;³⁴⁸ but also when one should deserve to attain to what the Saviour has said, ‘Father, I will that they also be with me where I am’.³⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Father ‘gave all judgement to the Son’, which is also an honour for the joint-heirs with Christ.³⁵⁰ In addition to his joint-heirs the Son says, ‘Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’³⁵¹ This is how Christ leads his joint-heirs not only into a share of the inheritance, but also in a participation in his rule. ‘If so be that we suffer together, that we may be also glorified together’,³⁵² he says. Anyone of us who says, ‘I have been crucified together with Christ’, ‘I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me’,³⁵³ he suffers together with Christ. Again, whoever says, ‘If we be dead together, we shall also live together, if we endure, we shall also reign together’,³⁵⁴ and indeed he who can say, ‘I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh’.³⁵⁵ And just as God highly exalted Christ because he had humbled himself having become obedient to death, even the death on the cross, and he gave him a name that is above every name’,³⁵⁶ so also God exalts with him [sc. Christ] in glory those who suffer together with Christ and who follow the example of his affliction. Indeed, this is the way Christ has laid open to his joint-heirs, that they might be exalted, not because of strength or wisdom, but through humility, that they might attain to the glory of the eternal inheritance through their perseverance over against afflictions.³⁵⁷

³⁴⁴ Rom. 8, 17. The idea is also denoted through 2 Tim. 2, 12, ‘we shall also reign with him’ (*exhMar*, XXVIII; XXXVII; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 114; *frJohn*, CV), which Paul intimates in 1 Cor. 4, 8, ‘that we also might reign with you’ (*commICor*, section 19).

³⁴⁵ Phil. 3, 21.

³⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 53. The same point is made in this Commentary, 8.11.8.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Col. 2, 3.

³⁴⁸ Phil. 3, 21.

³⁴⁹ John, 17, 24.

³⁵⁰ John, 5, 22.

³⁵¹ Matt. 19, 28.

³⁵² Rom. 8, 17.

³⁵³ Gal. 2, 19–20.

³⁵⁴ 2 Tim. 2, 11–12.

³⁵⁵ Col. 1, 24.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Phil. 2, 8–9.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Heb. 9, 15. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.4.3–4. The notion of *sonship*, which is tantamount to becoming ‘joint-heirs with Christ’, according to John, 5, 22, is stressed in Greek portions, too. Cf. *deOr*, XXII, 3; *commICor*, section 3; *commEph*, section 8.

The eschatological prospect is about 'sharing' and 'participation'. It is not about receiving rewards and 'wages', but 'receiving the things that belong to God'. Clearly this 'receiving' means not 'possession' of what God *has*, but somehow 'becoming' what God *is* like. This is the sense in which the ultimate goal of history is 'transformation of the entire world'.³⁵⁸ What is mortal will become immortal, what is visible will become invisible,³⁵⁹ what is temporal will excel time, what is perishable will be perpetual. How could possibly anyone compare the former with the latter? Origen exclaims.³⁶⁰ This means that the 'end' will occur through historical process and 'this subjection will be accomplished through certain means and courses of discipline and periods of time'.³⁶¹ In *commJohn* this is expounded in an entirely scriptural language:

Since it is through Christ that God reconciles the world to himself,³⁶² as [the world] had previously been an enemy due to the existence of evil in it, he is benefactor to the whole world, granting his benefaction through a certain course and order (ὁδῶ καὶ τάξει),³⁶³ while not putting all the enemies a footstool under his feet³⁶⁴ at one go (οὐκ ἁθρόως). For the Father says to the Lord of each one of us: 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies a footstool under your feet.'³⁶⁵ And this goes on happening until the last enemy, namely death, will be abolished by him.³⁶⁶ Whatever the subjection to Christ may be, if we are to understand this mainly according to the meaning of the statement, 'And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him',³⁶⁷ then we shall comprehend in a manner befitting his goodness how the lamb of God bears and takes away the sin of the world.³⁶⁸

Although salvation is received by individual response, 'resurrection' has not an individualistic character: all saints are 'awaiting' for universal resurrection, according to the idea of the 'delayed judgement'. Salvation is understood within a community, which is the Church, and individual salvation comes through the salvation of the entire body of Christ, which at present is the Church, whereas ultimately this body is the entire world transformed and having become the 'body' of Wisdom as this was in the beginning.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.4.5; italics mine.

³⁵⁹ *Op. cit.* 7.4.2. All the implications of dissolution of incorporeality upon becoming the 'body' of the Son are present in this analysis: 'this body of humility will be transformed so that it should become conformed to the body of the glory of the Son of God', after Phil. 3, 21. *op. cit.*, 7.4.3. S. *infra*, pp. 309f.

³⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, 7.4.2.

³⁶¹ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.8.

³⁶² Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 19.

³⁶³ s. pp. 299, 343.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Psalm 109, 1; Heb. 10, 13.

³⁶⁵ Psalm 109, 1.

³⁶⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 26.

³⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

³⁶⁸ Cf. John, 1, 29. *commJohn*, 6, LVII.

This is one more respect in which this theology parts way with a distinctive feature of the Platonic mode of thought: there is nothing of the aristocratic Platonic notion about a few souls who, through the study of philosophy, will be delivered from the world—a world which will have no end. The idea of the ‘delayed judgement’ is a cardinal point of Origen’s theology. Deification is not reserved to each one severally. The ‘body of the Church’ is ‘a whole’: when Paul speaks about ‘the redemption of our body’³⁶⁹ undoubtedly he ‘is hoping that the whole body of the Church will be redeemed, and he does not deem it possible for the things that are perfect to be given to the individual members, unless the entire body has been assembled unto one’.³⁷⁰

By the same token, Origen rejects the Gnostic doctrine about the ‘spiritual’ men, who are capable of salvation by nature. A man is what he is on account of his free will, not of his essence or immutable nature.³⁷¹ There is no human being of impeccable nature; no such being exists after the Fall. Salvation is a question of healing this nature, in a process of cooperation between God and striving creatures. This process is historical, within the life of a community, which is the Church.³⁷²

The Sabbath of the Lord

Catholic ascent to eternal life marks the ‘subjection’ of the entire world to Christ. Subsequent to this, he ‘delivers’ the kingdom to the Father and his entire resurrected ‘body’ enters into the divine being at the moment when the world has been transformed, since ‘the work of the apostolic writings and the advancement of the entire Church by means of them is both the conversion to God and the transformation of the entire world’.³⁷³

This marks the end of history of *oikonomia*, the end of the entire world, since the causes of its coming into existence (the world existing as καταβολή, or as a ‘fallen’ state) will have ceased to exist. It becomes then obvious why Origen regards the state of eternal life as a temporal one: in that place rational hypostases are in an active condition, still they await for the rest of beings to attain to this, too. Unless the last of them is found worthy of reaching there, time will not come to an end, since this is an indispensable means for free action to

³⁶⁹ Rom. 8, 23.

³⁷⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.5.9.

³⁷¹ *commICor*, section 11: εἰσὶ τινὲς ἄνθρωποι μὴ παραδεχόμενοι ‘τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ’ οὐ διὰ τὴν φύσιν ὡς οἰονται οἱ ἑτερόδοξοι, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μὴ παρ<ε>σκευασκέναι ἑαυτούς. Cf. a striking similarity of expression in *frLuc*, 162, also reviling Gnostics.

³⁷² Origen’s view of the Church as the *locus* of salvation needs a treatise of its own. I just cite a small token of reference to this: *homJer*, 5.16; 13.3; *commMatt*, 11.18; 12.11; *commJohn*, 20, XXXV. Cf. p. 86, note 185.

³⁷³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5.

be realized and to make sense. End of time can occur only at the end of the world, when no alive nature will be in need of it in order to exercise personal freedom aiming at perfection and ascent.

As a matter of fact, speaking of *after* the resurrection is an inaccurate expression, since time proper is terminated at the ultimate end. Origen was evidently aware of that: in his reply to Celsus he uses this term,³⁷⁴ yet he immediately points out that this is a question which cannot be canvassed, since it touches upon an ineffable mystery:

Then Celsus next says: . . . 'Obviously the members of the great Church confess this, and believe that the story of the making of the world current among the Jews is true even in respect of the six days and the seventh' on which, according to Scripture, God ceased from his work,³⁷⁵ and 'withdrew into his own sublimity' (περιωπήν).³⁷⁶ Yet Celsus, having not studied attentively what is written at those points, and having not understood them, he says that God 'rested' (ἀναπαυσάμενος), which is not the word actually used.³⁷⁷ But the teaching about the creation (περὶ δὲ τῆς κοσμοποιίας)

³⁷⁴ Cf. the expression 'after the resurrection' (μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν) in this sense in *commMatt*, 17, 34.

³⁷⁵ Gen. 2, 2–3.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Plato, *Politicus*, 272e5. The term περιωπή means a high place, and thence, sublimity, majesty, grandeur. This meaning of 'place' is Homeric. In Thucydides and Agathias it comes to mean 'thoughtfulness' and 'contemplation'. Cf. *Suda*, Alphabetic letter pi, entry 1233. According to *Etymologicum Magnum*, this means only 'high place', 'summit', p. 665; so it does in the *Lexicon* of Hesychius, entries 1782, 1964; likewise, in *Lexica Segueriana, Collectio Verborum Utilium e Differentibus Rhetoribus et Sapientibus Multis*, Alphabetic entry pi, p. 339.

³⁷⁷ It does not really matter whether this quotation from Plato's *Politicus* is made by Celsus or Origen. Whoever it is, he is wrong, since the word used by Plato is ἀπέστη, not ἀναχωρῶν. One cannot know whether Origen's remark that Celsus did not 'study attentively what is written at those points' (μὴ τηρήσας τὰ γεγραμμένα) pertains to misreading of the scriptural portion only (which is for sure), or to the Platonic quotation, too. Misquotation of Plato might well have been an error of them both. The fact is though that Origen is aware of the Platonic word 'περιωπή' (high place, sublimity), appearing in Plato only once (*Politicus* 272e5). This term is used by Origen in *commJohn*, 32, XXVIII; *commMatt*, 17, 7 (quoting the Platonic expression); *Cant*, PG.17.285.8. The term περιωπή appears in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 6.68.3; *Stromateis*, 7.2.5.5. Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Pentecosten* (orat. 41), PG.36.445.24; *In Sanctum Pascha* (orat. 45), PG.36.637.24. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orationes viii de Beatitudinibus*, PG.44.1193.31; PG.44.1196.12. Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Psalmos* 35–39, Cod. p. 234; *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (e commentario altero), Frs. 704a & 1247; *Fragmenta in Joannem* (in catenis), Fr. 11. Maximus Confessor, *Scholia in Ecclesiasten* (in catenis: catena trium patrum), section 5. Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 1740; *Commentarii in Isaiam*, p. 2164. Procopius of Caesarea (A.D. cent. 6), *De Aedificiis* (lib. 1–6), 1.1.28. Of pagan philosophers, the term περιωπή appears in Numenius, *Fragmenta*, Fr. 12. Simplicius simply quotes Plato once (*In Aristotelis Quattuor Libros de Caelo Commentaria*, v. 7, p. 306). It is only Proclus who made abundant use of the term: Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, v. 1, pp. 77, 81, 136, 165, 166, 177; v. 2, pp. 96, 154, 171; *Theologia Platonica* (lib. 1–5), v. 1, pp. 16, 35, 106; v. 2, pp. 66, 72; v. 4, pp. 15, 18, 19, 38, 61, 64, 71, 86; v. 5, pp. 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 44, 65, 74, 83, 91–93, 123, 138; *In Platonis Alcibiadem i*, Sections 19, 21, 83; *In Platonis Parmenidem*, pp. 959, 988, 1020, 1031; *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria*, Sections 110, 161; *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 3, pp. 199, 227; *In Primum Euclidis Elementorum Librum Commentarii*, p. 27; *De Providentia et Fato et eo quod in nobis ad Theodorum Mechanic*, section 18; *Excerpta e Platonica Procli Theologia*, p. 1243; *Eclogae de Philosophia Chaldaica*, Fr. 2.

and about the sabbatism that is reserved for the people of God after it (καὶ τοῦ μετ' αὐτήν ἀπολειπομένου σαββατισμοῦ τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ) is a doctrine which is mystical and profound and 'a word great and hard to explain'.³⁷⁸

Origen always uses the term κοσμοποιία in order to denote the creation of the world. Still he also uses the expression μετ' αὐτήν (*after* this, *viz.* the world), instilling a certain *after* the duration of creation. The reality visualized is 'sabbatism' (σαββατισμός) for the people of God'. This is an expression of Heb. 4, 9, yet Origen does not use this as a quotation, as he does with Heb. 5, 11. In any case, the expression 'after the creation' is Origen's. It is obvious, however, that he does not wish to furnish any explication of this eschatological reality. All he does is to allow that the ultimate end of the creation is to be 'followed', as it were, by a reality adumbrated by the word 'sabbatism'³⁷⁹ of Heb. 4, 9. This 'sabbatism' is to come 'after' the duration of the world.³⁸⁰ This is the reality which he says is almost impossible to depict in words, since it is about a teaching 'great', 'mystical', 'profound' and 'difficult to interpret'. In view of my preceding analyses, it can be said that this eschatological 'Sabbath' is the ultimate subjection of all to the Son, which is to be followed by the 'day of God'.³⁸¹ The repose of the Son is to take place 'after the Sabbath' (μετὰ τὸ σάββατον),³⁸² since this will be a rest not only for himself, but also for all 'those who have become conformed to his death, and, therefore, also to his resurrection'.³⁸³ This repose is the 'holy sabbatism'³⁸⁴ reserved for the 'delayed judgement' and the ensuing universal resurrection. This 'sabbatism' is the 'sacred and holy rest' (ἀνάπαυσις ἱερὰ καὶ ἁγία),³⁸⁵ since it is this which marks the 'end of sin and the eschatological 'repose' (ἀργίαν).³⁸⁶

This ultimate reality will occur in the real historical future. Origen was aware of the question which might be raised by some people, such as those who might argue that, since the union of Christ with the Church in 'one flesh' has already taken place, there is no reason to regard this 'union' as a *future* occurrence. What pertains to the reality 'after the resurrection' has been said by the 'Saviour himself' and can be found in the Scripture. However, 'the scriptures

³⁷⁸ Heb. 5, 11. *Cels*, V, 59. Cf. p. 167. For κοσμοποιία, s. p. 398, n. 102.

³⁷⁹ At other points Origen alludes to this eschatological reality using again the term 'sabbatism', explaining that it means the reality after the abolition of evil. Cf. *excPs*, 77: εἰς τὸν ἐν Χριστῷ νοούμενον σαββατισμόν, τοῦτέστιν εἰς ἀργίαν καὶ κατάληξιν τὴν ἐξ ἁμαρτίας.

³⁸⁰ *commMatt*, 12, 36.

³⁸¹ s. pp. 294f.

³⁸² *commJohn*, 2, XXXIII.

³⁸³ Cf. Rom. 6, 5. *ibid*.

³⁸⁴ *deOr*, XXVII, 16.

³⁸⁵ *selEx*, PG.12,289.20.

³⁸⁶ *excPs*, 77, PG.17.144.34. Notice the difference from 'eternal life', which is an active state.

contain all those things neither in a literal form, nor in a manner which can be comprehended by anyone, but in a metaphorical fashion.³⁸⁷ The 'law having a shadow of good things to come'³⁸⁸ contains 'narration about women and men and good marriages', but one should not stick to the letter of the narration. For they actually refer to 'the wedding of the Saviour to the Church, which will take place in the aeon to come.'³⁸⁹

It is indicative of Origen's Trinitarian faith, that he makes incisive reference to the eschatological role of the Holy Spirit in the process of the ultimate end. Although the Logos at present extends his action upon a wider domain,³⁹⁰ indeed upon all rational nature, the Holy Spirit progressively affects the material realm through the leavening of individuals within the Church. What is now accomplished through sacraments, will then be a historical reality.

Christ came to reconcile the world to God,³⁹¹ and to present³⁹² those who believe in him to the Father.³⁹³ For indeed those who are presented by him to the Father the Holy Spirit receives in order to sanctify them and give them life to be members of the heavenly Church of the firstborn ones,³⁹⁴ and to restore them in the stableness and perfection of the entire body. Consequently, it is only then that they might deserve to be called the Church of God, having no spot or wrinkle.³⁹⁵

There is a strong feeling about the notion of *perfection* and the role of the Holy Spirit towards accomplishing this. By participation to the Holy Spirit, and full reception of Him, all are knit into the Godhead.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'You are not yet able to hear unless the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth',³⁹⁶ because through him and in him the *perfection* of the Trinity is accomplished. For, the same reason is doubtless discovered in that there are nine and a half tribes who proceed under Jesus their leader, and not a total ten, the number that above all is said to be *perfect* and complete. Here again, that which the Lord Jesus said was withheld for the Holy Spirit is seen not whole and midway. . . . But the *perfection* and *summit* of all good things consists in this: whether anyone, after all these things, deserves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. None of these things

³⁸⁷ *commMatt*, 17, 34.

³⁸⁸ Heb. 10, 1.

³⁸⁹ *commMatt*, 17, 34.

³⁹⁰ Cf. *Princ* (Gr.), I.3.5. Cf. *Cels*, VI, 71 and quotation on p. 382.

³⁹¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 5, 19.

³⁹² One more reference to Christ 'delivering' the kingdom to the Father.

³⁹³ Cf. 1 Peter, 3, 18.

³⁹⁴ Heb. 12, 23: ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων. *Cels*, VIII, 5; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.3; *commJohn*, 10, 39; *deOr*, XXXVI, 4; *homJer*, 12, 3; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 226; *adnotDeut*, PG.17.32.55; *Philocalia*, 1, 24. Cf. in Latin: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.6.3; 7.5.3; 8.5.2 *Homilies on Joshua*, 9.4 (this 'church' denoting 'the heavenly powers'); *Homilies on Leviticus*, 1.3.2 (the 'church' whose 'altar is in heavens'); *Homilies on Exodus*, 4.7; *Homilies on Luke*, 7.8; 17.10. Cf. p. 208, note 10.

³⁹⁵ Cf. Eph. 5, 27. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.5.2.

³⁹⁶ Cf. John, 16, 12–13.

will be considered *perfect* in anyone who is in want of the Holy Spirit, through whom the mystery of the blessed Trinity is accomplished.³⁹⁷

The episodes in the history of salvation show that rational nature, although fallen, always received the divine love, which was culminated with the Incarnation. Referring to Rom. 5, 15, ‘the gift is not like the trespass’, Origen concludes that the gift is ‘more abundant’ compared to the ‘transgression’. The fallen creatures received much more than what they lost at the Fall. This Return is the homecoming of those who successfully exercised free will and were sanctified through the Holy Spirit, who ‘is the source of sanctification’.³⁹⁸

This is the aspect in which ‘the gift is not like the trespass’.³⁹⁹ Although there is a strenuous activity in eternal life, the eschatological union with the Trinity is to be waited for,⁴⁰⁰ as it happens with the sunrise. The role of the Holy Spirit, for this ultimate end to come to pass, underscores the role of *grace* in the eschatological fulfillment.

Apokatastasis

There is, therefore, a distinction of stages of resurrection: of them ‘to ascend to the Father’ is ‘the perfection of resurrection’,⁴⁰¹ or ‘restoration’ (ἀποκατάστασις).

The term ἀποκατάστασις was used also by the Stoics. However, there can be no similarity between Origen and them on this point. In Stoicism, ἀποκατάστασις is the restoration of the nature, in the sense of ‘recurrence’ of a next identical world. This is posited as ‘self-made’ (ἄπ’ αὐτῆς μόνῃς) and it is also designated as ‘resurrection’ (ἀνάστασις) presumed to recur infinitely in a beginningless and endless series of worlds.⁴⁰² This *natural* conception of ἀποκατάστασις is irrelevant to Origen’s one: in his teaching of ‘restoration of the whole’ (τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ παντός)⁴⁰³ there is nothing in common with the Stoics beyond the sound of expression.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁷ *Homilies on Joshua*, 3.2. The recurrence of ‘perfect’ and ‘summit’ themes, which I italicize, should be noticed. On number *ten* representing *perfection*, s. *frJr*, 62; *selPs*, 66, PG.12.1504.25. Latin: *Homilies on Joshua*, 4.4; *Homilies on Genesis*, 16.6; *Homilies on Exodus*, 9.3; *Homilies on Leviticus*, 13.4.1–6. Origen obviously took up the idea from Philo, *De Plantatione*, 123–26; *De Decalogo*, 20–32.

³⁹⁸ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 10.12.4.

³⁹⁹ Cf. reference to the Holy Spirit, p. 304.

⁴⁰⁰ “We do not restrict (περιορίζομεν) our hope to an explicit stretch of time (οὐ ρητῷ δὲ χρόνῳ), but we wait until we are found worthy of mercy being bestowed upon us (ἕως ἂν ἀξιωθῶμεν τοῦ οἰκτιρήσαι ἡμᾶς)”. *frPs*, 122, 2. An attack on Millenarrianism.

⁴⁰¹ *commJoh*, 10, XXXVII.

⁴⁰² *SVF*, II, 184,30–185,6; II, 190,19–20; II, 30–41; II, 191,19–32.

⁴⁰³ *selPs*, 16, PG.12.1217.14.

⁴⁰⁴ The different grasp of the notion of ‘whole’ by either Origen or the Stoics is discussed in *COT*, p. 28. Cf. chapter 1, p. 43.

The word 'apokatastasis' (ἀποκατάστασις)⁴⁰⁵ is used in Acts, 3, 21. In *hom̃jer* Origen considers the passage Jer. 15, 19 ('Therefore thus said the Lord; If you return I will restore you'), commenting thus:

These words again are said to each one whom God exhorts to return to him. And it seems to me that a certain secret truth (μυστήριον) is denoted by the expression 'I will restore you'. No one is restored to a certain place unless he was once there, since restoration (ἡ ἀποκατάστασις) is [to be understood as] to one's own home. Just as if my limb has been dislocated, the healer tries to carry out a restoration (ἀποκαταστάσιν) of the dislocated limb. In case one is outside his fatherland, either justly or unjustly, and he enjoys his being able again to live in his country according to the laws therein, he is [said to be] restored (ἀπεκατέστη) to his own country. Follow me in understanding the same thing about a soldier who was thrown off his own army and was restored (ἀποκαθισταμένου). Thus, at this point he says to us who have gone away (ἀποστρέψαντας) that, if we return, he will restore us (ἀποκαταστήσει). As a matter of fact, such is also the *end of the promise* (τὸ τέλος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας), as it is written in the Acts of the apostles in [the portion], 'until the times of restoration of all things (ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων), which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began'⁴⁰⁶ in Jesus Christ.⁴⁰⁷

The three examples used to explain the meaning of restoration were chosen not incidentally: they all point to his conception of both the Fall and Resurrection. This world is an 'exile', since 'Adam was driven from paradise into the exile of this world'.⁴⁰⁸ This is why resurrection is illustrated as receiving back . . . our ancient fatherland.⁴⁰⁹ The notion is also coupled with a passage of Isaiah,⁴¹⁰ on which Origen comments in *comm̃John*: pointing to the resurrection of the entire body of Christ, he urges that those who are now in captivity will receive what is promised in their fatherland.⁴¹¹

It is worth-noting that the notion of 'fatherland', as the place of man's primeval glorious existence, comes from Plato's *Theaetetus*:

But it is impossible that evils should be done away with, Theodorus, for there must always be something opposed to the good; and they cannot have their place among the gods, but must inevitably hover about mortal nature and this earth. Therefore we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling place of the gods as quickly

⁴⁰⁵ The verb ἀποκαθιστῶ (to restore), in a sense relevant to this point, is used in Psalms 15, 2; 34, 17; Job, 5, 18; it recurs in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

⁴⁰⁶ Acts, 3, 21.

⁴⁰⁷ *hom̃jer*, 14, 18.

⁴⁰⁸ *Homilies on Joshua*, 6.4.

⁴⁰⁹ *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1534.33. In view of this analysis in *hom̃jer*, H. Crouzel's surmise that the notion of *apokatastasis* is drawn exclusively from 1 Corinthians 15, 23–28 is not correct. Cf. H. Crouzel, "L'Hadès et la Géhenne selon Origène", p. 331.

⁴¹⁰ Is. 54, 11–14 and Is. 60, 13–20.

⁴¹¹ *comm̃John* 10, XLII.

as we can; and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible; and to become like God is to become righteous and holy and wise.⁴¹²

The idea is there, but the very word ‘fatherland’ is not actually used. We could conjecture that the term goes back to Ammonius Saccas, since it seems that both Plotinus and Origen employed this almost at the same time. As a matter of fact, Plotinus, who puts it forth at two points of the *Enneads*, took up the idea, but he quotes as his source not Plato, but Homer:

This would be true advice, ‘Let us fly to our dear country’ (φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα).⁴¹³ What then is our way of escape, and how are we to find it? We shall put out to sea, as Odysseus did, from witch Circe or Calypso—as the poet says (I think with a hidden meaning)—and was not content to stay among much beauty of sense. Our country from which we came is there, our Father is there. How shall we travel to it, where is our way of escape? We cannot get there on foot, for our feet carry us everywhere in this world, from one country to another. You must not get ready a carriage, either, or a boat. Let all these things go, and do not look. Shut your eyes, and change to and wake another way of seeing, which everyone has but few use.⁴¹⁴

The Homeric allusions of Plotinus recur later in the same work:

But there is a third kind of godlike men who by their greater power and the sharpness of their eyes, as if by a special keen-sightedness, see the glory above and are raised to it as if above the clouds and the midst of this lower world and remain there, overlooking all things here below and delighting in the true region which is their own, like a man who has come home after long wandering to his well-ordered country (πατρίδα). What, then, is this region (τόπος)? And how could one reach it? The man could reach it who is by nature a lover of and truly disposed to philosophy from the beginning, in travail over beauty, since he is a lover, not enduring the ‘beauty of body’ but escaping from up to the ‘beauties of soul, virtues and kinds of knowledge and ways of life and laws’;⁴¹⁵ and again he ascends to the cause of the beauties in soul, and again to anything there maybe beyond this, till he comes to the ultimate which is the first, which ceases from his travail, but not before.⁴¹⁶

The expression ‘our ancient fatherland’ is Origen’s, and John Chrysostom employed this word-for-word. Indeed it seems Chrysostom was so fascinated by both the idea and the language which Origen used for it, that he made this a recurring motif in his writings and sermons. The points where he comes over

⁴¹² Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176a, b.

⁴¹³ A quotation from *Iliad*, 2.140, in a quite irrelevant context.

⁴¹⁴ *Enneads*, I.6.8. Although Plotinus quotes from *Iliad*, his mind turns immediately to *Odyssey* 9.29f and 10.483–4, where Odysseus tells Alcinous how Calypso and Circe had loved him and tried to detain him on his journey home. To both Christians and pagans in Late Antiquity, Odysseus stood for the soul journeying to its true home and overcoming all difficulties and temptations on its way back.

⁴¹⁵ Plotinus combines Plato’s *Phaedrus*, 248D3–4 with *Symposium*, 210B3–C6.

⁴¹⁶ *Enneads*, V.9.1.

and over to the same expressions of Origen appear all too frequently in him,⁴¹⁷ so that they appear also in spurious works.⁴¹⁸

It seems then that Origen was the first Christian to really author this notion and diction for it. Probably he had read the expression in Philo, who had used the phrase describing the return of the people of Israel to their 'ancient fatherland'.⁴¹⁹ Origen's authenticity cannot be disputed, since Chrysostom's much older contemporary Didymus the Blind had already employed the expression verbatim.⁴²⁰ Had it not been Origen directly, then it should be Didymus who provided Chrysostom with the idea and the Origenistic language for expressing this.⁴²¹ The same notion is found word-for-word in a work ascribed to Athanasius. Both the 'ancient fatherland' (ἀρχαίαν πατρίδα) and 'apokatastasis' are intermingled in a single phrase: "We fell from our ancient fatherland and country, and now we implore God to restore us (ἀποκαταστήσαι) to the place whence we were expelled."⁴²² Basil of Caesarea took up the idea with its phraseology unaltered,⁴²³ and so did John of Damascus.⁴²⁴ Romanus Melodus employed the idea and expression in one of his hymns.⁴²⁵

Returning to Origen, the conviction that *apokatastasis* will definitely occur is based on this being a divine promise, which has been 'exemplified' and 'prefigured' through the resurrection of Jesus.⁴²⁶ Since restoration is the goal towards which the entire world is directed, restoration underscores the teleological character of Origen's philosophy of history.

The comment on the passage of Ezekiel,⁴²⁷ 'and he will restore his vines', is that 'they will be restored (ἀποκαταστήσονται) in Christ. It is in him that the *prophecy* will reach its *end*' (τούτῳ καταπαύσει ἡ προφητεία).⁴²⁸ This exegesis is in

⁴¹⁷ John Chrysostom, *De Futurae Vitae Deliciis*, PG.51.350.49; the same notion and phraseology in *De Cruce et Latrone* (homilia 1), PG.49.401.16; *ibid.* (homilia 2), PG.49.409.38; *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.55.273.3; *ibid.* PG.55.214.22, *ibid.* PG.55.348.19; *Contra Ludos et Theatra*, PG.56.264.9; *In Joannem* (homiliae 1–88), PG.59.152.5.

⁴¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *Interpretatio in Daniele Prophetam* (sp.), PG.56.227.1; *In Pentecosten* (sermo 1) (sp.), PG.52.805.58.

⁴¹⁹ Philo, *Hypothetica sive Apologia pro Judaeis*, p. 191.

⁴²⁰ Didymus the Blind, *De Trinitate* (lib. 2.8–27), PG.39.697.47: καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀπολαμβάνειν πατρίδα.

⁴²¹ When Chrysostom was ordained a deacon, Didymus was an old man, probably aged 80.

⁴²² Athanasius, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem* (sp.), PG.28.620.26. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 3.1.51 (text quoted in chapter 2, p. 96, n. 264).

⁴²³ Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 6.1; *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27.66; *Homilia Dicta in Lacis*, PG.31.1456. Also, in a work ascribed to his 5th cent. A.D. namesake, Basil of Seleucia: *De Vita et Miraculis Sanctae Theclae libri ii*, 1.7.

⁴²⁴ John of Damascus, *Expositio Fidei*, section 85.

⁴²⁵ Romanus Melodus, *Cantica*, Hymn 39, section 12, line 5.

⁴²⁶ s. *Cels*, II, 77, and *fi John*, CLX.

⁴²⁷ Ez. 17, 23.

⁴²⁸ *selEz*, 17, PG.13.816.2.

fact in line with the foregoing concept of restoration. In *commMatt*, *apokatastasis* is understood to mark the ‘end of things’:

For even if were be found worthy of seeing God now by means of mind and heart, we see Him not ‘as He is’,⁴²⁹ but as he appears according to his dispensation towards us; but, at the *end of things* (ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τέλει τῶν πραγμάτων) and at the ‘*restoration*’ (ἀποκαταστάσεως) of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began’,⁴³⁰ we shall see Him not as we do now, that He does not seem as He actually is, but as it is appropriate to that time, which He is indeed (ὅ ἐστιν).⁴³¹

Therefore, considering the passage Jer. 15, 19 (‘Therefore thus said the Lord; If you return, I will restore you’), this can be said: ‘Return’ means ‘subjection’ to Christ by attaining to eternal life. ‘Restoration’ is that which will immediately follow upon subjection. This however is not a personal prospect, but is understood only as universal resurrection, according to the tenet of the ‘delayed judgement’.

The ‘perfection of resurrection’

The universal perfection is a state followed by the ‘resurrection’ of the entire ‘body’ of Christ. Although an ‘end’, universal perfection is not the ultimate one: it marks the ‘subjection’ of all enemies to Christ, which is to be followed by the ‘delivering’ of the kingdom to the Father by the Son. So, although attaining to eternal life (even as an individual) constitutes a certain ‘resurrection’, there is also the universal eschatological resurrection, which is superior to either individual ascent to eternal life or the perfection of all. Quoting the passage of John 2, 19, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’, the notion of ‘perfection of resurrection’ (τὸ τέλειον τῆς ἀναστάσεως) is adumbrated thus:

For it is not written ‘Destroy this temple and on the third day and I will raise it up’, but ‘in three days’. For [construction] of the temple⁴³² is raised during the first and the second day after it has been destroyed, but its raising up is completed during all three days. This is why resurrection has indeed both taken place and there will also be a resurrection. For even though we are buried with Christ, we are also resurrected together with him.⁴³³ . . . For it was relevant to resurrection to be in the paradise of God⁴³⁴ on the first day; it was also relevant to resurrection when he was appearing and said, ‘Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to

⁴²⁹ 1 John, 3, 2.

⁴³⁰ Acts, 3, 21.

⁴³¹ *commMatt*, 17, 19; the same, in *Scholia in Lucam*, 14, PG.17.364.55; italics mine.

⁴³² For filling the lacuna with the word κατασκευή, s. p. 84, note 162.

⁴³³ Cf. Rom. 6, 4.

⁴³⁴ Luke, 23, 43.

the Father';⁴³⁵ but the *perfection of resurrection* (τὸ τέλειον τῆς ἀναστάσεως) occurred when he is with the Father.⁴³⁶

This means that the expression, 'We arose with him', is not sufficient for the resurrection in its fullness. Paul advances a certain procedure in resurrection itself: 'in Christ all shall be made alive, but each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, *then* those who are of Christ in his coming, *then* the end'.⁴³⁷ Jesus on the cross spoke about being 'in the paradise today', which testifies to this day belonging to the realm of resurrection, and so was the third day with the words of Jesus to Maria Magdalene. Yet *resurrection* in its full sense is understood when Jesus did ascend to the Father. Since Jesus exemplified and anticipated the ultimate eschatological prospect in his person, the *fullness* and *perfection* of resurrection is understood to come to pass when all elevated rational natures will be able to 'jump' from the spatio—temporal eternal life into the divine realm.

Universal perfection means that purified agents of history are 'at the right hand of wisdom'⁴³⁸ and in real 'life',⁴³⁹ but this is not a state *in* the Father. This is a reality *within* the world, that is, in time and history. This reality is distinguished from the divine one by the ontological *hiatus* between creaturely nature and the Creator. The very fact of being *in* the world is the cause due to which it is impossible to see God 'as he is'.⁴⁴⁰ For 'even the beings of the topmost planes of being do not see God, not by reason of their incapability, but because of God's incorporeality.'⁴⁴¹ In the Wisdom of God there are 'objects of contemplation' (θεωρήματα) which can never be apprehended by any creature at all,⁴⁴² be it human or creatures of a more noble condition of being.⁴⁴³ These visions can be seen only by the Son and the Holy Spirit and by no one else.

The transcendence of God to the world is expressed in terms of space and time.⁴⁴⁴ In the foregoing passage this chasm is portrayed in terms of corporeality; elsewhere though this is expressed also in terms of time:

Mind, which is subject to creation and hence [is also subject] to time, does not see God as he is. This is why it has been said not simply 'No one has seen God',⁴⁴⁵ but also this the [word] 'ever' (Πόποτε) was added,⁴⁴⁶ which denotes a notion of time

⁴³⁵ John, 20, 17.

⁴³⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVII; italics mine.

⁴³⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 22–24; italics mine.

⁴³⁸ *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.54. Migne did not notice that Origen is actually quoting Prov. 3, 16, as indeed he does in *commJohn*, 32, IX.

⁴³⁹ *commJohn*, 6, XIX.

⁴⁴⁰ 1 John, 3, 2. *commMatt*, 17, 19.

⁴⁴¹ *frJohn*, XIII.

⁴⁴² *commJohn*, 2, XVIII.

⁴⁴³ *Op. cit.* 2, XXVIII.

⁴⁴⁴ *COT*, pp. 21f.

⁴⁴⁵ John, 1, 18.

⁴⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.*

(χρονικόν τι), so that the phrase has a meaning such as this: as long as it is possible to speak of 'ever' (which implies living in a lower status) (ὅσον χρόνον τὸ 'Πώποτε' δύναται λέγεσθαι, ὡς σημαίνειν τι ὑποκείμενον) mind is bound (ἐμπέπραται) with material life. This is why mind cannot see God through an intellectual act of its own. So we conceive of God, to the extent that this is possible to us, through the theological notions about him—at least those which we have; even so, however, we conceive of Him obscurely. But *God in Himself* (αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Θεός) has knowledge of Himself not through any means of this kind, but He has a knowledge that is appropriate to Him. For it is Himself who is both the subject and the object of comprehension. This is why it is only the Son who knows Him; it is the Son who is comprehended by the Father and it is he who comprehends the Father.⁴⁴⁷

Therefore, what cognizant beings see from the eternal life's point of view is not the Father himself, but the Father seen through the Logos, according to John 14, 9, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'. This was said 'because he who has beheld the Logos of God, beholds God, ascending from the Logos to God; for it is impossible to behold God, unless through the Logos. And he who beholds Wisdom, whom God created before the aeons toward his works,⁴⁴⁸ ascends from having known Wisdom to her Father. Again, it is impossible, for the God of Wisdom to be apprehended unless by advancement through wisdom',⁴⁴⁹ which means the God the Father cannot be apprehended unless through the Son:

And perhaps, just as in the temple there were certain steps,⁴⁵⁰ by which one could enter the Holy of Holies, so is the Only-Begotten of God all of the steps for us. And just as it happens with the step of a stair, that is, one in the first upward, and the next is just a little higher, and so on up to the highest one, so the Saviour himself is all of the steps. The first and lowest one, as it were, is his human nature. Setting foot up on this, we proceed the entire way on the steps, in accordance with what is entailed from this humanity, so that we ascend through him, who is angel as well as the rest of the [heavenly] powers.⁴⁵¹

In this sense, therefore, the existential state in eternal life compared with the rest of existential standing is the closest one to God; yet this is 'outside' the divine reality. The 'blessed' and 'saints' do not live *in* God but *vis-à-vis* (ἐναντίον) God.⁴⁵² Since there is no ultimate individual resurrection, all saints await for the *perfection of resurrection*, which will be the universal one. Therefore, even the spatio—temporal state of eternal life is destined to come to an end.

⁴⁴⁷ *frJohn*, XIII. Cf. the notion of *God in Himself*, in *COT*, p. 146, *et passim*.

⁴⁴⁸ Prov. 8, 22.

⁴⁴⁹ *commJohn*, 19, VI.

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. Acts, 21: 35, 40.

⁴⁵¹ *commJohn*, 19, VI.

⁴⁵² *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), pp. 206, 220. *selGen*, PG.12.144.21f.

Whenever 'from aeon to aeon' is stated a length of time is implied, still there is some end to this. And if Scripture says 'into another aeon', certainly something longer is denoted, and yet again an end is set. And when 'the aeons of the aeons' is mentioned, some termination is indicated, although perhaps unknown to us, nevertheless established by God.⁴⁵³

This is an important passage, which should not be passed by without any comment, since this section of the Homily on Exodus introduces a notion of endlessness. This though runs contrary to all extant texts in Greek and should be taken as an interpolation by Rufinus confounding the clear notion of the finiteness of spatiotemporality. He presumably took the reference about the 'logoi' of Christ which will never 'pass away' to be identified with 'the kingdom of the Son'. However, the latter refers to the presence and activity of the Logos in the material world, which will come to an end when the reasons for the economic activity of the Logos (because evil is still 'the ruler of the world') will cease to exist. This will come about at the *restoration* from the consequences of the Fall. Rufinus once again failed to grasp the sophistication of Origen's theology, particularly that of the Son 'delivering' the kingdom to the Father.

The Day of God

When restoration of all rational nature will have taken place, the entirety of Christ's resurrected 'body' will enter into the divine being. This is how the realization of the 'perfection of resurrection', the 'delivering' of the kingdom from the Logos to the Father and the ultimate end is adumbrated. This ultimate end cannot come to pass unless God has made 'all' his 'enemies' his 'footstool'.⁴⁵⁴ A pithy portion makes the telling distinction between sundry 'ends'. The end of things cannot take place unless all things have first been subjected to him.⁴⁵⁵ This point is further expounded effectively, so that Origen's views emerge clear:

Until he renders all rulers and powers invalid and puts the enemies under his feet and destroys the last enemy, death, he has to reign⁴⁵⁶ in the way that he might accomplish the *mystery of the dispensation* he has taken up in the flesh and make known both the good and the reprehensible, so that they may come by, each according to his own deeds.⁴⁵⁷ But when he will have delivered the kingdom to God, indeed the Father,⁴⁵⁸ that is, when he has presented all who have been converted and reformed as an offering to God and has completely carried out the *mystery of the reconciliation*

⁴⁵³ *Homilies on Exodus*, 6.13.

⁴⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 15, 25; Psalm 109, 1.

⁴⁵⁵ *Homilies on Joshua*, 16.3.

⁴⁵⁶ 1 Cor. 15, 24–26.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Rom. 2, 6.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 24.

of the world, at that time, they are now said to stand before the judgement of God, in order that the saying might be fulfilled, 'As I live, says the Lord, unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall praise God'.⁴⁵⁹

This final end will be realized through a 'jump'⁴⁶⁰ of this 'body' through Christ unto the transcendent reality over the ontological *hiatus* which determines the state of the world being 'out' of God.⁴⁶¹

The depiction of 'salvation' through the notion of the 'body' of Christ once again shows how different this was from either the Platonic or the Gnostic ones. The Gnostic world is a pallid copy, indeed an actual abortion; this is why they resign to futility. Gnosticism is tantamount to a feeling of extraneity, alienation from the cosmos. Discounting the world is simply an anticosmicism, which means to be foreign to the cosmos regarded as a place of exile. History is then reduced to a mockery. Origen's history is dramatic all the way through, every step of the way. Creatures strive for transforming their own nature, they struggle to overcome their moral ailment and the fallen existential status; there is no such an unalterable datum as 'personal nature'. Thus the premises designated to guide the subsequent Christian *Weltgeschichte* are set up. Rebuking the 'heretics' who contended that 'the natures of human souls are either good or evil', Origen retorts that 'God pays back to each one not on account of his nature, but on account of his works'.⁴⁶²

The 'perfection of resurrection' pertains to the entirety, and *only* to the entirety, of rational beings. Eternal life is existentially characterized by 'love' both to God and to each other. The 'body' of Christ will not be 'perfectly' resurrected (that is, he will not present this to the Father and 'deliver the kingdom' to Him) until *all* are united in love to God and to each other.⁴⁶³ This is what is adumbrated as perfection of all and universal subjection to Christ. This is the deeper meaning of the allegory of the 'bride' in *Cant*, either as 'Church', or individual 'soul', or rational animal,⁴⁶⁴ which, in any case, is portrayed through the 'body of Christ'.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁵⁹ Rom. 14, 11. Cf. Phil. 2, 10. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 9.41.8; italics mine. A similar view in *homJer*, 5, 5, after Sophonias, 3, 9–10. Paul compiled this phrase of Rom. 14, 11, according to Is. 45, 23, preceded by the expression, 'I live, says the Lord', recurring in OT (Num. 14, 28; Soph. 2, 9; Is. 49, 18; Jer. 22, 24; 26, 18; Ez. 5, 11; 14: 16, 18, 20; 16, 48; 17:16, 19; 18, 3; 20: 3, 31, 33; 33, 11; 34, 8; 35: 6, 11). Origen at points avails himself of the expression. Cf. *Cels*, VIII, 40 (ref. to Ezekiel); *commJohn*, 2, XVI (ref. to 'all prophets'); 2, XVII (ref. to Paul); *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), 14, 11 (ref. to Rom. 14, 11).

⁴⁶⁰ s. *supra*: πηδήσει.

⁴⁶¹ s. *infra*, pp. 333f.

⁴⁶² *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.7.

⁴⁶³ *homJer*, 5, 4. Cf. *Cels*, VIII, 72.

⁴⁶⁴ *Cant*, 2, PG.17.165.43; *Cant*, 6, PG.17.176.53.

⁴⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 6, 15; 10, 16; 12, 27; Eph. 4, 12; Col. 1, 24; 2, 17. *Cels*, VI, 48; *commJohn*, 10, XXXV & XLI; *homLuc*, 34; *frLuc*, 168 & 186; *commMatt*, 14, 17; *comm1Cor*, sections 44 & 48; *commEph*, section 9; *selPs*, 29, PG.12.1292.52.

The final destiny of an individual being is the very same destiny of the entire Church, of the entire world, which will be ultimately 'subjected' to Christ. The final accession into the 'chamber'⁴⁶⁶ of Christ is the same for a 'soul' and for the entire Church. The former is neither earlier nor later to the latter. The 'perfection of resurrection' is *one* eschatological reality, which pertains to *all* creatures once 'subjected' to Christ. It is through this *all* that the individual perspective is essentially interconnected with the salvation of the entire world.

Reference to an 'end' of the kingdom of Christ means the Son delivering the kingdom to the Father and ceasing from his economic activity. This is grounded on the Psalms, as well as on Paul. The core of his conception lies in the expression that Christ will 'reign *until* . . .' The very term 'until' denotes a temporal termination of this 'reign'. This end will occur when all those who struggled for salvation will have ascended to eternal life. In *commJohn* there is a quotation of the passage of John 13, 3: 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came out of God and he goes to God, he rises from the supper.' The comment on this is quite telling:

These things, therefore, which formerly were not in the hands of Jesus have been given by the Father into his hands. And it is not some things that have been given while others have not, but it is all things. Which seeing also David in Spirit, says this, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit you at my right hand, until I put your enemies a footstool under your feet'.⁴⁶⁷

In Origen's eschatology, therefore, there are two distinct conceptions of the *end*:

First, the notion denotes perfection of all and subjection of the entire world to the Son. This is not the ultimate end and is illustrated as the resurrection of the entire 'body' of Christ.

Second, the *end* understood as subjection of the Son to the Father. This will come to pass when the entire world, being in the state depicted as the 'resurrected' body of Christ, 'jumps' through Christ into the timeless being of God and history reaches its end. This marks the absolute end of the world, the ultimate end and the 'perfection' of resurrection.

In view of the analyses and quotations so far, the opinion of Hal Koch, that Origen has no ideas which can be called eschatological, is plain wrong. He argued that he has no eschatology and there is no actual direction of the world towards an end. What he saw in Origen was that 'the whole is an uninterrupted development which is in all circumstances directed by Providence in the way which is best for all men.'⁴⁶⁸ Against this fallacy, were Origen's thought to be neatly characterized, it should be said that this is *earnestly and dramatically eschatological*.

⁴⁶⁶ *Cant*, 1, PG.7.256.4. *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum* (fragmenta), p. 109. Cf. Song of Songs, 1, 4.

⁴⁶⁷ Psalm 109, 1. *commJohn*, 32, III.

⁴⁶⁸ Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, pp. 33, 89f, 158.

The conception of time as an extension, through which free persons of history will return to God, is found in a significant passage in *commJohn*. This should be considered carefully, since its syntax and morphology demands a meticulous analysis. The passage in the original text reads as follows:

Τὰ μέντοι γε τῆς ἐτοιμασίας τῶν λίθων αἰρομένων καὶ εὐτρεπιζομένων εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομήν, τρισὶν ἔτεσιν ἐπιτελούμενα, ἐμφαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ τοῦ ἐν αἰωνίῳ τῇ τριάδι συγγενοῦς διαστήματος τὸν ὅλον χρόνον.⁴⁶⁹

This is a portion from the section where Origen comments on John, 2, 21f, about the ‘temple’ of the body of Jesus. At that point, he expounds his views of the resurrection⁴⁷⁰ by means of the imagery of ‘rebuilding’ the temple and alludes to the eschatological reality of the resurrection. The words should be put in the proper order, so that the accurate meaning of the phrase can emerge. To do this, two things have to be taken into account: the conception of time and the context and the meaning of the terms used. So, the real order of the last (and crucial) phrase is this: ‘δοκεῖ μοι ἐμφαίνειν τὸν ὅλον χρόνον τοῦ διαστήματος συγγενοῦς τοῦ <γενέσθαι> ἐν τῇ αἰωνίῳ τριάδι’, and the translation goes thus:

The expressions referring to the preparation of the stones, which are raised up and prepared in order to construct the building [sc. the temple of Solomon], certainly seem to me to signify the whole of time, namely, the temporal extension which is necessary in order to move into the eternal Trinity.⁴⁷¹

In this passage, any verb that might indicate this ‘moving’ into the Trinity is eschewed. In translation I have applied the verb ‘to move’ for the purpose of clarity, yet in the Greek text this ‘becoming into’ divinity is glossed by no word at all. Only the *direction* in history is denoted; that is, activity (*viz.* transformation of all rational nature) aiming at ‘entering’ into the divine being. There is no predication adumbrating the existential status ‘after’, so to speak, this ‘entering’ into the divine being. Had Origen explicated terms such as ‘moving’ or ‘being’, one might assert that what happens at the ultimate end is that rational animals *exist as such*, that is, as personal individual incorporeal hypostases within the divine life. This however would entail that one could live as an incorporeal individual personality—which is far from what this theology really advances. There is no verb that might be used in this case; this is why the doctrine of resurrection is styled ‘great’ and ‘difficult to contemplate’.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁹ *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX.

⁴⁷⁰ *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX–XLIII.

⁴⁷¹ The term συγγενής is related to the word διαστήματος, which is in Genitive case: συγγενής διαστήματος means ‘related to an extension’. Cf. a few lines before this: συγγενεῖς ἑβδομάδος (‘related to the number seven’). Cf. syntax of συγγενής with Genitive case: *JfLam*, 25; *homLuc*, 7, p. 41; *homEz*, p. 337; *selEz*, PG.13.871.24; *selGen*, PG.12.116.39&12.120.38; *selPS*, PG.12.1425.51.

⁴⁷² *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI. Cf. *Cels*, V, 59; VII, 32.

What he actually refers to at this point is the ‘perfection of resurrection’. This passage is immediately followed by a statement referring to ‘when’ this ‘entering’ into the divine being will occur: “those things will occur when peace will be absolute after the years of dispensation following the exodus from Egypt” (ταῦτα δὲ ἔσται ὅταν ἡ εἰρήνη τελειωθῇ μετὰ ἔτη τῆς οἰκονομίας τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου ἔξοδον).⁴⁷³ Thus *oikonomia* is to be followed by *peace*. We should recall that the imagery of ‘absolute peace’ is also used in the portrayal of universal abolition of evil. This is employed here for adumbration of the same eschatological reality. Later still the same expression is there.⁴⁷⁴ Thus the real meaning of this statement can be elicited out of consideration of its context.

Besides, there is the aspect of the actual purport of the passage. Any structure which could lead to interpretation about time existing in the divine reality would be not only arbitrary but also false, on the grounds of both philology and Origen’s authentic views.⁴⁷⁵ For the term συγγενούς can in no way be applied to the expression ἐν αἰωνίῳ τῇ τριάδι, since there is the preposition ἐν. In order to be able to speak of a time applied to ‘the eternal Trinity’, the phrase should be συγγενούς τῇ αἰωνίῳ τριάδι. That is, the preposition ἐν should not exist at all and the term συγγενούς should be related to Dative case. Now however, the preposition ἐν is there. Moreover, at a point shortly before this passage, Origen himself provides a token how he uses and understands⁴⁷⁶ the term συγγενούς: this goes with Genitive case and means ‘related to’. Therefore, the term συγγενούς does not apply to the phrase ἐν αἰωνίῳ τῇ τριάδι. This is not actually a matter of structural or exegetical option. If that relation of the two expressions were employed, it would simply and purely be a mistake on grounds of both grammar and structure of Greek language. Subsequently, this could lead to critical distortion, such as claims that the divine reality is a temporal one. In the same work, however, he contends that no notion of time can be applied to the divine being. It is then impossible to understand this passage in the teeth of fundamental doctrines of this theology, which are enunciated in the same commentary.

This passage bespeaks certain facets of a certain concept of history and eschatology. Reference to ‘the whole time’ indicates that time is finite; it is also

⁴⁷³ *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX. The allegory of going out of Egypt in order to reach the promised land is a recurring motif in Origen. It refers to the eschatological perspectives of the world (Cf. 3 Kings, 6, 1), as well as to the personal historical progress of any Christian. Cf. *Homilies on Joshua*, 4.1.

⁴⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁷⁵ This is the mistake that C. Blanc made translating this passage in French (*Commentaire sur S. Jean*, vol. II, pp. 548–9): “Cependant les travaux de la préparation des pierres, de leur extraction et de leur adaption à la construction, qui durent trois ans, me semblent représenter toute la durée de l’intervalle apparentée à la triade dans l’éternité.”

⁴⁷⁶ *Loc. cit.* ἐβδομάδος συγγενεῖς.

an 'extension', since the very term διάστημα (extension) is used. Beyond that, it is significant that time is the extension through which all cognizant beings prepare themselves for entering into the divine life: history is the terrain where they strive for attaining the transformation of nature of the fallen world. In the light of this, Origen employs the allegory of the whole of history portrayed through the pattern of 'three days': the 'first' day is a figure of the period during which evil prevails, the 'second' one denotes the consummation of the world, and the 'third' is the day of universal resurrection.⁴⁷⁷

The notion of 'return' to God is definitely and inherently related to the notion of 'dispensation' (οἰκονομία).⁴⁷⁸ Like that 'return', this 'dispensation' will also take place 'in due course and order' (ὁδῶ καὶ τάξει). History is a milieu for the divine dispensation to be realized and for creaturely freedom to make sense and to be exercised. Thus time, as an element in the make-up of the world established by God, is what par excellence shows that the divine dispensation does not oppress freedom; for it is due to the reality of time itself that creaturely freedom, indeed history, obtains an actual meaning.

Time, although prolonged, has not only a teleological but also a *dramatic* character, since the struggle towards the end takes place through an encounter between the divine and creaturely will. The eschatological expectation will be fulfilled when the promise, 'That God may be all in all'⁴⁷⁹ will be a historical reality. For this reason we are taught to say in the Lord's Prayer, 'Your kingdom come!';⁴⁸⁰ as if it had *not yet* come.⁴⁸¹ This 'not yet' by comparison with the 'already' of the Christ's coming establishes the tension in this philosophy of history. Present time seems not so much a time of reigning as of war.⁴⁸² Through this war the future kingdom is being striven for. Yet Christ can be said to reign even in this time of war, since the dominion of death is now broken in part and is being gradually destroyed, a dominion which had previously spread itself out to all men. This agrees with the words of Scripture, 'For he must reign until he puts every enemy under his feet'.⁴⁸³ By the same token, 'now we do not yet see everything subjected to him'.⁴⁸⁴ Whence it appears, Origen argues,⁴⁸⁵ that what he says 'for he must reign', he used instead of, 'He [must] prepare a kingdom'.⁴⁸⁶ For it is certain that the strong man must first be fought and bound and in this

⁴⁷⁷ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVII & XXXV.

⁴⁷⁸ *commJohn*, 32, III.

⁴⁷⁹ 1 Cor. 15, 28. Cf. *Princ* (Lat.) III.6.3.

⁴⁸⁰ Matt. 6, 10; Luke, 11, 2.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. *deOr*, XXV, 2.

⁴⁸² Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.37. *Homilies on Joshua*, 8.4. Cf. *infra*, p. 346 and n. 824.

⁴⁸³ 1 Cor. 15, 25.

⁴⁸⁴ Heb. 2, 8.

⁴⁸⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.3.7.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, *commJohn*, 1, XXXII: 'the kingdom prepared to the Father' (ἐτοιμον βασιλείαν). The Latin text is faithful to the letter at this point.

way his property must be plundered.⁴⁸⁷ For this reason also Jesus said, 'I have not come to bring peace, but a sword'.⁴⁸⁸ Therefore, those who want to reign in life through Jesus, until 'death, the last enemy, should be destroyed',⁴⁸⁹ must endure the combat for a long time.

The reality 'after the resurrection' is the divine one, which is atemporal. This is the reality which Origen allegorically calls the perpetual 'day' of God, in which there is neither morning nor evening. When G. Florovski decried Origen on the basis of views drawn from *Princ*, he could never imagine that the real views of Origen are those just canvassed. So Florovski referred to an 'after the resurrection'⁴⁹⁰ in which there will be no time. He appealed to John of Damascus who described that reality as 'a day without evening'. Yet it is striking that John of Damascus simply repeated portions of Origen's, such as this:

To God there is no evening and I think that there is no morning either, but the time, so to say, which is stretched out alongside with his unbegotten and timeless life, this is the day called *today*.⁴⁹¹

John of Damascus used all the notions, which Origen first formulated in order to portray the Christian conception of time. He depicted a certain divine eternity which 'is not time, neither is it a part of time counted by the direction and course of the sun, it is not that which comprises days and nights, but is what is stretched out alongside with that timeless, so to say, temporal movement and extension'.⁴⁹² Therefore, as far as time is concerned, what G. Florovski expounded as views of his own, supported by those of John of Damascus, are actually Origen's doctrine, including the nomenclature he first introduced in forming the Christian concept of time.

Since the Fall was one *out* of God, and the 'perfection of resurrection' is the 'return' to the Father, the final end is perceived as a return *into* the Father. To afford an express portrayal of the reality 'after' the end is as difficult as to do this for the reality 'before' the Fall. For in both cases one has to portray the life of God, which is impossible. He speaks of 'beginning *or* end' because both these terms indicate one and the same reality, the divine one. This is the reason why he does not wish to set forth a detailed account of the doctrine of resurrection. For this, like the doctrine of the Fall, is 'secret' and ineffable, bound to be miscomprehended once explicated.

Although he desisted from a detailed exposition, he was after all misconstrued and branded as a Platonist. It is then worth dwelling a little further on

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Matt. 12, 29; Mark, 3, 27; Luke, 11, 22.

⁴⁸⁸ Matt. 10, 34.

⁴⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 15, 26.

⁴⁹⁰ G. Florovski, *Creation and Redemption*, p. 50.

⁴⁹¹ *commJohn*, 1, XXIX. Cf. *COT*, pp. 210f.

⁴⁹² John of Damascus, *Expositio Fidei*, section 15.

the crucial issue concerning the reality ‘after’ the final end. One might, for instance, ask the question what the eschatological perspective of the Church will be. Will this be extinguished into nothing—as Jerome inculpated Origen? What is the ground on which Origen avers that the teaching about the soul is ‘mystical’ (ἀπόρρητον),⁴⁹³ and in what sense do his views constitute a ‘more sublime doctrine’ having nothing to do with Platonism?

In order to answer such questions, we should recall the actual meaning of the ‘world’, particularly of ‘life’ and its relation to time: life *became*, since it came into being out of non-being; *creaturely* life did not exist when *time* did not exist either.⁴⁹⁴ There are then four realities, which should be distinguished:

Firstly, the reality of God, the divine life in which there is nothing but the Triune God.

Secondly, the divine reality in which God ‘decorated’ the ‘body’ of the ‘multi-embroidered’ Wisdom, which is the providential creation of the reasons, according to which everything was made.

Thirdly, the Fall out of the ‘body’ of Christ. It is then that the actual world comes into existence: space-time and rational hypostases get to be, as individual personalities.

Fourthly, the ‘restoration’ to the reality ‘before’ the Fall, *id est* the ‘perfection of resurrection’. When this comes to pass, the world (in other words, space-time) will come to end.

The Fall is understood to have occurred out of the second reality. This is the same as the fourth one, which constitutes the eschatological expectation, portrayed as ‘restoration’. That reality is a kind of ‘our ancient fatherland’, which will be reached *after* the resurrection. This is the sense in which the resurrected Christ was ‘the first-fruits of our nature’ and ‘was elevated above all the heavens’.⁴⁹⁵ When Jesus gave a promise to his disciples, saying, ‘I will come again and receive you unto myself’,⁴⁹⁶ he meant that he will take them also in the heavens where he himself is, so that they share his life. This reality is illustrated by means of a quotation of Paul, ‘If we suffer, we shall also reign with him,’⁴⁹⁷ which is one more allusion to the final hope of ‘deification’. In *commMatt* it is stated that Christ

left the Father with whom he was being ‘in the form of God’⁴⁹⁸ for the sake of the Church. He also left the mother, since he was Son of *the upper Jerusalem* (καὶ αὐτὸς ὢν υἱὸς τῆς ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ).⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹³ *commMatt*, 15, 34.

⁴⁹⁴ *commJohn*, 2, XIX.

⁴⁹⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁹⁶ John, 14, 3.

⁴⁹⁷ 2 Tim. 2, 12; italics mine.

⁴⁹⁸ Phil. 2, 6.

⁴⁹⁹ *commMatt*, 14, 17. The expression ‘upper Jerusalem’ alludes to the divine reality *pace* Gal.

There is recurrent reference to the mystery denoted by the saying of Jesus about man and woman, 'they twain shall be one flesh' and 'wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh'.⁵⁰⁰ He ponders particularly on the deeper meaning of the saying, 'they are no more twain, but one flesh', which he repeatedly quotes in these sections of *commMatt*. So does he for the saying, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife'.⁵⁰¹ There is an analogy of this leaving one's mother to what Christ himself did, when he 'left' his Father and 'mother' (the divine reality, allegorized as 'upper Jerusalem' of which Christ is the 'son') in order to become 'one' with his bride, that is, the Church.

Here is the eschatological prospect of the Church. To buttress this up Origen appeals to the authority of Paul: 'you are the body of Christ and members in particular',⁵⁰² since 'there is nothing apart from the Church which would be said to be "body" of Christ and "members in particular"'.⁵⁰³ It is for the sake of the Church that 'the Logos was made flesh and dwelt upon us'⁵⁰⁴ and 'cleaved to his wife, which has fallen here, and they became twain in one flesh'.⁵⁰⁵

In that section of *commMatt*, Origen deems it necessary to enunciate emphatically and repeatedly the expression '*they are no more two*' (οὐκέτι εἰσὶ δύο), but they are '*one flesh*' (ἀλλὰ σὰρξ μία). Christ who 'became' one flesh with the Church offers a prefiguration of the eschatological reality. This means that after the Incarnation, *the future has become present*.⁵⁰⁶ This fact is a decisive factor in the formation of this concept of history, which is essentially determined by notions such as *prophecy, realization, faith, hope, anticipation, awaiting for, fulfillment, end*, as discussed earlier. For 'prophecy expressed through deeds renders visible what was heard and [renders] the *future present*, as it were, demonstrating the whole in the part' (ἡ γὰρ δι' ἔργων προφητεία τὸ ἀκουστὸν καθίστησιν ὁρατὸν καὶ τὸ μέλλον οἶονεῖ παρὸν, ἐν τῷ μέρει δηλοῦσα τὸ ὅλον).⁵⁰⁷

The epicenter of prophecy is Christ himself. For the prophecies of the Old Scripture lose all their meaning once the *oikonomia* demonstrated in the person of the incarnate Christ is taken away from them.⁵⁰⁸ It is in the nature

4, 26. Cf. The figure of 'mother' in *homJer*, 5, 13 and *Homilies on Jeremiah*, 5.15. Also, in the 10th Hom. on Jeremiah (10, 7: both in Greek and Latin) and *Cels*, IV, 44; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.8; *commMatt*, 14, 13; 16, 15; *frPs*, 44, 9–10; 108, 29–31; 118, 100; 130, 2; *selPs*, 130, PG.12.1649.18; *Philocalia*, 1, 24. (Latin): *Homilies on Exodus*, 8.1; *Homilies on Leviticus*, 11.3.1; 11.3.2; 11.3.3. 12.4.2; *Homilies on Joshua*, 17.1. *homLuc*, 34 (Gr.) and *Homilies on Luke*, 39.4 (Lat.).

⁵⁰⁰ *Matt*, 19, 5–6. *commMatt*, 14, 16–17.

⁵⁰¹ *Matt*, 19, 5.

⁵⁰² 1 Cor. 12, 27.

⁵⁰³ *commMatt*, 14, 17.

⁵⁰⁴ John, 1, 14.

⁵⁰⁵ *commMatt*, 14, 17.

⁵⁰⁶ s. *supra*: a 'saint who has already risen from the dead' (ἡδη συνανέστη). *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)* (in catenis), section 29.

⁵⁰⁷ *frJer*, 61.

⁵⁰⁸ *commJohn*, 2, XXXV. Cf. *frJer*, 116.

of prophecy's real meaning to be 'revealed' only when what has been foretold comes to pass (τότε γὰρ ἀποκαλύπτεται, ὅτε ἐπιτελεῖται τὸ πληρούμενον).⁵⁰⁹ Until this comes to pass, the reality foretold by prophecy is *hoped* for and *expected* as a real historical perspective, since this was *promised*. This is the sense in which the future determines the past and herein lies the tension between the present condition and the future eschatological accomplishment.

A comment on Psalm 21, 28, ('All the ends of the world shall recollect and turn unto the Lord') casts further light upon this eschatology:

After knowledge, oblivion followed, and after oblivion recollection will come again. Therefore, it has been well said that 'they shall recollect'. For since they have received their own being from God, they shall recollect *their creator* and once they remember him they shall return; not just one nation, as it has been said, not only two either, but all the ends of the earth [shall return], being enlightened through the light of knowledge of God.⁵¹⁰

The return to the 'knowledge' of God (in other words, to union with God) will definitely come to pass. For indeed the deeper meaning of this eschatological 'knowledge' is precisely that of 'union',⁵¹¹ as in Genesis 4, 1. It is exactly this 'union' that he calls a 'great mystery' using (actually quoting) the expression of Paul in Eph. 5, 32. This is the primeval as well as eschatological reality, which he alludes to when he avers that 'there was [a reality] in which there was no evil and there will be [a reality] in which evil will exist no more'.⁵¹² This is the divine reality in which what came into being out of non-being will be in union with the Son of God and the saying, 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me'⁵¹³ will be not only an experience, but also an objective condition.⁵¹⁴ Although quoting this passage, Origen does not adumbrate the betokened eschatological reality, in consideration of this being a deep and ineffable mystery.⁵¹⁵ Only at a point of *commMatt* he makes a hint of how he conceives of this mystery; that is, how is it possible to urge that personal identity will reach an end and this end in itself constitutes *salvation*. He appeals to Gal. 2, 20 again, yet he goes ahead with averring that salvation of a soul is to enter into the divine bliss (ἀλλ' εἴπερ νοοῦμεν τὸ σώζεσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν μακάριον εἶναι, ἀναφερομένην ἐπὶ τὴν ἐν Θεῷ σωτηρίαν). He deems that the saying of Jesus, 'whosoever wants to save his soul, he shall lose it; and whosoever loses his soul for my sake he

⁵⁰⁹ *commJohn*, 6, V.

⁵¹⁰ *selPs*, 21, PG.12.1260.3–10 (comm. on Psalm 21, 28); italics mine. The same (also on Psalm 21, 28), in *commEph*, section 9.

⁵¹¹ Cf. *commJohn*, 19, IV; *commICor*, section 29; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (*Mt.* 22.34–27.63), p. 127; *frPs*, 34, 11.

⁵¹² *expProv*, 5, PG.17.173.33–34; *frProv*, 5.

⁵¹³ Gal. 2, 20.

⁵¹⁴ *commJohn*, 10, X.

⁵¹⁵ *commJohn*, 1, IV.

shall find it'⁵¹⁶ alludes to this eschatological reality. For to lose one's soul is not something necessarily bad: there is 'a loss of soul in a good sense and for the sake of Christ, since it will be the preamble (προσίμιον) of the blessed salvation (τῆς μακαρίας σωτηρίας)'.⁵¹⁷ It is no accidental that Gal. 2, 20 is treated in the section preceding this analysis,⁵¹⁸ which intimates the disowning of personal identity once life is transformed 'in one spirit' and union with the Trinity is attained. In his mind there is a close relevance between universal eschatological union in Holy Spirit and 'losing one's soul' in order to 'find it' (εὕρήσει, Matthew 10, 39; 16, 25) or 'save it' (σώσει, Mark, 8, 35; Luke, 9, 24), or 'preserve' (ζωογονήσει, Luke, 17, 33), or 'preserve it unto life eternal' (φυλάξει, John, 12, 25), of which Jesus spoke. This 'salvation' of the soul is in fact related with the state, 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me', as well as that of all 'cleaving to the Lord' having been transformed into 'one spirit'.⁵¹⁹ In a pithy instance, Origen intimates both the notion of all attaining to eternal life in 'spiritual bodies' and the ensuing universal resurrection unto the divine life, depicted as 'transformation into one spirit': this is the eschatological 'wedding' of the Logos with his 'bride' Church, when all will have become 'one', indeed one 'son'. There is no more dichotomy between Christ and the Church, now all are become one spirit. Now the Logos does no longer extend his action upon a wider domain than the Spirit does,⁵²⁰ but all rational nature is now perfect under the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The final victory of the Spirit and the final victory of rational nature is one and the same thing: all are now made 'one spirit' in to God.

'The animal body is sown; the spiritual body rises'.⁵²¹ Moreover, 'one who cleaves to the Lord' is made 'one spirit'.⁵²² Hence, if 'one who is joined to the Lord'⁵²³ when he was an animal, is turned thereby into a spiritual being and 'is one spirit',⁵²⁴ we too should lose our souls,⁵²⁵ to cleave to the Lord and be transformed into one spirit.⁵²⁶

⁵¹⁶ Matt. 16, 25; Matt. 10, 39; Mark, 8, 35; Luke, 9, 24; 17, 33; John, 12, 25. I maintain the literal rendering of ψυχή as 'soul', although I understand that English versions of the Bible are unanimous in rendering this as 'life'. I think that, in this context, this philosophical sense of 'soul' (that is, as distinct from the 'body') is more appropriate to Origen than the Biblical sense of 'soul' meaning 'life'.

⁵¹⁷ *commMatt*, 12, 27.

⁵¹⁸ *commMatt*, 12, 25.

⁵¹⁹ 1 Cor. 6, 17.

⁵²⁰ *Princ*, IV.2.8 (*Philocalia*, 1,15); *deOr*, II, 3; XIV, 5 (quot. Rom. 8, 27); *ibid*. II, 5. Cf. the claim by Justinian, Fr. 9 Koetschau in *FP*, p. 33f.

⁵²¹ 1 Cor. 2, 14.

⁵²² 1 Cor. 6, 17.

⁵²³ 1 Cor. 6, 17.

⁵²⁴ 1 Cor. 6, 17.

⁵²⁵ Commenting on Luke, 17, 33.

⁵²⁶ *Homilies on Luke*, 36.1.

Referring to Matt. 16, 25, about 'losing one's soul' in order to 'find it', the comment is that 'one loses' his soul 'once he makes this stand outside the conditions of blessedness' (ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, ἔξω ποιῶν αὐτήν τῶν ὅρων τῆς μακαριότητος). He nevertheless maintains the 'mystical' character of the doctrine, eschewing too much explication: these words are addressed to 'those who have comprehended what salvation is' (εἴ τις νοήσας, ὅ τί ποτέ ἐστὶν ἡ σωτηρία).⁵²⁷

The eschatological reality is adumbrated by means of the notion of *after* 'the consummation of the world' (μετὰ τὴν συντέλειαν). With regard to the scriptural 'And lo, I am with you',⁵²⁸ he says, 'after the consummation of the aeon he will be *with* them until' the end (μετὰ τὴν συντέλειαν τοῦ αἰῶνος γένηται μετὰ τούτων).⁵²⁹ The whole passage makes clear that Christ is with the world as long as space-time exists. The 'restoration' will mark the return to the reality in which Christ is *in* the resurrected body, in 'one flesh', in the same sense that the resurrected world is *in* the Son, according to the saying, 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me'.⁵³⁰ This is why Origen (always meticulous in the use of language) depicts the presence of the Logos in the world through the expression 'stretched out alongside *with* the whole world' (ὄλφ τῷ κόσμῳ συμπαρεκτεινόμενος).⁵³¹

In that reality God will be seen as he is in Himself, that is, as the Son knows him. Those who are now *rational hypostases* will be in God, indeed *son* of God,⁵³² beyond time and corporeality.⁵³³ The eschatological perspective is the state in which corporeality and time will no more exist and the relation to the Father will be the same as the relation itself of the Son to the Father. In that state, of the conceptions of the Son those of Logos and Wisdom will still make sense. The conception of 'life', as *creaturely* life (that is, life *distinct* from the divine one), will have ceased to make sense, since this pertains not to the Son only, but also to others (οὐχ αὐτῷ ἀλλὰ ἑτέροις).⁵³⁴ This is the primeval state in which the 'third and fourth' (that is 'life' and 'truth') conceptions of the Son, which arise for his activity towards creation,⁵³⁵ do not exist. However, *creatureliness* will still exist, referring to the 'precious stones'⁵³⁶ (or, 'holy stones')⁵³⁷ which 'embroider' the 'body' of

⁵²⁷ *commMatt*, 12, 25.

⁵²⁸ Matt. 28, 20.

⁵²⁹ *commJohn*, 10, X; *commMatt*, 12, 34; Cf. *op. cit.* 14, 12–13; *homJer*, 12, 10.

⁵³⁰ Gal. 2, 20.

⁵³¹ *commJohn*, 6, XXX. Cf. *COT*, p. 167.

⁵³² *commJohn*, 1, XVI.

⁵³³ *frJohn*, XIII.

⁵³⁴ *commJohn*, 2, XVIII.

⁵³⁵ *commJohn*, 2, IXX.

⁵³⁶ Cf. chapter 4, n. 47, ch. 5, n. 44, ch. 10, n. 44; The notion of 'precious stones' is discussed in *COT*, pp. 54 & 72. Cf. *supra*, p. 55, n. 104.

⁵³⁷ s. chapter 6, p. 187, note 99. Cf. p. 152.

Wisdom. These came into being out of nothing and there is no end to their existence in Wisdom. They are the created 'logoi' and it is about them, as well as the 'logoi' of Jesus, that he himself reassures that will 'not pass away'.⁵³⁸

This is how both the origin and the eschatological destination of the world are visualized. This is also the sense in which the wisdom of God, Christ himself, is said to be a νοητὸς κόσμος in which Jesus 'teaches that we have our origin'.⁵³⁹ The final reality will be the 'body' of Christ, 'the whole Church of God'⁵⁴⁰ in her resurrected form, the 'bride Church'⁵⁴¹ living with Christ in 'one flesh'.

It would be not superfluous to make an additional point in order to clarify this eschatological perception. The end as perfection of all rational nature and 'subjection' to Christ is distinct from the final end depicted as 'subjection' of Christ to the Father and 'delivering' the 'kingdom' to Him. The ultimate end is understood to be subsequent, that is, to 'follow' the former one. Nevertheless there is no reason to assume that any actual period of time will lapse from the former end to the final one. The final state of perfection will obviously occur at the end of a future aeon, after a consummation and judgement. Thereupon all acting agents of history still in lower planes of being will be found worthy of ascending to eternal life. The outcome of that judgement marks the 'subjection' of all rational nature to Christ and abolition of the 'final enemy, namely death', since eternal life is also portrayed as the state of 'immortality'. The 'subjection' of Christ to the Father will come to pass immediately after that occurrence. No measurable period of time will lapse until this happens, simply because there is no reason for time to exist any more.

Never does his phraseology intimate that Christ will reign and *then* he will deliver the kingdom to the Father. An expression of this kind might invite an argument such as that it is not necessary for the kingdom to be delivered to the Father *immediately* after the abolition of 'death'. Although he also adheres to the expression of Paul that the ultimate end will occur 'after'⁵⁴² the 'subjection' of all conscious and alive nature to Christ, he perceives the final end as occurring immediately 'after' this 'end', or indeed upon this end.

This is the way to understand historical evolution: History summons us 'to make haste to accomplish all things that pertain to perfection, so that on the tenth day of the first month,⁵⁴³ we shall be able to enter the land of promise, that is, the

⁵³⁸ Cf. Matt. 24, 35; Mark, 13, 31; Luke, 21, 33; Cf. 2 Peter, 3, 10. Cf. pp. 115, 323, 329.

⁵³⁹ *commJohn*, 1, XXV; νοητὸς κόσμος: *commJohn*, 19, XXII; *Cels*, VI, 5.

⁵⁴⁰ *Cels*, VI, 48.

⁵⁴¹ *commJohn*, 1, XXV. The allegory of the Church as the bride of Christ is current nowadays and has its origin in Scripture. Israel is the fiancée of Yahwe (Hos. 2, 18; Is. 62, 4–6, etc.); the Church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 1, 22–23; Rev. 21, 9–10). Hippolytus appears the first to interpret the Song of Songs as an allegory of the love of Christ to the Church.

⁵⁴² *commJohn*, 10, X.

⁵⁴³ Cf. Joshua, 4, 19.

blessedness of perfection'.⁵⁴⁴ An ultimate goal, signified through the number 'ten', is associated with a 'promise' for a holy 'land' to be inherited in due time.

The foregoing two perceptions of *end* constitute a fundamental distinction which should be made in Origen's eschatology. Unless this distinction is plain confusion as to what he really espoused is inevitable. At all events, critical points of his work should be studied on account of the term 'end' betokening sundry realities.

Considering the saying about Christ being 'first and last',⁵⁴⁵ his comment is that Christ 'being regarded as *first* is not the same with being the Alpha and the ἀρχὴ (beginning); and regarded as *last*, he is unlike being the Omega and the end'.⁵⁴⁶ This in fact yields two distinct conceptions of the term 'end' as canvassed above. Christ is the 'first' regarded in his relation to the world; he is the wisdom who 'willed to establish a creative relation to the future beings'⁵⁴⁷ and brought them into being. But he is the 'Alpha and ἀρχὴ' regarded as Wisdom, who, in herself, has nothing to do with creation.⁵⁴⁸ Accordingly, Christ is 'last' regarded as he who will 'deliver the kingdom to the Father'; in this respect, he is regarded in his relation to the world. But he is the 'Omega and end' once the final end is considered, when there will be no world any more and 'God will be all in all'. In short, the conception of Christ as 'first and last' alludes to his being the Logos, whereas he is 'beginning and end' inasmuch as he is regarded as the Wisdom of God.⁵⁴⁹ According to this distinction, Origen provides a similar exegesis on Proverbs 1, 7, 'Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'. He points out that, when in the Revelation it is said, 'I am the beginning and the end',⁵⁵⁰ Christ is the 'beginning' since he gave creatures their being; and he is the 'end' on account of his being the means for their perfection.⁵⁵¹

In view of these ideas found in Greek, one may notice similar notions behind the obfuscating rendering of *Princ*:

And just as by his present coming he has fulfilled that law which has a 'shadow of the good things to come',⁵⁵² so also by that glorious coming the shadow of his first coming will be fulfilled and brought to *perfection*. For the prophet has spoken of it thus: 'The breath of our countenance is Christ the Lord, of whom we said that

⁵⁴⁴ *Homilies on Joshua*, 4, 4.

⁵⁴⁵ Rev. 22, 13.

⁵⁴⁶ *commJohn*, 1, XXXI, commenting on Rev. 22, 13f, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.'

⁵⁴⁷ *fJohn*, I.

⁵⁴⁸ *fJohn*, I; *commJohn*, 2, XXVIII.

⁵⁴⁹ I discuss the distinct conceptions (ἐπίνουαι) of the Son, in *COT*, pp. 37, 52, 57–58, 82 *et passim*.

⁵⁵⁰ Rev. 1, 8.

⁵⁵¹ *expProv*, 1. In this passage of Proverbs, 'wisdom' that is regarded as the 'means' for perfection.

⁵⁵² Heb. 10, 1.

under his shadow we shall live among the nations',⁵⁵³ that is, at the time when he shall duly transfer all the saints *from the temporal to the eternal* gospel, to use a phrase employed by John in the Apocalypse, where he speaks of the 'eternal gospel'.⁵⁵⁴

The notion of 'perfection of resurrection' makes a mark in this passage. The same goes for the idea that this 'perfection' pertains to the entire body of Christ, since his incarnation was a prefiguration of that eschatological resurrection. Even the notion of 'jump' of this resurrected body to the divine eternity can be traced in the phrase referring to Christ who shall 'transfer all the saints from the temporal to the eternal gospel'. The distinction between 'temporal' and 'eternal' indicates that this 'transfer' is one from a temporal to a timeless reality. The 'saints' no more 'contemplate' the eternal gospel, but they are themselves 'transferred' into it. It is then that the absolute end is realized, in the sense that 'perfection of resurrection' comes to pass.

The distinction between these two 'ends' is, therefore, portrayed not so much in terms of succession of periods of time, but in terms of succession of two quite distinct existential states. There is no *lasting duration* between the state of perfection of all and the ensuing state of God being all in all. Such a notion is perfectly compatible with Origen's conception of time without duration.⁵⁵⁵ This is what allows him to include the occurrence of these two 'ends' into one and single phrase: the ultimate end comes to pass as soon as the perfection of all is accomplished. A comment on the Wisdom of Solomon about 'the beginning and the end and the middle of the times' (ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων)⁵⁵⁶ reads thus:

And as to what he says about the 'beginning and the end and the middle of the times', he is speaking of the beginning of the visible world⁵⁵⁷ ... the middle is a term relative to the total count of time; and the *end* is that for which we *hope*, when 'heaven and earth shall pass away'⁵⁵⁸ ... the end is the things that are yet to be, that is, *the perfection and consummation of the universe*.⁵⁵⁹

It is then worth canvassing how this 'consummation of the universe' is understood.

⁵⁵³ Lament. 4, 20.

⁵⁵⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), IV.3.13; italics mine.

⁵⁵⁵ *COT*, pp. 256f.

⁵⁵⁶ Wis. 7, 17–21. *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 221. At that point the entire passage is quoted. Origen uses this expression in his works in Greek alluding to current scientific knowledge.

⁵⁵⁷ The simultaneity of the beginning of time and space is once again reiterated.

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Matt. 24, 35; Mark, 13, 31.

⁵⁵⁹ *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 221; italics mine.

Consummation of nature

The conception of this reality is indicative of Origen's eschatological grasp. For, although eschatological intuitions are a common theme in human thought, there are profound differences as to how eschatological conceptions are visualized and portrayed. W. Herberg proposed that 'eschatologies have appeared in two radically divergent forms, distinguished by their attitude to time and history'. The distinction is drawn thus: "On the one hand, ultimate destiny may be seen as *consummatory of nature*; on the other hand, it may be seen as a *fulfillment, rectification, or transfiguration of history*." Herberg delineates three forms of eschatology, 'naturalistic, eternalistic, and historicist', which are regarded as 'reflecting three basic modes of understanding reality'. The basic distinction, however, is drawn between the 'historistic' and the other two: he deems that the attitude toward time and history in both 'naturalistic' and 'eternalistic' eschatologies is essentially non-historical. The 'naturalistic' view is characteristic of what Herberg called 'primitive' religion, in which the basic reality is nature: "Nature is engrossed in cyclical rhythms, and the pattern of eternal recurrence becomes the context of naturalistic eschatology". 'Eternalistic' views are characteristic of 'Greek and Oriental spirituality . . . In most cases eternalistic eschatologies find their background in the conception of history as the endless cycle of eternal recurrence. It is from this 'vain repetition' that they seek to escape: the 'last thing' hoped for is the 'deliverance of the *individual* from the unreal realm of the empirical, temporal and historical, to the timeless realm of spirit.'⁵⁶⁰ Herberg's view is that that 'historistic eschatologies', in the full sense of the term, have appeared only in the sphere of Hebraic religion, by which he means both Judaism and (primitive) Christianity. In this category, Herberg includes also Islam, and notes that Zoroastrianism (Parsiism) constitutes a perplexing problem because 'its view of time and history is not one of eternal recurrence, but rather one of a linear movement toward a consummation.'⁵⁶¹

Adducing this account of W. Herberg, I maintain my reservations, expressed in chapter 6, about the distinction 'time and history is Hebraic' whereas 'spatial is Greek', which actually underlies his classifications. In addition, I note that Origen's eschatological concern does not expire with the 'salvation' of the *individual*. That kind of salvation was also a Gnostic attitude, regarded by Herberg as a characteristic of 'Greek and Oriental' attitude toward time and history. 'Resurrection', as Origen understands it, has no individualistic character. The 'perfection of resurrection' applies to the 'body' of Christ. For the time being, this 'body' is the Church; but at the 'end', when all will have been 'subjected'

⁵⁶⁰ W. Herberg, "Eschatology", pp. 694–97; italics mine.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

to Christ, this 'body' will be the entire world. This is what the 'resurrection' pertains to. It is therefore absurd that A. Harnack regards Origen as one of the 'high-watermarks' of what he sees as the process whereby the departure, or 'apostasy', from Primitive Christianity was effected. Origen is described as the most 'Hellenistic' and most consistent and thoroughgoing 'de-eschatologizer'.⁵⁶² Worse still, Harnack in this case postulates 'Hellenism' as synonymous with 'Gnosticism'.⁵⁶³

The conception of consummation of nature is present in Origen's theology. This should not be unexpected—not in view of any Platonic or Stoic outlook prevailing therein. Once universal perfection has been attained, time proper and indeed History lose their inherent *raison d'être*, which is to exist as the milieu for those striving to return to their 'ancient fatherland'. This final end will be reached through free action in space-time. When the 'jump' (πηδήσει)⁵⁶⁴ from being *out* of God (that is, from corporeality and time) to being *in* God (that is, to incorporeality and timelessness) occurs, then the *reason* (*viz.* corporeality and time) for the world to exist as it stands will come to an end and will cease to exist. This *reason* is quite the 'reason' (logos) following from the Fall. The elimination of this particular reason means extinction not of any of the *logoi* created by God (for they will 'never pass away'): it only means extinction of evil as an *accident*, not as a 'substance', since this is not actually a substance, *viz.* a being: 'neither did this exist in the beginning, nor shall this exist for ever'.⁵⁶⁵ Evil is a scandalous disarrangement of nature, it is 'against nature' and can exist only where 'division' and 'schism' exists. As a symptom of 'disagreement', evil has infinite manifestations, it is 'indefinite' (ἄοριστον),⁵⁶⁶ while virtue is one and simple.

The notion of a certain 'after the eternal life', which marks the final end of the world, points to the dissolution of corporeality into non-being. Going into the divine reality, 'communion' with God and 'deification' imply and entail sharing the divine nature.⁵⁶⁷ Although the ontology of creatures is not the divine

⁵⁶² A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, (7 vols.), vol. II, p. 319f.

⁵⁶³ A. von Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, p. 60.

⁵⁶⁴ *commJohn*, XIII, 3.

⁵⁶⁵ *commJohn*, 2, XIII.

⁵⁶⁶ *Cels*, IV, 63. Cf. p. 169, n. 164; p. 400. This is the doctrine of Plato (*Respublica*, 445c6), authorised by Aristotle (*Ethica Nicomachea*, 1106b29), who ascribes this to the Pythagoreans. Plato, *Respublica* 45c5–6: ἐν μὲν εἶδος τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἀπειρα δὲ τῆς κακίας. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1106b30–34: ἔτι τὸ μὲν ἀμαρτάνειν πολλαχῶς ἔστιν (τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπείρου, ὡς οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι εἵκαζον, τὸ δ' ἀγαθὸν τοῦ πεπερασμένου), τὸ δὲ κατορθοῦν μοναχῶς (διὸ καὶ τὸ μὲν ῥάδιον τὸ δὲ χαλεπὸν, ῥάδιον μὲν τὸ ἀποτυχεῖν τοῦ σκοποῦ, χαλεπὸν δὲ τὸ ἐπιτυχεῖν). Philo upheld the idea in *Legum Allegoriarum libri i–iii*, Book 1, section 100: πρῶτον μὲν σπάνιον ἔστι τάγαθόν, τὸ δὲ κακὸν πολύχουν· διὰ τοῦτο σοφὸν μὲν εὐρεῖν ἕνα μόνον ἔργον, φαύλων δὲ πλῆθος ἀναρίθμητον. Origen had read this work and mentions this by name: τῶν μὲν πρὸ ἡμῶν ποιήσας τις νόμων ἱερῶν ἀλληγορίας. *commMatt*, 17, 17. Cf. p. 400 and n. 106.

⁵⁶⁷ Christian theologians upheld the Platonic expression, 'becoming like god, as far as possible' (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, *Theaetetus*, 176b1–2). Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 2.19.100.3; 2.22.133.3. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 12.29.15. Hippolytus,

one (since creaturality is an essential characteristic of them), they are deified by divine grace. This entails that the essential elements of the make-up of the world, that is, space and time, will come to an end. Since corporeal nature is a demonstration of the reality of space, termination of existence of corporeal nature is due to the termination of existence of space proper.

Origen holds a conception of corporeality eventually dissolved into non-being, on account of divine nature proper excluding corporeality. He avers that 'in God' there are 'objects of contemplation . . . which no nature which is in a body is able to comprehend if it first does not get rid of *any body* (μὴ πρότερον ἀπαλλαγείσα παντὸς σώματος)'.⁵⁶⁸ This illustrates creation getting into the divine reality. 'Liberation' of the entire creation,⁵⁶⁹ marks corporeality reaching an end of existence. There is also reference to the belief that in Christ there are 'objects of contemplation' (θεωρήματα) which can be comprehended by him only.⁵⁷⁰ It is an eschatological hope that these objects of contemplation will be comprehended once the ultimate end come to pass:

For I am persuaded that God is reserving and retaining in Himself wonders which are far greater than those seen by sun, moon, and the choir of stars, and even by the holy angels whom God made 'spirit' and 'flame of fire',⁵⁷¹ 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.⁵⁷²

This is one of the points where the perspectives of corporeal nature are related to the final abolition of evil and the subsequent ultimate end. In like manner the notion is affirmed at another point:

And I think that it is they who with a great desire to come to union with God (πρὸς τὸ κοινωνῆσαι τῷ Θεῷ) withdraw and separate their soul not only from the

Refutatio Omnium Haeresium (Philosophumena), 1.19.17. Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 1.2. Didymus the Blind, *In Genesim*, Cod. p. 145. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Oratione Dominica Orationes v*, p. 240. Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, 11.9; 12.21. John of Damascus, *Orationes de Imaginibus Tres*, 3.33; *Dialectica sive Capita Philosophica*, (recensio fusior) 66; *Fragmenta Philosophica*, section 8. So did Philo, *De Fuga et Inventione*, 63. The expression does not appear in Origen's extant writings, even though the pertinent analysis in *Theaetetus* suits his doctrine of total abolition of evil. (Only two points are remotely reminiscent of Plato: *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.321.33–34; *selPs*, 8, PG.12.1185.15–16). Stobaeus says that 'becoming like god' is an 'end', adding that the idea was taken up by Socrates from Pythagoras (*Anthologium*, 2.7.3f). So says John Philoponus about this perfection being an 'end': *In Aristotelis Meteorologicorum Librum Primum Commentarium*, v. 14.1, p. 1: τελειοῦται ἕκαστον τὸ ἑαυτοῦ τέλος ἀπολαμβάνον. *De Opificio Mundi*, p. 242.

⁵⁶⁸ *exhMar*, XIII. An implicit reference to 'conceptions' of the Son pertaining only to Christ himself and to no one else (ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐδενὶ), *commJohn*, 2, XVII, XVIII. s. *COT*, chapter 2, pp. 61–2.

⁵⁶⁹ Quoting Rom. 8, 21. *loc. cit.*

⁵⁷⁰ *commJohn*, 2, XVII, XVIII.

⁵⁷¹ Psalm 103, 4.

⁵⁷² Rom. 8, 21. *exhMar*, XIII.

earthly body but also from *any body* (οὐ μόνον ἀπὸ τοῦ γήινου σώματος ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς σώματος) that love God with all their soul.⁵⁷³

The expression ‘any body’ (παντὸς σώματος) is of course a figure of speech, still behind the metaphor employed in the particular mood of *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, the conviction of the final abolition of corporeality is present. For the notion of ‘body’ at the time of resurrection has only one import: the resurrection of the ‘body’ of Christ, and it is through the expression παντὸς σώματος that the notion recurs.⁵⁷⁴ By the same token, he argues for the incognoscibility of God: He ‘shows Himself to those to whom He judges right to appear, so far as it is possible for God to be known to man and for human soul *which is still in a body* (ἀνθρώπου δὲ ψυχὴ ἔτι οὔσα ἐν σώματι) to know God.’⁵⁷⁵ Even the creatures of the superior planes of being do not ‘see’ God, ‘not because of their incapacity, but due to God’s incorporeality’; for ‘mind’ which is bound with time and corporeality cannot see God, who is invisible from the point of view of ‘material life’. It is then impossible to see God because mind is fatally involved with material life.⁵⁷⁶

Mind is amalgamated with matter due to this having been *created*, that is, on account of its creaturliness. This is a remarkable point of contrast between Origen and Platonism. The consequence of the Fall is not the *change* of existential status of any pre-existing incorporeal world: it is *creation* of individual, distinct and diversified hypostases, which were not made so in the beginning.⁵⁷⁷ Thus the fundamental cause of not ‘seeing’ God is not ‘corporeality’ proper; it is the fact that cognizant animals have been *created* as individual personal hypostases standing far and beyond God on ontological grounds. To exist in the actual creation, *of necessity* entails both to be in time and to be corporeal under any circumstances and in any of the existential statuses comprising this reality. Certainly ‘material life’ is a ‘fallen’ state,⁵⁷⁸ yet this notion is irrelevant to the Platonic tenets. For this is not a fallen state of pre-existing personal incorporeal individuals. The temporal and corporeal beings were created *as individuals* right upon the Fall, which marks the beginning of the spatio—temporal reality. They did not exist as *individuals* upon the initial act of creation.⁵⁷⁹ This is why ‘multitude of number’ (πλῆθος ἀριθμοῦ), ‘schism’ (σχίσμα), ‘division’ (διαίρεσις) and ‘disagreement’

⁵⁷³ *exhMar*, III. The same in *op. cit.*, XIII.

⁵⁷⁴ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV; XLIII; *commEph*, section 17. Cf. *exhMar*, XIII.

⁵⁷⁵ *Cels*, VII, 42. Italics mine. Cf. chapter 5, note 127.

⁵⁷⁶ *frJohn*, XIII.

⁵⁷⁷ What was created ‘in the beginning’ was ‘male’ and ‘female’ nature, not ‘man’ and ‘woman’. Cf. *COT*, pp. 41f. Gregory of Nyssa pp. 177, 181, 185, 189, 205. *De Opificio Hominis*.

⁵⁷⁸ *frJohn*, XIII.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. *COT*, pp. 41–44; 47–49; 60–61.

(διαφωνία) are regarded as ‘signs of wickedness’.⁵⁸⁰ In short, actual creation is marked by the notion of ‘otherness’ prevailing in the *modus operandi* of history.

What Origen actually envisages is the ‘hope’ to return to God, the ‘realization’ of the final end, which has been already exemplified and prefigured in the person of Jesus Christ, urging all rational nature to live in anticipation of this. This is why he quotes scriptural passages such as, ‘When shall I arrive and see the face of God?’⁵⁸¹ Also, ‘I shall pass through in the place of the wonderful tabernacle which is located as far as the house of God (ἕως τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ), with a voice of rejoicing and of confession of a festal sound.’⁵⁸² Origen quotes scriptural passages that fit most his account of eternal life and eventual end. His language is that of the portion in Psalm 41, 5, which refers to ‘arrival’ (*viz.* reaching the final point of a destination) and ‘seeing the face of God’. On the other hand, the same portion is deemed suitable to express eternal life as a place where one does not ‘arrive’, but ‘passes through’. The implication is that this place is not a final destination, but a temporary residence. This place is located ‘as far as the house of God’ (ἕως τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Θεοῦ), still this is not *in* the house of God.⁵⁸³

In *selPs*, ‘corporeal substance’ is posited as destined to be definitely ‘annihilated’: the saying about ‘the heavens’ destined ‘to perish’, whereas God ‘endures’,⁵⁸⁴ is taken to indicate the eventual abolition of ‘corporeal essence’ (οἱ δὲ ἀπολλύμενοι οὐρανοὶ τῆς σωματικῆς οὐσίας) as distinct from ‘incorporeal nature’ (νοερᾶς φύσεως) which will never be abolished.⁵⁸⁵

Incorporeality (a characteristic exclusive to divinity) exists beyond time, whereas corporeal nature exists only as long as time exists. This is why ‘incorporeal nature’ is ‘the throne of Christ’.⁵⁸⁶ In *Cels* he speaks of ‘ways that have been appointed for the alterations of bodies, which [bodies] comprise the *world*, as long as it exists.’⁵⁸⁷ Once again, the world is treated as a material reality destined to exist for only a definite period of time. The same conception is granted further, in a reference to ‘the day after the making of the world which is the

⁵⁸⁰ *selGen* (comm. on Gen. 11, 7), PG.12.112.10; also *commJohn*, 5, V. s. *infra*, p. 416. Cf. *COT*, chapter 3, p. 79.

⁵⁸¹ Psalm 41, 3. *exhMar*, III.

⁵⁸² Psalm 41, 5. *loc. cit.*

⁵⁸³ Psalm 41, 5. *loc. cit.*

⁵⁸⁴ Psalm 101, 26–27. PG.12.1240.51.

⁵⁸⁵ *selPs*, 18, PG.12.1240.51. This is consonant with the view of Origen’s *pace* Matt. 24, 35; Mark, 13, 31; Luke, 21, 33; (Cf. 2 Peter, 3, 10), as well as 1 Cor. 7, 31. Cf. *Cels*, V, 22; *frJohn*, LVI; CXXVIII; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 123; *commMatt*, 13, 1; 16, 10; *Fragmenta in Evangelium Matthaei*, pp. 4, 5; *frPs*, 74, 4; 118, 89; *selPs*, 118, PG.12.1604.38; *expProv*, 6, PG.17.177.35; *Princ* (Lat.) III.5.1; IV.3.10.

⁵⁸⁶ *selPs*, 9, PG.12.1188.34.

⁵⁸⁷ *Cels*, IV, 57; italics are mine highlighting the finiteness of space / time. It is worth-comparing this passage with Origen’s definition of ‘aeon’ (*selPs*, 5, PG.12.1172.46–49. s. chapter 6, p. 188), which defines ‘aeon’ as a *natural* reality.

object of his activity *as long as* the world exists, the day of the Sabbath and the recess of God.⁵⁸⁸ Quite expressive is also the reference to a certain fixed time when the world will be brought to the end, which it must necessarily have since it had a beginning.⁵⁸⁹

The very affirmation that the world will finally come to an end actually implies that corporeal nature itself will come to an end. For there is a firm correspondence between the notions of 'corporeality' and 'world': each of them cannot make sense without the implication of the other.

For if the moon is abolished, time is abolished, too. And once time is abolished, the perceptible world will come to an end.⁵⁹⁰

It is not only the implicit end of the world that is significant in this portion; it is also the definition of time as 'stretched out alongside with the structure of this world'.⁵⁹¹ The idea betokened here is that space and time exist in close relation to each other and they will come to an end *simultaneously*. Thus, in the passage above, one can discern this: in the first sentence, 'abolition of space' (expressed as 'moon') is stated as a *cause* of abolition of time. In the second sentence, 'abolition of time' is a *cause* of abolition of space (expressed as 'the perceptible world'). The succession of these two sentences denotes the notion of *concurrence* of either existence or non-existence of space and time; in fact it indicates the simultaneous existence, or non-existence, of space-time as *one* reality. In view of this, the following phrase of Justinian can be considered more effectively.

Now what man of intelligence will believe that the first and the second and the third day, and the evening and the morning existed without the sun and moon and stars?⁵⁹²

The sentence actually expresses Origen's view that the 'days' in Genesis do not express time; it indeed echoes his view that the existence of time proper is related to the existence of space proper. Besides, the portion seems to indicate a certain affinity between Origen's conception of time with that of Chrysippus, who related time to the heavenly bodies. The fundamental difference, however, lies in Origen's particular perceptions of what 'material' and 'temporal' is. Although time is certainly related to the heavenly bodies, this is understood to exist in a 'broader' world, not only in the perceptible one. This passage, nevertheless, is indicative of the conception of varied spaces on the one hand, and rational beings as denizens of these spaces, on the other. The reality of space-time will

⁵⁸⁸ *Cels*, VI, 61.

⁵⁸⁹ *Op. cit.* IV, 9.

⁵⁹⁰ *selPs*, 71, PG.12.1524.30.

⁵⁹¹ *COT*, pp. 210f.

⁵⁹² *FP*, p. 288: Fr. 29, Koetschau.

come to an end. This end will be the final one, regardless of whether there will be cognizant animals in the particular spaces, or not. So, although at the moment of the end human beings may not exist at all (since they may have attained to higher ranks of life), their space (that is, the three-dimensional Euclidean world) will still exist. It is only then that the perceptible world will be dissolved into nothing, together with the entire reality of space-time, of which this particular world is understood to be only a part. The existence of time proper is correlated with that of heavenly bodies in *deOr*, too:

And we have to consider if the words written of feasts or solemn assemblies that take place according to ‘days’ or ‘months’ or ‘seasons’ or ‘years’⁵⁹³ are to be referred to ages. For if ‘the law’ has ‘a shadow of the things to come’,⁵⁹⁴ it must needs be that the many Sabbaths are a ‘shadow’ of so many days and that the beginnings of months (τὰς νομηνιάς) come round in intervals of time (διὰ χρονικῶν διαστημάτων), and I know not under which moon accompanying which sun they [sc. the beginnings of months] are determined.⁵⁹⁵

This passage is indicative of Origen’s conception of time. He is not interested in relating heavenly bodies with the very existence of time as ‘extension’ (διαστημάτων) in itself. Rather, he regards the heavenly bodies as indicating the particular periods (days, months, years) of time, not establishing in themselves the very reality of time proper. According to this fundamental tenet, he regards the heavenly bodies as having been subjected to ‘vanity’: they carry out the task of indicating various periods of time and kairoi at which certain actions are taken by ‘angels’ who ‘read the book of God’ (the heaven), which indicates the opportune times. Thus, heavenly bodies are certainly associated with time; yet they do not establish the reality of time proper in themselves, *as heavenly bodies*: they simply *indicate* periods of it. They are allied to *time proper* only inasmuch as they are understood to indicate the very reality of *space*. In respect of this, Origen’s concept of time is au fond at variance with that of Chrysippus’. This is the basis on which Basil employed Origen’s conception and castigated the assertions of Eunomius about time proper.⁵⁹⁶

As a matter of fact, Origen advances a broader conception of the close relation of time to space. ‘Mind’ (νοῦς)⁵⁹⁷ is subject to time due this having been ‘created’ and will be subject to time as long as (ὅσον χρόνον) ‘material life’ (that is, corporeality) exists.⁵⁹⁸ The existence of *time proper* is then not essentially

⁵⁹³ Cf. Gal. 4, 10.

⁵⁹⁴ Heb. 10, 1.

⁵⁹⁵ *deOr*, XXVII, 14.

⁵⁹⁶ Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium*, 2.13, PG.29.596.

⁵⁹⁷ The term actually indicates consciousness, and therefore, the sense of personal identity as a diversified hypostasis.

⁵⁹⁸ *fr* John, XIII.

related to the existence of the heavenly bodies; it is related to the notion of being *actually* created (contrasted with being *providentially* created)⁵⁹⁹ regardless of rank of life. This is how the reality of time is held to pertain to the entire world, not only to the visible firmament.

In Origen the notions of ‘cyclicity’ and ‘vanity’ stand in close relation. This stems from considering the text of Paul in Rom. 8, 20–21, ‘The creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.’ Consequently ‘hope’ means that

the sun and moon and stars and the angels of God should fulfil an obedient service for the world; and it was for those souls which on account of their excessive spiritual defects required these grosser and more solid bodies and also for the sake of those others for whom this arrangement was necessary that the present visible world was instituted.⁶⁰⁰

The notion of ‘vanity’ is also related to that of ‘corporeality’. This is why ‘everything pertaining to corporeality is vanity’ (τὰ σωματικά πάντα ματαιότης ἐστίν).⁶⁰¹ ‘Bodies themselves are vanity and to carry out actions pertaining to body is vanity’ (ἵνα ματαιότης τὰ σώματα ᾗ καὶ τὸ ποιεῖν τὰ σωματικά).⁶⁰² He then is not particularly interested in the science of nature and refer to this only occasionally.⁶⁰³ In this context, ‘hope’ alludes to extinction of heavenly bodies, that is, to the end of the world:

Nevertheless, the entire creation cherishes a hope of liberation, a hope of being ‘delivered from the bondage of corruption’⁶⁰⁴ when the ‘children of God’, who had fallen and become scattered, will have been gathered into one,⁶⁰⁵ and when the others have fulfilled in this world the rest of their duties, which are known solely to God, the Artificer of all things.⁶⁰⁶

Corporeality coming to an end can be inferred by the idea of the world destined to an end, too. According to the fundamental existential characteristics of the world (that is, spatiality and temporality), ‘end’ of the world necessarily entails ‘end’ of corporeality, as well as of time. There can be no other sense in which the entire resurrected ‘body’ of Christ can be understood to come in union with the divine reality, which is radically transcendent to space and time.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. *COT*, canvassing Providential Creation and Actual one.

⁶⁰⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.4.

⁶⁰¹ *selPs*, 38, PG.12.1389.4, quoting Psalm 38, 6.

⁶⁰² *commJohn*, 1, XVII, quoting Rom. 8, 20.

⁶⁰³ s. *commJohn*, 1, XXV; 1, XXVI; *Cels*, IV, 74; IV, 99; *commMatt*, 10, 11.

⁶⁰⁴ Rom. 8, 21.

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. John, 6, 52.

⁶⁰⁶ *Princ* (Lat.), III.5.4.

To trace this doctrine in the Latin rendering of *Princ* is not difficult. However, since in that text the homonymous meanings of ‘end’ are not clarified, there is much confusion and obscurity surrounding this tenet. Rufinus apparently essayed to modify the content so that the treatise should become ‘orthodox’. But he tampered with it without awareness of the slight (yet substantial) nuances of this eschatology. On the other hand, there are the opponents: they are either people hostile to Origen himself, or people who lived centuries later and deplored what was presumed to be ‘Origenism’. In either case the fundamental, yet subtle, features of Origen’s eschatology eluded both his sympathizers and his detractors.

In *Princ* one can see the notions of ‘end’ mixed up and confounded, simply because Rufinus did not grasp this as a homonym. In the Second Book there is a discussion about bodily nature and the destination of individual beings. There is no need to discuss thoughtlessness, such as the term ‘soul’ applied to all cognizant animals, although Origen is always scrupulous in applying this term only to human beings. What is of importance is that this discussion actually refers to the ‘form’⁶⁰⁷ of the resurrected bodies. Behind the obfuscated Latin rendering, one could discern Origen himself stating that to speak of a ‘soul’ being ‘clothed’ with a body is only a ‘metaphor’.⁶⁰⁸ There is also the anti-Platonic tenet that individual persons live *only* in bodies: cognizant beings are understood to constitute entities living a corporeal life, which leaves no room for any notion of ‘intelligible world’.

Paragraph 3 of this part of *Princ* should be understood in the light of these premises. The argument that ‘in the end’ corporeality will not ‘return to non-existence’ pertains the ‘end’ of an ‘aeon’ only. The discussion is about those who are ‘saved’ and transferred to ‘immortality’.⁶⁰⁹ A comparison with the works in Greek shows that the discussion is about eternal life:

It will be seen to be a necessity that, if bodily nature were to be destroyed, it must be restored and created a second time. For it is apparently possible that rational creatures, which are never deprived of the power of free will, may once again become subject to certain movements. This power is granted them by God lest, if they held their position for ever irremovably, they might forget that *they had been placed in the final state of blessedness by the grace of God and not by their own goodness*. These movements would again undoubtedly be followed by a *variety and diversity of bodies, out of which a world is always composed*; for it would never exist, except as a result of variety and diversity, and this *can in no way be produced apart from bodily matter*.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁷ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), II.3.2.

⁶⁰⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁰⁹ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), II.3.3.

⁶¹⁰ *Loc. cit.* italics mine.

Origen confirms a staunch opposition to Platonism. The 'final state of blessedness' is eternal life itself. Cognizant beings attain to this by the grace of God, since their 'will is not sufficient in order to attain to the end'.⁶¹¹ It is reiterated that the state of eternal life is a corporeal as well as a reversible one. To attain to eternal life does not entail living an incorporeal life. There is no notion of 'a life apart from the body' and eternal life is *in* the 'world', which 'is always composed' of 'a variety and diversity of bodies'.⁶¹²

In order that no doubt should remain as which 'end' Origen refers to at this point (which is the end of an aeon), one should see the logical sequence of the text. This passage is the conclusion of paragraph 3. Right after this, paragraph 4 starts: the subject discussed in that section is the tenet that the consecutive worlds are not 'similar to each other and in all respects alike'. One can see then what the discussion in previous paragraph 3 is actually about. No matter what the interventions of Rufinus in the text, the logical congruity and coherence of the exposition is still there and no interpolation or tampering with the text can put it out. The entire chapter is about 'the beginning of the world and its causes'.⁶¹³ He makes an introduction to what he is going to discuss in this chapter. Paragraph 1 is set out thus: 'It remains to inquire next, whether there was another world before the one which now exists'.⁶¹⁴ Then (§2) he portrays the teleological course of the present world and the meaning of resurrection as a hope to be realized at the end of this aeon for those who deserve it. Then (§3) he insists that those who will be saved will live in bodies, too. Next (§4) he rejects the doctrine of recurrence of identical worlds. It is only at the end of this chapter (§7) that there is reference to the 'end and perfection of all things'.⁶¹⁵ In the course of this exposition (§6) the author did not fail to explicate that 'it is certainly foreign to our mode of reasoning to speak of an incorporeal world that exists only in the mind's fancy'; and, as he himself points out, this comment constitutes his ban on the notion of noetic objects existing in themselves, that is, 'the existence of certain imaginary forms which the Greeks call "ideas"'.⁶¹⁶

Hence not only the text itself, but also the logical sequence of the exposition demonstrate that the 'end' which he refers to is the end of an aeon—not the perfection of all; least of all is this the ultimate end.

One could see therefore how unfortunately Koetschau incorporated improbabilities in that infelicitous cluster of passages purporting to reconstruct the *Princ.* Justinian refers to a time when 'what has been subjected to Christ shall

⁶¹¹ *Op. cit.* (Gr. & Lat.), III.1.19. Cf. *exhMar*, V.

⁶¹² *Op. cit.* (Lat.), II.3.3.

⁶¹³ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), II.3.1.

⁶¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹⁵ *Princ.*, II.3.2–7.

⁶¹⁶ *Op. cit.* II.3.6.

in the end be subjected also to God' and 'then all will lay aside their bodies'.⁶¹⁷ It is obvious that Koetschau did not grasp what the discussion in that section is about. He presumed this passage to be relevant to ideas he *thought* they were expounded there. On the other hand, Justinian, too, did not see the point of Origen's theory; for this miscomprehension continues thus: 'and I think that there will then be a dissolution of bodily nature into non-existence, to come into existence a second time if rational beings should again fall.'⁶¹⁸

It is only the notion of bodily nature being eventually terminated that echoes Origen's genuine tenet at this point. All in all, however, this is only a faint and distorted echo of his real thought. No doubt Justinian only accidentally included a correct point of the entire doctrine, since he had entirely miscomprehended what the Alexandrian really held. I have argued that Origen holds no notion of corporeality coming into existence 'for a second time'; neither does he espouse the notion of timeless causality,⁶¹⁹ which Justinian erroneously attributed to him. Beyond that, Justinian did this in the context of his false impression that Origen held some notion of a beginningless world of incorporeal 'minds'. This is what he actually meant when he spoke of 'rational beings' which would 'fall again'. Likewise, he attributed this opinion to Origen in other passages of the same work of his.⁶²⁰ When, therefore, he spoke of 'end' and 'dissolution of bodily nature', he echoed Origen's tenet only accidentally. For obviously Justinian did not regard this 'end' as *the ultimate and definitive* end of the world. He rather presumed an intermittent transformation of a beginningless and endless world, from a corporeal to an incorporeal form, supposing this 'end' of corporeality as a 'temporary' one. He took it that corporeal nature may well come into existence over and again according to an imaginary 'causality' established in an 'eternal', and essentially incorporeal, world. In view of my previous analyses, it would be superfluous to discuss any further how alien and unfair these allegations of Justinian's are to Origen's real theology.

For similar reasons (that is, failure to grasp the divers conceptions of 'end') Jerome also ascribed to Origen false opinions, such as this: 'he who is perfectly subjected to Christ must be understood to be without a body, and all are to be subjected to Christ, then we too shall exist without bodies, when we have become perfectly subjected to him.' What Jerome did not grasp is that subjection to Christ is a *corporeal* state of historical things, which is not the reality of the ultimate end. Moreover, Origen could in no case have used the expression 'to live without bodies'. For to him *life* of creatures is attached inseparably and

⁶¹⁷ *FP*, p. 86: Fr. 19, Koetschau.

⁶¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹⁹ *COT*, pp. 355f.

⁶²⁰ Cf. Fr. 10, in *FP*, p. 43; Fr. 40, in *FP*, p. 325.

indissolubly to corporeality.⁶²¹ Hence the very expression 'to *live* without bodies' is in itself a self-defeating one, in the same way that it could be absurd to speak of any 'incorporeal world'.

In a like manner, Jerome claims that to Origen 'all things have lived without bodies, then bodily existence will be swallowed up, and that which was once created out of nothing will be resolved into nothing. And a time will come when its use will once again be necessary.'⁶²²

The last point is similar to Justinian's allegations as discussed above. What is of interest is that Jerome, in a way, admits that Origen did not hold any notion of 'eternity' of the world or, at least any notion of beginninglessness, which is diametrical to Justinian's allegations. The expression 'out of nothing . . . into nothing', however, is far too simplistic and distorts Origen's doctrine. This is in fact one more garbled medley of passages, which combine authentic dicta with biased interpretations. What is 'out of nothing . . . into nothing' is the material world regarded as *καταβολή*, that is, as a condition of fall. Origen's perception of creation, however, actually refers to being 'out of God . . . into God'. The first part of this notion alludes to the 'Fall', whereas the second points to the 'resurrection'. Since he regarded them both as 'mysteries' and secret truths difficult to speculate, he eschewed any elaboration on them. It is then not surprising that this is precisely the point, which many of his detractors selected in order to misrender his genuine theology.

In the light of this discussion, we can now consider certain allegations of Jerome's about Origen's eschatological ideas, particularly those about corporeal nature.

And further, when the same apostle says that 'the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the Son's of God',⁶²³ we understand it in such a way as to say that the first creation of rational creatures was also an incorporeal one, which was not meant to be in bondage to corruption for the reason that it was not clothed with bodies; for wherever bodies are, corruption follows immediately. But it will afterwards be 'delivered from the bondage of corruption', when it has received the glory of the Son of God and when 'God shall be all in all'.⁶²⁴ We are also led to believe that the end of all things will be incorporeal by the statement of our Saviour, in which he says, 'That as I and thou are one, so they also may be one in us'.⁶²⁵ For we ought to know what God is and what the Saviour will be in the end, and how the likeness of the Father and the Son has been promised to the saints, so that as the Father and the Son are one in themselves, so, too, the saints may be one in them. For we must either suppose that the God of the universe is clothed with a body and enveloped with

⁶²¹ Cf. *COT*, pp. 71, 87, 91, 93, 95–96; 99; 113f.

⁶²² *epAv*, 5, *apud FP*, p. 84, n. 3.

⁶²³ *Rom.*, 8, 21.

⁶²⁴ Cf. *Rom.* 8, 21 & 1 *Cor.* 15, 28.

⁶²⁵ *John*, 17, 21.

some sort of matter in the same way as we are with flesh, in order that the likeness of God's life may in the end be brought to the level of the saints; or, if this view is unseemly, as it most certainly is to those who desire even in the smallest degree to dwell on the majesty of God and to apprehend the glory of his unbegotten and all-surpassing nature, then we are compelled to accept one of two alternatives and either despair of ever attaining the likeness of God if we are destined always to have bodies, or else, if there is promised to us a blessedness of the same life that God has, then we must live in the same condition in which God lives.⁶²⁶

A similar assertion is adduced by Justinian and reads thus:

Now when God is said to become 'all in all',⁶²⁷ just as we cannot include evil, when God becomes all in all, nor irrational animals, lest God should come to be in evil and in irrational animals; nor lifeless things, lest God, when becomes all, should even come to be in them, so neither can we include bodies, which in their own nature are lifeless.⁶²⁸

To trace Origen's real thought in this passage (which the translator G. Butterworth regarded as 'filling' the 'gaps left by Rufinus') is not an easy task. For at this point one is faced with the phenomenon always present in false expositions of this theology: there are some seeds of uncorrupted opinions mingled with fallacious allegations; or, there are tenets set forth with some crucial facets of them missing, so that they in effect are half-truths. These half-truths constitute the worst distortion of Origen's actual doctrine.

First though what we can make of this passage is Origen's opinion that corporeality will come to an end: he refers to a state of a sheer non-existence of the world, not only in the past, but also in the future. In *Princ* the author is represented to wonder 'if there will ever be a time when there will be no world anywhere, or if there ever was a time when there was any world at all',⁶²⁹ also, there is reference to a certain time 'when the universe reaches its perfect end'. At that point he comments on the scriptural passages, 'I will that, where I am, these also may be there with me',⁶³⁰ and 'as I and you are one, that they also may be one in us',⁶³¹ and regards these sayings as referring to a reality in which 'all things are no longer in an age, but "God is all in all"'.⁶³²

This portion is not extant in Greek; but we have no reason not to accept that the term 'age' (saeculum) is Rufinus's rendering of the term 'aeon'. Therefore, the notion of not to live in an 'age' betokens the notion of not to live in the

⁶²⁶ Jerome, *epAv*, 9a, *apud FP*, p. 246, n. 4.

⁶²⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

⁶²⁸ Fr. 27 in *FP*, p. 247. At the relevant point of the Latin translation of Rufinus, the expression 'so neither can we include bodies, which in their own nature are lifeless' does not exist.

⁶²⁹ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.1.

⁶³⁰ John, 17, 24.

⁶³¹ John, 17, 21.

⁶³² 1 Cor. 15, 28. *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.5.

‘world’, that is, in a spatio-temporal reality. On the other hand, it is obvious that Rufinus strove not to explicate Origen’s idea that corporeality will *enfin* come to an end. Consequently, he concocted an obscure rendering of the relevant points, with ambiguities studiously left to surround phrases such as this:

So far, then, we have discussed the question of our bodily nature and of the spiritual body. We leave it to the reader’s judgement to choose which of the two opinions he decides to be the better.⁶³³

He refers to the ‘end of all things’,⁶³⁴ with Origen represented to propose three different possibilities of what the state of things in that ‘end’ will be:

Each of our readers must judge for himself, with all care and diligence, whether one of them may be approved and adopted.⁶³⁵

Thus and so, he goes on with illustrating three alternatives for ‘end’ (‘... either ... or ... or else ...’). In that text the conceptions of the eschatological perfection of all rational hypostases and that of the eventual end have been mingled together, and therefore confounded. For the former ‘end’ is one in which corporeal nature still exists, whereas the latter (the ultimate end) marks the end of corporeality. This failure to grasp the varied notions of end, coupled with Rufinus’s own apprehension about what was regarded as ‘orthodoxy’, led the translator rather than the real author not to elaborate on these and leave the reader to ‘judge for himself’.⁶³⁶ The moot questions arising here, however, are not of the kind introduced by Origen himself as tentative theological conjectures.

From the same work, however, one might draw the conclusion that corporeality will ultimately cease to exist. Origen holds that ‘the end and the consummation of all things should consist of a return to this beginning’,⁶³⁷ in accordance with his anticipation of restoration and rehabilitation, when the ‘end’ will be like the ‘beginning’. This stands side by side with statements such as ‘bodily nature was created out of nothing after a space of time and brought into being from non-existence’;⁶³⁸ and ‘bodily nature ... did not exist before it was made’.⁶³⁹ In the same work there are references to the ‘end, which is renewed after the pattern of the origin and the issue of things made to resemble their beginning’.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore:

⁶³³ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.9. It is not surprising then that P. Plass asserts, “Origen’s eschatology is notoriously obscure” (*op. cit.* p. 14). Once he tried to study this eschatology using *Princ* as his main source, this conclusion was inevitable.

⁶³⁴ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.7.

⁶³⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁶³⁶ Cf. similar allegations by Jerome: *epAv*, 5, 6, *apud FP*, p. 92, n. 7.

⁶³⁷ *Princ*, III.6.8.

⁶³⁸ *Op. cit.* II.2.1. The expression ‘after a space of time’ is just an inept rendering by Rufinus.

⁶³⁹ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), II.3.2.

⁶⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), III.6.3.

But some think that this perfection and blessedness of rational natures can only remain in the condition which we have described above, that is, the condition in which all things possess God and God is all things to them, if they are in no way impeded by union with bodily nature. Otherwise, if there were any intermingling of a material substance, they consider that the glory of the highest blessedness would be prevented. On this subject the arguments that may be raised have been fully dealt with and discussed by us in a previous chapter.⁶⁴¹

There should be no doubt that the last phrase was interpolated by Rufinus, who did not wish to deal with the question of corporeality any further. The 'previous chapter', which he refers to, is the passage in Book II, chapter 3, §§2, 3. As I have just showed, however, the real question at that point is corporeal nature at the end of *a certain* aeon. This is irrelevant to the question of the eventual destiny of corporeality proper at the ultimate end.

It is therefore plain that Rufinus did not grasp the distinct denotations of 'end'. He just mentioned what 'some think . . .', without stating that the opinion of these 'some' is actually the opinion of Origen himself expounded at that very point of *Princ.* This is how, I think, Rufinus modified the passage, in his effort to avoid further discussion of this question, which he evidently regarded as a precarious one.

Regarding the passage of Paul in Rom. 8, 20–21, according to which the entire creation cherishes a hope of liberation, a hope of being 'delivered from the bondage of corruption', along with the saying, 'the fashion of this world passes away',⁶⁴² Origen develops the following rationale, in order to bolster up his conviction that these sayings point to both a 'beginning' and an 'end' of the world:

If the creation was subjected to vanity by reason of a certain hope, it was certainly so subjected from a cause, and what proceeds from a cause must necessarily have a beginning; since apart from some beginning the creation could not have been subjected to vanity, nor could it hope to be 'delivered from the bondage of corruption' if it had never begun to be a servant to corruption'; . . . [therefore] the world had both a beginning and is expecting an end.⁶⁴³

By the same token, it is argued that when Christ says that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away', 'he shows that this [world] is corruptible and destined to come to an end.'⁶⁴⁴ This is explicated right in the Preface of *Princ.*

The Church teaching also includes the doctrine that this world was made and began to exist at a definite time and that by reason of its corruptible nature it must suffer

⁶⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁴² 1 Cor. 7, 31.

⁶⁴³ *Princ.* (Lat.), III.5.1; italics mine.

⁶⁴⁴ Matt. 24, 35; Mark, 13, 31; Luke, 21, 33; Cf. 2 Peter, 3, 10. A recurrent motif in Origen. Cf. pp. 115, 306, 329.

dissolution. But what existed before this world, or what will exist after it, has not yet been made known openly to the many, for no clear statement on the point is set forth in the Church teaching.⁶⁴⁵

In the light of the works in Greek, the relevant references in *Princ* about the world expecting an 'end' can be regarded as by and large expressing Origen's authentic thought. With respect to the passage in Genesis 49, 1, 'Gather to me, ye sons of Jacob, that I may tell you what shall be in the last days', and the expression 'after the last days', he remarks: "If then there are 'last days' or a time 'after the last days', it follows of necessity that the days which had a beginning also come to an end."⁶⁴⁶ He further appeals to other scriptural passages in order to conclude that the world 'is corruptible and destined to come to an end'.⁶⁴⁷ Therefore, of Jerome's claims about Origen, only his testimony that corporeality will finally come to an end expresses the latter's genuine thought.

In *Dial* there is a preliminary statement of more than two pages long, before he spells out a few words about his anthropology. In these preliminary remarks he repeatedly expresses his 'anguish' intending to speak of these 'highly delicate notions',⁶⁴⁸ since this is a 'mystical'⁶⁴⁹ truth. Finally, after a long preface (expressing his anguish because of the slippery ground on which he was about to walk) he speaks of 'man' being in fact 'two men', of which one is 'incorporeal' and was 'initially' made. The notion echoes Paul⁶⁵⁰ and is also found in the Latin text of his *Homilies on Luke*, where he makes the distinction between the 'outer man' and the 'inner man',⁶⁵¹ as well as in the Prologue of his Commentary on the Song of Songs.⁶⁵²

If indeed Origen urged what Jerome attributed to him, he could simply and purely expound his doctrine without long preambles and expressions of 'anguish' in consideration of what he was going to talk about. Certainly neither Plato nor Plotinus, nor anyone else who upheld the Platonic assertions, had any difficulty in enunciating their tenets simply and manifestly; nor did they feel any 'anguish' intending to spell out their anthropology. Origen, however feels so, precisely because he is far from espousing any simplistic theory of some 'incorporeal world' existing before the corporeal one: he holds a doctrine of his own, yet he regards this as a mystical truth, which needs 'listeners who have a mind

⁶⁴⁵ *Princ*, Pref. 7. The conception is Origen's, yet expressions such as "this world . . . began to exist at a definite time" are far from his sophisticated language.

⁶⁴⁶ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), III.5.1.

⁶⁴⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁴⁸ *Dial*, 12: Οἱ λόγοι λεπτότεροί εἰσιν . . . s. *supra*, citations from *Homilies on Luke*, 23.5. Cf. *Homilies on Numbers*, 13.7.

⁶⁴⁹ *Dial*, 14: . . . καὶ ἤλθομεν ἐπὶ λόγον μυστικόν.

⁶⁵⁰ 2 Cor. 4, 16; Rom. 7, 22; Eph. 3, 16.

⁶⁵¹ *Homilies on Luke*, Fr. 196.

⁶⁵² *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, Prologue: "there are two men in everyone of us". Also, once again, *loc. cit.*: "there are two men in everyone of us".

able to apprehend the truth plainly'.⁶⁵³ Certainly Jerome was not one of them, to say the least. For he was not able to comprehend that Origen refers not to any incorporeal world, but to God's wisdom herself. He did not grasp that the end of things will be incorporeal, not because there will be any 'change' of the form in which the world exists, but because the entire resurrected 'body' of Christ will 'enter' into the divine being, thus restored to its original status as creatures which 'embroider' the body of Wisdom.⁶⁵⁴ This 'body' will be (as it was in the beginning) the body of the Wisdom of God, not a 'world'. Creatures will continue to be *creatures* on account of their creaturliness, yet they will be the originally created 'holy stones', not any kind of incorporeal personal spirits. It is not the case of creatures *per impossibile* changing ontological status (which is *creaturliness*); rather, it is the case of a *metamorphosis* of nature, which overcomes the state of fall and becomes divine again.

This is the sense in which the 'end' is the same as the 'beginning'.⁶⁵⁵ Assertions such as 'the beginning or the end of all things could not be comprehended by anyone except our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit'⁶⁵⁶ should be understood in the light of this conception of the end. In view of Origen speaking of the 'beginning *or* the end', one can understand what he means by affirming the termination of existence of corporeal nature. This eschatological reality is adumbrated through expressions such as this: at the 'end of things... God is said not only to be in all things, but even to be all things' and 'the mind will no longer be conscious of anything besides or other than God'.⁶⁵⁷ No matter how unwary Rufinus may have been, the Alexandrian's uncorrupted doctrine can be read behind these statements.

What then he means by 'restoration' is return to that original state. His analysis of the term 'to restore' (ἀποκαθιστῶ)⁶⁵⁸ in *homJer* makes reference to a certain 'mystery' denoted by the saying in Jeremiah, 15, 19, 'Therefore thus said the Lord; If you return I will restore you (διὰ τοῦτο τάδε λέγει Κύριος· ἐὰν ἐπιστρέψῃς, καὶ ἀποκαταστήσω σε)'.⁶⁵⁹ This is the 'mystery' of the final resurrection and return to God, which is return to the state where the sole reality is the divine one: a reality where 'there will no longer be any contraposition between good and evil, since evil nowhere exists; for God, whom evil can never approach, is then all things'.⁶⁶⁰ This restoration is described as the 'day

⁶⁵³ *Dial.* 12: δεόμεθα ἀκροατῶν ἰσχνὴν διάνοιαν ἔχόντων.

⁶⁵⁴ A discussion of this, in *COT*, chapter 2, pp. 48–49, 54.

⁶⁵⁵ *Princ.* I.6.2; II.1.3; III.5.4. III.6.3; III.6.8. Significantly though, they all are extant in Latin.

⁶⁵⁶ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), IV.3.14.

⁶⁵⁷ *Op. cit.* (Lat.), III.6.3.

⁶⁵⁸ *homJer*, 14, 18.

⁶⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁶⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.3.

of God',⁶⁶¹ on which the 'blessedness' will have been reached. By the same designation, the 'day of God' stands in no temporal distance from the eschatological 'Sabbath' of those who will attain to this reality, the day after the making of the world, which is the object of his activity as long as the world exists, the day of the Sabbath and the cessation of God, in which those who have done all their works in the six days will feast together with God.⁶⁶² This end marks the return to the state 'before' the actual creation of the world. In that reality, Christ 'was not in need of uprooting words when he was in the Father';⁶⁶³ he was not in need of words which demolish and those which destroy what is inferior. For there was nothing which should be destroyed, there was nothing which deserved to be uprooted.⁶⁶⁴

To 'enter into' the divine reality does not allude to all becoming 'sons' of God, but to all becoming *Son* of God. For this will be the same state as before the Fall. This distinction drawn between 'sons' and 'Son' is indicative of the reality in which there is no world any more. As already mentioned, the concept of Fall is held to be a 'mystical' doctrine. Since the 'end' is understood as a return to the primeval state, 'resurrection' is also regarded as a 'mystery great and difficult to contemplate'⁶⁶⁵ and as a doctrine comprehended only by 'the wise'.⁶⁶⁶ Nevertheless, there are some substantial indications of how this 'end' is understood.

In *commJohn* it is stated that the 'end' is 'the so-called restoration' (τῇ λεγομένῃ ἀποκαταστάσει), because at that time there will be no enemy left, if it is true that 'he must reign, until he has put all enemies a footstool under his feet' and 'the last enemy will be destroyed, namely death'.⁶⁶⁷ For then there will be one single action by those who reached near (πρὸς) to God... so that they *all become*... exactly *Son* (υἱὸς), as now only the Son knows the Father.' This will come to pass 'when they become one as the Son and the Father are one' (ἀλλ' ὅταν γένωνται ἓν ὡς <ὁ> υἱὸς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν εἰσίν).⁶⁶⁸

This portion provides the light illuminating certain critical averments. When he speaks of the Son, stating that 'it is only the Son who knows him, as he is comprehended by the Father and he comprehends the Father',⁶⁶⁹ he contrasts

⁶⁶¹ *homJer*, 17, 6; *Cels*, VI, 61. Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 8. Also, *apud* Rom. 2, 5, Cf. *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 2, section 5.

⁶⁶² *Cels*, VI, 61. Cf. Philo, *De Vita Mosis*, 2.12. Clement, *Stromateis*, 6.16.

⁶⁶³ Cf. John, 14, 10.

⁶⁶⁴ *homJer*, 1, 9.

⁶⁶⁵ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI. Partially using the phraseology of Eph. 5, 32 and 1 Tim. 3, 16.

⁶⁶⁶ *Cels*, IV, 30.

⁶⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 15, 25.

⁶⁶⁸ *commJohn*, 1, XVI. Cf. *frPs*, 140, 7: οἱ γὰρ ἐν ἀρετῇ ὄντες εἰς εἰσιν τῷ Κυρίῳ. Didymus conveyed the notion faithfully: *Commentarii in Psalmos 29-34*, Cod. p. 179: καὶ πέρατος τεύζεται, ὅταν γένηται, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἓν εἰσίν, οὕτω πάντα τὰ λογικά.

⁶⁶⁹ *frJohn*, XIII.

this knowledge from that of creatures, since they all are spatio—temporal beings. This is why he says that ‘mind’ cannot see God now, because mind is ‘created’ and therefore ‘subject to time and corporeality’.⁶⁷⁰

On the other hand, he asserts that ‘at the *end of things* (ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τέλει τῶν πραγμάτων) and at the ‘*restoration* (ἀποκαταστάσεως) of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began’,⁶⁷¹ we shall see him not as we do now, when he does not appear as he actually is, but as it is befitting at that state for him to be seen, indeed as he actually is.’⁶⁷² Full knowledge is to be attained at the eschatological reality and the portion of 1 Cor. 13, 9–12 is interpreted in this way, making up a substantial facet of this theology.⁶⁷³ This tenet fits neatly into this framework and the notion of ‘eternal gospel’ should be recalled at this point: since Scripture comprises ‘body, soul and spirit’, the first applies to those under the Law, the second applies to us Christians at this stage of history, whereas the ‘spirit’ of Scripture is to be revealed to those ‘who, in the future, will attain to the heavenly things and the truth of the Law’ (τὰ ἐπουράνια καὶ τὰ ἀληθινὰ τοῦ νόμου).⁶⁷⁴ This means that at the final end God will be seen in Himself, as the Son knows Him. The explanation of why Origen takes such a serious view lies in his tenet that in the eschatological reality all rational beings will have become *Son*, not sons. He somehow intimates this in his mature work on Matthew, commenting on the narration of the transfiguration: since Jesus and his clothes had become bright like the sun, his pupils were unable to gaze at him being with Moses and Elias. That very moment though was when they were ‘lit up’ by the touch of the Logos. After this touch (μετὰ τὴν ἀφὴν τοῦ λόγου), and upon re-opening their eyes, they saw Jesus alone. This was so, Origen infers, because the three had become ‘one’. This is posited to mean that ‘the law, the prophecies and the gospel, were no more three, but they became one’. This of course was a doctrine of the Church at the time. However, Origen calls upon the reader to understand this imagery as pertaining also to the mystical and sublime doctrines (τὰ μυστικὰ πράγματα), which he never explicates. He has nonetheless declared that the events of the New Testament, being the fulfilment of the *typoi* of the Old one, are themselves also *typoi* of the eschatological reality.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁰ s. *supra*, pp. 315–16. This points to Actual Creation.

⁶⁷¹ Acts, 3, 21.

⁶⁷² *commMatt*, 17, 19.

⁶⁷³ *Cels*, VI, 20; *commJohn*, 10, XLIII; 13, X & XV; 20, XXXIV; 32, IX; *homJer*, 8, 7; *De Engastrimytho* (*Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25*), 9; *deOr*, XXV, 2; *fiJohn*, X; XLVIII; XXXVIII; *commMatt*, 10, 9; 11, 2; 14, 17; 17, 14; *commEph*, sections 5 & 17; *comm1Cor*, sections 17, 49, 53; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7), p. 228; *selEz*, 2, PG.13.772.37; *Cant*, PG.17.272.36; *selPs*, 44, PG.12.1432.14.

⁶⁷⁴ *homLev* (Baehrens), p. 334; the same in *Philocalia*, 1, 30.

⁶⁷⁵ *commMat*, 12, 43: καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ ἦσαν πρότερον τρεῖς, οὕτω μεμενήκασιν, ἀλλὰ γεγόνασιν οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν. ταῦτα δὲ μοι νόει ὡς πρὸς τὰ μυστικὰ πράγματα.

Therefore, it is not a question of a personal 'soul' which will just get rid of corporeality and will see God himself. Such a Platonic opinion is alien to his thought. The notion of all becoming *Son* (not sons) stems from the conception of the resurrected 'body' of Christ. 'Restoration' pertains to the 'body' of Christ, and, under this light, to Christ himself. This is why Origen may well refer to the 'restoration of Christ',⁶⁷⁶ indeed to 'restoration and rest' of the Logos upon the saved rational beings (σωτηρίαν καὶ ἀποκατάστασιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς).⁶⁷⁷ In like manner, reference may be made to the 'restoration of the bride Church to Christ, her bridegroom',⁶⁷⁸ or, to 'restoration of the whole [world]' (ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ παντός).⁶⁷⁹ Prophetic language is abundantly used, such as 'restoration of the bones' following Ezekiel's imagery,⁶⁸⁰ or 'captivity of the people and destruction of the temple' which is to be followed by 'reconstruction of the temple and apokatastasis of the people'.⁶⁸¹ Otherwise, Origen simply designates the eschatological prospect, as the 'end of things',⁶⁸² or simply 'apokatastasis'.⁶⁸³ This notion is also expounded in the Latin translation of *Princ* in a like manner:

When events have begun to hasten towards the ideal of all being one as the Father is one with the Son,⁶⁸⁴ we are bound to believe as a logical consequence that where all are one there will no longer be any diversity.⁶⁸⁵

This is the putative incomprehensibility of either 'beginning or end':

Moreover Isaiah, knowing that the beginnings of things could not be discovered by mortal nature, no, and not even by those natures which, though diviner than man's nature, are yet themselves made and created, knowing, I say, that none of these could discover either the beginning *or* the end, says; 'Tell ye the former things, what they were, and we shall know that ye are gods; or declare the last things, what they are, and then shall we see that ye are gods.'⁶⁸⁶ . . . neither the armies of the holy angels, nor the holy thrones, nor the dominions, nor principalities, nor powers can wholly know the beginnings of all things and the ends of the universe.⁶⁸⁷

The 'jump' into the divine life means that there is no longer the reality of space-time, since the reasons for its coming into existence will have passed

⁶⁷⁶ *commMatt*, 15, 24; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1168.32; *frPs*, 119, 27.

⁶⁷⁷ *commJohn*, 13, XLVI.

⁶⁷⁸ *commMatt*, 17, 15.

⁶⁷⁹ *selPs*, 16, PG.12.1217.145.

⁶⁸⁰ *Dial*, 21.

⁶⁸¹ *commJohn*, 10, XLII.

⁶⁸² *commJohn*, 2, VIII; 10, II; *commMatt*, 14, 19; 17, 19; *Cels*, VIII, 72; *commGen*, 3 (*Philocalia*, 23, 8).

⁶⁸³ *commJohn*, 13, II; 16, XVIII.

⁶⁸⁴ *John*, 17, 21; 10, 30.

⁶⁸⁵ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.4.

⁶⁸⁶ *Is*, 41, 22–23.

⁶⁸⁷ *Princ* (Lat.), IV.3.14.

away. This does not mean that the creative act of God will return into nothing. The original object of creation was the 'logoi', according to which everything was made.⁶⁸⁸ This will never perish. In a mature work such as *Cels*, we find the conviction stated tellingly:

For we know that even if heaven and earth and the things in them pass away, yet the reasons about each being, being like parts in a whole or forms in a species of the Logos who was God the Logos with God 'in the beginning',⁶⁸⁹ will in no wise pass away. For we would pay heed to him who says: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.'⁶⁹⁰

Origen makes this combined reference with both the creative act of God 'in the beginning' according to Genesis and the 'in the beginning' according to the opening of the Gospel of John. This association of the opening of Old and New Testament is a favourite theme in his analyses, serving to his teaching that in fact the advent of Jesus was creation of the world anew: the 'logoi' (constitutive principles) which were created in the beginning for the purpose of bringing everything into being are not essentially different from the 'logoi' (words) of Jesus, since they have the same divine origin and source. Both the opening of Genesis and the words of Jesus are utterances of one and the same Trinity. This is the context in which the Gospel is said to be ἀδιάδοχον, which means that this cannot be surpassed by anything at all.⁶⁹¹ Elaboration of this tenet is found again in the same commentary on the gospel of Matthew: the words of Jesus are ontologically the same 'logoi' according to which everything was made 'in the beginning'; therefore, they are not subject to 'improvement' (βελτίους γενέσθαι).⁶⁹²

A creation with a beginning, but with no end

The created nature came into being out of God's creative command Γεννηθήτω (Let There Be), it fell out of the upper Jerusalem,⁶⁹³ yet this is still the 'body'⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁸⁸ *COT*, pp. 40–53.

⁶⁸⁹ John, 1, 1.

⁶⁹⁰ Matt. 24, 35. *Cels*, V, 22. Cf. pp. 115, 306, 323.

⁶⁹¹ *frJohn*, LVI; CXXVIII; *frPs*, 112, 1–2. Cf. Matt. 24, 35. s. *supra*, p. 115.

⁶⁹² *frMatt*, 484. *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 123. Cf. *expProv*, 6, PG.177.35.

⁶⁹³ The eschatological significance of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, in *Cant*, 6: τῆς εἴτε Ἐκκλησίας εἴτε νόμφης τοῦ λόγου ψυχῆς. . . ἐκπεσούσα τοῦ παραδείσου πρὸς τὴν ἐπίμοχθον ταύτην ζώην. The 'bride' is now 'in betrothal' and lives 'in the hope of resurrection' (νῦν μὲν ὡς ἐν ἀπαρχῇ λαμβάνουσα τῆς υἰοθεσίας τὸν ἀρραβῶνα, καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐλπίδα). My discussion on history and Incarnation can leave no doubt about the authenticity of these texts compiled by Procopius of Gaza. PG. 17: 276.53 & 280.10.

⁶⁹⁴ *Cels*, VI, 79.

of Christ in the form of the Church. The creative utterances in the beginning of creation, the *logoi* of God then and the *logoi* of Jesus now, are ontologically the same thing. The former constitute a perfect set of reasons; the latter make up a perfect whole of teaching and conduct of life that leads to restoration, which however is at present restricted within the Church as a reality both historical and eschatological. This Church, as the body of the Logos, is destined to encompass the entire universe again, on the day of resurrection.

Since what was created in the beginning was 'invisible', the 'earth' was also 'invisible and not yet constructed' (τὸ τῆς γῆς ἀόρατον καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστον), too.⁶⁹⁵ This was the creation which God saw as 'good': it was the 'reasons' of everything in the (incorporeal) providential creation, which was 'good' since those λόγοι (words, reasons, constitutive and cohesive causes, as well as sustaining and operational ones in every respect) are incorporeal. This is the most sublime content applied to the 'upper Jerusalem', the supreme 'city of God' in the wisdom of God, the 'embroidery' of the body of Wisdom. This 'body' is the original reality of the Church. Once this reality came into being, it will never be dissolved into non-being.

For we know that even if heaven and earth and the things in them pass away,⁶⁹⁶ yet the *reasons* about each being, being like parts in a whole or forms in a species of the Logos who was God the Logos with God 'in the beginning' will in no wise pass away.⁶⁹⁷

The expression 'the *reasons* about each being will in no wise pass away' calls for a short comment. Origen deliberately uses the term λόγοι in its twofold sense, meaning both the 'words' of Jesus and the 'reasons of the world'; this is why he speaks of 'reasons' of everything through one single expression. The deeper meaning lies in the conception of the incarnation of Christ. His 'words', during his corporeal presence in the world, 'began' the new creation; his work was also a kind of 'creation', just as that made 'in the beginning'. These 'words' are as creative as the 'reasons' (words) uttered in the beginning. The homonymity of the term λόγοι allows Origen to couch two facets of his thought at the same time, by using the term in its twofold sense.

In his mind, nevertheless, this issue is more profound and it could take an extensive analysis in order to discuss how he comprehends the relation between 'words' and 'reasons'. There is something more than a homonymity. A λόγος is held to be *both* a 'word' and a 'reason'. It is the λόγος that has all the power. The λόγος of a passage in Scripture (*id est*, the truth harboured therein) is what has the force, yet this λόγος is also untrammelled as an 'utterance': once uttered,

⁶⁹⁵ *Cels*, VI, 49. Cf. Gen. 1,2.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Matt. 24, 35 and parallels, *supra*.

⁶⁹⁷ John, 1, 1. *Cels*, V, 22. Italics mine.

this is like a powerful ‘medicine’ which can ‘clean’ evil and affront daemons by virtue of the fact that it was ‘uttered’.⁶⁹⁸ The power of a λόγος lies in the fact that this is both a ‘reason’ (a creative cause) and an enunciated utterance, which invigorates (γίνονται ισχυρότεραι) invisible powers existing within a man (τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν ἀόρατα).⁶⁹⁹ Therefore, λόγος is regarded *at the same time* as having the sense of both ‘reason’ and ‘utterance’. This λόγος is in itself a *prepotent creature*.⁷⁰⁰ This topic, however, is a particular facet of Origen’s theology which is recondite enough to call for a treatment of its own.

The creative act of God produced *being* out of non-being. The creative *utterances* of God ‘in the beginning’, those λόγοι, which themselves are the outcome of that creation, are *creatures*: they came into being out of non-being and they are themselves *wisdom*. They constitute what Origen depicts as a ‘made’⁷⁰¹ yet ‘living wisdom’,⁷⁰² which ‘has a soul, as it were’ (οἷον εἰ ἔμψυχον).⁷⁰³ This is the sense in which they are ‘like parts in a whole, or forms in a species’ (οἱ περὶ ἐκάστου ‘λόγοι’ ὄντες ὡς ἐν ὅλῳ μέρη ἢ ὡς ἐν γένει εἶδη τοῦ ‘ἐν ἀρχῇ’ λόγου ‘πρὸς τὸν θεόν’).⁷⁰⁴

It was because of the Fall that Being became *Existence*⁷⁰⁵ and the actual spatio—temporal reality of the world was made, coming to being as a ‘down-fall’ (καταβολή) out of God. History is the natural means and channel through which Existence will become Being again. Existence will pass away when the reason for its being ‘out’ will have passed away. What is now a καταβολή will pass away. But the created *wisdom*, the ‘embroidery’ of the ‘body’ of Christ, which came into being out of God’s creative γεννηθήτω, constitutes *the created Being* which will never pass away.

This is one more point on which Origen dissents from the Platonic mode of thought. To Plato it was an axiom that ‘everything that has a beginning has also an end’.⁷⁰⁶ Against the background of that proposition, Origen affirms creation out of non-being (an un-Platonic concept) and explicates that, although this creation had a beginning, it will have no end. The notions of ‘beginning’ and ‘end’ related to creation are expounded in a context dissimilar to the Platonic mindset.

⁶⁹⁸ *homJer*, 2, 2. Cf. *commJohn*, 13, LIX: ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντως καταβεβηκέναι δεῖ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ βασιλικοῦ πυρέττοντα, ἀρκεῖ γὰρ τὸ ‘Ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ’ πρὸς σωτηρίαν λεγόμενον τοῦ παιδός, δραστηρίου ὄντος τοῦ λόγου καὶ ποιητικοῦ ὧν βούλεται ὁ λέγων. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 5.8.48.9: ὁ λόγος ὁ δραστήριος. *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 1, extract 19, excerpt 5: τῇ δραστηρίῳ καὶ κυριωτάτῃ αἰτίᾳ. s. chapter 1, p. 48, n. 49.

⁶⁹⁹ *In Jesu Nave Homiliae xxvi*, p. 416 (*Philocalia*, 12, 1). Cf. chapter 1, p. 54, notes 98, 99.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. *frMatt*, 484.

⁷⁰¹ *commJohn*, 1, XIX.

⁷⁰² *commJohn*, 1, XXXIV.

⁷⁰³ *commJohn*, 1, XIX; 1, XXXIV.

⁷⁰⁴ *Cels*, V, 22.

⁷⁰⁵ I mean the noun *existence* in its literal sense, understood as derived from Latin: *ex + sisto* (standing out from). s. *infra* a short discussion on modern Existentialism, pp. 337f.

⁷⁰⁶ Plato, *Respublica*, 546a; 529.

Hence, 'restoration' actually means return to the creation portrayed by the terms *ποίησις* and *γένεσις*. This is the state specified as 'beginning' (*ἀρχή*) contrasted to the 'end'.⁷⁰⁷ It is certainly not accidental that the *ἀρχή* of John 1,1 is identified with the Wisdom of God.⁷⁰⁸ These who are now distinct creatures have fallen from what was perfect into what is imperfect. This happened to all those who 'left their own residence', since they 'did not remain faithful to their beginning' (*μὴ τηρήσαντες τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχήν*).⁷⁰⁹ When, therefore, it is said that Jesus came in order to 'make perfect the work'⁷¹⁰ of God, the argument comes up fronting any suggestion that the work of God in itself was made 'imperfect': Jesus came to show the way for the 'return' to God 'not only to man, but to every rational soul'. This, despite the scriptural saying, 'in order to make perfect the work' of God, held to contain 'a deeper mystery denoted' by those words (*ἡγοῦμαι δὲ ἐν τοῖς τόποις βαθύτερόν τι ἐναποκεῖσθαι μυστήριον*).⁷¹¹ It cannot be said then that the creative act of God was futile, since neither 'does God do anything superfluous, nor anything made by him is futile'.⁷¹² The created 'body' of Wisdom, therefore, will never be dissolved into nothing. This is the sense in which Origen contends that the created wisdom of God will never vanish into nothingness.

At a significant point of *expProv* it is argued that 'creatures' (*γεγονότων*) themselves (which are stated as *πράγματα*)⁷¹³ will pass away (*παρελεύσεται*); yet the reasons of them will never pass away. For they constitute a creation made in wisdom, which was manifested through the words of Jesus Christ and 'will never pass away' (*οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ λόγοι παρελεύσονται τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*).⁷¹⁴

The work of the incarnate Christ was not futile and the eschatological prospect of the Church is not to be dissolved into nothing, as Jerome falsely ascribed to Origen. The eschatological prospect of the Church is to be one body and 'one flesh'⁷¹⁵ with the Son. Once the creative act of God was done, there will be no end of what was made 'in the beginning'.

This is how he maintains that the Church will have no end: she will enter into the divine reality being the resurrected 'body' of Christ and will be 'one flesh' with him. God will be all in all,⁷¹⁶ as promised. In that reality *life* will be

⁷⁰⁷ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVII.

⁷⁰⁸ Cf. *COT*, pp. 31–33.

⁷⁰⁹ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVII; using the expression of the Epistle of Jude, 6.

⁷¹⁰ John, 4, 34. Cf. pp. 105–106.

⁷¹¹ *commJohn*, 13, XXXVII. Cf. pp. 106 & 278.

⁷¹² *commMatt*, 17, 33.

⁷¹³ Discussion about Origen coupling things (*πράγματα*) with events (*γεγονότα*), *infra*, pp. 341, 384f.

⁷¹⁴ *expProv*, 6, PG.17.177.35–36.

⁷¹⁵ Eph. 5, 31–32.

⁷¹⁶ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

only the divine one, the life of Christ himself, of which Paul's statement 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me'⁷¹⁷ is at present a figure. This is the mysterious eschatological reality of the Church in its union with Christ in love; this is why Origen holds that the Song of Songs treasures the deepest mysteries and truths of Christian faith.

Thus the reality before the Fall and after the Resurrection is couched through the imagery of 'body' of Christ, appealing either to John,⁷¹⁸ or to Paul.⁷¹⁹ The body of Jesus was both a historical reality and a prefiguration⁷²⁰ of the 'spiritual house',⁷²¹ that is, of Christ. Yet again Origen maintains his reticence on this subject: he asserts that to speak in detail about this 'temple', that is, the spiritual meaning of the 'body' of Christ, is 'difficult to expound' (δυσδιήγητον)⁷²² and 'beyond our verbal capability' (καὶ πολλῷ τῆς λέξεως ἡμῶν μεῖζον).⁷²³

Being 'in' and 'out' of God

What shall be dissolved then is time and history, since they will be no more requisite for the struggle to return to the divine life. Time and Space will not be necessary any more, since there will be no reason for them to exist. Space being cancelled means *corporeality* being annulled. In fact, what shall be undone after the universal resurrection and accession into the divine life is the notion of being 'out' of God along with any notion of 'otherness'.

Whenever Origen speaks of being *in* the world (including eternal life), or of the world itself, he uses phraseology implicitly or explicitly denoting that the world is *out* of God.⁷²⁴ To cite an instance, with respect to eternal life, he alludes to the 'end' as 'subjection' of all to Christ, speaking of 'all' (πάντες) who reached 'near (πρὸς) God', but he does not portray this state as being *in* God. Besides, he points out that this state is an active one, speaking of 'one single uniform action' (μία πράξις) by all those who reached 'near' God.⁷²⁵ In contrast, when he refers to the reality either 'before' the Fall or 'after' the end, he uses a language clearly denoting that this is a state *in* God. The 'one' who 'fell' was '*in* godhead' (ἐν θεότητι).⁷²⁶ God 'will receive (or, gather together: συνάγοντος) all creatures to one end'.⁷²⁷ Thus the purpose of striving in time is entering the

⁷¹⁷ Gal. 2, 20.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. John, 2, 21. *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX.

⁷¹⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 6, 15; 12, 27; Eph. 4, 12; Col. 2, 17.

⁷²⁰ Cf. Eph. 5, 30. *frJohn*, XCL.

⁷²¹ *commJohn*, 10, XLII.

⁷²² Cf. Wis. 17, 1.

⁷²³ *commJohn*, 10, XXXIX; s. also, *commJohn*, 10, XLI.

⁷²⁴ About the world being 'out' of God, or 'external' to the Trinity, s. pp. 155, 168, 201. Also, s. *COT*, pp. 25, 74, 82, 93, 131, 168, 172, 244, 275.

⁷²⁵ *commJohn*, 1, XVI.

⁷²⁶ *Op. cit.* 32, XVIII.

⁷²⁷ *Op. cit.* 13, XLVI.

divine reality. It is God who constitutes the content of hope and expectation: "I look forward to God and it is *himself* who is my *expectation* and *hope*" (ἀλλὰ πρὸς αὐτὸν βλέπω τὸν Θεόν, αὐτὸν ἔχων προσδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα).⁷²⁸ Apropos of this, the following passage is expressive:

Certainly the soul of Christ, living in its own perfection, was *in* God and the fullness of the divine life (ἐν Θεῷ καὶ τῷ πληρώματι); it *came out* therefrom (ἐκεῖθεν ἐξεληλυθυῖα) being sent by the Father and assumed the body from Mary. But other souls *came out* (ἐξῆλθον) of God not in this way, that is, they came out being neither sent nor escorted by the divine will.⁷²⁹

What is *in* the world is understood to be *out* of God and vice versa.⁷³⁰ As already noted, this 'out' does not imply that God is a certain whole, with the world existing outside of this. The notion of 'out' is a figure of speech,⁷³¹ through which the ontological difference is adumbrated. Origen himself alerts the reader to God being neither a 'part' nor a 'whole'.⁷³² Since the term 'whole' applies to the world,⁷³³ God is actually 'beyond the whole'. He makes clear that the scriptural figures (such as in / out, or, up / down) are only employed in order to depict the ontological *hiatus* between divine reality and the world. They simply indicate the ontological difference between the 'immaterial and invisible and incorporeal' divine reality and the world, which is entirely 'material and has various spaces'.⁷³⁴ Thus, 'entering into God' announces a transformation of nature (yet not modification of ontology, as *creatures*) which will be the 'ornaments' in the body of Wisdom. There is no change of ontological status, which is determined definitely by God being uncreated and the 'embroidery' of wisdom being created. This should be paid particular attention, since it is one of the points where Origen parts way with Platonism. It should be recalled that Origen confronts Heracleon who claimed that created rational nature is 'homousios' with God. The vehemence of his assault on Gnosticism stems from his conviction about the established ontological difference between the 'uncreated nature' (ἀγεννήτῳ φύσει) of God and the 'created nature' (τῶν γεννητῶν).⁷³⁵

⁷²⁸ *selPs*, 61, PG.12.1485.14 (comm. on Psalm 61, 6).

⁷²⁹ *commJohn*, 20, XIX. The notion of the incarnate Logos 'getting out' of God is expounded in *commJohn*, 20, XVIII. Origen emphasizes, however, that, the Logos at the time of the Incarnation was both 'out' of God and 'in' God. s. *commJohn*, 20, XVIII.

⁷³⁰ In view of this conception, the Latin passage in *Princ*, IV.4.1, where the entire world is portrayed as the 'things external to the Trinity' can be regarded as Origen's real voice.

⁷³¹ Scriptural authority for this is sought in John, 13, 3.

⁷³² *Cels*, I, 23. Cf. *COT*, p. 29.

⁷³³ The standard Stoic tenet: *SVF*, II, 167, 4–168, 3. s. *supra*, p. 43.

⁷³⁴ *commJohn*, 19, XX.

⁷³⁵ *Op. cit.* 13, XXV. The world came into being out of non-being because God willed so: the *will* of God precedes all creation, which is the outcome of divine freedom. God *became* Creator, he is not compelled to be Creator in consideration of his ontology. The world is the 'whole' which is *out* of God. *COT*, pp. 119f.

The *hiatus* which sets the ontology of Deity apart from that of creatures is a fundamental notion of this theology. This is expressed through the expression to-come-out-of-God, which is related to the anticipated eschatological perspective of restoration. This prospect has been most intense after the Incarnation. It is indicative of the perception of both Fall and Resurrection that Origen speaks of Jesus who ‘came out of God’⁷³⁶ for the sake of those who had come out of God’ (διὰ τὰ ἐξελθόντα δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ); ‘whereas before he willed not to go out of the Father, he went out of God, so that those who went out [of God] come in the hands of Jesus in due time and order, so that the dispensation of their going back to God by following Jesus be realized; for they will be with God as a result of them following him [sc. Jesus].’⁷³⁷

The world emerges out of the episode of the Fall and its origin is in the divine life. Rational nature currently stands outside of divinity, yet it now lives in anticipation of a return. After the Incarnation, the process has become known. Not only the final destination, but also the ‘way’ and ‘gate’ to this are now disclosed, being the Logos himself. The question is how should history be understood in the meantime, until the eventual end.

To Origen, the ‘get out’ (ἐξελθε) in the Song of Songs 1, 8, is redolent of what happened to the creaturely being once the Fall occurred.⁷³⁸ However, the Church has already received a ‘betrothal’ to its return and cherishes the ‘hope of resurrection’,⁷³⁹ so that eventually the ‘whole world’ (ὅλος ὁ κόσμος) will ‘enter into the house of the upper Jerusalem’ again.⁷⁴⁰ The imagery of ‘body of Christ’ is the recurrent allegory for the ‘Church’, the ‘soul’, or for the ‘rational animal.’⁷⁴¹ The Church will definitely be elevated again to its perfect and glorified form, she will get into ‘the mystery of the wedding’ and in ‘the perfect rest’.⁷⁴²

This is the concept, in the light of which Origen considers Paul’s saying, ‘For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things’.⁷⁴³ His exegesis is that the expression ‘of him’ (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) ‘indicates the beginning of existence of everything’ (παριστάς τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν πάντων ὑποστάσεως): the Logos is the Person whose action is the efficient cause making things emerge from potentiality to actuality. God created everything not at random, but through his providence.

⁷³⁶ Cf. John, 13, 3.

⁷³⁷ *comm. John*, 32, III.

⁷³⁸ *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum (fragmenta)*, p. 141 (comm. on Song of Songs, 1, 8).

⁷³⁹ *Cant.*, 7, PG.17.280.40.

⁷⁴⁰ *Cant.*, 3, PG.17.268.40–269.39.

⁷⁴¹ *Cant.*, 6, PG.17.277.43: λογικὸν ζῶον ἢ νόμφη. Cf. *Cant.*, 2, PG.17.165.43: περὶ ζῴου λογικοῦ. The teaching of the Logos and the destiny of the world pertains to all rational creatures, not simply to human beings: ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος οὗτος, οὐ μιᾷ ψυχῇ κοινωνῶν, ἀλλὰ πλείοσι καὶ διαφόροις. The structure of Origen’s world, consisted of different ranks of life, and all of them related to the Logos in different degrees, is tellingly expressed.

⁷⁴² *Cant.*, 3, PG.17.268.56–58: ἀπορρητοτέρων ἐθέλων κοινωνεῖν, καὶ τῆς τελειοτέρας μετασχεῖν ἀναπαύσεως. This points to the perfection (τελειοτέρα) of resurrection.

⁷⁴³ Rom. 11, 36.

Everything was made ‘toward a certain end’ and ‘because of a certain reason’ (ἕνα θεὸν πάντων δημιουργόν, πρὸς τι καὶ ἕνεκέν τινος ἑκάστων πεποιηκότα).⁷⁴⁴ The clause ‘through him’ points to the world maintained in existence by him (καὶ τὴν συνοχὴν ἐν τῷ ‘δι’ αὐτοῦ). Finally, the phrase ‘to him’ attests to *the end* (καὶ τὸ τέλος ἐν τῷ ‘εἰς αὐτόν’), that is, becoming ‘in him’ again, as ‘restoration’ to ‘our ancient fatherland’, which is the final destination of the world.⁷⁴⁵

By conflation of 1 Cor. 8, 6 and Rom. 11, 36, the same notion is stated in a Latin translation: “the word ‘God’ is used primarily ‘of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, and in whom are all things’.”⁷⁴⁶ Likewise, the same joined consideration of the two NT portions crops up again resulting to this telling conclusion:

Nevertheless, his statement ‘from him’, points to the fact that we exist; ‘through him’ to the fact that we are being guided in life through his providence; and ‘in him’, that the perfection and end of everything will be in him when God will be all in all.⁷⁴⁷

This ‘perfection’ marks the end of history, and is once again asserted to be ‘not completed within one aeon, but is prolonged over many [aeons] and hardly at any time is it hoped to be fulfilled.’⁷⁴⁸

R. Sorabji asserted that it was Gregory of Nyssa who reserved the expression ‘from God’ not only for the generation of the Son, but also for the material universe.⁷⁴⁹ He regarded this as ‘an innovation of Gregory’, but this is in fact a notion of Origen’s, who however is far from considering this creation as an emanation from God.⁷⁵⁰ Thus H.A. Wolfson’s assertion that the expression ‘from God’ in Gregory of Nyssa suggests emanation cannot be applied in Origen.⁷⁵¹ I do not believe that Gregory uses the expression in this sense either; rather, it is to be assumed that he has in mind Origen’s understanding of the doctrine. For in fact Gregory followed Origen on this point, suggesting that the world is created *from God*.⁷⁵² R. Sorabji took this notion as a ‘striking innovation’.⁷⁵³ It should be emphasized, however, that one could not speak of ‘innovations’ in Gregory of Nyssa unless having studied Origen before. Least of all could

⁷⁴⁴ *Cels*, IV, 54.

⁷⁴⁵ *Cels*, VI, 65. Cf. *selPs*, 117, PG.12.1584.33. Cf. ‘fatherland’ identified with the ‘paradise’, in *Homilies on Exodus*, 2.1.

⁷⁴⁶ *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, p. 34.

⁷⁴⁷ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.13.9. Cf. a quotation of 3.10.3, in chapter 11, p. 415.

⁷⁴⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁴⁹ R. Sorabji, *op. cit.* pp. 194 & 294.

⁷⁵⁰ *COT*, p. 64.

⁷⁵¹ Cf. H.A. Wolfson, “The identification of *ex nihilo* with emanation in Gregory of Nyssa”, pp. 53–60.

⁷⁵² Gregory of Nyssa, *De Opificio Hominis*, 23–24; p. 212: ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὰ πάντα.

⁷⁵³ *Op. cit.* pp. 194 & 294.

one speak of any 'answer' of Gregory to Origen, which Sorabji emphatically did.⁷⁵⁴ For at this point, also, all Gregory says is not a 'striking innovation', but an echo of Origen's views.

The notion of 'out' applied to the world deserves particular attention and consideration. It has been asserted that in Christianity there was a distinction between 'out of nothing' and 'from God': whereas the former is normally used for the material universe, the latter is reserved for the Son, on the ground that he is of one substance with God the Father.⁷⁵⁵ In Origen this differentiation is entirely different and much subtler. He makes the distinction between 'out of nothing' and 'from God', in contrast not only to assertions about Christian thought, but also to the Neoplatonic ones. Porphyry, for example, portrays creation not in terms of 'out of nothing': he avers that God generates things 'from himself' (ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ).⁷⁵⁶ Plotinus also speaks of creation as coming *from* the One.⁷⁵⁷

Origen is crystal-clear: 'coming into being out of non-being' points to the providential creation of all potentialities, whereas becoming 'outside God' indicates the actual creation coming into existence. Thus 'outside of God' points to the actual spatio-temporal reality. Whatever is *in* this reality is held to be *outside* of God, thus being in a condition of fall.⁷⁵⁸

In the light of this distinction, a comparison to the notion of 'out of the world' in modern Existentialism would be interesting. Origen would certainly subscribe to J.P. Sartre's statement that 'without the world there is no selfhood, no person; without selfhood, without the person, there is no world',⁷⁵⁹ still the agreement could be only literal. For what Sartre meant by this expression is that man is nothing apart from his environment; indeed he rejected the very idea that man's essence is prior to his actual being. In Existentialism the notion of 'existence' is taken in its root sense, meaning 'standing out'.⁷⁶⁰ But 'existence' means the fact of finding ourselves *into* the world. This is actually Heidegger's *Dasein*.⁷⁶¹ With respect to this, K. Jaspers expressed this notion clearly: *Dasein* or *existence* is 'the unreflecting experience of our life in the world'.⁷⁶² However,

⁷⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 151.

⁷⁵⁵ An account of this alleged distinction has been given by J. Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism': its background and nature", p. 167; s. also, H.A. Wolfson, "The meaning of *ex nihilo* in the Church Fathers, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophy and St. Thomas", pp. 355–70.

⁷⁵⁶ Porphyry, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria* (fragmenta), Book 2, Fr. 40 (*apud* Proclus *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 1, p. 300): ὁ πατήρ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ γεννᾷ τὸ ὅλον. Likewise, Porphyry, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria* (fragmenta), Book 2, Fr. 40: ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ μένοντος τὰ πάντα παρήγαγε.

⁷⁵⁷ *Enneads*, V.8.12.

⁷⁵⁸ s. *supra*, pp. 116, 168, 283, 320.

⁷⁵⁹ J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, p. 104.

⁷⁶⁰ s. *supra*, n. 705.

⁷⁶¹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 67.

⁷⁶² Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*, pp. 63–66.

this *Dasein* should not be confused with Jaspers' notion of *Existenz*, since 1) this is not a kind of being, but of a potential being. 2) *Existenz* is freedom found as the gift of Transcendence. 3) *Existenz* is the 'ever-individual self, irreplaceable and never interchangeable'. This is the context in which K. Jaspers asserts that 'there is no *Existenz* apart from *Transcendence*'.⁷⁶³ The existentialistic conception of 'existence' as 'standing out' is based on the notions of *ecstasy* and *transcendence*.⁷⁶⁴ In the first place though it seems that whereas in Origen the notion of *out* is applied to man perceived as 'outside of God' and *in* the world, in Existentialism this notion of *out* means 'out of the world'—under certain presuppositions and in a certain sense.

However, the question is not as simple as stated here. I believe that a study of Origen's thought with respect to the existentialistic conception of 'out' could be fruitful. I shall desist from pursuing this discussion further since this is beyond my scope. I only say that I would not be surprised if what seems as difference would be proved to be not the case, and Origen to have anticipated the deeper sense of the 'potential being', as well as the notions of 'quest for authentic existence' and 'attainment to selfhood' expressed in terms of his theology.

In Origen then 'to come into being out of non-being' implies the providential creation, whereas 'to get outside of God' implies the actual creation. Therefore, *created being* applies to the providential creation, whereas *created existence*, in a literal sense,⁷⁶⁵ applies to the actual creation.

The notion of 'becoming into God', therefore, constitutes the actual meaning of 'restoration'—an eschatological goal which will be accomplished through 'the good road which leads to the good Father' (ἀγαθὴ γὰρ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα πρὸς τὸν ἀγαθὸν πατέρα).⁷⁶⁶ This is the sense of the 'restoration of the whole' (τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ παντός),⁷⁶⁷ the term 'whole' (παντός) being in the Singular, and meaning 'the whole world', as we have seen. For 'not only one nation . . . nor two, but all the ends of earth . . . shall return'.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶³ It could be interesting to compare this existentialistic notion with Origen's concept of individual being. In such a context, one should consider Heidegger's view that the essence of man lies in *existence* and (as it seems from later developments of his philosophy) existence comes to maturity as it responds to the call of being. Besides, it might be productive to consider Heidegger's assertion that *Dasein's* essence (Wesen) is constituted not of properties, but of possible ways of being.

⁷⁶⁴ To say that a man exists 'ecstatically' is in fact a tautology, since *ecstasis* is but the Greek cognate of 'existence'.

⁷⁶⁵ Certainly in no case will a student of Origen find these terms in his works. But comparing his view of the world being *outside* of God with the meaning of 'existence' in modern Existentialism, bearing in mind the Latin etymology of 'existence' is useful.

⁷⁶⁶ *commJohn*, 6, XIX.

⁷⁶⁷ *selPs*, 16, PG.12.1217.14.

⁷⁶⁸ *selPs*, 21, PG.12.1260.9.

Names and personal identity of creatures

It is a conviction of Origen's that 'names' or appellatives in themselves have a particular significance. Beings have been named by the Holy Spirit, who 'does not simply establish names': in fact they are 'characteristics of various kinds of action'.⁷⁶⁹

Do scrutinize the interpretation of names; for they have forcefully been named by the Holy Spirit. Besides, you should know this: names indicate habits and states and qualities, from which it is possible to see the fitness of what is named.⁷⁷⁰

The appellatives 'of the higher powers are not names of natures of animals, but designation of ranks, in which God has placed this or that rational nature'.⁷⁷¹ As a matter of fact, 'there is an entire doctrine about names, which is very profound and mystical'. Appellations are not just a matter of human convention,⁷⁷² and Origen denounces those who believe names to be just so. Evidently, he has in mind Aristotle, the Stoics and the entire debate in the Platonic *Cratylus*. The issue is mentioned in *Cels*, where the significance of appellatives comes to the fore.⁷⁷³

Regarding Aristotle, Origen refers to him implicitly speaking about 'the Peripatetics'.⁷⁷⁴ In general, he makes use of some notions that are of Aristotelian origin and sometimes the Stagirite is mentioned. But, as G. Bardy pointed out, these are current ideas and commonplaces of his time rather than an outcome of a direct study of Aristotle by Origen. Actually there can be no assertion of any decisive 'influence' of Aristotle upon Origen.⁷⁷⁵ Following this conviction, a befitting definition of a 'name' is stated in *deOr*: "A name, then, is a principal appellation indicating the particular quality of him who is designated."⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁶⁹ *expProv*, 1, PG.17.164.28.

⁷⁷⁰ *selGen*, (comm. on Gen. 17, 5), PG.12.116.12–18.

⁷⁷¹ *commJohn*, 2, XXIII.

⁷⁷² *exhMar*, XLVI.

⁷⁷³ *Cels*, I, 22–25 & V, 45. J. Denis took a similar view asserting that it is possible that Origen might have never read Aristotle's works themselves. (J. Denis, *De la Philosophie d'Origène*, p. 16). H. Crouzel, too, rightly asserted that there is no Aristotelian influence on Origen. (H. Crouzel: *Origène et la Philosophie*, Paris, 1962.). On the contrary, E. de Faye points out some philosophical points which are of Aristotelian origin, such as the notions of ἀπορίαι, λογικά οὐσία, ποιότητες and ὑποκείμενον, free will and the reference to the 'soul'. (E. de Faye, *Origène*, vol. III, p. 87, n. 1). This is one more point on which de Faye went along with H. Koch, who argued that one might discern an indirect Aristotelian influence upon Origen's thought (Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis*, p. 205). These notions though were widespread in the Hellenistic era and they do not prove any Aristotelian influence on Origen. At any rate, E. de Faye failed to see the most important point, which is Origen's adoption of the Aristotelian definition of τέλος, which underlines the teleological character of history.

⁷⁷⁴ *Cels*, I, 10 & 13; II, 27; VII, 3 *et passim*.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. G. Bardy, "Origène et l'Aristotélisme", p. 83: "Origène adopterait plutôt, à l'égard d'Aristote, un attitude de défiance; il n'est en tout cas pas familier avec sa pensée et jamais il ne le regarde comme son inspirateur." I endorse this conclusion.

⁷⁷⁶ *deOr*, XXIV, 2.

A *name* is related to a certain kind of *function*. This, however, pertains to function of creatures, not to the name of God. 'Appellatives should not be overlooked, since they signify certain things (πραγμάτων σημαινομένων) which contribute to interpretation of passages'.⁷⁷⁷ Therefore, an appellative on the one hand, and a particular kind of *action*, on the other, stand in a certain correspondence. The sundry appellatives of rational beings express the diversity of the world—which is an essential characteristic of the condition of Fall. This is why in certain cases the term *names* is used as substitutive of the expression *rational creatures*.⁷⁷⁸

It is probably on account of this understanding of 'names' that a notion such as the following has been attributed to him: the passage is from the Anathemas decreed by the Second Council of Constantinople, in 553. Similar is a text of Justinian's, which Koetschau upheld.⁷⁷⁹ The translator alleges that 'though they cannot be taken as literal extracts from the *De Principiis*, they express the teaching of this work, doubtless for the most part in Origen's own words.'

The creation of all rational creatures consisted of minds incorporeal and immaterial without any number or name, so that they all formed a unity by reason of the identity of their essence and power and energy and by their union with and knowledge of God the Word; . . . they took bodies, either fine in substance or grosser, and became possessed of a name, which accounts for the differences of names as well as of bodies among the higher powers; and thus the cherubim, with the reigns and authorities, the lordships, thrones and angels and all the other heavenly orders came into being and received their names.⁷⁸⁰

In fact, however, this passage constitutes one of the worst distortions of Origen's thought. It is buttressed on the false premise of an 'eternal world of spirits' and on similar allegations Justinian's alike. In the light of my discussion, no further comment is necessary, since it could be superfluous to repeat points already made about notions such as incorporeality.

The reality envisaged in the absence of the world (either 'before' the Fall or 'after' the ultimate end) is the divine one. In that reality, the only name that may make sense is the name of God.⁷⁸¹ On the other hand, the notion of names ascribed within the temporal reality is related to 'function' and 'change' of personal creatures. In other words, a name is by essence related to 'diversity' and 'otherness', which is an attribute of the 'downfall'.

Beyond that, an obvious prerequisite for speaking about a *name* it is that the creature named *exists*, that is, it has been created as a personal individual hypostasis. This creation is related to space and time, that is, to the existence

⁷⁷⁷ *commJohn*, 6, XLI.

⁷⁷⁸ *commJohn*, 13, XXV, using the language of Eph. 1, 21.

⁷⁷⁹ *FP*, p. 125, n. 7.

⁷⁸⁰ *FP*, p. 125.

⁷⁸¹ Cf. *Cels*, I, 22.

of the world. Thus the notion of name could make no sense in the absence of the world, in the same way that all the notions inherently related to the world could make no sense in the absence of it.

The term, which Origen uses to underscore the significance of names is denotative of his understanding: names indicate 'pragmata' (πράγματα, 'things').⁷⁸² The term (Plural of the word πρᾶγμα) is derived from the verb πράττω (to act) from which 'praxis' (πρᾶξις) is derived, too. Etymologically, the word πρᾶγμα signifies the result of an action.⁷⁸³ The term πράγματα, therefore, indicates *action*, particularly results of action, since the root (or, 'theme') of the word is that of the verb πράττειν, which means, 'to act'. Quite indicative then of how good a command of Greek language Origen had, is his remark that 'names' are 'indicative of various kinds of action'.⁷⁸⁴ This is why the 'names' of superior planes of being indicate a certain existential 'rank', not particular names of specific rational animals: they bespeak the order of existential standing in which 'a certain rational nature' has been placed by God (τὰ ὀνόματα οὐχὶ φύσεων ζῶων ἐστὶν ὀνόματα ἀλλὰ τάξεων, ὧν ἦδε τις καὶ ἦδε λογικὴ φύσις τέτευχεν ἀπὸ θεοῦ).⁷⁸⁵ Names such as 'thrones', 'principalities', and the rest, indicate not 'a species of animal' (οὐκ εἶδος ζώου), but the 'actions' (ὀνόματα πραγμάτων) which they have been assigned with.⁷⁸⁶

It is certainly not accident that the term πράγματα was employed in order to point to the ultimate end of the world: the expression τὸ τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων (the end of things) depicts the end of history and of the world itself. Thus πράγματα (that is, what alludes to *function*) will come to an *end*, which is the ultimate end. Once, therefore, πράγματα (the world itself) come to an end, names make no sense any more.

The final universal unity in the resurrected 'body' concurs with the abolition of any 'distinction' or 'diversification' or 'otherness'. Consequently, the notion of 'others' makes no sense any more; for resurrection means that all will have become *Son*.⁷⁸⁷

Certain statements in *Princ* may well be regarded as pointing to the reality upon the ultimate end. Such is a portion about how the 'end of things, in which God is said not only to be in all things, but also to be all things'. This is portrayed as a state where 'the mind will no longer be conscious of anything besides or other than God, but will think God and see God and hold God'.⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸² *commJohn*, 1, IX; 6, XLI. s. *supra*, n. 713.

⁷⁸³ In Greek etymology it is a rule that the final syllables *-ma*, *-mi* and *-os* signify the 'result' of what the root (or, 'theme') of the word indicates.

⁷⁸⁴ s. *supra*, *expProv*, 1, PG.17.164.28 (again, through Evagrius).

⁷⁸⁵ *commJohn*, 2, XXIII.

⁷⁸⁶ *Loc. cit.* Notice the crucial term πραγμάτων, which betokens the importance attached to rational animals in terms of their *action* in history. s. ch. 10, n. 143 and ch. 11 *passim*.

⁷⁸⁷ *commJohn*, 1, XVI.

⁷⁸⁸ *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.3.

It is hard to know the extent to which these expressions are Origen's own words. In the light of preceding discussion though I believe I can assume that they must be not far from his phraseology. We could then take them into consideration, to a certain extent at least. These expressions allude to a reality where there are no 'names' at all. This means that a creature is not distinct in the sight of God, since 'distinction' and indeed 'otherness' is an existential feature pertaining only to standing in Fall. Strictly speaking, therefore, there is no personal identity of creatures any more. For the person who *is* in that reality is the Son, since we actually refer to the state of providential creation.⁷⁸⁹

This is the sense in which these who are at present 'individual creatures' shall then be 'deified' having no more consciousness of individual existence and identity, since everything will be God. It is in the light of this perception that the saying of Isaiah, 'Tell ye the former things, what they were, and we shall know that ye are gods; or declare the last things, what they are, and then shall we see that ye are gods'⁷⁹⁰ is quoted in *Princ.*⁷⁹¹ This is also the sense in which these who now are individual creatures will then be not sons, but *Son* of God, according to the expression in *commJohn* previously discussed. Whereas in creaturely condition the personal identity of creatures lies in their relation to God, in that state the personal relation between *I* and *You* can be understood only as the relation between the persons of the Trinity. This end of the world actually is the eschatological 'Sabbath' of the Son, the 'rest' from his perpetual advent and work into the world,⁷⁹² followed by the Day of God (ἡμέρα Κυρίου), which is labelled κυριακή.⁷⁹³

There are two points of the *Homilies on Leviticus* in Latin that deserve consideration. In Leviticus 4, 1, the statement refers to the 'soul' which 'sins involuntarily in the presence of the Lord'. This is the departing point for this comment: "Rightly, it says '*a soul*' when it ascribes sin; for it would not have called one being on the verge of sinning a *spirit* about to sin. Not would it have called this a *person*, in whom 'the image of God'⁷⁹⁴ would not subsist if sin intervened."⁷⁹⁵ There is, therefore, the distinction between soul, spirit and person. Soul is susceptible to sin, spirit is not. Person is what was created in the image of God, but no reference to 'likeness' is made. Person is what got rid of sin and is ready to enter into the holies of God. But is one still a *person* when he attains to this? The reply is provided in another homily of the same work: this will be no more a person, but 'an angel of God'.

⁷⁸⁹ *COT*, pp. 39f.

⁷⁹⁰ Is. 41, 22–23.

⁷⁹¹ *Princ* (Lat.), IV.3.14.

⁷⁹² *commJohn*, 2, XXXIII.

⁷⁹³ Cf. chapter 2, p. 85 & n. 173.

⁷⁹⁴ Cf. Gen. 1, 26.

⁷⁹⁵ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.4; italics mine.

Next, the Scripture goes on thus: ‘and there will not be a person, when the high priest enters within the inner veil in the Tent of Witness’.⁷⁹⁶ How ‘will there not be a person?’ I take it that it means that anyone who would follow Christ and enters with him into the interior sanctuary and ascends to the heights of heaven ‘will not be a person’ but, according to his teaching, will be ‘as an angel of God’.⁷⁹⁷ It is even possible that this which the Lord said will be fulfilled in him, ‘I said you are gods and sons of the Most High’.⁷⁹⁸ Therefore, either having become spiritual he becomes one spirit with the Lord, or through the glory of the Resurrection is transposed to the rank of angels, then fittingly ‘he will not be a person any longer’, but each one presents himself so that either he surpasses the name of man or he is considered within the condition of this word.⁷⁹⁹

I have no doubts about the authenticity of the ideas implied in this passage. Origen refers to the personal identity, which will make no sense in a state where there is neither ‘division’ nor ‘schism’ and ‘disagreement’ (διαφωνία).⁸⁰⁰ For a similar assertion is found in Greek fragments, where the eschatological prospect of ‘seeing the face of God’ is conditioned by transformation into not simply ‘an angel’, but indeed ‘into God’. No one seeking to ‘see the face of God’⁸⁰¹ can see this ‘here’ (ἐνθάδε), unless one is ‘altered’ into ‘angel’ and indeed ‘God’ (ἄγγελον ἤδη καὶ Θεὸν γενέσθαι δεῖ).⁸⁰² This is in fact the foundation on which Origen grounds his theory of *deification* by participation.⁸⁰³

The raison d’être and character of History

The profound reason for the existence of history is implied by means of the expression *in due time and order* (ὁδῶ καὶ τάξει).⁸⁰⁴ The saying of Jesus to Peter,

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. Lev. 16, 17. The word in Septuagint is actually not ‘person’ (πρόσωπον), but ‘man’ (ἄνθρωπος).

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Matt. 22, 30.

⁷⁹⁸ Psalm 81, 6; John, 10, 34–35. Cf. *commJohn*, 20, XXVII; 32, XVIII; *homJer*, 15, 6; *commMatt*, 16, 29; 17, 19; 17, 32; *selEz*, 1, PG.13.769.28; *Scholia in Lucam*, 14, PG.17.364.42. *fPs*, 81, 6–7; *selPs*, 4, PG.1137.55; 135, PG.12.1656.5. (Latin): *Homilies on Exodus*, 6.5; *Homilies on Leviticus*, 9.11.1; 11.2.3.

⁷⁹⁹ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 9.11.1.

⁸⁰⁰ *selGen* (comm. on Gen. 11, 7), PG.12.112.10; also, *commJohn*, 5, V. Cf. *COT*, chapter 3, p. 79.

⁸⁰¹ Cf. Matt. 18, 10; 1 Cor. 13, 12. Cf. Gen. 32, 31; 33, 10; Ex. 3, 6.

⁸⁰² *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1268.24–8 (comm. on Psalm 23, 6); *excPs*, 23, PG.17.116.1–7: μεταβαλὼν εἰς ἄγγελον καὶ Θεόν. In both cases, this eschatological prospect is rendered through the distinction ‘Here / There’. S. *supra*, note 264.

⁸⁰³ God the Logos is ‘he who deifies’ (θεοποιός): *selEz*, 1, PG.13.769.28. Cf. *commMatt*, 16, 29: ‘being deified’ (ἀποθεωθῆναι). *exhMar*, XXV: τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου θεοποιηθεῖσι. *deOr*, XXV, 2: διαθέσεως θεοποιουμένης. *deOr*, XXVII, 13: θεοποιηθῶμεν. *commMatt*, 17, 32: θεοποιηθῆναι. *commJohn*, 32, XXVII: ὁ νοῦς . . . ἐν οἷς θεωρεῖ, θεοποιεῖται (section 338). *commJohn*, 32, XXVII: θεοποιηθέντος αὐτῷ τοῦ νοῦ (section 340).

⁸⁰⁴ The expression ὁδῶ καὶ τάξει is used at significant points. Cf. *Cels*, I, 66; *commJohn*, 6, LVII; 32, III; *exhMar*, XXIX; *Philocalia*, 18, 13. Cf. pp. 282, 299.

'Whither I go you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterwards',⁸⁰⁵ will be said 'to each one of all which the Father gave in the hands of the Son' (πρὸς ἕκαστον τῶν πάντων ὃ δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ ὁ πατήρ εἰς τὰς χεῖρας), that is, to all rational hypostases; yet it will be said to them all not at the same time (ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν). This is the meaning of the scriptural expression 'afterwards'.⁸⁰⁶ Likewise, the saying, 'Whither I go, you cannot come'⁸⁰⁷ is taken to mean that although it is not *now* possible for Jesus' pupils to go where he went, this will be possible in the future. For if there is a present aeon and another one yet to come, those to whom he said, 'You cannot come', cannot go where Jesus is during the present aeon. The time which remains until its completion is long, but this completion does not mark the end of all history: since there is the 'present aeon',⁸⁰⁸ there is also an 'aeon to come', as well as 'the aeons to come'.⁸⁰⁹

Origen is satisfied that 'souls are not driven on some revolving course which brings them to the same cycle again after many ages, with the result that they do or desire this or that, but they direct the course of their deeds towards whatever end the freedom of their individual minds may aim at'.⁸¹⁰ In any event, 'all things work towards an end'.⁸¹¹

The end will not come 'all of a sudden, but gradually and by degrees, during the lapse of infinite and immeasurable ages', since 'the improvement and correction will be realized slowly and separately in each individual person'.⁸¹² Moreover, 'this training of ours in the body extends over a very long period, up till the time when the bodies themselves . . . are found worthy of incorruptibility and immortality by reason of the word and perfect righteousness of God'.⁸¹³

The expression about the end not coming 'all of a sudden' should be taken to mean that there is still time available until the end comes to pass. However, this is a point of translation unlike Origen. For, on the one hand, he adheres to Jesus saying that 'times and kairoi', which the Father reserved for His own power, are incongnosible to men.⁸¹⁴ On the other, he positively believes that the final consummation will occur 'all of a sudden', indeed 'in the twink of an eye' (ἄθρόως).⁸¹⁵

⁸⁰⁵ John, 13, 36.

⁸⁰⁶ *commJohn*, 32, III.

⁸⁰⁷ John, 8, 21.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Gal. 1, 4.

⁸⁰⁹ Cf. Eph. 2, 7. *commJohn*, 19, XIV.

⁸¹⁰ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.4.

⁸¹¹ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.2.

⁸¹² *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.6.

⁸¹³ *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.2. The language of Rufinus should not be pressed too far. For example, the expression 'infinite . . . ages' is not a phrase of Origen's. Cf. *COT*, pp. 245f. Likewise, the term 'immortality' denotes ascent to eternal life. In *Princ*, II.3.3, it is urged that, in this existential state, rational creatures possess bodies. Rufinus, however, obfuscated the conception.

⁸¹⁴ Acts 1, 7.

⁸¹⁵ *JfJer*, 35; *JfLuc*, 228 (the same in *commMatt*, 14, 9); *commMatt*, 13, 1; *Fragmenta in Evangelium Matthaei* (E. Klostermann & E. Benz), p. 7.

It should be emphasized that to Origen there is no question about the degree, so to speak, of reality of the world. There is nothing of the Gnostic tendency to denounce time and history as a lie and to annul the material world as an untruth. Affirming the full reality of history,⁸¹⁶ Origen does not regard temporal reality as a pale imitation of the atemporal one.

This is indeed a facet of his thought widely misapprehended, mainly because of his exegetical method. *Typology* pertains to the relation between past and future, in the context of understanding the historical process. Certainly the relation between *up* and *down* is not neglected, and is expressed through the employment of allegory. According to this consideration, it is the wisdom of God that is manifested through historical events. On that account, the full reality of historical occurrences is *reinforced* rather than negated. Origen's prime concern makes its mark through the pronouncement, 'Those *former* bear in themselves an image of those *latter*' (Τῶν γὰρ δευτέρων εἰκόνα φέρει τὰ πρῶτα),⁸¹⁷ which boldfaces his typological conception of the historical course. This means that he is preoccupied with the coordination and inner relevance of past and future circumstances rather than with establishing a relation between the historical and the non-historical.⁸¹⁸

A recurring motif of Origen's biblical exegesis is personal appropriation of biblical narratives. In this way, he does not cause history to dissolve into theoretical ideas, but he makes theology a concrete historical experience for everyone. Thus the presence of the Logos in biblical history and the coming of the Spirit is not only grasped in that past history narrated in the Bible, but also in the personal history of any faithful individual person.

And do not suppose that these deeds belong only to past times, and nothing so great as this is done in you who are now the listener of them. For all things are accomplished in you, according to a mystical account. Indeed you, who long to come closer to the hearing of the divine law, have recently abandoned the darkness of idolatry and are now for the first time forsaking Egypt. When you are accounted among the number of catechumens and have undertaken to comply with the precepts of the Church, you have passed the Red Sea, you are placed in the stations of the desert, daily devoting yourself to hearing the Law of God and to looking upon the face of Moses, through which the glory of the Lord is revealed. But if you also have entered the mystical birth of baptism and in the presence of the priestly and Levitical order have been instructed by those sacred and sublime sacraments, which are known to those who are allowed to know those things, then, with the Jordan parted, you will enter into the land of promise by the services of

⁸¹⁶ *commJohn*, 1, XXVI.

⁸¹⁷ *frMatt*, 57.

⁸¹⁸ I agree with H. de Lubac who argued that Origen's exegetical method is influenced by those of the biblical writers. (*Histoire et Esprit: L'Intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène*, pp. 69–77.) I also endorse his assertion that 'spiritual' conception of Scripture is not a 'de-historization' of the biblical narratives. *Op. cit.* pp. 246f.

the priests. In this land, Jesus takes you in after Moses, and becomes for you the guide of a new way.⁸¹⁹

Within a few lines, Origen makes all biblical history the personal history of any Christian, even of the catechumens, the newcomers still under instruction. As long as time exists, the earnest concern and ardent preoccupation is with the course in history, *id est*, with the sense of the crucial importance of every moment and the dramatic relation between 'before' and 'after' in history. For it is only *through time* that the restoration from 'here' and 'down' to 'there' and 'up' could be attained. This concept of history gives emphasis to the outstanding role of time (indeed of *every moment* of it) in the cosmic drama towards the eschatological prospect.

Current historical reality is 'in betrothal' (ἐν ἀρραβώνι) to the eschatological one. When Paul says 'we have been resurrected together with' Christ,⁸²⁰ he lives *already* a life 'according to the blessed and perfect resurrection hoped for, although he is *not* resurrected *yet*.'⁸²¹ In this real historical present, we already live in the air of 'the restoration of the world and the renovation of the entire creation that has been re-established through the resurrection of the Lord.'⁸²² For indeed, after him who said 'be assured; I have overcome the world', every Christian is satisfied that 'with that leader the world has now been overcome by us. And its walls, which persons of this age used as support, have collapsed'.⁸²³

The conclusion is therefore plain: 'this kingdom is being prepared by means of war'.⁸²⁴ This is the dynamics through which history comes forth amidst a dramatic time of tension between 'already' and 'not yet'. This is how this philosophy of history imbued by intense eschatological orientation makes its mark.

This tension is underscored by the notion of the 'suffering body' of Christ.

Justinian appears to have ascribed a notion of 'continuous passion' of Christ to Origen. The portion as a whole is far from rendering an accurate aspect of this theology. The last phrase of it, however, is not too far from Origen's actual outlook: it concludes with Justinian ascribing to him the idea that the 'suffering' of Christ 'will happen in the ages to come until the end of the whole world'.⁸²⁵

That the real meaning of this 'passion' eluded Justinian altogether has been discussed in chapter 2. What is significant for the issue here is that the 'perfection' of resurrection and the 'transfer' of rational beings from what is 'temporal' to what is 'eternal' are related to the notion of the 'end of the whole world'.

⁸¹⁹ *Homilies on Joshua*, 4.1.

⁸²⁰ Rom. 6, 5.

⁸²¹ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

⁸²² *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.5.3. Cf. *supra*, p. 299 and n. 482.

⁸²³ *Homilies on Joshua*, 7.2.

⁸²⁴ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.3.8.

⁸²⁵ Fr. 30, Koetschau, *apud FP*, p. 310, n. 3.

The sequence of events making up this anticipation, as expounded in *Princ*, is in fact what Origen really held about the eschatological destination of history.

This notion is critical not only in general, but also with respect to Origen's conception of history and eschatology. Thus, one could pose the following question: since God knows everything, and evil will be abolished, why does Origen speak of the 'suffering' of Christ and of a certain 're-crucifixion' which is subsequent to the historical crucifixion of Jesus? Why is Christ regarded as 'suffering' once he knows that evil is destined to be exterminated? An answer to this question can be furnished only through the notion of the 'body' of Christ. When Origen describes this 'suffering', he refers to the historical *now* in which the events that constitute Christ's 'passion' occur. Although evil will be eventually eradicated, Christ suffers *now* for what happens *now*, precisely because the relevant historical events take place in his 'body'. The created *logoi* are distorted by perverse action. There is an incessant abuse of the harmony of the 'precious stones'. The 'holy stones' that 'decorated' his 'body' in the beginning, are not all 'holy' at present. The significance attributed to the determinative and dramatic character of the historical *now* demonstrates the full reality of history. This notion of 'passion' of the 'body' of Christ constitutes Origen's answer to those who misconstrued the character of his allegorical exegesis and argued that he does not consider the role of history in his theology.⁸²⁶

History is understood not just to be directed towards an end, but also to be directed towards an end *urgently* required. Origen deems it praiseworthy that Abraham 'is energetic and eager in his duties'.⁸²⁷ Emblematic and archetypal character as he is, Abraham's case provide the opportunity for pointing out the urgency of doing things in history, thus underscoring the dramatic character of it. Abraham 'makes haste in all things; all things are done urgently; nothing is done leisurely. . . . He himself runs, but the servant makes haste. No one is slow in the house of a wise man.'⁸²⁸ In all ranks of life there is an earnest expectation for the anticipated prospect to be fulfilled. Even angels, who live in higher existential standing (yet not by all means in the supreme one) yearn and work for this prospect to come to pass: "It is for their sake that angels are sent to carry out service, in order that they, too, might receive the inheritance of salvation".⁸²⁹

All history lying ahead is a period of *tension* between 'already'⁸³⁰ and 'not yet', since the incarnate Logos has *already* accomplished his dispensation, he 'has set

⁸²⁶ I discuss this in chapters 10 & 11.

⁸²⁷ Cf. Gen. 18, 2.

⁸²⁸ *Homilies on Genesis*, 4.1.

⁸²⁹ Cf. Heb. 1, 14. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.5.13.

⁸³⁰ Cf. reference to Christians who are already (ἵδῃ) 'saints and spiritual men'. *commJohn*, 2, XX, *pace* Eph. 5, 8.

an example for' us,⁸³¹ who however are not *yet* with him, but we shall 'follow later'.⁸³² In a Greek portion we can see the distinction between this 'already' and 'yet'. There are 'two senses of *resurrection*', according to Paul: one pertains to a 'saint who has already risen from the dead' (ἡδη συνανέστη); the other is the resurrection proper, 'when the perfect comes'.⁸³³ The tension is portrayed through the fact that *every moment* of history constitutes a crucial 'kairos' to be snatched through proper action. This philosophy of history has its own *carpe diem*,⁸³⁴ in a sense exclusive to this. In the *Homilies on Exodus*, Origen speaks of the manna ceasing.⁸³⁵ Therefore, Christians must store up the food (in the form of 'justice, mercy and piety') to have provisions for the 'day to come'.⁸³⁶ Herein lies the breakthrough instituted by this theology: the land of promise is understood *both as present and future*. The same idea makes its mark in his *Homilies on Joshua*:

But when we have passed across the banks of the river, 'the manna ceases'; hence anyone who has not prepared food for himself will not be able to follow Jesus as he enters the land of promise.⁸³⁷

The typological double entendre of the name 'Jesus', which is the basic motif in those homilies, is useful in making the point of the tension between present and eschatological time, experienced within the Church, as a unique understanding of the entire course of history. Once the Church is already 'in betrothal' (ἐν ἀρραβῶνι)⁸³⁸ with its final destiny, this end is earnestly and urgently striven for. This is what constitutes the intrinsic dramatic character of history.

The question of a 'next' creation and Fall

The question of the possibility of a 'next' creation is not what Origen's thought is preoccupied with. He is concerned with the world, which was created by God according to the narration of Genesis. His main interest focuses on the eschatological perspectives of this world. He is concerned with the course of this κοσμοποιία throughout history, and its destiny until the end of it. He does not deal with possibilities of a repetition of what is narrated in Genesis.

⁸³¹ *Op. cit.* 8.5.6. Cf. John, 13, 14–15.

⁸³² *commJohn*, 19, XIV; 32, III. Cf. John, 13, 36.

⁸³³ *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 29.

⁸³⁴ Horace (or, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, born in Rome, 65–8 B.C.), *Odes*, I, 11, 8.

⁸³⁵ Cf. *Joshua*, 5, 12.

⁸³⁶ *Homilies on Exodus*, 7.2.

⁸³⁷ *Homilies on Joshua*, 1.4.

⁸³⁸ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV. Cf. 2 Cor. 1, 22; 5, 5; Eph. 1, 14. The notion of 'betrothal', correlating historical action with eschatological prospect, makes a considerable mark. Cf. *commEph*, section 8; *commJohn*, 13, LIII; *Cant*, 7, PG.17.280.47; *selJob*, PG.17.97.31; *enarrJob*, PG.12.1045.15.

However, if by all means one wishes to find insinuations related to the question of possibility of a ‘next’ creation, the answer is that he believes that no other Fall will ever occur.

Einar Molland expressed his doubt as to whether will ever be any end of time, or not, according to Origen.⁸³⁹ He also considered the possibility of a ‘new’ fall. Although he traced averments according to which there will be no other fall, he doubts as to whether they belong to Origen ‘or they are Rufinus’. In *Princ* we read: “nor will one who is always in the good and to whom God is all things desire any longer to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”⁸⁴⁰ In addition, the assertion that there will be no other fall is found in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, preserved in Latin.

It is contingent that no matter what the state a soul is and what its degree of perfection of the virtues, it can still experience a fall, owing to the fact that virtue is changeable.⁸⁴¹ So just as the [soul] advances from vices to virtues, so also [it moves] from virtues to vices.⁸⁴² . . . By proposing things such as these and the like, they assume that these same arrangements will have to be repeated by Christ even in the future aeon. We then shall reply in brief to these things, as better as we can. We certainly do not deny that free will always will remain in rational creatures, but we assert that the power of the cross of Christ and of his death, which he undertook at the end of the aeons,⁸⁴³ is so great that it suffices for the healing and restoration not only of the present and the future but also for the past aeons. It suffices not only for the human rank, but also for the heavenly powers and orders.⁸⁴⁴ For according to the apostle Paul’s statement, Christ has made peace ‘through the blood of his cross’ not only with ‘the things on earth’ but also with ‘the things in heaven’.⁸⁴⁵

So far so good, there is no question of credibility for this part of the commentary. It says nothing new, in view of my analyses confirming the uniqueness of the Incarnation. Therefore, there is no reason to challenge the authenticity of this. Let us then see the following lines:

⁸³⁹ Einar Molland, *The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology*, pp. 162–164. Since the notions of ‘end’ have been perplexed in the Latin version of *Princ*, E. Molland can furnish no answer to his question: “But will there ever come an end of all time? That is the terrible problem to his thought. In the *De Principiis* he follows his two lines of thought to their utmost consequences, one leading to the idea of an ultimate end, the other denying the possibility of such an end” (*ibid.*, p. 162). E. Molland did not take into due consideration how poorly Rufinus treated Origen’s notions of time, and his failure to grasp ‘end’ as a homonym pointing to different realities. The ‘terrible problem’ then is only the Latin version of *Princ*.

⁸⁴⁰ Cf. Gen. 2, 17. *Princ* (Lat.), III.6.3.

⁸⁴¹ Cf. *commJohn*, 32, XIX: ‘volition is changeable’ (τρέπη ή προαίρεσις); *frJohn*, LXXVII: ‘human nature is changeable’ (τρέπη ή ανθρώπινη φύσις); *Scholia in Matthaeum*, PG.17.292.36: ‘the changeability of human nature’ (τὸ τρεπτόν τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου).

⁸⁴² Cf. *Cels*, IV, 69; VIII, 72.

⁸⁴³ Cf. Heb. 9, 26.

⁸⁴⁴ Cf. *Princ* (Lat.), II.3.5.

⁸⁴⁵ Col. 1, 20. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.14.

What therefore is that which, in the future aeon, might restrict freedom of will, so as to hold it from falling into sin once more, the apostle teaches us through a brief remark, saying, 'Love never fails'.⁸⁴⁶ This is indeed why love is said to be greater than faith and hope.⁸⁴⁷ For it will be only through this [sc. love] that it will be no longer possible to sin. For if a soul will have attained to this state of perfection, so as to love God with all its heart and all its strength and all its mind, and loves its neighbour as itself,⁸⁴⁸ what room is possibly left there for sin? On that account it is made clear that since none of these things listed above can disengage us from the love of God, once one has attained to the peak of perfection, how much more impossible will it be for the freedom of will to disengage us from his love. For although this virtue is part of the natural arrangement, nevertheless the power of love is so great that it draws all things to itself,⁸⁴⁹ and brings all together to itself and overpowers all virtues, since it is indeed God who first has given to us the grounds of love. . . . We have said all these as best as we have been able, in order to meet questions called for by the passage, in order to make all too clear in what manner has Christ died to sin once and for all, and how is it that he no longer dies, and why the life he lives, he lives to God.⁸⁵⁰

E. Molland said that, as far as he knows, this passage is the only one where Origen 'tries to solve the problem'.⁸⁵¹ I maintain though that the portion which Molland considers is not the sole one where Origen expounds his views of the issue. In any event, the statement that there will be no other fall does indeed express his authentic views.⁸⁵² The same notion appears in the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, in a portion, which reads thus:

If all these things, I say, were brought about by virtue of His Name alone, what do you think His very Self will do? What strength, what vigour will these maidens get from it, if they ever did attain to His actual, incomprehensible, unutterable Self? I think myself that if they ever did attain to this, they would no longer walk or run, but bound as it were by the bands of His love, they would cleave to Him, and would have no further power to move again. For they would be one spirit with Him, and that which is written: 'As Thou Father, in me and I in Thee are one, so may these also be one in us'⁸⁵³ would be fulfilled in them.⁸⁵⁴

This passage is preserved in Latin and, on the face of it, some doubt about its authenticity might be justified. E. Molland's suggestion that Origen 'tries to solve

⁸⁴⁶ 1 Cor. 13, 8.

⁸⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 13, 13.

⁸⁴⁸ Cf. Matt. 22, 37.

⁸⁴⁹ Cf. John, 12, 32.

⁸⁵⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.15–16.

⁸⁵¹ E. Molland, *op. cit.* p. 162.

⁸⁵² Regarding these affirmations in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Molland wondered: is it 'Origen or is it Rufinus?' who says so. The answer is that it is Origen himself who says so.

⁸⁵³ Cf. 1 Cor. 6, 17 and John, 17, 21.

⁸⁵⁴ *The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies, op. cit.* p. 77.

the problem⁸⁵⁵ is right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. His doubts could remain nevertheless, since the portion is preserved only in Latin.

However, in Origen's thought this was not really 'a problem' at all. For similar statements are scattered in his works in Greek. In *commJohn* he argues that once the restoration of all takes place, then each one will be a 'pillar in the temple of God, which will not go out' (μὴ ἐξελευσόμενος ἔξω).⁸⁵⁶ He grounds this conviction on the Revelation of John⁸⁵⁷ emphasizing that this scriptural passage is in fact a 'promise' (ἐπαγγελίαν).⁸⁵⁸ The same conviction is expressed in *commMatt*, where he uses scriptural terms in order to profess that time itself has an 'urgent' character,⁸⁵⁹ yet once (ἅπαξ) the end comes to pass there will be no separation from Christ any more. Beyond that, the same idea is expressed in a Greek text of *Cant*. He refers to the 'bride Church, which is the body of Christ'⁸⁶⁰ and its eschatological prospect, which is to enter into the divine reality and to be in union with Christ. The saying, 'My beloved is in me, and I am in him' (ἀδελφιδός μου ἐμοὶ, καὶ γὰρ αὐτῷ)⁸⁶¹ implies this eschatological union.⁸⁶² This union will never be dissolved, 'because it has been said by a prophecy that the Lord, like a shepherd shall feed his flock for ever'.⁸⁶³

Thus the conviction that there will be no other fall is grounded on his overall eschatological understanding. The Book of Revelation is not only a *promise*, but also a *prophecy*. Since it has been pre-announced that there will be no other fall,⁸⁶⁴ this prophecy proceeds from God's foreknowledge. According to Origen's fundamental perception of prophecy then,⁸⁶⁵ this saying in Revelation has been said *because* God timelessly *knows* that this will be the reality, which is subsequent to the ultimate end. Therefore, the conviction about no other fall ever to recur

⁸⁵⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.14. E. Molland, *op. cit.* p. 162.

⁸⁵⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XLII. s. *supra*, p. 259.

⁸⁵⁷ Rev. 3, 12.

⁸⁵⁸ *commJohn*, 10, XLII.

⁸⁵⁹ *commMatt*, 12, 34: τὸν κατεπεύγοντα περὶ τοῦ δηλουμένου χρόνον, οὐ ημεριον οὐθενον. *Ibid. infra*: τὸ κατεπεύγον. Here, also an attack on Millenarism.

⁸⁶⁰ *Cant*, 2, PG.17.265.39f.

⁸⁶¹ Song of Songs, 2, 16–17; *Cant*, 2.

⁸⁶² *Cant*, 2, PG.17.265.43.

⁸⁶³ Cf. Is. 40, 8 & 11. *Cant*, 2. Origen recalls the figure of 'shepherd' because it appears in the passage at hand, namely, Song of Songs 2, 16–17 and relates this to the notion of 'endlessness' appearing in Isaiah, 40, 8. The scriptural passages and figures are obviously interpreted in a way befitting his conviction that there will be no other Fall. At this point it is the authority of *prophecy* on which he seeks to ground this conviction, whereas elsewhere it is the *love* of God. s. *supra*, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.15–16.

⁸⁶⁴ A.H. Chroust was wrong in arguing that Origen holds a notion of 'pendular time . . . in terms of alternating approachment to and alienation from God.' Having branded Origen a Platonist, he associated what he took as a Platonic suggestion about 'pendular time' (Cf. *Politicus*, 270D) with Origen's view of time. A.H. Chroust "The meaning of Time in the Ancient World", p. 27, n. 150.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. *fMatt*, 21.

is grounded on the fact that the eschatological reality has been pre-announced by God in Scripture.

It might be mistakenly asserted that the 'as long as . . .' notion of Origen's implies that a new 'fall' may be implied out of this expression. This 'as long as . . .' (ὡςόν γε αἰνοῦμεν αὐτόν)⁸⁶⁶ does not refer to the ultimate end, but to the eternal life which is an active state, a spatio—temporal reality and certainly a reversible standing. Thus the 'fall' implied by the 'as long as . . .' notion has nothing to do with the doctrine of the Fall. It pertains only to a contingent fall of a specific being from the paramount existential allotment during the temporal course of the world, which is irrelevant to Origen's eschatological ideas. Hence this reference in *Cels* actually pertains to the 'end' as 'eternal life', not to his conception of the ultimate end.

What stands behind the conviction that there will be no other Fall is actually an aspect of Origen's philosophy of history.⁸⁶⁷ When the Father receives creation from the Son through the Holy Spirit, Origen says that creatures are seized and, as if possessed, the Trinity holds them aloft. I have argued how he distances himself from the Greek views of time and how radically he transforms the actual content of terms originated either in Plato, or in the Stoics, or those later found in Plotinus. In regard of this particular point, he actually distances himself from the Hebraic mode of thought.

It has been argued that one of the striking peculiarities of the Hebraic notion of the content of time is to be seen as follows: while the Greeks orient themselves towards the *circular* motion of the sun, the Hebrews orient themselves temporally toward the regular change of the moon's phases, or toward the *rhythmic* alteration of light and darkness, warmth and cold, etc. This means that the Hebrews did not think of a generation as a circle, but rather 'as an eternal rhythm of beginning, continuation, and return to the beginning.'⁸⁶⁸ Elaborating on this feature of Hebraic thought, T. Boman stated that the rhythmic character of Hebraic thought is capable of being illustrated in several ways: 'An isolated unit of time, therefore, has a rhythm which for the sake of comparison with rhythmic speech can be given the form: unaccented-accented-unaccented, or to compare it with the pulse-beat: weak-strong-weak. Thus in Hebrew the period of day and night is a rhythm of dull-bright-dull; evening-morning-evening . . . Accordingly, the rhythm of the month is: new moon-full moon (or, moon phases)-new moon. A year is: beginning-the months-return to the beginning; . . . A human life is origin from the earth-life-return to the earth . . .'⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁶ *Cels*, VI, 20.

⁸⁶⁷ s. *supra*, p. 349. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.10.14.

⁸⁶⁸ T. Boman, *op. cit.* p. 134.

⁸⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

This pattern of thought, as described by T. Boman, has been set forth also by N. Glatzer who argued that the interpretation of history in Tannaitic literature is constructed according to a *heiligeschichtliche* pattern consisting of three phases: 'election', 'defection', and 'return to election'. The first is seen as a kind of 'paradisical historylessness', in the sense that it is not a 'human doing', but God's gracious act. Defection is the beginning of history where human doings are arrayed against the divine purpose. History results to the restoration of the state of the original election through the dialectical relation between God and man.⁸⁷⁰ Thus, the divine-human drama progresses rhythmically through the phases of 'original righteousness' (Kehr), 'falling-away' (Verfallen) and 'restoration to original righteousness' (Wiederkehr).⁸⁷¹ Certainly no such notion of 'rhythmic alternations' is predominant in Greek thought, although the notion of 'eternal return' is not entirely irrelevant to it. The Stoic view of recurrence is in fact another notion of 'resurrection'.⁸⁷² This pattern, however, can be regarded as peculiarly a Hebrew one.

Origen's conception of the origin and destination of the world has some apparent similarities to the Hebrew pattern. There is, however, difference from both the Hebraic and the (asserted as) Hellenic mode of thought. Origen does not regard time as an everlasting duration. Time is finite; it had a beginning and will come to an end. Thus the 'rhythmic alternations' are not different 'qualitative periods of time': there is only the unique and non-recurrent succession, 'timelessness-time-timelessness'. This 'rhythm' is understood to occur *once and for all*. It is not the rhythm of a ceaseless becoming. In the final analysis, this is not actually a *rhythm*, since this notion, as Boman puts it, actually implies 'repetition'. This is exactly what constitutes the distortion by Justinian and Jerome, who alleged that Origen held that the appearance and disappearance of corporeality takes place 'at intervals', that is, intermittently and *ad infinitum*. Besides, his concept of restoration does not depict a simple fruitless 'return' to the 'ancient fatherland'. This is not just restitution of things, out of which an insignificant and pointless flux of events simply comes to pass.

Origen rejects the idea of everlasting time, which is actually both Hebraic and Greek. Those who by all means wish to find the similarities between Origen and either of these two frames of thought would say this: The teleological pattern of history might be seen as similar to the Hebraic one. The idea of temporal-worldly reality, contrasting an atemporal-divine one, might be seen as similar to

⁸⁷⁰ Nathan Glatzer, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichtslehre der Tannaiten*, p. 35.

⁸⁷¹ N. Glatzer, *op. cit.*, p. 36. With respect to the Old Testament, W. Herberg also explained that 'there is a unity, and this unity consists in the conviction that the present (historical) period of 'wrongness' is a *falling away* from the original (protological) 'rightness' (the rightness of God's creation), and it is destined for a *return* to the final (eschatological) 'rightness' in which God's purpose will at last be fulfilled.' W. Herberg, *op. cit.* pp. 694-97.

⁸⁷² *SIF*, I, 32, 19-23.

the Greek thought. So is the idea that atemporal reality is 'up' whereas temporal reality is 'down', on account of the fact that the latter is a 'fallen' condition—but the idea of 'fall' is also a typical Biblical notion, too. Nevertheless, a difference between Origen and the Hebraic pattern of history is that providential creation precedes the actual creation of the world. The 'Fall', on the other hand, coincides with the actual creation and marks the 'beginning' of space-time.⁸⁷³

I have quoted three different kinds of eschatology delineated by W. Herberg. I intimated my reservations about this classification, which could be summarized in a presumed distinction such as 'time-history is Hebraic' whereas 'space-nature is Greek' feature of thought. Well, here is Origen's eschatology—yet Herberg would be in difficulty to force it into either of his categories. In the first place, this is a 'historicist' eschatology, since time is profoundly *teleological* and there is a purpose to be fulfilled through rectification of the world. But, at the same time, the end marks the consummation of *nature*—which means that the notions of 'space-nature' are not absent from the exposition of this eschatology. Herberg would categorize Origen's eschatology as a 'historicist' one; but, in order to do that, he should make some serious concessions in his criteria of classification.

My point is that Origen's world-picture is couched in terms of space-time. He does not consider these two constitutive elements of the world as antagonistic with each other in terms of philosophy of history—which is a current tendency among many modern theologians. In other words, there is no room for misleading and unduly simplified distinctions between 'Greek' and 'Hebraic' thought, especially in our day, when modern science regards space-time as *one* single reality.

I endorse the assertions of Walter Eichrodt who expressed doubts that there is a peculiar sense of time, such as maintained by T. Boman, J. Marsh and partially by C.H. Ratschow.⁸⁷⁴ Whether this is due to the assertion that the ancient Israelites were a primitive people and therefore unable to construct verb-forms as in Greek, as asserted by Ernst von Dobschütz,⁸⁷⁵ or to any other reason, is a question which is moot. I do not think Boman is right in his claim⁸⁷⁶ that this assertion of von Dobschütz 'is no answer to the question'. I do not see why a 'theory of time' should by all means be attributed to a people who did not even

⁸⁷³ N. Glatzer (*loc. cit.*) suggested that in the Tannaitic conception the period of election precedes the inauguration of history proper and the election is co-incidental with the creation. On the other hand, Philo postulates an 'intelligible world'. Although at a point he speaks as if it was created first (*De Opificio Mundi* 4.15–5.20), he insists that this intelligible world was created *simultaneously* with the material world. *De Opificio Mundi* 7.26–8; similarly *de Providentia*, 1, 7.

⁸⁷⁴ Carl H. Ratschow, "Anmerkungen zur theologischen Auffassung des Zeitproblems", pp. 36–87.

⁸⁷⁵ Ernst von Dobschütz, "Zeit und Raum im Denken des Urchristentums", pp. 212f.

⁸⁷⁶ T. Boman, *op. cit.* p. 143.

have a word for the term 'time'⁸⁷⁷ and did not make the slightest hint about the problematique of time, but just lived *in time* cherishing a hope for the future—a hope stemming from religious convictions. To take the scriptural passages where this 'hope' is expressed and endeavour to produce a 'theory of time' out of it *now*, and ascribe this retrospectively to a people who lived more than two and a half thousand years ago, seems to me an extrapolation.

The overly simplified distinction between Hebraic and Hellenic world-pictures has also been expressed thus: the Hebraic world-picture conceives of reality as an 'order of succession', whereas the Hellenic one perceives this as an 'order of co-existence'. This was drawn by G.W. Leibniz and was promptly employed by Boman.⁸⁷⁸ As far as Boman is concerned, this is understandable, since it supported his own theories, which he had picked up from von Orelli. The actual distinction, which Leibniz made, was based on the knowledge of his epoch, when time and space were regarded as *two* distinct realities and the notion of *relativity of time* could have been rejected out of hand.

Origen *did* hold a notion of 'order of succession', but at the same time he *did* hold a notion of an 'order of co-existence'. That space proper is not only the Euclidean three-dimensional one is nowadays a commonplace. We may well speak of (and study) spaces where the *distance* between two points is nil and yet they do *not* coincide (as they should, in our three-dimensional space); we also may well study spaces and reach conclusions about them which, in our Euclidean space, seem paradoxical, or impossible, or even irrational.

Space-time is *one* reality termed αἰὼν. Therefore, when time comes to an end, space comes to an end, too. The reality of space-time does not exist without a reason. On the contrary, it has a serious and meaningful *raison d'être*. To the Alexandrian it could be a nonsense to postulate an infinite time, a time-eternal companion of God existing without space. T. Boman's strictures passed on O. Cullmann's analyses are fair-spoken:

Eschatology and belief in the timeless Beyond are not two forms of the Christian hope that are mutually exclusive, but they are equally necessary thought-forms enjoying equal privileges and complementing one another. The Bible knows not only of a glory that is coming, but also of a glory that belongs to the timeless Beyond. The cessation of all conflict and all history, when God is everything in the universe and in all,⁸⁷⁹ corresponds to the becoming visible of the invisible world of the New Jerusalem, which John saw in the Spirit.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁸⁷⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 142.

⁸⁷⁹ 1 Cor. 15, 28.

⁸⁸⁰ T. Boman, *op. cit.* p. 163.

By the same token, A. Chroust averred that 'Christianity by the very ethical character of its religion directs man's thoughts above everything visible and present to an invisible and future world'.⁸⁸¹

Origen's conception of the world-picture is indeed *both* an 'order of succession' (in which time has a teleological and profoundly dramatic and crucial character) *and* an order of 'co-existence' in the *entirely material* reality of the one 'single' world. Accordingly, the eschatological perspective entails fulfillment, rectification, transfiguration of history *and* the end of nature, that is, of space-time. The eschatological perspectives of the world are understood to lie in the *real future time*. It is through historical time, *it is through history* that the *end* will come about, the *prophesied* and *hoped for* and, in the person of Jesus, *exemplified* and *realized* and *prefigured*, and definitely *expected in anticipation* eschatological goal will be attained, and the *promise* will be *fulfilled*. This will come to pass only inside, and by means of, time and history.

It would be then too scholastic to insist on searching for similarities or differences of Origen's conception of history with respect to what is presumed to be either a 'Greek' or 'Hebraic' pattern. The reason is that history is fundamentally fashioned by a fact, which does not exist in either Greek or Hebraic thought: this is the historical event of incarnation of Christ and its eschatological implications. This is the decisive factor by which this philosophy of history is thoroughly imbued. To search for similarities to other philosophical or theological streams, while neglecting this decisive factor, could be a misleading approach to Origen's philosophy of history. The dramatic character of history has actually been intensified by the fact that the world is currently in a state of *downfall* and yet this is also already in a state of *restoration*, by virtue of God's redemptive act. This 'betrothal' to resurrection establishes a dramatic tension, because the world is regarded as *already* resurrected although not resurrected *yet*. This apparent paradox profoundly determines the dramatic character of history. The conception of time as a *natural* element in the make-up of the world, its essence and character, were formed according to the *eschatological* implications out of the divine *theophanies* of Biblical history and the historical fact of the incarnation of the Logos. This constant eschatological orientation of the whole of Origen's thought is vividly present in the formation of his concept of time as much as in his philosophy of history. It is this philosophy that provides the ground for the emergence and formation of his eschatology.

⁸⁸¹ A.H. Chroust, "The Metaphysics of Time and History in Early Christian Thought", p. 339. In support of his view, he appeals to John, 1, 15; Col. 6, 1; Phil. 3, 30.

PART IV

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY RESOLVED

Another myth reconsidered

CHAPTER TEN

HISTORY WITHOUT A 'BODY'?

An account of Origen's perception of history in the *Philocalia* is quite expressive: God is both the author of this world and the author of Scripture. God made the sun, the moon and the stars, as well as all kinds of creatures on this earth, and provides for them all. There is not a single quarter of this world that was not made according to the purpose of its Creator. The same Creator created Scripture, since the Holy Spirit is its actual author. Hence, he who believes the Scripture to have been composed by him who is the creator of this world, he also may well expect to find therein the same kind of difficulties of understanding as those in the constitution of nature. For indeed in nature there are things that can scarcely be found by human intellect, whereas other natural principles is hardly possible to discover at all.¹ Still, inability to discover all the principles governing nature does not mean that God's providence is not present throughout. So the best thing to do is to accept that our human nature is feeble and unable to understand everything. By the same token, the divine providence is present throughout all Scripture. We cannot understand all the mysteries lying hidden therein, still there is not one 'jot or one tittle'² which is void of meaning. God has authored Scripture to the minutest detail precisely in the same way he has done so for nature.

This pattern provides an unerring grasp of how Origen conceives of history. There are unanswerable questions concerning the constitution of the natural world and not everything is possible to explain. Whatever is after all explained, it reveals something of the admirable wisdom, which permeates the structure and functions of the natural world. This proposition about nature is matched by the fascinating, and yet volatile and abstruse, character of history, which stands side by side with nature, both reflecting the wisdom and providence of God.

There is much to be revealed in history. Departing from the analogy with nature, Origen considers Scripture as comprising body, soul and spirit.³ The first is literal narration; the second is moral teaching denoted through historical narration; the third is the profound mysteries believed to be harboured therein.

¹ *Philocalia*, 2, 3–4.

² Cf. Matt. 5, 18. Cf. *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.365.16; 221; *commMatt*, 16, 12; *frJer* 2 (*Philocalia*, 2, 1); *Philocalia*, 2, 4; 10, 1; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1081.6; *frPs*, 118, 140.

³ *Princ* (Gr.) IV.2.4 & 5; *Philocalia*, 1, 11; 1, 12; 1, 30; 9, 2; *homLev*, p. 334.

Introduction to truth starts with the body of Scripture, which is its letter.⁴ Allegory does not mean to jettison the letter, since this process is like stepping up to a stair, that is, reaching a more sublime understanding. Dumping the letter could simply mean to destroy the first step of the stairs.

Classification of apprehension of all knowledge has its variants, but only in letter. The learning may be natural, moral, theological (φυσική, ἠθική, θεολογική);⁵ or, natural, practical, theological (φυσική, πρακτική, θεολογική).⁶ There is a four-fold division of 'doctrines': mystical, moral, natural, logical (δογμάτων μυστικῶν, ἠθικῶν, φυσικῶν, τάχα δὲ καὶ λογικῶν).⁷ A similar designation is reserved for the 'philosophy according to Moses', involving four parts: historical (ἱστορικόν, or, legislative, νομοθετικόν), moral (ἠθική πραγματεία), theory of nature (φυσική θεωρία), and theological (θεολογικόν εἶδος).⁸

The three kinds of knowledge involve cognition of 'corporeals, incorporeals and of the Holy Trinity', which is once again classified as understanding of 'this world and contemplation of it' (τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον καὶ τὴν θεωρίαν αὐτοῦ), 'practical' (πρακτική) and 'contemplative' (θεωρητική) perception.⁹

The three aspects of functions of the soul according to Plato are echoed paraphrased at one point,¹⁰ but Origen normally prefers a term peculiar to him, which is πορευτικόν: this is the capability of the soul to apprehend things and respond accordingly. The cognitive power of a soul is then either 'explorative and confirmative' (πορευτική), or 'efficient' (δραστική), or contemplative' (θεωρητική).¹¹

Certain quarters of scholarship introduce the word ἐνοπτική, presuming this to indicate the third and supreme disciplined branch of philosophy. This they do instead of the right term ἐποπτική. But this is sheer nonsense. The word ἐνοπτική does not exist actually in Greek, certainly not in such a sense.¹² Origen's word was θεωρητική. Alternatively, he used the term ἐποπτική, but this he did only sparingly¹³ as a concession to the Greek nomenclature which bears upon

⁴ *commJohn*, 13, IX.

⁵ *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.26; 22, PG.17.220.54.

⁶ *selPs*, 120, PG.12.1641.52.

⁷ *fiLam*, 14.

⁸ *fiPs*, 76, 21.

⁹ *selGen*, PG.12.125.5–8.

¹⁰ *selGen*, PG.12.125.3–5: beside the correct ἐπιθυμητικόν, he uses λογικόν for Plato's λογιστικόν, and θυμικόν for θυμοειδές. Cf. *Respublica*, 550b1f.

¹¹ *commJohn*, 20, X; 28, VII; πορευτική δύναμις of the soul, in *commMatt*, 13, 25, *fiLuc*, 186 and *fiJohn*, 18. Cf. Aristotle (literal, sense, ref. to animals), *De Anima*, 432b14; *De Generatione Animalium*, 716a31; 740a27. But s. Hesychius, *Lexicon*, alph. letter beta, 286; Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon* (A-O), p. 373; Lexica Segueriana, (*Collectio*...), p. 179.

¹² There is only the title 'Ενοπτικῶν β' of a book ascribed to the philosopher Philip of Opus. Suda, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter phi, entry 418. The term points to optical geometers and was not used otherwise, indeed it was never used in any instance other than this specific one.

¹³ *Cels*, III, 37: 'a deeper teaching, which a Greek might call esoteric or epoptic' (ἐσωτερικῶν καὶ ἐποπτικῶν).

pagan mysteries.¹⁴ In any case, the highest contemplation of truth was indicated through the word ‘mystery’.¹⁵

Under the appellation *creation* falls not only nature, but also history. As a matter of fact, Origen is preoccupied not with ‘natural things’ (φυσιολογεῖν),¹⁶ but with the ongoing drama of history. It is not quite the case that he thought that the prime importance of the gospels is to be discovered in the spiritual truth which they communicate, rather than in the significance of historical details. He valued them in themselves, being at the same time aware of the saying, ‘I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old’,¹⁷ which enjoyed a prominent place, since this is present in both Testaments.

Origen finds it unacceptable to stick to a barren literalism and to ignore the ‘treasures of divine meaning which are enclosed within the frail vessel of the common letter.’¹⁸ Though important it is, the literal reading is only the first stage of initiation to faith. At that stage, a man is a ‘bodily’ person, but he becomes a ‘spiritual’ one through proper conduct. The difference is all too clear: a ‘bodily’ person rests content with the literal narration, or meaning; the ‘spiritual’ man ‘compares spiritual things with what is spiritual’¹⁹ and ceaselessly struggles to discover the edifying spiritual meaning behind the letter.²⁰ This is all the more necessary, since biblical narration contains certain seeming discrepancies, or instances considered to be literally unlike.²¹ Furthermore, sometimes one cannot be certain as to whether the narration happened literally, or not.²² Behind

¹⁴ *Cels*, VII, 10: The prophets said things which are ‘more mystical and more epoptic’.

¹⁵ *frLam*, 14. Origen’s use of the terms μυστήριον, μυστικός, μυστικώτερος, and derivatives such as μύστις, μυσταγωγία, μυσταγωγῶν, amounts to nearly five hundred instances. It is he who initiated the notion and expression ‘mystical doctrines’ of the Church (*frLam*, 14; *frLuc*, 209), upheld by some of his successors and championed by Gregory of Nyssa: *Ad Ablabium Quod Non Sint Tres Dei*, PG.3, 1.38; *Contra Eunomium*, 1.1.156; 2.1.198; 2.1.239; 3.5.13; 3.9.56; 3.9.59; *In Canticum Canticorum (homiliae 15)*, v. 6, p. 339. Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 6.2; *Epistulae*, Epistle 38.1. Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Zacchariam*, 2.302. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 10.4.64; *Commentarius in Isaiam*, 2.57. John Chrysostom, *Non Esse Desperandum*, PG.51.368.30. Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 1676; *Commentarii in Isaiam*, p. 2705. Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 3; 25. Ammonius of Alexandria, *Fragmenta in Joannem*, Fr. 604. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 230, Bekker p. 268a. Cf. Introduction, n. 83, p. 23f.

¹⁶ *Cels*, V, 60.

¹⁷ Matt. 13, 25 & Psalm 77, 2.

¹⁸ *Princ* (Gr.), IV.2.6.

¹⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 13: a recurrent quotation by Origen.

²⁰ *Cels*, IV, 71; VII, 11; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.2.9; *commJohn*, 10, XLIII; 13: XVI, XVIII, XLVIII, LIII; 20: X, XXIV; *deOr*, XIII, 4; XIV, 10; XXV, 1; *Fragmenta in Lucam* (Rauer), Fr. 171; *Philocalia*, 1, 16; 2, 3; *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum* (Baehrens), p. 226; *commMatt*, 10, 14 & 15; 11, 18; 14, 14; 15, 6 & 17; 17, 6 & 22; *comm1Cor*, sections 11; 12; 21; *commEph*, section 29; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 15, section 27; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.353.16; *frPs*, 19, 3–4; 92, 4; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1093.47; 4, PG.12.1149.43; 17, PG.12.1229.54; 135, PG.12.1656.53.

²¹ *Princ*, IV.2.5 (*Philocalia*, 1.12).

²² *Op. cit.* IV.3.5.

those stumbling blocks, however, there is always a veiled moral and spiritual meaning to be brought to light.²³

History full of meaning is the Biblical history. To grasp this, however, takes divine knowledge, which makes people wise unto salvation. Bald narrative is not sufficient, history in an ocean of hidden pearls of wisdom: its paramount value consists in eliciting the secret wisdom, the 'ocean of objects of contemplation' (πέλαγος τῶν θεωρημάτων) lying covert in the depths of it.²⁴ It is then the task of the exegete to 'scrutinize searching for the hidden theoremata' (καταλεπτύνειν ἐρευνᾶν τὰ κεκρυμμένα τῶν θεωρημάτων).²⁵

Since the 'letter kills, whereas the spirit gives life',²⁶ Origen faithfully appeals to Paul,²⁷ particularly whenever he undertakes the difficult task of interpreting all the complex precepts of the book of Leviticus. He sought to shield scriptural books such as this from being tarred with the brush of folly. He made use of allegory already worked out by Philo, as well as by the Stoics and others, who sought to defend the educational value of Homer. Old Testament was an old document and so was the allegorical method, therefore his method met the criteria of participating to the prestige of oldness, the *auctoritas vetustatis*, which casts light both upon the present and the future, until the end. His normal asseveration is that precepts, such as those in Leviticus, are allegories and symbols, which should by all means be applied a spiritual meaning. His interpretation of Leviticus does not deny the historical truth of the narration. At his time, however, the temple was already destroyed since 70 A.D. Still he abides by the text as real, but in order to be able to speak with more point, he upholds its perennial value regarding this as pinning the revelation of God on earth, instead of allowing this to dissipate in the clouds of idealism. The narratives of Holy Scripture are 'figures',²⁸ and for that reason they must be considered in a spiritual rather than corporeal manner. For, if they were taken in a bare corporeal sense, they harm rather than benefit, failing to nourish the reader or hearer. The Holy Spirit, who is the author of Scripture, communicated the spiritual meaning, not the literal one; otherwise all ceremonial and legal prescriptions should be expurgated from the Bible, since Christ came and abolished them. To claim that rendering the text of Leviticus free of legalism, obsolescence and incongruousness, causes this to evaporate into thin ideas is less than one half

²³ *Op. cit.* IV.3.5. Cf. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 5.5.3. "A triple mode of understanding is to be found in divine Scriptures: the historical, the moral, the mystical".

²⁴ *commJohn*, 13, XV.

²⁵ *selDeut*, PG.12.812.16–17.

²⁶ 2 Cor. 3, 6. Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.10.2; 2.9.1; 6.12.2; *Princ*, IV.3.2 (Gr. & Lat.); *Homilies on Leviticus*, 4.7; *homLuc*, 5.

²⁷ *Cels*, VI, 70; VII, 20; *commJohn*, 13, XXIII; *commMatt*, 15, 1; *frPs*, 77, 17–25; *excPs*, 77, PG.17.144.2–5.

²⁸ Heb. 10, 1 & Col. 2, 17.

of the truth. Granted this, Origen draws fairly freely on scriptural books whose letter appears to be antiquated and obsolete.

It is not only the Old Testament ‘letter which kills’,²⁹ but also the New Testament one, since there are numerous instances in the gospels at which the ‘letter kills’ those who do not entertain a spiritual interpretation of what is recorded therein.³⁰

This approach is convenient in interpreting Leviticus, where allegory is the only way out from the chaos of precepts. The attitude underlying this vein of exposition is that virtuous life and prayer will bring about the hidden truth of the Bible, and then everyone will be like John leaning on the bosom of the Logos. This is why Origen now and then refers to those ‘who resist the allegories of the Holy Scriptures and who habitually ridicule those who do not follow the historical sense in every instance’.³¹ As I explain presently, ‘historical sense’ does not mean impugning the historicity of events: it simply bears upon not taking literally some minor details of Scripture which play no role in the formation of a philosophy of history, or theology in general.

Origen drew a clear distinction between the literal narration of Scripture, which is the mere chronicle of happenings, and the disclosure of the significance of those happenings.³² The first is the bare letter of occurrences, the latter is the sublime and mystical meaning (μυστικώτερον) conveyed thereby (τὸ ὑψηλὸν τοῦ γράμματος βούλημα).³³ This is the difference between ‘things’ (πραγμάτων) and ‘bare letter of Scripture’ (ψιλῶν γραμμάτων τῆς γραφῆς),³⁴ which is the unadorned account of episodes, called ‘literal narration’ (ψιλή ἱστορία).³⁵

²⁹ 2 Cor. 3, 6.

³⁰ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.5.4–5; Cf. also in Latin: *op. cit.* 1.1. *Homilies on Joshua*, 9.8; 20.6; *Homilies on Genesis*, 7.4; *Homilies on Exodus*, 7.1; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.10.2; 2.12.1; 1.14.8; 2.14.10; 2.14.11; 3.1.3; 3.9.8; 6.1.9; 6.7.10; 6.9.3; 6.11.3; 6.12.2, 6, 7, 8; 7.5.5. In Greek: *Cels*, VI, 70; VII: 20, 21; *commJohn*, 10, XXIV; 13, XXIII; XXIV; LV; *commMatt*, 11, 14; 15: 2, 91; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 11; *commEph*, section 12; *selEz*, 20, PG.13.820.21; *excPs*, PG.17.144.3; *frPs*, 22, 1–2; 77, 19–25; 2, 3; *selPs*, 70, PG.12.1520.12 & PG.12.1521.21.

³¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.8.8. Cf. *op. cit.* 2.13.17. Cf. “It is far better not to have understood than to understand things badly.” *op. cit.* 8.8.6.

³² An analogous modern distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte* is drawn by German philosophy of history mindest.

³³ *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.345.16–17; *Princ*, IV.2.2 (*Philocalia*, 1, 9): ‘spiritual understanding’ (γραφή πνευματικά νανομένη) and ‘bare letter’. Cf. *Princ*, IV.2.4.

³⁴ *Cels*, I, 49. *commJohn*, 13, LV: τῇ ψιλῇ ἐκδοχῇ τοῦ γράμματος. *commMatt*, 12, 43: τὸ ψιλὸν τοῦ γράμματος βούλημα. Likewise, *op. cit.* 10, 14; 12, 5; 12, 45. *Cels*, II, LXIX: ἐν ψιλῇ τῇ λέξει καὶ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ. *Princ*, III.1.15: τῶν ψιλῶν ρητῶν. *commJohn*, 1, XXXVIII; 5, II; 10, XXXII; 13, LV: ψιλῇ λέξει. Cf. *Philocalia*, 1, 11; 5, 2; 8, 1; 12, 2; 21, 14; 27, 13; *homJer*, 19, 11; *In Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, pp. 413, 420; *comm 1Cor*, section 63; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 10.

³⁵ ψιλή ἱστορία: *Cels*, II, 69; *In Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, p. 432; *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum* (fragmenta), p. 129; *commMatt*, 16, 12.

Bare letter is inappropriate to resolve what has been said in subliminal intent (ὑπόνοια),³⁶ which can be grasped only by an intellect not devoid of divine inspiration (ψιλῶ καὶ γυμνῶ θειότητος).³⁷ History was written not simply to narrate facts, but mainly to convey expressive messages. This is 'the willful intention' (βούλημα) of the holy writers,³⁸ which is unfailingly contrasted with the bare letter, although certainly this is one and the same corpus: "there is no one Scripture understood in its higher improt and another one read in its literal sense".³⁹ The literal narration is not dismissed, since even this 'narration of tangible things is highly beneficial' (καὶ ἡ κατ' αἴσθησιν τῶν πραγμάτων ἱστορία μεγάλης ὠφελείας πεπλήρωται).⁴⁰ This concern for real facts stimulated Origen to visit places recorded here and there in the stories, following 'the footprints of Jesus and his disciples and the prophets' for the sake of confirming the 'literal historical account' (ἐπὶ ἱστορίαν).⁴¹ The same concern for the 'letter' urged him to consult with different editions of scriptural texts,⁴² or with different versions of the Septuagint.⁴³ It was after all this assiduity and adhesion to the historical reality of 'things' that instigated occasional onslaught on Origen for literalism.⁴⁴

The subtlety of his use of Greek should not elude us. He refers to the βούλημα, not βούλησις, of Scripture. Although both may be rendered as 'will' or 'purpose', βούλημα is loaded with a sense of 'will to act', a sense of intended *action*. Searching for the βούλημα of Scripture⁴⁵ is tantamount with a quest for the dynamic relation between God and men resulting to *history*, not to mere contemplation. Confronting a βούλημα is not simply an intellectual disagreement, it is *acting* over against one's will.⁴⁶ This means that Origen saw

³⁶ *Cels*, IV, 38. Cf. pp. 28f.

³⁷ *Cels*, V, 1.

³⁸ τὸ βούλημα τῆς γραφῆς: *commJohn*, 2, XVI; *commMatt*, 16, 1; *commGen*, PG.12.88.34–35 (*Philocalia*, 14, 1); *exhMar*, XXIX; τὸ βούλημα τῶν γεγραμμένων: *homJer*, 1, 2; 3, 1. τὸ βούλημα τῶν γραφῶν: *commMatt*, 12, 14; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat., p. 218; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1148.35–36; τὸ βούλημα τῶν γραψάντων: *Cels*, I, 42 (*Philocalia*, 15, 15); *Cels*, III, 74 (*Philocalia*, 18, 26); IV, 87 (*Philocalia*, 20, 14); τὸ βούλημα τῶν (ἡμετέρων, or ἱερῶν, or ἁγίων, or simply) γραμμάτων: *Cels*, III, 53 (*Philocalia*, 18, 23); IV, 17; VI, 37; *homJer*, 19, 11; *commMatt*, 15, 3; 16, 3; 16, 10; τὸ βούλημα of any scriptural author: *Cels*, I, 18 (Moses); III, 33 (Paul); *commJohn*, 10, XLI (Paul inspired by the Logos); τὸ βούλημα τῶν προφητικῶν λόγων: *Cels*, II, 76.

³⁹ *Princ*, IV.2.2 (*Philocalia*, 1, 9).

⁴⁰ *selNum*, PG.12.577.36–37.

⁴¹ *commJohn*, 6, LX.

⁴² *selEz*, PG.13.781.37: ἐπισκεψάμενοι τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκδόσεις.

⁴³ *homJer*, 15, 5. Notice the repetition of the same expression, ἐπισκεψάμενοι τὰς λοιπὰς ἐκδόσεις at this point.

⁴⁴ Eustathius of Antioch (4th cent A.D.), *De Engastrimytho Contra Origenem*, 21.3; 21.10; 22.4; 22.6; 22.7. s. Introduction, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Βούλημα has an inherent sense of communal will. Βούλευμα means individual volition. Suda *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 2825.

⁴⁶ Suda refers to Origen's 'deeper' search for the βούλημα of Scripture since childhood.

Scripture not as a text to be simply perused in terms of philology, but as an *act* of God within history. The text should be scrutinized not just for the sake of intellectual gratification, but for the purpose of responding properly to the divine message.

Full comprehension of Scripture is to be achieved in the future, according to the teaching by the Holy Spirit. It was Jesus who said to his disciples that, although he ‘still’ has ‘many things to say’ to them, they would be fully instructed by the Paraclete, when he comes.⁴⁷ What Jesus said to them in parables⁴⁸ was a ‘type’ of the ‘truth’ which will be pronounced by the Holy Spirit: “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth”.⁴⁹ Full knowledge of Scripture is placed in the eschatological realm, ‘when the entire body of Jesus will be resurrected.’⁵⁰ This is the ‘sealed book’ which John saw in the Revelation, this is the ‘eternal gospel’. Origen remains faithful to Jesus’s order to investigate in Scripture,⁵¹ in the hope that the Logos will ‘open the minds’⁵² of his disciples throughout history, so that they ‘comprehend the Scriptures’.⁵³

Paul assured that ‘these things happened typically, and were written to admonish us’,⁵⁴ and Origen countenances the idea as a recurring theme.⁵⁵ The question thought which is invited is whether he denies history. Granted, it comprises body, soul and spirit. Is it nevertheless possible to have history without a body?

Origen points out certain disparities, which he calls ‘discrepancy regarding literal narration’ (τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀσυμφωνίας).⁵⁶ His assertion is, however, that discordance between the gospels concerning bare facts does not impugn their credibility, for the evangelists saw the glory of God from different points

Lexicon, Alphabetic letter omega, entry 183. *Lexica Segueriana*, *De Syntacticis* (e cod. Coislin. 345), Alphabetic entry alpha, page 121, line 11. Even stronger is the term βούλευσις, which a ‘name for a crime’ (ἐγκλήματός ἐστι ὄνομα). *Suda*, *Lexicon*, Alphabetic letter beta, entry 429. *Lexica Segueriana*, *Glossae Rhetoricae* (e cod. Coislin. 345), Alphabetic entry beta, page 220. *Lexicon Sabbaiticum*, *Lexicon Sabbaiticum* (e cod. Sabbaitico 137), Alphabetic letter beta, page 44.

⁴⁷ Matt. 16, 12–13. Cf. *commJohn*, 2, XVIII; 20, XXIX; *selPs*, 27, PG.12.1289.18.

⁴⁸ Psalms, 77, 2; Matt. 13, 35. Cf. *Cels*, II, 6; IV, 49; *commMatt*, 15, 28; *frPs*, 77, 2; *frProv*, PG.13.25.45 & 52.

⁴⁹ Cf. John, 16, 13. *Cels*, II, 2. Origen refers to the sanctifying action of the Spirit, as expounded in chapter 9, p. 286.

⁵⁰ *commJohn*, 10, XLIII: Τὸ τέλειον τῆς πίστεως ἐκ τῶν περὶ πίστεως ἐξητασμένων καταλάβομεν ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ τῶν νεκρῶν ἀναστάσει.

⁵¹ Cf. John, 5, 39. *Cels*, III, 33; V, 16; VI: 7, 37; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.5; *commJohn*, 5, VI; VI, 20; VI, 59; *frJohn*, XXXVII; 48; *commMatt*, 10, 6; *Philocalia*, 1, 21; 5, 5; *frPs*, 118, 115; *epAfr*, PG.11.60.10 *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.7.10.

⁵² Cf. Luke, 24, 45; 24, 32.

⁵³ Cf. *commJohn*, 10, XIV; *Cels*, VII, 12; *Philocalia*, 8, 1; 12, 1; 23, 4; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1133; *In Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, p. 415; *comm1Cor*, section 11.

⁵⁴ 1 Cor. 10, 11.

⁵⁵ *Cels*, IV, 43; VI, 70; *Princ*, IV.2.6; *commJohn*, 1, VI; 13, XXVI; *comm1Cor*, sections 35 & 46; *frLuc*, 125; *Philocalia*, 1, 13; *commLuc*, PG.17.337.

⁵⁶ *commJohn*, 10, IV.

of view. What is important is the glory, which was revealed, not the point of view. Therein lies the ultimate value of history.

Let us see then what he actually has in mind when he refers to discrepancies and impossibilities. The question is if he licenced discovery of the spiritual meaning at the expense of the real historicity of events. His texts then call for investigation, in order to determine points, if any, where facts are dismissed for the sake of spiritual interpretation.

Regarding the milestones of Biblical history, never did Origen dispute their historical reality. Going out of Egypt, passing through the Red Sea, living in the desert and finally reaching the Land of Promise, they all are instances considered through the lens of allegory. All these events, however, are never denied or styled not real history. Besides, the allegories identifying 'Egypt' and 'Pharaoh' with evil domain, 'desert' with exigencies of life, the 'Land of Promise' with the eschatological expectation, and so on, are not simply theories in a Platonic vein, such as those of Philo's. In contrast, he makes both the narration and its spiritual meaning a real part of everyone's life. The struggle, progress and setbacks both in action and in faith to God are conditions to be experienced by the faithful during their lifetime. Allegorical exegesis is a support for everyone so that he does not lose courage, faith and hope. They are patterns for any Christian's life to be lived in actuality, in real history, in any historical age.⁵⁷

The notion of divine *epiphanies* is crucial for grasping Origen's theology, especially the *historical* basis of this, which originates in God's appearances and his perennial call to any man throughout history. Theology, after all, is not simply the exposition of doctrines, as if they were just another sort of philosophical propositions: it is an entire world considered in its historical course. Doctrine is nothing more than the teaching which describes the content of faith as this was, and continues to be, manifest in real life. Despite widespread misimpression, the foundation of his teaching was not theoretical or personal philosophical assertions; it was the entire *experience* of ecclesiastical life participating in the adventures of the people of Biblical history. What he primarily saw as *Christianity* was not philosophical concepts and ideas handed down from Scripture, but the actions of God and the *life* and actions of God's people in the world—and this, in relation not only to the past, but also to the future. Tentative theological conjectures is a quite different issue.

Origen tried to interpret the biblical concepts in terms that his contemporaries could understand without taking offence at the alien modes of thought encountered in the Bible. But he never had the impression that we could in

⁵⁷ *Homilies on Joshua*, 4.1. s. *supra*, pp. 345–46.

any case say anything really *new*, that is, to say things going beyond the experience of the prophets and the apostles, or indeed that in any case was there anything essentially new to be said. This is precisely the function of all of his doctrinal teaching. Through a certain appropriation of all means available to him from his environment, he contributed to the life of the Church, couching Christian doctrine using abundantly Scriptural language, retailed by notions of science and philosophy frequently loaded with an import duly accommodated. His aim was not only to 'keep that carnal Israel completely out of a historical interpretation',⁵⁸ but also to show that the drama of history is neither simply an intellectual analysis, nor just an abstract model. His accounts are the living representation of all Christians (and ultimately, of all people) experiencing the real adventures of things. Life is meaningful to the detail of it, hence not only is the historicity of events dissolved, but also their reality is extended throughout all history, until the end of it.

Should anyone by all means were apt to hunting points where historicity is disputed, he would be rather disappointed. There are only a few instances where some remarks relate not to vital questions such as the 'reality of history', but with minute moments highlighted by Origen not for the sake of denying history, but in the spirit of his (sometimes excessive) attention paid to details, which he regards as loaded with supplementary meaning. Defending this tendency, he said to Celsus: "we avail ourselves of common sense and prolonged investigation and insight into the intention of the author".⁵⁹ Instances relating to this disposition, however, by no means can compromise his philosophy of history, since they pertain to minor details, which cannot be paid disproportionate attention, assuming one wishes his considerations to remain out of the domain of the ludicrous evidence for making a point about philosophy of history. For example, in *Princ*, he questions the letter of the Mosaic law regarding 'carrying burdens on the Sabbath', or offering sacrifices or even carrying out circumcision, not as unreal, but as setting forth observances which may appear either irrational or impossible once one thinks that this is *all* Moses had to say, and no spiritual meaning in conveyed through the letter.⁶⁰ He does not deny that the appearance of those precepts in history was a real event, neither does he dispute that the Jews try to, or indeed do, observe them to the letter. What he condemns is any assumption that the biblical text is exhausted in such practical instructions only, some of which are ludicrous, such the interpretation of Num. 35, 5, by Dositheus the Samaritan, who contended this ordinance to mean that 'in whatever position a man is found on the Sabbath day he should remain there

⁵⁸ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 6.1.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Cels*, I, 42.

⁶⁰ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.2. Cf. IV.3.4 & 5.

until evening'.⁶¹ The same goes for similar instances in the Gospel. What can be more irrational than the command, 'Salute no man by the way'?⁶² Origen wonders. What a simple believer could think about Jesus's commands if this were to be taken literally?

To speak of the right cheek being struck⁶³ is most incredible, for every striker, unless he suffers from some unnatural defect, strikes the left cheek with his right hand. And it is impossible to accept the precept from the Gospel about the 'right eye that offends'; for granting the possibility of a person being 'offended' through his sense of sight, how can the blame be attributed to the right eye, when there are two eyes that see? And what man, even supposing he accuses himself of 'looking on a woman to lust after her' and attributes the blame to his right eye alone, would act rationally if he were to cast this eye away?⁶⁴

He himself, however, takes exception to attempts of his remarks being unduly beguiled.⁶⁵ He furnished exceedingly extended accounts on a few 'absurd or impossible' portions⁶⁶ which cannot be taken literally. None of them though can be seriously considered as bearing upon his philosophy of history.

Putting the ancient method of allegorical exegesis into Christian use, he saw as his task to elicit the moral and theological (or mystical) meaning that the text is presumed to contain, since there is an unfailing regular agreement about cardinal issues, conjoining them fast into one body of revelation. Although unyielding in his conviction that it is impossible to fathom the scriptural mysteries, he was steadfast in determining historical events as the basis and substructure of loftier insights. His Homily on 1 Kings (or, 1 Samuel) 28 is a notable instance proving him constantly circumspect considering the anagogical sense of Scripture (ἀναγωγῇ). He refused to part way with historical occurrences narrated there. This is a point where he lays bare his underlying conception of the reality of history in general. The Homily on 1 Kings 28 refers to one of the most controversial passages in Scripture, commonly called the Witch of Endor incident. In this, a medium conjures the dead prophet Samuel from Hades. His exegesis is of exemplary importance, since he stays almost entirely with the historical or literal text from start to finish, affirming the historical truth of the text without jettisoning the literal sense. His thesis is that elevation to the higher spiritual truth hidden in the text does not disallow the historicity of events. His Epistle

⁶¹ *Op. cit.* IV.3.2.

⁶² Luke, 10, 4.

⁶³ Matt. 5, 39.

⁶⁴ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.3.

⁶⁵ Cf. *epAfr*, PG.11.60.18. A reference to 'those who seek for pretext (προφάσεις)' in order to 'slunder' him (συκοφαντεῖν). s. Introduction, p. 2, note 1.

⁶⁶ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.4.

to Africanus is also a piece of work showing him a staunch defender of the letter of Biblical narration. This notwithstanding, his opinion is that sticking to literal meaning only is a characteristic of either simple Christians, who need instruction,⁶⁷ or of heretics, such as Marcion, Basilides, Valentinus, even the devil.⁶⁸ As sin has a certain seat and kingdom in the body,⁶⁹ so heresies are the works of flesh and proceed from a mind of flesh. Thus ἀναγωγή does neither presuppose nor entail invalidation of historicity of events; it simply points out their historical significance. *Historia* is always the ground upon which all interpretation should be based. Elevation to the anagogical truth does not overrule historicity; this only acknowledges the threefold meaning of Scripture being literal, moral and spiritual. To stick to the literal meaning is the ground giving rise to either error or absurdities.⁷⁰ This he rendered evident in his homilies on Leviticus, claiming that the innumerable precepts for everyday life are now nul and void, still there are higher truths hidden in the ceased historicity of those past real events.

I have myself reflected on why his views were so flagrantly distorted. One reason for this, it seems to me, is his expression *κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν* (according to the *historia*),⁷¹ in which ‘history’ has been taken to designate History, although it simply means ‘literal narration’.⁷² This is then a suitable point to consider his use of the adverb ἱστορικῶς, which is frequent in modern language, but the case was not quite so in Antiquity. As a matter of fact, the adverb is absent from available writings of eminent Christian theologians, such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Clement. It appears though in Origen and I cannot find any Christian use of this prior to his writings.

To the surprise of a modern reader (particularly a Greek one), the term is not as common as one might have expected this to be. It occurs once in Aristotle,⁷³ then once in Sextus Empiricus⁷⁴ and Galen.⁷⁵ Of later philosophers commenting

⁶⁷ *Homilies on Luke*, 23.5.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* 31.2–3.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.7.3.

⁷⁰ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.4.

⁷¹ Cf. *Cels*, IV, 45; V, 38; *Princ* (Gr.), IV.3.4; IV.2.9; IV.3.4; IV.3.5; *commJohn*, 10: III; V; XLII; 13, XIII; *frJohn*, LXXIX; *homJer*, 4, 1; *frJer*, 28; *De Engastrimytho* (*Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.]* 28.3–25), section 2; *Fragmenta in Lucam*, (M. Rauer) 223; *Philocalia*, 1, 16; 20, 21; 26, 8; *commMatt*, 15, 7; 16, 25; *frPs*, 121, 4–5; *selEz*, 4, PG.13.780.31; *expProv*, 23, PG.17.221.39; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1120.53; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1164.6.

⁷² Cf. τῇ ἱστορίᾳ (according to the narrative), *Cels*, I, 43; III, 33; *commJohn*, 10, XXXVIII; 13, LVIII; 20, XXV; *homJer*, 14, 12; *commMatt*, 11, 6; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1120.27; *selPs*, 135, PG.12.1656.40; or, τῇ ἱστορίᾳ ψιλῇ (according to the bare literal narrative): *commMatt*, 16, 12; *Cels*, II, 69, which is simply a ‘point of departure’ (ἐπιβάθρα), *commJohn*, 20, III.

⁷³ Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*, 757b35.

⁷⁴ Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, 1.4.

⁷⁵ Galen, *De Theriaca ad Pisonem*, v. 14, p. 275.

on Aristotle, we find an equally scarce use in Simplicius⁷⁶ and Syrianus,⁷⁷ while Proclus makes the interesting distinction of considering a certain myth in different ways: first, ἱστορικῶς, secondly φυσικῶς, thirdly φιλοσόφως.⁷⁸ The spirit of this distinction goes back to Strabo, who concedes some historical instances to be narrated mingled with some literally untrue but edifying additions.⁷⁹ This extremely scarce use of the adverb ἱστορικῶς is all pagan thought made of it.

It is with Origen that this adverb makes its mark in theological parlance, in order to accentuate the outstanding emphasis laid upon the historicity of Christianity.⁸⁰ However, as it happened with so many of his inspirations, the adverb did not enjoy much currency among subsequent writers. In fact, this was used only once by Athanasius,⁸¹ Gregory of Nazianzus,⁸² the historian Socrates⁸³ and Olympiodorus of Alexandria,⁸⁴ twice by Eusebius,⁸⁵ and Maximus Confessor,⁸⁶ three times by Theodoret of Cyrus,⁸⁷ four times by Gregory of Nyssa,⁸⁸ six times in one commentary of Procopius of Gaza,⁸⁹ also six times by Didymus the Blind,⁹⁰ but never by Basil of Caesarea. The case of Eustathius of Thessaloniki is one of its own, since he used the adverb ἱστορικῶς twenty-four times, yet exclusively in his analyses on Homer. He needed this anyway, since the tradition of allegorizing Homer was behind him and he had somehow to make his own point on the narration related to either 'historicity' or 'allegory'. The strikingly impressive exception is Cyril of Alexandria, who used this adverb no less than fifty times.⁹¹

⁷⁶ Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 9, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Syrianus, *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, p. 103.

⁷⁸ Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 1, pp. 109, 144. Cf. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, v. 1, p. 144: ἱστορικῶς suggesting bare narration of historical instances.

⁷⁹ Strabo, *Geographica*, 1.1.10: συγγνῶν δ' ἄν καὶ εἰ μυθῶδη τινὰ προσπέλεκται τοῖς λεγομένοις ἱστορικῶς καὶ διδασκαλικῶς καὶ οὐ δεῖ μέμφεσθαι.

⁸⁰ *frLam*, 98; *frLuc*, 217; *frPs*, 77, 44 (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν and the distinction of ἱστορικῶς from πνευματικῶς). The same in *excPs*, PG.17.147.35; *Scholia in Lucam* PG.17.333.13 (the same in *frLuc*, 105).

⁸¹ Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.27.465.43.

⁸² Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Sanctum Pascha (orat. 45)*, PG.36.636.30.

⁸³ Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.2.

⁸⁴ Olympiodorus of Alexandria (6 cent. A.D.), *Commentarii in Job*, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 9.1.12; *Commentarius in Isaiam*, 2.28.

⁸⁶ Maximus Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, 27; *Capita de Caritate*, 2.31.

⁸⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, p. 78; *Interpretatio in Daniele*, PG.81.1532.9; *Interpretatio in xii Prophetas Minores*, PG.81.1836.33.

⁸⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 2.1.255; *De Vita Mosis*, 2.320; *De Oratione Dominica Orationes v*, p. 238; *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, pp. 76 & 113.

⁸⁹ Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Isaiam*, pp. 2332, 2432, 2484, 2505, 2513, 2633.

⁹⁰ Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Job (5.1–6.29)*, Cod. p. 144; *Commentarii in Psalmos 22–26.10*, Cod. p. 66; *Commentarii in Psalmos 29–34*, Cod. p. 189; *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (e commentario altero), Fr. 1286; *De Trinitate (lib. 2.8–27)*, PG.39.672 (distinction made between ὁρατῶς and νοητῶς, as well as between ἱστορικῶς and πνευματικῶς); *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten (9.8–10.20)*, Cod. p. 308.

⁹¹ Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarius in xii Prophetas Minores*, v. 1: pp. 27, 28, 31, 34, 35,

Origen wrote and thought with full awareness of the importance of historical narration. What he disputed was only details and ‘stumbling blocks’, which though are asserted to be there in order to be investigated with particular scrutiny so as to have concealed truths revealed. It is implausibility that is pointed out, not any denial of history posited therein. Common sense is applied to certain remarks, in order to elicit what is covert at a point. Paul said, Origen continues, ‘Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised.’⁹² Uneasy at such words, and others of this kind, he asserts that they ‘have been inserted not at random’: not only ‘uncircumcision’ is impossible, but also it would be unlikely for anyone to do this ‘in view of the disgrace which is felt by most people to attach to circumcision.’⁹³

I made these quotations in order to show that the proverbial ‘denial of history’ by Origen is a myth. No matter what his speculations are, they stem from real historical occurrences. Even in the foregoing portions, Origen does not deny that those words were really said by either Jesus or Paul. What he argues for is that on no account one should concentrate on the implausibility of the letter. The ‘eternal gospel’ is revealed as a robust historical account of the innumerable instances of Biblical history, and of a life lived in Judaea ‘at the time of Pontius Pilate’, which is ‘the true story about’ Jesus (τὴν ἀληθῆ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱστορίαν).⁹⁴

But someone may suppose that the former statement refers to all the scriptures, and may suspect us of saying that because some of the history did not happen, therefore none of it happened; and because a certain law is irrational or impossible when taken literally, therefore no laws ought to be kept to the letter; or that the records of the Saviour’s life are not true in a physical sense... We must assert, therefore, that in regard of some things we are clearly aware that the historical fact is true... For the passages, which are historically true, are far more numerous than those with purely spiritual meanings.⁹⁵

Those ‘thousands of other facts’⁹⁶ which are asserted as undisputedly historical are all the facts and events of the Bible, while those disputed are sayings and

40, 68, 72, 78, 96, 353, 445, 725; v. 2, pp. 25, 95, 98, 101, 226, 243, 303, 340, 435. *Commentarii in Joannem*, v. 2, p. 154; *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate*, PG.68.393.43; *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*, PG.69.16.8; PG.69.37.32; PG.69.60.3; PG.69.192.29; PG.69.261.34; *Expositio in Psalmos*, PG.69.833.45; *Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam*, PG.70.192.16; PG.70.277.11; PG.70.305.29; PG.70.329.54; PG.70.333.14; PG.70.360.41; PG.70.361.3; PG.70.377.19; PG.70.388.42; PG.70.436.16; PG.70.604.55; PG.70.645.57; PG.70.689.30; PG.70.692.27; PG.70.861.18; PG.70.905.8; PG.70.953.54; PG.70.1125.23; PG.70.1145.9 & 18.

⁹² 1 Cor. 7, 18.

⁹³ *Princ.*, IV.3.3.

⁹⁴ *commMatt.*, 13, 17.

⁹⁵ *Princ.* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.3.

⁹⁶ *Op. cit.* IV.3.4.

laws taken to the letter by the Jews, as discussed above. This is the only sense in which 'all Scripture has a spiritual meaning, but not all has a bodily meaning'.⁹⁷ Origen devoted himself to the disclosure of the truth deposited in the Bible. What is never mentioned, however, is the reason why he did so: it is for the sake of *history* unto salvation that he sought to find the 'mind of Christ'.⁹⁸ To this purpose, he buttresses up his exegetical conjectures by means of applying ample cross-reference to biblical testimony. He always remains faithful to the Bible, adducing as the authority for entertaining allegorical interpretation not only Paul's statement in Gal. 4, 24 (rebuking the Galatians for failing to perceive the mystical meaning behind the narration about Abraham and his sons),⁹⁹ but also Paul's references such as 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels',¹⁰⁰ and his consideration of the Deuteronomic precept, 'Thou shall not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn', making this point: 'Is it for the oxen that God cares, or said He this entirely for our sake? Indeed it was written for our sake'.¹⁰¹ Following Paul's allegorical tender, Origen takes for granted that the rock from which the Israelites drew their water in time of need was both a real event and a foreshadow of Christ,¹⁰² and he does use this abundantly.

On points such as this, Origen is at one with Paul subscribing to his remarks to the Galatians: 'Further in the Epistle to the Galatians, speaking in terms of reproach to those who believe that they are reading the law and yet do not understand it, and laying down that they who do not believe that there are allegories in the writings do not understand the law'.¹⁰³ The same he does referring to Col. 2, 16–17, about eating meat or drinking, new moons and sabbaths, which all are 'a shadow of the things to come'. All the precepts about foods, therefore, are not denied as history, still they are held as 'symbols' of the eschatological nourishment by the Trinity.¹⁰⁴ Biblical history was a 'type' of what was to be fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Likewise, what Jesus said and did is in fact a 'type' of the eschatological fulfillment.¹⁰⁵ In view of all these figures and symbols, it is all too natural for Origen to regard history as an 'open sea of meanings' (πέλαγος τῶν τοσούτων νοημάτων),¹⁰⁶ where patent facts need a virtuous and pervasive mind to point out their significance.

⁹⁷ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.3.5.

⁹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 16. *Cels*, V, 1; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.3; *commJohn*, 1, IV; 10, XXVIII; 10, LXI; 13, LXVI; *deOr*, I, 1; *Philocalia*, 1, 10; *commMatt*, 15, 30; 17, 13; *frPs*, 124, 5; *sePs*, 4 PG.12.1149.40 & 49; *Scholia in Canticum Canticorum*, PG.17.253. Cf. pp. 383, 404, 410.

⁹⁹ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.6.

¹⁰⁰ 2 Cor. 4, 7.

¹⁰¹ 1 Cor. 9, 9.

¹⁰² 1 Cor. 10, 4.

¹⁰³ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.6.

¹⁰⁴ *commJohn*, 10, XV.

¹⁰⁵ *homLev*, p. 333 (*Philocalia*, 1, 30); *commMatt*, 16, 3.

¹⁰⁶ *commJohn*, 10, XV.

Origen did recognize the records of both the Testaments as truly representing what took place regarding God's relation to the literal and the allegorized 'Israel'. With the real historicity of events affirmed, it is an additional task to elicit their mystical meaning. Allegory should not be dissociated from the real story narrated by the Gospel (τηρουμένης τῆς κατὰ τὰ γενόμενα ἱστορίας).¹⁰⁷

Along with its full reality, history, like nature, is a sacrament, where manifest and visible symbols administer communication of an abundance of *theoremata*, that is, of innermost spiritual truths, to perceptive and receptive minds. Still, this does not make either nature or *historia* unreal. The foremost concern is not in fact for the particular spiritual rendering of a passage, but for maintaining respect for the Holy Spirit, that is, not to disgrace the real author of Scripture. Any spiritual interpretation is accepted once this complies with the grandeur of God (ἄξιως Θεοῦ).¹⁰⁸

If the usefulness of the law and the sequence and ease of the narrative were at first sight clearly discernible throughout, we should be unaware that there was anything beyond the obvious meaning for us to understand in the scriptures. Consequently, the Logos of God has arranged for certain stumbling-blocks, as it were, and hindrances and impossibilities to be inserted in the midst of the law and the narration (τῇ ἱστορίᾳ), in order that we may be not completely drawn away by the sheer attractiveness of the language, and so either reject the true doctrines absolutely, on the ground that we learn from the scriptures nothing worthy of God (ἄξιον Θεοῦ),¹⁰⁹ or else, by never moving away from the letter, fail to learn anything of the more divine element. And we must also know this, that because the principal aim was to announce the connection that exists among spiritual events, those that have already happened and those that are yet to come to pass, whenever the Logos found that things which had happened in history (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν) could be harmonized with these mystical events and use them, concealing from the multitude their deeper meaning... Sometimes *a few words* (ὀλίγαι λέξεις) are inserted which in the bodily sense are not true, and at certain other instances maybe some more words.¹¹⁰

What is then called in question is not the reality of history, but the possibility 'of a few words' to be taken literally. History is not an allegory; it is a downright reality. A parable, by definition, relates things that never happened in actuality. Biblical history, on the other hand, relates real events concerning the past life, but also concerning the present and the future, until the end. The testimonies teach what really happened, symbolic interpretation and *anagoge* teaches what these episodes mean and how they edify towards salvation. The value of history lies not only in what it informs about the past, but in what it teaches about

¹⁰⁷ *commMatt*, 10, 14.

¹⁰⁸ *Cels*, V, 18; *commJohn*, 1, XXXVIII; 2, XVII.

¹⁰⁹ An exegesis should always be 'worthy of God' (ἄξιον Θεοῦ). Cf. *homJer*, 20, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Princ*, IV.2.9 (*Philocalia*, 1, 16); italics mine.

everyone's everyday conduct of life and about the eschatological future. The 'stumbling-blocks', of which so much discussion has been made, are never the major historic instances of the Bible: the exegetical difficulties have simply to do with minute details running contrary to common sense, taken to be pregnant with edifying design.

Allegorical interpretation has never been the way to evade painstaking examination of events, texts and sources. No other author produced anything remotely like the *Hexapla*, and few in Origen's time, if any, did carry out such a thorough inquiry in appellations, biblical localities and archeological evidence related to biblical instances. Is this performance degradation of, or contempt for, real history in the name of idealization of narration? I am often struck by the fact that, although certain allegorical interpretations of Origen's are chastised as fanciful extrapolations, or alchemic stuff, his method is almost never stated along with the Pauline portions which afford him the authority to go ahead. No doubt nevertheless, it was not his wish to interpret Paul in the first place when he adopted symbolism. His cardinal aim was to confirm the unity of all Scripture, to show that the stern justice of the Law does not introduce any break with the loving-kindness of Jesus, it was to respond to the challenges of Gnostics such as Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides.

There is a section of the Commentary on Matthew included in the *Philocalia*,¹¹¹ which represents the entire Scriptural record as a musical instrument playing the music of God (τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ μουσικὴν), wherein the inexpert listener (τῷ ἀμουσῷ καὶ μὴ ἐπισταμένῳ λόγον μουσικῆς συμφωνίας) may think that he hears jarring disconcerted notes coming from either the Old or the New Testament. However, the man whose ear has been well trained perceives the seemliness and grace, with which the different notes are worked together into one melodious composition produced by this perfect and harmonious instrument, which is the entire Scripture (τὸ τέλειον καὶ ἡρμουςμένον ὄργανον τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὴν πᾶσαν γραφήν).

His aim was to demonstrate that Old Testament now belongs to Christianity and should be safeguarded for the Church. The Law provided a retrospective light for the way to the Gospel, it proved itself to be 'the beginning' of the Gospel'.¹¹² What appeared as Jewish practice maintained its dignity under this new light, since the narrator is the same, the Holy Spirit.¹¹³ It is perhaps easy to deride some of those allegorical exegeses today. Branding allegory as *always* causing history to evaporate into thin ideas is defensible, for others it is seductive, even though it can be shown by argument to be wrong. This contention though (which thrives on allegory having elemental recourse to spiritual truth)

¹¹¹ *fr*Matt, 3; comm. on Matt., 5, 9; *Philocalia*, 6, 2.

¹¹² *comm*John, 1, XV.

¹¹³ *Homilies on Numbers*, 26.3; *hom*Jer, 13, 1, *et passim*.

vis-à-vis Origen texts appears so baffling, that argument would be needed to establish not its incoherence, but its coherence. Identifying allegorical reading and *anagoge* with idealism is an otiose generalization, which could easily collapse into an arid empiricism. This line of animadversion therefore is incapable even of being coherently conceived, since it fails to recognize the simple assumption of this philosophy that truth attaches primarily to real historical occurrences.

Origen elicits the meaning of history from *facts*, not just from a narration. He did not divest history from its content, since such a history could be a body without life. Had truth not appeared *through* facts, the spiritual meaning could be compromised by evaporation into vapid mysticism. Had he deprecated the real historical occurrences of the Bible, his proclamation of a deeper spiritual import could lose all its ground and real onset. Kings, battles, devastation, births, deaths, successions, marriages—everything bespeaks higher truths concealed behind the letter.

All the narrative portions of Scripture, which seems to deal with marriages or the begetting of children or battles of various kinds, . . . must surely be regarded as nothing other than the forms and figures of hidden and sacred things.¹¹⁴

To elicit this meaning by no means presupposes abolition (rather, demolition) of historicity of real events. Certainly, the veil concealing the ‘mystery of the great king’¹¹⁵ must be removed, indeed removed with caution, and this should not be divulged unthoughtfully.¹¹⁶ Commenting on 1 Cor. 4, 15, he makes the distinction of hearers as either ‘carnal’ or ‘spiritual’¹¹⁷ (*pace* 1 Cor. 9, 11 and Rom. 15, 27). This distinction is explicated thus: simple-minded individuals may be edified, as it were, by the *body* of Scripture, which is the common historical narration. Those who have begun to make reasonable progress, and are able to see something rather more advanced, are assisted by what is called the *soul* of Scripture. Those, again, who are perfect will be edified by the *spiritual* law itself.¹¹⁸ Anyone then who has received instruction according to the letter of the law is called a scribe; that is, one ‘may interpret the words’, ‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites’, as being addressed directly to anyone

¹¹⁴ *Princ*, IV.2.2 (*Philocalia*, 1, 9).

¹¹⁵ Cf. Tobit, 12, 7. *Cels*, V, 19; V, 29; *Princ*, III.1.17; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5; 5.1.10; 6.8.2; 8.12.8.

¹¹⁶ “Anyone who has been found worthy of grasping secret truths (ἀπορρητοτέρων), and was bid to conceal them, sins unto God once he does not do so. For the danger looms not only in professing false doctrines, but also in unduly professing the correct ones”. *selP*3, 118, PG.12.1589.39–46.

¹¹⁷ *comm*1Cor, section 20.

¹¹⁸ *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.1.7.

who confines his apprehension to the letter. Regarding narrative and prophecy alike, it is a characteristic of idiots to remorselessly squeeze the entire import out of the letter only, understood in a jejune manner. Indeed one of the meanings ascribed to the 'kingdom of heavens' is progressing from the letter up to 'spiritual things'.¹¹⁹

The struggle is to remove the 'veil' (κάλυμμα)¹²⁰ which hangs over the entire Scripture, be it narrative, or law, or prophecy alike. He has what is contained therein disclosed to him who sees the veil of Scripture removed. This person is filled with true knowledge.

This 'removing of the veil'¹²¹ is central to this understanding of history brought to light through the Biblical history. Origen did not quest for notions, or abstract ideas, but he struggled for him and his audience to establish a *relation* with a living loving God acting within history. He himself had set forth his objective: every word pronounced out of his mouth should 'function' (ἐργάζεσθαι) unto salvation, both for the speaker and his audience (φιλοτιμούμεθα πᾶν ῥῆμα τὸ ἐξῶν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ἡμῶν ποιεῖν ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς λέγουσι καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀκούουσι).¹²²

According to a certain contention, Origen considers history as a parable. Nothing could be remotest from truth than this. What he understands as a 'parable' is expressly stated by himself: A parable is a narration about something professedly having taken place, which however has not actually happened, still could have happened. The story identifies certain realities metaphorically (τροπικῶς δηλωτικός πραγμάτων) once what is narrated is really perceived (ἐκ μεταλήψεως τῶν ἐν τῇ παραβολῇ λελεγμένων). Still this did not happen according to the literal narration (οὐ γὰρ γέγονε κατὰ τὴν λέξιν).¹²³ This is a metaphorical designation of enigmas (τροπικῶς δηλωτικός αἰνιγμάτων), in which what did not occur in fact is stated as if it were an actual occurrence (ὡς γενομένου τοῦ μὴ γενομένου).¹²⁴

Origen has the same sense of a parable as a layman has. No one ever believed that through parables Jesus related factual stories. The reality of the parables lies in the wisdom and higher truths they communicate. They are simple stories, making sense even to a child, as far as the literal story is concerned. The

¹¹⁹ *commMatt*, 10, 14.

¹²⁰ *pace* 2 Cor. 3, 16. *Cels*, IV, 50; V, 60; VI, 70; *Princ*, IV.1.6; *commJohn*, 13, X; *homJer*, 5: 8, 9; *frLam*, 116; *Fragmenta in Lucam* (Rauer), Frs. 151, 162; *Philocalia*, 1, 6; 21, 14; 23, 16; *commMatt*, 10, 14; 11, 14; 12, 10; *commEph*, section 9; *frPs*, 118, 18.

¹²¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 3, 16.

¹²² *frJer*, 2; *Philocalia*, 10, 1.

¹²³ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν ('according to the word', that is, literally): *commProv*, 1, PG.13.20.40; *op. cit.* PG.13.25.43. The expression of an event having occurred κατὰ τὴν λέξιν recurs in *Princ*, IV.3.4; IV.3.5; *Philocalia*, 1, 21. The same definition of 'parable' *verbatim* in *frPs*, 77, 2.

¹²⁴ *commProv*, 1, PG.13.20.38 & 13.25.40; *frPs*, 77, 2.

higher truth is covered: even the disciples were unable to disclose the relevant truths; still the story did make sense as a story. Were this obscure and shorter, then the case could be that of a *proverb*, of which also a definition appears in the interpretation of the Book of Proverbs.¹²⁵

Origen had no problem with the ‘scandal’ and ‘nonsense’ of Christian *kerygma*. This he defended fronting Celsus all the way through. He safeguarded the literal historicity of the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a dove and vehemently reviled the detractor for disputing this historical fact while so many Greek stories (such as the Trojan war) are conceded as true.¹²⁶ He takes advantage of certain, minor or not minor, points of the Bible in order to demonstrate its divine inspiration and significance. He always sees the transcendent God intervening in the history of his elected people, acting and counter-acting in an incessant historical (not intellectual) drama. History, as well as nature, provides a hint about this God acting within history. This is the sense in which ‘the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead’.¹²⁷

This is not knowledge pursued for the sake of knowledge, but taken up for the sake of salvation. It has to be said nevertheless that it is a gross mistake to take it that salvation is to be attained *through* knowledge, or, in other words, that knowledge *entails* or secures salvation. No question, Origen grants simple confession of faith to be indispensable for attaining to salvation. True, he encourages complete faith and he is fascinated by knowledge, although there will never be ‘full knowledge’ in this life. That said, nowhere does he say or indeed imply, that those who somehow obtain knowledge are privileged in respect of all others apropos of salvation. This would be a sheer distortion of Origen’s ideas. Knowledge is a gift, which a holy man enjoys because of his virtuous life. It is a fully Christian conduct of life that gives rise to knowledge, not vice versa. If one is to be saved, this will be attained in consideration of the quality of action within history, not on account of any higher mental capacity or

¹²⁵ *commProv*, 1, PG.17.161.20f: “A proverb is a statement concealed under a different explicit articulation” (παροιμία ἐστὶ λόγος ἀπόκρυφος δι’ ἑτέρου προδήλου σημαίνόμενος). Possibly this definition was taken up from Hippolytus, Cf. *Fragmenta in Proverbia*, Fr. 36. Basil of Caesarea refined this rendering: a proverb is a ‘fairly concealed statement’ which is beneficial even if taken literally, but this in fact stands as a veil to a sublime meaning: Παροιμία ἐστὶ λόγος ὠφέλιμος, μετ’ ἐπικρύψεως μετρίας ἐκδεδομένος, πολὺ μὲν τὸ αὐτόθεν χρήσιμον περιέχων, πολλήν δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ βάθει τὴν διάνοιαν συγκαλύπτων. *Homilia in Principium Proverbiorum*, PG.31.388.31. Cf. Didymus the Blind, *De Trinitate* (lib. 3), PG.39.813.34–37: Παροιμία ὄνομα τῇ βίβλῳ, ὥς οὐ πάντως ἀεὶ τὸ φαινόμενον, ἀλλ’ ὅτι μάλιστα δι’ ἑτέρου πράγματος, ἢ προσώπου ἕτερον σημαίνουση.

¹²⁶ *Cels*, I, 42.

¹²⁷ Rom. 1, 20. *Cels*, III, 47; VI: 3, 59; VII, 37; 46; *Philocalia*, 15, 5; 18, 18; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 1, section 20.

profound knowledge somehow made available to him. Those who have simple faith and are able to follow only the 'bare letter' of Scripture will be definitely saved, by virtue of their faith and conduct of life. Knowledge is a by-product of a virtuous life and this life leads to salvation, not to knowledge in the first place. If knowledge is of some value, this is to be found in its certain potential for transformation of human conduct in historical praxis. Should this not happen, knowledge is useless, and probably catastrophic. The following recurrent themes in Origen have not been properly noticed by those who falsely impute different ideas to him. One, 'Wisdom will not enter into a soul that practices evil neither will it dwell in a body involved in sin' (Εἰς κακότεχνον ψυχὴν οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται σοφία, οὐδὲ κατοικήσει ἐν σώματι κατάχρεφ ἁμαρτίας).¹²⁸ Two, 'For the Holy Spirit, who instructs people, will avoid evil souls and shall stand away from people with imprudent thoughts' ('Ἅγιον γὰρ πνεῦμα παιδείας φεύξεται δόλον καὶ ἀπαναστήσεται ἀπὸ λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων).¹²⁹

He returns to these motifs over and over¹³⁰ and the reason is clear each time he does so: knowledge is the result of the moral quality of one's life. Otherwise, even if some knowledge is attained, this is removed from the person that relapsed into evil life, the person who either pre-crucifies or re-crucifies Jesus,¹³¹ either before or after his corporeal presence on earth.¹³² Wisdom is the result of a virtuous life, since the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in those who conduct this quality of life.¹³³ This means that knowledge proceeds from virtuous life. Salvation will be achieved because of praxis, not knowledge. Never did Origen say that those who discover 'hidden truths' will be saved in priority over any unsophisticated Christian. He goes for the sheer contrary without hesitation and without equivocation or evasiveness. In a pithy portion of his mature work *commMatt*, he points out that although Jesus said of the meek that they should inherit the earth, he reserved the kingdom of heavens for those 'poor in spirit'.¹³⁴ For the 'fruit', which they bring about, stands out as one of somewhat different quality.¹³⁵

He stresses that the higher one stands in ecclesiastical hierarchy, the more he is in danger of being destroyed because of his sins, since God will be more

¹²⁸ Wis. 1, 4. s. *supra*, pp. 25, 170.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 1, 5.

¹³⁰ Ref to Wis. 1, 4: *Cels*, III, 60; V, 29; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *frJohn*, LXXVI; *comm1Cor*, section 11; *selPs*, 88, PG.12.1549.25–29; *op. cit.*, 118, PG.1621.26–31; *expProv*, 24, PG.17.232.8–12 Ref to Wis. 1, 5: *Cels*, VII, 8; *commJohn*, 28, XV; *frJohn*, XX.

¹³¹ Cf. Heb. 6, 6. *homJer*, 13, 2; *commJohn*, 20, XII (sections 89, 90, 126).

¹³² *commJohn*, 20, XII.

¹³³ *Cels*, VII, 8.

¹³⁴ Cf. Matt. 5, 3–5. *commMatt*, 16, 16.

¹³⁵ *commMatt*, 17, 8; Cf. *frPs*, 77, 2.

severe to him than to the humble members of the Church.¹³⁶ Salvation is not reserved for eminent scholars, or philosophers or theologians, or great thinkers of Christianity. Salvation is to be obtained only through history—there is no other way to salvation whatsoever, since it has inherently to do with *action*. The principal and ultimate purpose for disclosing mystical truths is to accelerate this salvation which is at present both present and anticipated, still this is urgently needed and striven for. This is not quite the case of a Gnostic quest for knowledge which ‘saves’ out of time, out of history altogether.

History is a meaningful process which has in itself something important to teach. This is not just the thesis of Origen’s; it is almost every historian’s assertion. Is there a historian who does not seek for *causes* and does not essay to interpret facts and events? Is this not after all the function which marks off the historian from the chronicler?

To view history as a vehicle of moral and spiritual *kerygma* is no Platonism. To point out the great lessons from Biblical history and to demonstrate how they exemplify and anticipate the ultimate fulfillment of Christian hope is, once again, no Platonism. History is too urgently in need of an end *promised* and already *anticipated* to be allowed to evaporate into barren idealism. To Origen history is not just a chain of events. It is the field where cultivation will bring about the fruits of a meaningful process pregnant with profound mysteries. History is not simply a catalogue of events which provides an account of ‘what happened’. What is more needed is a penetrating view which correlates and explains events by means of a study of causes, of reasons and of some principal ideas which conjoin things and make occurrences speak for themselves in the light of these prevalent propositions. Origen claims that brute facts ‘are not true’ (ἡ κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν αἰσθητὴ γνώσις οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής),¹³⁷ only once they are viewed superficially ‘according to the external (*viz.* physical) eyesight’ (κατὰ τὴν ἔξω μόνον ὄρασιν).¹³⁸ Visual perception means paying superficial attention to events only: this ‘*only*’ should be stressed because facts are not cast off: they are held to be the vital part of the function towards understanding history, still facts sufficient on their own merits.

Bare historical occurrences then are like a shadow’,¹³⁹ in the sense that they themselves do not communicate the real drama of the process. According to the statements in Rom. 6, 14 and 1 Cor. 13, 12, real knowledge is an eschatological

¹³⁶ Cf. *deOr*, XXVIII, 4; *commMatt*, 15, 26.

¹³⁷ *expProv*, 23, PG.17.221.39.

¹³⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹³⁹ *Cant*, 2, PG.17.261.32; 4, PG.17.272.40; *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum*, (Baehrens) p. 183; *frPs*, 101, 12; *selPs*, 89, PG.12.1552.2. The notion of ‘shadow’ (σκιὰ) at this point, apropos of Song of Songs, 2, 3, is associated with Rom. 6, 14 and 1 Cor. 13, 12.

anticipation. Therefore, bare facts detached from investigation of causes and interpretation are meaningless chains of events, unless they are illuminated by this eschatological knowledge, to the degree this is possible. What he pursues (which every student of history does) is a set of truths fulfilled (or, not fulfilled) into history, principles which surpass the limits of the visible world, of the 'external eyesight'. Hardly anyone would disagree with the thesis that it is not sufficient to proclaim facts and events: one should set forth purposes, reasons, and perhaps almost permanent causative relations which underlie events, as Thucydides first taught us. This is how events are regarded as 'symbols' of veiled reasons of history.¹⁴⁰

A facet of the alleged 'Platonism' of Origen is his conviction that Biblical history holds certain significance, not always evident. There is a meaning, a message, and a purpose underlying events, which has both moral and spiritual value. Through history God *speaks* communicating his will in regard to this same history, and the world has to respond somehow. This actual communication between God and world has to be revealed, not for the sake of knowledge, but for the purpose of instruction unto salvation. The Jews redeemed history from the vanity of beginningless and endless cycles of events by assigning to history a meaningful end. Origen, beside maintaining this conception, saw in addition the full significance of history in the light of *certain* events, which start with the creation of the world and are concluded at the end of it. Within this span of time, God matched his original Creative Act (which was an act of love) by another act of love, which was manifested as an Act of Redemption. Historical evidence about God the Logos, through which we were introduced into *theoria*, is a unique experience. However much we advance though, we shall never be dissociated from the historical experience. Even when we attain to the highest and most sublime *theoria*, we shall not entirely forget that we were introduced to him by his coming in a body (τάχα γὰρ κἂν ὁπωσποτὲ ἐν τῇ τοῦ λόγου ὑψηλοτάτῃ καὶ ἀνωτάτῃ θεωρίᾳ γενόμεθα καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐ πάντα ἐπιλησόμεθα τῆς ἐν σώματι ἡμῶν γενομένης δι' αὐτοῦ εἰσαγωγῆς).¹⁴¹ History is what it is, because the Logos appears and acts within it since the creation of the world. It is through history that God made himself and his will known. However lofty the *theoria* to be attained, the fact is that this was revealed and demonstrated through sheer historical events. Those events are the 'body' of revelation, however veiled this may be.

This is why history will remain, to the ultimate end of the world, the indispensable milieu for our dramatic and volatile relation with God. Origen

¹⁴⁰ *Cels*, V, 44.

¹⁴¹ *commJohn*, 2, VIII.

interpreted Scripture, wrote commentaries and treatises, and delivered sermons having history as his point of departure. His aim was to instruct and urge unto the rectification and renewal of this history.

Creative and Redemptive acts mark two major points of world-history, which will be concluded with the eschatological universal salvation of ‘all Israel’.¹⁴² This is how history and its unity is revealed and defended. Origen’s works are in reality studies on Biblical history asserted to stage, as well as prefigure, the universal human drama. My contention is then that he is not a Platonist, since he primarily speaks in terms of *events*, and only after he has done so he proceeds with dealing with moral and spiritual lessons and ideas. With regard to historical narration comprising body, soul and spirit, it has to be said that the ‘body’ is always there. This theology is not about thin ideas; it is about ‘things’, that is, actions and events (πράγματα).¹⁴³

History is not without a body.

¹⁴² Cf. Rom, 11, 26. *Cels*, VI, 80; *frLam*, 42; 112; 118; *commJohn*, 10, XXXV; *homJer*, 4, 6; 5, 2; 5, 4; 5,5; *commLuc*, PG.17.340.23; *commMatt*, 14, 20; 17, 5; *frLuc*, 125; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 39; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* (e cod. Vindob. gr. 166), Fr. 7; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 1, section 26; *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 190; *selPs*, 61, PG.12.1485.22. In Latin, *Homilies on Leviticus*, 3.5.1.

¹⁴³ *Cels*, VIII, 72; *commMatt*, 10, 2; 14, 19; 17, 19; *commJohn*, 2, VIII; *Philocalia*, 23, 8; *commGen*, PG.12.64.21–22; *Princ*, IV.1.1; *commProv*, 1, PG.13.20.39; *frPs*, 77, 2.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IS HISTORY A 'PARABLE'?

Although this theology is expounded in the form of homilies and commentaries, it is only *Cels* that makes up what today would be styled a systematic account. Even this, however, is somehow conditioned by the opponent's structure of discourse, since Origen had decided to reply paragraph after paragraph. And yet, once all of his works are studied, he comes up with what could indeed be called a set of doctrines, indeed an *instrumental* one. This means that all particular tenets which make up his theology stand together in harmony and correlation and each one of them can be understood within the context which they all make up together. One particular doctrine is what it is, by reason of all others being what they are. This congruence of particular facets should be seriously taken into account in studying each one of them.

This philosophy of history is formed in relation to the respective doctrine of creation. The object of creation is the reasons (λόγοι) which interrelate and produce the world according to an evolutionary conception of creation. These λόγοι are supervised by Providence and move, interact, and create things according to the superintendent divine will. Knowledge of the logoi is indeed definition of wisdom, being 'contemplation of corporeals and incorporeals' (θεωρία σωμάτων καὶ ἀσωμάτων)¹ which 'contains the reasons about judgement and providence'.²

Although wisdom refers to 'corporeals and incorporeals' (nature and history are the *corporeals*, and *logoi* of them both are the *incorporeals*) he advances the idea that wisdom is to be attained through theology, actually through 'intensive theology' (θεολογῶν ἐπιτεταμένως).³ Nothing remains out of the knowledge and care of Providence.⁴ God looks after even the slightest detail of this world:

¹ The expression suggests full knowledge reserved for the eschatological reality, which now can be attained 'in part' (1 Cor. 13, 9–10 & 12; Rom. 6, 14). This *theoria* is in fact contemplation of Wisdom herself. Cf. *selGen*, PG.12.125.5; *expProv*, 5, PG.17.176.25; 31, 17.249.47; 31, 17.252.14; *fiPs*, 83, 3; 138, 14–16; *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.41; 25, PG.12.1276.5; 54, PG.12.1465.38; 67, PG.12.1508.29; 117, PG.12.1581.53; 138, PG.12.1661.42.

² *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.24 & 28; 7, PG.17.181.4; 17, PG.17.197.20; 19, PG.17.205.49. *selPs*, 61, PG.12.1488.1; 100, PG.12.1557.33; 138, PG.12.1661.45. *fiPs*, 61, 13; 100, 2; 138, 14–16.

³ *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.23f. Cf. *fiProv*, 1, PG.13.17.45; 7, PG.17.181.1f; *commJohn*, 19, XXII. Cf. Aristotle defining 'wisdom', *Analytica Priora et Posteriora*, 48b12–14; *Metaphysica*, 982a6; 1004b19; *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1141b2; *Magna Moralia*, 1.34.14 & 16.

⁴ *COT*, pp. 349–351.

nothing happens without the consent of his will. This function of the Logos is a perpetual beneficial action for the sake of the entire nature, not only of rational hypostases.

The Logos of God, through whom all things were made, in order that all things be made by the Logos, is he who extends not only to humans, but also to the things supposed to be utterly lesser and commanded by nature.⁵

Interaction of reasons produces nature and history. We do not know all natural science; likewise, we do not know all the reasons according to which history is formed. These reasons fall within the divine omniscience and it is impossible to any rational nature to contain them all.⁶ This interaction of reasons, being in fact a multifarious action of the Reason (Logos), does nothing pointless, nothing in vain. There is always a reason for everything that takes place, in the same sense that in nature all processes and interactions follow a set of principles (*logoi*), although some of them may be unidentified by men.

What happens in nature happens in history, too, particularly the recorded Biblical history. Events come to pass and it is taken for granted that none of them occurs without a good reason, which somehow has been recorded in the Bible, mostly not expressly. Even in its minute details, the Bible has recorded substantial things, because the events themselves were important, even if they sometimes appeared as instances of everyday life. This is why Scripture has to be investigated assiduously to the slightest detail. Nothing, even 'what is thought to be most insignificant' (*τῶν ἐλαχίστων εἶναι νομιζομένων*),⁷ should be left out of thoughtful consideration and study.

All these assumptions provide a background which casts considerable light on Origen's conception of history. Like the rest of his thought, this is buttressed up with passages, but is not made up *by* passages. What is important is not to collect fragments, but to reconstruct a *whole* that he had in mind and expressed here and there in homilies, or commentaries, or letters. As I already said, this whole is instrumental and presents itself distinctly in portions throughout. Unless this overall attitude is grasped, it seems to me that mere portions are of rather ineffectual use.

Logoi are the effective causes of history and nature. As they pursued by those who practice natural science (*φυσιολογία, φυσιολογεῖν*),⁸ so, too, they also should be explored in history. They all impart knowledge about action of the Logos and about the providential activity in the world. Furthermore, as the reasons of nature are sought for in the *body of nature*, that is, in natural objects (flowers,

⁵ *Cels*, VI, 71. Cf. *supra*, p. 286.

⁶ *Cels*, III, 38; *Philocalia*, 19, 1.

⁷ *commJohn*, 32, VI.

⁸ *Cels*, IV: 40, 60, 77; V, 36; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1097.13; *commMatt*, PG.17.301.11; *et passim*.

stones, motions and all objects of natural scientific research), so the reasons of history should be sought in the *body of history*, *id est*, in events.

This is why to Origen events are indispensable for understanding God's intentions within the world. In the same sense that it would be impossible to study nature ('the order of the world and the rest of creatures')⁹ without natural objects (what would possibly be medical science in the absence of human body?), likewise it would be absurd to study the concealed *logoi* of Providence¹⁰ apart from events, that is, without relying on events as the first and real data for investigation. Certainly events mean things, they point to things, they shroud things. But they do so in the same sense that a natural object insinuates, points to and harbours all the ideas and notions which make up natural science.

The ground for researching both in nature and history is in fact a common one. In both cases we have 'a spiritual ode' (ὠδαὶς πνευματικαῖς)¹¹ sung by either a scientist or a theologian, who investigate the mind of Christ. This is the set of reasons making up nature and the meaning of underlying interactions of these reasons. In both cases we search for the *logoi* of things. In both cases we need a *natural* object to examine, be it a vineyard,¹² a human body,¹³ or a series of events (γεγονότα).¹⁴ In both cases we arrive at *theories* about things, be they natural science or philosophy of history. In both cases we cannot work without a 'body', be it a physical object or a flux of events, out of which we form our considerations and compose our conclusions. This is why Origen states that no matter what the kind of investigation (natural, moral, theological) is, it always takes the same painstaking scrutiny in order to be successful.¹⁵

History, as well as theology, is about events (γεγονότα) and things (πράγματα). This means that events are not discounted; on the contrary, they are loaded with fertile meaning. Events themselves (πράγματα) are pregnant with serious sense and import.

It is not in the bare letter and simple story that those events which have been recorded to have happened to Jesus contain the entire perception of truth (οὐκ ἐν ψιλῇ τῇ λέξει καὶ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὴν πᾶσαν ἔχει θεωρίαν τῆς ἀληθείας); for in the

⁹ *commEph*, section 29: περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου τάξεως καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν δημιουργημάτων.

¹⁰ *Homiliae in Job* (fragmenta in catenis, typus I+II) (codd. Vat.), p. 375: "God provides for and is interested in things (προνοεῖ καὶ μέλει τῶν πραγμάτων), and nothing comes to pass simply or randomly (οὐδὲν ἀπλῶς οὐδ' εἰκῇ παρέρχεται). God's providence is unknown and impossible to presume (ἡ δὲ οἰκονομία θεοῦ ἀτέκμαρτος καὶ ἄγνωστος)".

¹¹ *commEph*, section 29. Cf. Eph. 6, 19.

¹² *commMat*, 17, 7.

¹³ *op. cit.* 13, 6.

¹⁴ *Princ.* IV.3.1; *Philocalia*, 1, 17; *selPs*, 68, PG.12.1513.48; *selPs*, 138, PG.12.1661.48; *frPs*, 76, 16; 77, 3–6; 138, 14–16 & 17; *selJos*, PG.12.824.16 & 25.

¹⁵ *commGen*, PG.12.89.

view of those who read the Bible more attentively, each one of those [events] has been proved to be a symbol of something (σύμβολόν τινος). . . . However, analysis of the mere narrative, and the elevation from what has been recorded to have happened to *the things* (τὰ πράγματα) which were signified by those occurrences, should be expounded at a more opportune time and in an *ad hoc* composition (ἐν προηγουμένη συντάξει), through which an account more sublime and more divine could be provided.¹⁶

The distinction is clear: on the one hand, we have what is ‘recorded’ (ἀναγεγραμμένα or ἀναγεγραμμένων); on the other, it is ‘the things’ (τὰ πράγματα) recorded in Scripture. To find out truth in history one should follow ‘the sequence of things’ (τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῶν πραγμάτων).¹⁷ To make *prophecy* a central theme in the formation of this philosophy of history, Origen focuses on *events* which happened in the past and were consequently anticipated to come to pass. The notion of *kairos* reveals concern for events, too. So is the concern about the significance of the Incarnation, as well as about what a human being does and is like throughout an aeon. This is all about *events* and their relation to the ultimate perspectives of the world. It is not just about notions and ideas.

This spirit of adoption is in sons of the heavenly Father, who pronounce not mere *words* but *facts* (οὐ λεξείδια, ἀλλὰ πράγματα), when by a lofty utterance (μεγαλοφώνως) they secretly say, ‘Abba, Father’.¹⁸

Although Origen was echoed by subsequent writers, there is one thing peculiar to him: he does not want eschatology to be relegated to the realm of mythology, but to be rendered in historical terms. What was later said by Ephraem Syrus was indeed said in the spirit of Origen: ‘the Law contains the earthly things (ἐπίγεια), while the Gospel contains the heavenly ones (ἐπουράνια)’.¹⁹ To put it in Origen’s own words, his aim was to ‘exclude completely the carnal Israel from historical interpretation’.²⁰

This distinction should be paid the attention it really deserves. Throughout his writings we are faced with Origen strife to grasp ‘the letter’ of Scripture, which is commonly understood. What is not equally understood though is that his quest is for ‘the things’ (τὰ πράγματα) standing beyond the letter, and yet recorded in letter. These ‘things’ are not any noetic objects such as the ‘ideas’: they are palpable reality—a basis of facts that any student of history should wish to apprehend. This very actuality of historical things is his aim when he distinguishes between ‘the bare letter’ (τῶν ψιλῶν γραμμάτων) from the ‘things’

¹⁶ *Cels*, II, 69.

¹⁷ *Cels*, I, 41; I, 61; *commMatt*, 12, 34; 17, 30.

¹⁸ *Cels*, VIII, 6. Rom. 8, 15; Gal. 4, 6; Mark 14, 36; italics mine.

¹⁹ Ephraem Syrus, *Sermo Adversus Haereticos*, in quo tum ex margaritae tum ex aliorum claris argumentis ostenditur credendum esse sanctam dei param praeter naturae leges dominum ac deum nostrum pro mundi salute et concepisse et peperisse, p. 156.

²⁰ *Homilies on Leviticus*, 6.1.

(πραγμάτων) of Scripture.²¹ The distinction recurs as a mature motif and is made between 'the letters of the Gospel' (τὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου γράμματα) and 'the things worthy of the Logos of God' (ἄξια λόγου θεοῦ πράγματα), which are recorded in the Scripture.²² Records are accounts of events, documentation of real 'things', which 'through the letter' (διὰ γραμμάτων) mean to represent 'more divine things' (πραγμάτων θειοτέρων), in any form which is appropriate, be that a 'typos' or 'symbol' or 'image' (τύπος καὶ σύμβολα καὶ εἰκόνας).²³ Nowhere does Origen say, or indeed imply, that the quest is for 'ideas' or 'notions' or abstract intellectual concepts. He always stresses that he looks for actual situations (πράγματα) denoted through the letter: these are *historical* situations, if sometimes concealed behind the letter, either having occurred in the past, or designated to happen 'either in the future generations or in the aeon to come'.²⁴ Revelation itself, as well as theological reflection and inspiration, emerge and come forth within a *historical* setting. They come forth through experience, *ex visu* and *ex auditu*. In any case, the letter records an event which is a 'type' or 'symbol' of 'a thing' (τύπος πράματος), not of an idea. Still this 'type' (τύπος), or 'sign' (σημεῖον) is a real *event*, indeed 'a sign which has happened' (γεγονέναι τὸ σημεῖον). *Signs* are *events*, which bear upon future *events*, either upon the near or less near future, or indeed the eschatological one. Signs are not symbols of barren ideas or mere abstract notions.

And you should inquire every sign in the old letters [sc. Old Testament] in order to find out of which thing (πράματος) in the New Scripture this is a type (τύπος); [likewise, you should examine] that which in the New Testament was called a 'sign' [in order to discover] of what future event is this indicative (δηλωτικόν), which [future event] is designated to come to pass either in the aeon to come, or in the generations which are to follow subsequently to the time that this sign occurred (γεγονέναι τὸ σημεῖον).²⁵

History comprising definitely a body (πράγματα) means that knowledge of God comes out of events. It is not nature, it is God's self-revelation that provides all messages about the divine being. Once *facts* are truly grasped, one should not let himself fall into the trap of 'superstition about appellatives', since the constant concern is for facts (μὴ δεισιδαιμονοῦντές γε περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἀλλὰ βλέποντες τὰ πράγματα).²⁶ Origen deemed words to be mere counters, mere

²¹ *Cels*, I, 49.

²² *commMatt*, 10, 1. Cf. in the same work, distinction between 'bare letter' (τὸ ψιλὸν τοῦ γράμματος) and 'secret things' (τὰ μυστικά πράγματα): *commMatt*, 12, 43. Cf. *deOr*, II, 6.

²³ *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 198.

²⁴ *commMatt*, 12, 3: ἡ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι δηλωτικόν, ἡ ἐν ταῖς ὕστερον γενεαῖς. Cf. *excPs*, PG.17.109.1.

²⁵ *commMatt*, 12, 3.

²⁶ *commJohn*, 19, XV.

symbols of meaning, while he only cared for the meaning itself. Since symbols are apt to be somewhat ambiguous vehicles of truth, it will in any case be unwise to put too great a stress on words; otherwise we might be trapped into an absurd setting of words, with the import remaining elusive. Thus he did not set a great store by any word *per se*, as distinct from the truth which this was meant to convey. He was then willing to manipulate expressions without compunction, while refusing to brook any divergence from the spirit. If certain terms are not capable of expressing ‘things’ properly, one should not hesitate to use different words in order to render what is of prime importance, which is ‘things’ (ἄλλοις ὀνόμασι χρῆσθαι κατὰ τῶν πραγμάτων).²⁷ Language incorporates a certain inescapable ambiguity. A flash of insight should not then be discarded, even by this man who was perfectly aware of the fine shades of meaning which are indigenous in the Greek language. For all the subtlety of this language in expression of recondite notions, now nuanced distinction (διάκρισις)²⁸ is asserted to be given by Wisdom not to the skilled, but to the innocent. Far from taking the short way with real problems, nevertheless no one should be uneasy about using terms, provided he has grasped ‘the things’ (Δεήσει τοίνυν τὰ πράγματα συνιέντας, μὴ γλίσχρους εἶναι περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα), and to be always prepared to see when the terms are used with literal accuracy, and when they involve an inevitable inaccuracy (πότε κυρίως τῶν πραγμάτων ταῦτα τέτακται, καὶ πότε διὰ τὴν στενοχωρίαν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐν καταχρήσει).²⁹ Thus, although one may investigate both ‘appellatives and things’ (τὰ ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ πράγματα),³⁰ the real object of true knowledge is ‘to know things’ (μανθάνειν πράγματα),³¹ it is ‘the thorough comprehension of things’ (κατανόησις τῶν πραγμάτων).³² This is a prerogative of God alone, who can ‘see the bare nature of things and comprehend the purpose of them happening’ (γυμνὴ γὰρ αὐτῷ τῶν πραγμάτων φύσις θεωρεῖται καὶ ὁ σκοπὸς κατανοεῖται).³³

‘Appellatives’ simply ‘signify things’.³⁴ The ultimate concern is about ‘true things stated through appellatives’ (ἀληθινῶν κατὰ τὰ ὀνόματα πραγμάτων). Although his exposition was rendered in words which can hardly be bettered, what I said in the Introduction should be recalled: for all his acclaimed literal

²⁷ *commJohn*, 19, XV.

²⁸ *fJJer*, 19; *homLuc*, 17, p. 107; *homJob*, PG.17.89.34; *commMatt*, 11, 14, *et passim*.

²⁹ *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1164.3–4. (*Philocalia*, 26, 8). One more proof that in *selPs* we hear Origen’s authentic voice.

³⁰ *Cels*, I, 71.

³¹ *commJohn*, 2, IX.

³² *commJohn*, 1, XXIV.

³³ *fJLuc*, 10.

³⁴ *commJohn*, 1, IX; 2, XXIII; 6, XLI; 20, XXIX; 32, XXVI; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 36a (*Philocalia*, 9, 3). *Cels*, I, 24; (& *Philocalia*, 17, 1); *deOr*, XIV, 2; *exhMar*, XLVI, 7.

preciseness, his theology should be rendered and reasoned out sense for sense, not word for word.

This is a point calling for particular consideration, since the stricture of 'heresy' on Origen has been mostly levelled against him on mistaken accounts. His concern was about 'things', not terms. He was chastised for use of expressions which at his time he used in an orthodox sense, but he could not foresee that they later received a heterodox import. I hardly need to say that his statements should always be considered within the context of his overall theology, not as his detractors do, putting his statements within the theological setting of one, or two, or indeed three centuries later to him. I might well avail myself of what was said by intellectuals about Homer: he should be construed through his own self: "Ὅμηρον ἔξ 'Ομήρου σαφηνίζειν αὐτὸν ἐξηγουμένον ἑαυτὸν (it is Homer himself he who can gloss himself).³⁵ Galen put it in the clearest terms possible: the authors of the old times expounded their theories without providing any strict definitions of terminology in advance. Once a specific term is in need of clarification, one should study this in a different context within the work of the same author: then the significance of a term arises in clarity. This is the way to interpret Homer; indeed not only him: this is after all how subsequent grammarians composed interpretations of Homer's vocabulary.³⁶ The same goes for Origen, as well as for any pioneer in the history of ideas, let alone that he cannot be called a heretic on doctrines which the Church set forth long after his death.³⁷ As he himself glossed a revealed text from another, so too any text of his should be construed by studying relevant points involving homologous terminological usage.

It has been asserted that with respect to Rom. 1, 20, 'Origen has interpreted ἡ τε αἰδὶος αὐτοῦ δύναμις not as being in apposition to ἀόρατα but as a part of a series', which is claimed to be a 'mistaken understanding' that 'was repeated by later Fathers.'³⁸ The confusion of both Rufinus and his modern commentator at this point should be clarified. They both confuse what they call 'invisible things' (ἀόρατα) (after Rom. 1, 20, where no word such as 'things' actually appears), with the 'theoremata' and 'logoi' which exist in God, in fact in his Wisdom. They take it that these 'invisible things' are the rational creatures of

³⁵ Porphyry, *Quaestionum Homericarum liber i* (recensio V), 56; *Quaestionum Homericarum liber i* (recensio X), 56; *Zetemata Codicis Vaticani*, p. 297.

³⁶ Galen, *De Differentia Pulsuum libri iv*, v. 8, p. 715: αὐτοὶ μὲν γὰρ οἱ παλαιοὶ χωρὶς ὅρων ἐποιούντο τὰς διδασκαλίας, ἐνδεικνύμενοι τὰ σημαινόμενα τῶν ὀνομάτων ὧν ἔλεγον αὐτῇ τῇ κατὰ ἑρμηνείαν ἰδέα, καθ' ἣν δηλονότι καὶ τὰς παρ' 'Ομήρῳ λέξεις ἅπασι τε τοῖς ἄλλοις παλαιοῖς οἱ γραμματικοὶ σαφηνίζουσι. τὸ γὰρ τῇδε τῇ ἑρμηνείᾳ μήπω σαφές ἐξ ἑτέρας εὐδελον γίνεται.

³⁷ For instance, he cannot be called a heretic on the doctrine of the origin of souls in reference to his time, since the Church had no doctrine on this, save that souls were created by God.

³⁸ K.H. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer der Väter: Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer I–II*, p. 55.

higher superior planes of being, although at innumerable points Origen explicates that they are only the 'theoremata' (objects of contemplation, or, visions) which are in God's wisdom. They are certainly 'created' and 'incorporeal', yet they are not 'rational living creatures', as I have explained.³⁹ Origen's students should be referred for this notion to a number of points,⁴⁰ the import of these references being always the same: whatever Greek philosophers discovered about nature and philosophy was in fact a gift granted to them by God; although they received this gift, they did not acknowledge this as a divine gift, and they did not honour God subsequently. On no account, however, does this mean that Origen grants observation of nature to be a source of theology proper. It is he who distinguishes Cosmology from Theology.⁴¹ What is more, it is himself who says so, commenting on Rom. 1, 19 ('For what is known of God has been manifested to them, because God has manifested it to them').

We have already mentioned, that whatever we are able of grasping out of the operation of this world and by means of reason is 'known of God'.⁴² This is what the Apostle himself denotes, saying that the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.⁴³ However, the knowledge of his essence and nature must be held to be a matter 'unknown of God'. In my view, the character of nature proper he has, is something which is concealed not only from us human beings, but also from every created being.⁴⁴

To have an inkling of truth does not mean participating to revelation. The opinion is almost verbatim the same with that of the Fragment XIII of the Commentary on John. Origen is crystal-clear that *all* knowledge is bestowed to men by God as a gift. However, on no account can observation of nature provide even the slightest piece of knowledge about God Himself: we can only learn something of Him as Creator. Theological knowledge stems only from God's own self-revelation in history, in his theophanies (θεοφάνεια)⁴⁵ (or, epiphanies, ἐπιφάνεια) recorded in the Scripture.⁴⁶ As for the portion following

³⁹ *COT*, pp. 39f. s. *supra*, pp. 106–7, 160, 376.

⁴⁰ *Cels*, III, 47; VI, 3 & 59; VII, 37 & 46; *Philocalia*, 15, 5; 18, 18; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 1, section 21.

⁴¹ *COT*, p. 30.

⁴² Cf. Rom. 1, 19. Cf. *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 5; *Philocalia*, 15, 5. (Lat.): *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.16.5.

⁴³ Rom. 1, 20. Cf. *Cels*, III, 47; VI, 3; VII, 37; *Philocalia*, 15, 5.

⁴⁴ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.16.6.

⁴⁵ *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.361.5.

⁴⁶ Whereas θεοφάνεια appears once, ἐπιφάνεια is a recurring term, pointing both to the OT epiphanies and the Incarnation, as well as to the eschatological advent of Christ. Epiphanies in Biblical history: *Cels*, II: 74, 75; III, 14; V, 2; *commJohn*, 6, V, 13, XXXIII; 32, XXVII; *homJer*, 4, 2; *fiLuc*, 185; *fiPs*, 8, 6; 66, 1; 117, 25–27. Epiphany of Christ (either corporeal or eschatological): *Cels*, II: 4, 39, 50; III: 3, 28, 43, 61; IV, 80; V, 8; VI, 23, 46; VIII: 12, 53. *commJohn*, 2, VII; 6, IV; 13: XVII, XLVI; LXI; 20, XI; *Princ*, IV.1.7; *fiLam*, 75; *homLuc*, 17 (p. 102); 34 (p. 191); *fiLuc*, 168; *Philocalia*, 1: 7, 29; 20, 7; 21, 3; 27: 5, 9; *homJer*, 19, 11; *commMatt*,

this remark of Origen's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans⁴⁷ saying that 'the power of God which is eternal and his deity which is no less eternal are known by inference from creation', to the extent that this is not an interpolation of Rufinus, it has to be associated with the notion of the 'conceptions of the Son' which indeed stem from divine action in history.⁴⁸ What is for sure is that Origen was not a schizophrenic so as to make a claim which is quite contrary to that quoted above, and to do this right in the next paragraph of the same work concerning such a cardinal point of his theology. This theological point (God Himself cannot be known from observation of nature) appears not only in this quotation, but also throughout his writings preserved in Greek. Even in this Latin translation this tenet is abundantly present. To observe nature and assume that a certain divine power is the creator of it is one thing. But to come to a dialectical relation with the personal God is quite another: there is no way to know the divine 'will' apart from God's self-revelation in history, as recorded in the narration of the Scripture.⁴⁹ Therefore, 'the law of nature will be of no help whatsoever for knowing God's righteousness',⁵⁰ which is 'disclosed by Jesus Christ, who attests to it, not in the law of nature, which is undoubtedly small and scanty'. The same righteousness is nonetheless expressed through 'the law of Moses', which is also 'attested in the prophets through him who spoke in them, the Spirit of God'.⁵¹

However much the law of nature may offer testimony about good and evil according to the judgement of conscience,⁵² nevertheless it cannot be put on the same level as the law of faith, by which Abraham believed God and merited to be justified and to be named a friend of God.⁵³

Origen's theology springs from neither any retiocinative procedure, nor observation of nature. Since 'God's nature is inaccessible to human perception',⁵⁴

12, 9; 12, 29; 12, 33; *frPs*, 4, 1; 66, 1; 89, 6; 118, 97; 131, 7–8; *epAfr*, PG.11.72.29 & 35; 11.73.3 & 35. *selPs*, 13, PG.12.1205.41; 19, 12.1248.42; 42, 12.1421.2; 49, 12.1449.14; 50, 12.1453.50; 60, 12.1504.18; 134, 12.1653.44. Epiphany of the Holy Spirit: *Libri x in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 201.

⁴⁷ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1.17.2.

⁴⁸ *COT*, pp. 35–37, 52, 57–58, 60–62, 82, 141, 165, 170, 271.

⁴⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.7.7.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.* 3.7.6.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.* 3.7.8; s. further, 3.7.9–14.

⁵² Cf. Rom., 2, 15.

⁵³ Cf. James, 2, 23. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.4.3. On the notion of 'friendship' with God, s. chapter 5, p. 157, note 84.

⁵⁴ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.1.7. Beyond this Latin translation, the notion of 'natural law' is also found in Greek remainders of the same work: *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)* (in catenis), sections 10, 14, 37, 39, especially section 15 (the same portion, in *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat., p. 150): "the righteousness of God is far beyond the natural instances, which are not self-sufficient for apprehending righteousness; I refer not to righteousness in general, but to the righteousness of God Himself"

we know him only from his own self-revelation throughout history. Abstract philosophical methods, such as those of ‘analogy’ (ἀναλογία)⁵⁵ or ‘synthetic reasoning’ (σύνθεσις λόγου)⁵⁶ or ‘linear proof’ (γραμμικαὶ ἀποδείξεις),⁵⁷ or ‘loquacity, stylish compositions’ (λέξεων σύνθεσις) and logical arguments constructed through divided sections (διαίρέσεων) and worked out with ‘Greek technical expertise’ (τεχνολογίας ἑλληνικῆς)⁵⁸ are all incapable of procuring, let alone perfect, cognition of the Trinitarian God. At the same time though, adhering to revelation does not at all entail forfeiture of reason.

The third book of the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is a good point to see how this tenet is formed. Treating the term ‘law’ as a homonym, it is repeatedly stated that it has the meaning of either ‘natural law’ or ‘law of Moses’. The former is ‘inherent in men’,⁵⁹ denoting the ‘power of reason’ ‘indiscriminately granted to all men’ by God. Therefore ‘no human being escapes this law’,⁶⁰ since this is present in everyone.⁶¹ Origen does not refrain from some elaboration on the actual import of this law: This is what

people are capable of perceiving by nature,⁶² such as that they should not commit murder or adultery, that they ought not steal, they should not bear false witness, they should honour their father and mother, and the rest.⁶³ It is possibly authored also in the hearts of the Gentiles that God is one and he is the Creator of all things. It seems then to me that the things which are said to be drafted in their hearts match with the laws of the Gospel, where everything is determined according to natural justice. For what would indeed be closer to the natural moral impression than [being satisfied] that those things which men do not want committed against themselves,

(μείζων γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν φυσικῶν ἀφορμῶν, αἵτινες οὐκ εἰσὶν αὐτάρκεις πρὸς τὸ κατανοῆσαι δικαιοσύνην, οὐχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλὰ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ). Moreover, s. *frJohn*, I; CXXVII; *frLam*, 101; *selPs*, 70, PG.12.1520.27; *selGen*, PG.12.100.

⁵⁵ *Cels*, VII, 42, 44.

⁵⁶ *commJohn*, I, VIII; *Cels*, I, 62 (*Philocalia*, 18, 8); III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2); III, 68; *frJer*, 36.

⁵⁷ *Cels*, VIII, 11; *selGen*, PG.12.93.42.

⁵⁸ *Cels*, III, 39 (*Philocalia*, 19, 2). Cf. *supra*, p. 172.

⁵⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.6.1.

⁶⁰ *op. cit.* 3.6.2. Cf. 1.16.5.

⁶¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.8.6; s. a full account of this in *commJohn*, 2, XXV; 6, XXX & XXXVIII; *frJohn*, XVIII & LXXXII.

⁶² Cf. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.7.10. According to the Stoics, all men are endowed with the ‘seminal reason’ (σπερματικός λόγος) in which common ethical precepts are assumed to have been naturally imprinted. Cf. *SVF*, II, 154, 29; III, 51, 41 (*apud Cels*, VIII, 52). At this particular point, Origen employs the notions of ‘common law’ (κοινὸς νόμος) and ‘common notions’ (κοινὰ ἔννοια), which implies current natural perception of elementary moral values. I argue later (pp. 402–3) that Origen’s premises allowed him not to employ identically the doctrine of ‘seminal reason’ as it stood in Stoicism. Cf. *SVF*, III, 4, 2 (*ap. Diogenes Laertius*, 7.87). Cf. *Cels*, I, 4; III, 40; IV, 84; VIII, 52; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.) IV.1.1; *frJohn*, XX; *Philocalia*, I, 1; 9, 2; 19, 3; 20, 11; 23, 9; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21) (in *catenis*), section 36a; *commGen*, PG.12.68.11. S. *infra*, p. 402.

⁶³ Cf. Ex. 20, 12–16.

they should not commit against others.⁶⁴ ... This is then the work of the law which the apostle says that even the Gentiles are naturally able to abide by.⁶⁵

Although this 'law of nature' provides a common criterion about what is good or evil,⁶⁶ it can in no case be held to provide any knowledge about 'God's righteousness', just because someone 'appears to understand something about human righteousness'.⁶⁷ There is no way to learn anything about God out of this natural law, which is 'of no help'⁶⁸ in this case.

Nevertheless the law of nature may render testimony about good and evil according to conscience bearing witness;⁶⁹ this cannot however be put on a par with the law of faith, through which Abraham believed God and has been worthy of being justified and to be called a friend of God.⁷⁰

Theology then does not emerge from observation of nature: it comes forth only from God's self-revelation in history, through the events which occur to the holy men, or the chosen people of Biblical history. The method of treating homonyms is brought to the fore in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans mainly for the purpose of distinguishing knowledge stemming from nature from the one bestowed to men by God through his Logos, occasionally

⁶⁴ Cf. Matt. 7, 12; Luke 6, 31. In fact Origen implicitly quotes the Greek maxim, 'that which you hate to be done to you, you do not do to another' (ὃ σὺ μισεῖς, ἑτέρῳ μὴ ποιήσης), not the scriptural portions which enjoin what one ought 'to do', not what 'to refrain from doing'. Cf. *Apophthegmata (collectio anonyma)* (c. cod. Coislin. 126), Apophthegm 253; *Apophthegmata Patrum (collectio systematica)* (cap. 1–9), 1, 31. Septem Sapientes, *Sententiae*, p. 216. Of Christian authors, it is only Didymus the Blind who cites both, Greek and Christian maxims, in one and the same portion: *Commentarii in Ecclesiasten* (7–8.8), Cod. p. 223. Apart from that, there is only an oblique reference to the Greek dictum by John Chrysostom, *Ad Populum Antiochenum (homiliae 1–21)*, PG.49.140. Otherwise, the Greek apophthegm is absent from Christian literature.

⁶⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.9.1. This stands in line with the notion of 'natural conceptions' (φυσικαὶ ἔννοιαι) of God which He imparted to men. *Cels*, IV, 14; *commMatt*, 10, 2; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 134; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)* (Gr.), section 10; *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 204; *selPs*, 10, PG.12.1197.14; *expProv*, 19, PG.17.209.7. The same point is made by reference to the 'common conceptions' (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι) of God: *Cels*, I, 4; III, 40 (*Philocalia*, 19, 3); IV, 84 (*Philocalia*, 20, 11); VIII, 25; *Princ*, IV.1.1 (*Philocalia*, 1, 1); *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 36a (*Philocalia*, 9, 2); *Commentarii in Genesim*, PG.12.68.11 (*Philocalia*, 23, 9). In *frJohn*, XX, it is declared that John the Baptist set out to preach Christ, not after the 'common conceptions of men', but according to what was revealed to him by the Father and the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* 3.6.9. Cf. Clement, *Stromateis*, 1.27.171.1.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.* 3.7.6.

⁶⁸ *Loc. cit.* Irenaeus had said that 'the Lord did not abolish, but extended and completed, the natural law, by which man may be justified'. *Adversus Haereses*, 4.13.1 (Latin tr.).

⁶⁹ Cf. Rom. 2, 15.

⁷⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.3.2. Cf. James, 2, 23; Wis. 7, 27. *Cels*, III, 40; IV, 3, 7; VIII, 1, 64; *homJob*, PG.17.65.14; *selGen*, PG.12.125.51; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.340.40; *Philocalia*, 19, 3; *selPs*, 22, PG.12.1264.36; 27, PG.12.1285.19; 63, PG.12.1489.48; *excPs*, PG.117.19; *frPs*, 138, 21; *expProv*, PG.17: 176.26, 35–37, 50, 52–53; 188.41–43; 196.50; 205.28–29; 236.4. Cf. p. 157, note 84.

called 'the righteousness of God' *pace* 1 Cor. 1, 30. The interplay between the different imports assigned to 'law' is made in order to show the doctrine of Theology being built up quite apart from Cosmology. Thus, when Paul says that the righteousness of God is revealed apart from law, the law of nature should be understood; but when he says, 'attested by the law and the prophets', he refers to the law of Moses.⁷¹ The righteousness of God can be revealed by Jesus Christ, who attests to it, and by the law of Moses, but not through the law of nature, which is undoubtedly small and meager.⁷² This righteousness of God, which is Christ,⁷³ is cognoscible apart from the law of nature, but not apart from the law of Moses or the prophets. Natural law can provide a hint either simply of God's existence, or of the things which righteousness demands to be done. But who could possibly perceive out of observation of nature alone that Christ is the Son of God? It is therefore beyond and quite apart from this law that the righteousness of God, which is Christ,⁷⁴ has been revealed, attested by the law of Moses and the prophets.⁷⁵ Quite simply, he asserts that had God not become incarnate, we should never have known him as a Trinity and consequently a distinctly Christian philosophy of history could be impossible.

History is not a parable.⁷⁶ For such a sort of story relates instances that never occurred: its value lies in the principles and morals it conveys. It is a flux of *signals*, which may conduct action toward a teleological destination. Origen's interpretation of these signals has the constant aim of rectification of history, through transformation of human nature. His ultimate concern is with history, since interpretation always returns to history and to the objective of its transformation.

What is *metaphysically* important in history is not identified with what is *historically* important and Origen knows this well. Hence he does not make any distinction between history and parable, in order to either accept an event as metaphysically important or to reject this as a myth. Events are loaded with a meaning anyway, whether one can disclose and communicate this, or not. The distinction between what is historically significant and what is theologically significant is not all too obvious. This means that he had no reason to impugn the real historicity of events. Allegory does not entail rejection of things, but appropriation of their veiled import, for the sake of rectification of real history.

⁷¹ Cf. Rom. 3, 21. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.7.7.

⁷² *Op. cit.* 3.7.8.

⁷³ *Op. cit.* 3.7.10. Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 30.

⁷⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 30.

⁷⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.7.10. This is why certain people 'ignore God', although they are otherwise 'perceptive with regard to various arts or sciences, or are acute in comprehending moral or logical problems'. They simply 'lack the intellectual eye' to gaze at the noetic 'sun' and his 'sunrise'. Revelation is offered to man, not grasped on one's own merits. All one has to do is open his eyes. *selPs*, 4, PG.12,1164.35–1165.25.

⁷⁶ For claims about Origen treating history as a parable, Cf. R.L. Milburn, *Early Christian Interpretations of History*, p. 50; R. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, pp. 363–64.

According to his view, natural reality and historical process maintain their physical, *natural* and countable element, while at the same time they are loaded with an (often concealed, but not detached) *metaphysical* significance. This significance is pursued not just for the sake of bare knowledge, but as a guide for thoughtfulness and rectification of action. The discourse about God stems from the life of a historical community. The course of this people in history is understood in an unbreakable continuity, despite its accomplishments and setbacks. The ultimate meaning of life in its fullness is present only in the body of this community and its charismatic persons, which are members of this body. This is why the Church of the Pentecost is a genuine progression in the history of Israel. This is the actual bond which casts light upon the roots of the Church and its relation to Creation and History. The created human being concurrently with nature, his historical course, the patriarchs, Moses, judges, kings, priests, prophets, the discarnate Logos, the apostles, the evangelists, bishops, presbyters, deacons, the fathers of the Church, the saints—all these are not simply characters or heroes or instructors related in certain books, but they are the charismatic messengers who receive and communicate truth and life to the entire body of the community. The 'mystery of the great king'⁷⁷ was to reach unto few people, and it did so in a mostly veiled manner. They are all members of a body, of a people, and of all humanity. It is out of this history, indeed from this *life* itself, that records, monuments and holy books issue and come forth. Theology is an incessant expression and interpretation of this life, contemplation of God and his work, in other words, a *theoria* of the divine glory (θεωρία τῆς θείας δόξης),⁷⁸ by 'glory' meaning the manifestation of his divinity in history.⁷⁹

On no account does this indicate life and history parting way with each other: it means concern with life and history, the ultimate goal of them being 'conversion to God and transformation of the entire world'.⁸⁰ Theology stemming from the events of epiphanies, springs forth in history and its aim is to accomplish the metamorphosis of history through action 'in time' (διὰ χρόνου), so that 'the entire world returns' to God (ἐπιστρέφειν τὸ ὅλον πρὸς ἑαυτόν).⁸¹ Recourse to allegory is had in order not to form *ideas*, but to form *life*, which eventually means a *metamorphosis* of life and history.⁸² The eventual goal for man

⁷⁷ Cf. Tobit, 12, 7. *Cels*, V, 19; V, 29 (*Philocalia*, 22.8); *frJer*, 65; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5; 5.1.10; 6.8.2; 8.12.8.

⁷⁸ *Cels*, II, 64; V, 60; VI, 68; *commJohn*, 28, II; 32, XXVI–XXVIII; *selEz*, 3, PG.13.776–77; *frLuc*, 140; *commEph*, section 9; *commMatt*, 12, 42; *selPs*, 18, PG.12.1241.13.

⁷⁹ *commEph*, section 15: "according to the idiomatic terminology of Scripture, his divinity has befittingly been called 'glory'" (ἔοικεν ἡ θεϊότης αὐτοῦ ἰδίως κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν 'δόξα' αὐτοῦ ὀνομάζεσθαι).

⁸⁰ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5.

⁸¹ *Cels*, IV, 99; *Philocalia*, 20, 26.

⁸² *Dial*, 13–14 (μεταμορφωθῆναι); *commJohn*, 13, XLII (μεταμορφοῦσθαι).

is to ‘transform himself’ (μεταβάλλειν) and to become ‘an angel and indeed to become God’.⁸³

What is really meant by ‘transformation of the entire world’ is then clear in Origen’s mind. It is to change history from being ‘against nature’ to becoming ‘accordant with nature’, so that this can be renewed towards the primordial quality of creation. Positing theology as concern with ‘things’ or ‘events’ (πράγματα), the first and foremost objective is to influence things unto perfection, understood in terms of real history. Towards this goal, Christianity itself is an ‘art of medicine’ for human nature. Trying to get this message across in the discourse against Celsus, he emphasizes that ‘we desire to heal all rational souls through the medical treatment of the Logos (τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἰατρικῇ) and to make them friends of God’.⁸⁴ This notion of Christ as medical doctor and Christianity as an, as it were, hospital for healing human nature is a theme favourite to Origen.⁸⁵ The final goal of Christianity is not just *theoria*, it is *another state of affairs* in real life: this is what is meant by *transformation* of history.⁸⁶

The discourse about God is not the result of a secluded intellectual speculation or reflection on premised axioms. In order to be saved, it is not necessary to do what members of ancient philosophical schools did, that is, ‘to abandon one’s works and devote all time to philosophy’ (καταλιπόντας τὰ τοῦ βίου πράγματα σχολάζειν τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν).⁸⁷ It is sufficient to believe and to conduct a virtuous life. The crucial element is *life* taking place within the historical life of the people of God, that is, the Church. This element is the main criterion even for those who aspire to comprehending the deeper mysteries of theology. A passage stated in his commentaries on Matthew and Luke alike, is most exhibitiv of how seriously the requirements for exercising the discipline of theology should be taken. Anyone who aspires to theology, should in the first place assess his own self, his own competence and his virtues: all of his capacities, skills, inclinations, should be thoroughly considered by him himself, so that this serious task should not remain incomplete. At both points, stressing how serious engagement with theology is, reference is made to Luke’s Gospel: “Which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish?”⁸⁸ This means that failure is understood not as an *intellectual* one, but

⁸³ *selPs*, 23, PG.12.1268.27. Cf. pp. 271, 343.

⁸⁴ *Cels*, III, 54.

⁸⁵ *Cels*, I, 63; III, 61; IV, 69; VIII, 72; *commJohn*, 1, XXXV; 32, VI; *frJohn*, XXXVII; *homJer*, 17, 5; *frJer*, 37; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 14; *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 148; *frPs*, 118, 29; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1160.19. *frEx*, PG.12.277.

⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2.4.5.

⁸⁷ *Cels*, I, 9.

⁸⁸ Luke, 14, 28. Reference is likewise made to Mark, 12, 1 and Matt. 21, 33: the ‘tower’ of the parable is ‘the discourse about God’ (ὁ περὶ θεοῦ λόγος): *commMatt*, 17, 7. *frLuc*, 215.

as a *historical* failure, in terms of an aborted undertaking, which is most demanding every step of the way. This is why Origen's references to clergy and the requirements concerning them are so frequent and austere.⁸⁹

Theology is not possible, unless this is bestowed by God acting within history, revealing himself in the real historical setting. Nowhere in Origen's accounts a cosmological starting point for Trinitarian theology can be found. He does not allow any knowledge of God become dependent on observation of nature. I have shown that he holds an idea of God in Himself, quite apart from any creation, indeed apart from any *thought* of creation.⁹⁰ On the contrary, it is Origen who stresses his point of departure, which is God's self-revelation within real historical circumstances.⁹¹ Revelation is to be found only within real life and real history. This was fully manifested through the incarnation of the Logos. Faith is not an abstract philosophical conviction, it is not to be found in metaphysical realms, it is not to be elicited from the study of a particular natural sphere, it cannot be the product of analytical philosophy: faith is belief in what was revealed by the discarnate and incarnate Logos in history. This is all about the *life* of a continuous tradition in real historical environment and in charismatic messengers who communicated this truth to the entire people.

Within the same and unbreakable historical stage, the drama is dominated by the monarchy of the Father and the continuous apocalyptic function of the Logos and the Holy Spirit. Origen, and the subsequent Christian fathers likewise, starts with the fundamental premise of the epiphanies culminated with the incarnation of the Logos. This is not only the basis for understanding his Trinitarian doctrine as a foundation of his Christology and Ecclesiology, but (which is significant for my topic) it lays the utmost stress upon the *historical* character of revelation, within an uninterrupted historical process.

It is only through this point of view that Origen was able to discern orthodoxy from heresy. Addressing himself to both Jews and Greeks, he is at pains

⁸⁹ *commJohn*, 1, XXXVI; 32, XII; *commMatt*, 11, 15; 16, 8; 16, 22; *selLev*, PG.12.400.41; *Scholia in Matthaewm*, PG.17.301.43; *selPs*, 149, PG.12.1681.28, *et passim*. Cf. p. 46.

⁹⁰ *COT*, pp. 25f. By contrast, compare Clement's of Alexandria statement, that 'if God were to cease doing good, he would cease being God'. He employs the typical Platonic view that it is not the characteristic of deity to be idle: God is creative due to his own nature: οὐ τοίνυν ὥσπερ τινὲς ὑπολαμβάνουσι τὴν ἀνάπανσιν τοῦ θεοῦ πέπανται ποιῶν ὁ θεός· ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ὢν, εἰ παύσεται ποτε ἀγαθοεργῶν, καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι παύσεται, ὅπερ οὐδὲ εἰπεῖν θέμις. *Stromateis*, 6.16.141.7–142.1. Likewise, in *op. cit.* 5.14.141 & 6.16.141.2. Further, 'doing good' is 'in God's nature', *op. cit.* 1.17.86.3: τὸ ἀγαθοποιεῖν, φύσις γὰρ ὡς εἰπεῖν αὕτη τοῦ θεοῦ. *op. cit.* 6.17.159.4: φύσις τοῦ ἀγαθοποιοῦ τὸ ἀγαθοποιεῖν. This is probably what Rufinus had in mind while rendering infelicitously the point of *Princ*, I.4.5: 'God did not commence his work having at some point been idle'. Clement, nevertheless, qualifies his statement, saying that God does good not 'out of necessity' (οὐκ οὖν ὁ θεὸς ἀνάγκῃ ἀγαθοποιεῖ), but 'out of choice' (κατὰ προαίρεσιν). *op. cit.* 7.7.42.6. God engaging in a permanent devolution of his sovereignty through his word and wisdom was also part of the rabbinic orthodoxy. A discussion of Origen's dissent from Platonism on this point s. in *COT*, pp. 129f.

⁹¹ s. *supra*, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.3.2.

to demonstrate that the Christian *kerygma* comes from the very old. Its roots are to be found in the original spring of Judaism, as well as in the channel of Hellenism, since the domination of the incorporeal Logos, which was manifested in the history of the elected people, is not confined only to those concrete historical limits, but it extends throughout all history.⁹² At the same time, heresy also comes from the very old. *Fall* from the community is not only an aboriginal occurrence, but it happens throughout all history, as it indeed happened during the history of Israel, each time this people did not accommodate the historical requirements which obtained in relation to the epiphanies. As the advent of the Logos in incorporeal form was continuous, so was the intermittent denial of him;⁹³ indeed he was 'pre-crucified' and 're-crucified' in respect of the historical states either before or after his incarnation (προσταυροῦντα ἢ ἀνασταυροῦντα τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ).⁹⁴

Origen's theology evinces that his painstaking (and sometimes, agonizing) labour to articulate his theology is closely attached to Scripture. At the same time, however, it is obvious that, in order to compose and expound this theology, he does not mechanically cite portions of either Old or New Testament, but he refers to *events*, frequently dramatic ones, in the history of a people, of leaders, of prophets and witnesses of truth. Thus, the emphasis is laid upon *events*, not *verses* of Scripture. Eminent among those events are the epiphanies, the presence of the incorporeal Logos as the second person of Trinity, his incarnation and the consequences of this ongoing drama until the ultimate end of history.

This was the character of his engagement in confronting the challenge to Christianity, from both a Judaic and a Hellenic point of view. To the Jews who claimed that Christianity was a recently appeared heresy, he retorted that the history of Christianity started with Creation and its patrimony is that of patriarch Abraham. The Trinity reveals herself to Abraham and the incorporeal Logos guides the history of Israel. This was also his line of argument facing the Greeks.⁹⁵ Leaving for a moment aside all the other premises of his theology, I should have thought that even the simple fact that Origen employs a *historical* source and conception for revelation could suffice to eliminate all contentions about 'Platonism' in him.

Our concurrence is based on such an assumption, or rather not on a assumption but on a divine *action*, so that its derivation is God teaching men through the *prophets* to hope for the advent of Christ going to save men. So long as this is not actually disconfirmed, even if the unfaithful think they can disconfirm this, so much more

⁹² *Cels*, III, 47; IV, 30; VI, 3; VII, 47; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 1, section 21; *Philocalia*, 15, 5; 18, 18; 18, 29. Cf. pp. 286, 382.

⁹³ *Cels*, Prologue, 2.

⁹⁴ *commJohn*, XX.12. Cf. *homJer*, 13, 2; *commJohn*, 28, 15.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Cels*, V, 33.

is the doctrine standing as the doctrine of God, and Jesus is proven to be Son of God both before he was incarnated and after he was incarnated. What is more, I profess that even after his incarnation he is always found by those people who have very sharp eyes of soul, [and he is found] to be most divine and to have truly come down on to us from God, and to have owed the doctrine about him, or what follows from this doctrine, not to human intelligence, but to God's self-manifestation, who established Judaism in the first place, and after this, Christianity through varied wisdom and various miracles.⁹⁶

Faith then proceeds from history and it was given and confirmed by means of divine action within it. This spine of truth originated in the divine epiphanies and was demonstrated as a *historical* occurrence. Notwithstanding his use of allegory, this principle remained firm in Origen's theology. Allegory is never the end of the road, since there is always an ardent concern for adapting its results and conclusions to historical action. Use of this method did not undermine the *historical* source of his Christology, and therefore, of his Theology. His understanding of Christology was distinctly historical and this was one of the reasons for attacking so vehemently heresies of his time, such as Docetism. For he felt heresies of this kind to be an offense to the historicity of his own dogma, which was the dogma of the Church.

As the foregoing discussion explicates, faith does not stem from abstract conceptualization. What comes first is the dramatic events, as formed and pronounced in the Biblical world. These events shape knowledge of Christ being the Son of God and the son of Mary, the one who redeems and advances the history of the chosen people. This is how this history was viewed in early years of Christianity and this is what Origen's theology confirmed. On the one hand, there is the view of a transcendent God; on the other, his will makes its mark in history, along with his power of freedom bestowed upon people. The remote God, although ontologically alien to creation in terms of substance and being, and while remaining transcendent, becomes historically accessible. Although God has no communion of substance with creatures (ἀφιστάντι τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν γεννητῶν), still a certain divine glory and power, and indeed an effluence of his deity (ἀπορροή τῆς θεότητος)⁹⁷ comes upon them.⁹⁸

Incarnation is a paramount moment in this continuous historical process, where the divine *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία)⁹⁹ is revealed and the economic action of the Trinity is present in historical events. Incarnation casts light upon past history, in which the Trinity is present through the monarch God the Father and the Logos who instructs through his Spirit the community of the elected

⁹⁶ *Cels*, III, 14. Cf. chapter 2, p. 66.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Wis.* 7, 25.

⁹⁸ *de Or.* XXIII, 5; likewise, in XXIV.4.

⁹⁹ Cf. *ἕως οὗ πληρώσῃ τὴν οἰκονομίαν* ('until he carries out the economy'). *fr. Matt*, 259.

people. The same he does in present and future history, in which the Logos through his incarnation institutes the community of the Church through the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Through the doctrine about the perpetual advent of the Logos in the world, Origen is manifestly concerned with primarily interpreting *facts* and *events*, not simply passages or portions. Even with respect to the concept of ‘eternal gospel’, of which so much debate has raged, there is an important point which eludes many Origen’s detractors.

Regarding the eternal gospel (which he finds fitting to also call ‘spiritual’), he states that this contains ‘everything about the Son of God’. What does he mean by ‘everything’? This is stated at the same point: Jesus’ words betokened certain mysteries of theology and ‘things’ which were anticipated as ‘enigmas’ (αἰνίγματα) in his ‘actions’ (τὰ τε πράγματα, ὧν αἰνίγματα ἦσαν αἱ πράξεις αὐτοῦ).¹⁰⁰ As far as the ‘mysteries’ are concerned, Origen makes this point clear throughout, mainly referring to the ‘great mystery of resurrection’ (μέγα τὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως μυστήριον).¹⁰¹ What is more important is that Jesus’ historical actions were held to be symbols designating not ideas, but *things*, events (πράγματα). I emphasize that this remark is made by Origen precisely at the point where he actually provides a definition of his concept of *eternal gospel*, a notion par excellence claimed by many scholars to underscore him as dissolving historical reality into abstract ideas. The entire span of time is extended between two fixed points: one, the ‘beginning of creation’ (ἀρχὴ τῆς κοσμοποιίας), or, the ‘making of the world’ (κοσμοποιία);¹⁰² the other is ‘the end of things’ (τέλος τῶν

¹⁰⁰ *commJohn*, 1, VII.

¹⁰¹ *commJohn*, 10, XXXVI.

¹⁰² The term *κοσμοποιία* is Biblical (4 Macc. 14, 7) and was conveniently upheld by Origen, since this also comes from Aristotle referring to Anaxagoras (*Metaphysica*, 985a19) and Empedocles (*Physica*, 196a220), as well as from Philo, featuring in the title of his work *De Opificio Mundi*. Cf. *ibid.* sections 3, 4, 6, 129, 170, *De Posteritate Caini*, 64; *De Gigantibus*, 22; *De Plantatione*, 86; *De Fuga et Inventione*, 68; 178; *De Abrahamo*, 2; *De Vita Mosis* (lib. i-ii), 2.37; *De Decalogo*, 97; *De Specialibus Legibus* (lib. i-iv), 4.123; *De Praemiis et Poenis & De Exsecrationibus*, 1; *Quaestiones in Genesim* (fragmenta), Book 1, Fr. 1. The term *κοσμοποιία* had been employed by Chrysippus (Fr. 627), it is found in the Corpus Hermeticum (Fr. 37), Marcus Aurelius (7.75.1), and, interestingly enough, in the philosopher Eudemus (4th cent. B.C.). After Origen, Cyril of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Epiphanius of Salamis, Evagrius Ponticus, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Georgius Monachus, Themistius, Theodoret of Cyrus, John Philoponus, John of Damascus used this, too. So did Damascius, Iamblichus, Proclus, Simplicius, Sophonias, Syrianus, Hermias, as indeed Celsus had done before Origen. It is found eight times in Athanasius, another eight times in Basil of Caesarea, but only once in Gregory of Nyssa, and never in Gregory of Nazianzus. This is also present in the Acts of Oecumenical Synods, such as that of Ephesus (A.D. 431), and Constantinople and Jerusalem (A.D. 536). The term *κοσμοποιία* in Origen appears in *Cels*, I, 19; II, 9; V, 59; VI, 27, 28, 49, 50, 51, 60, 61; VII, 39; *frJohn*, I, XCV; *frLuc*, 139c; 257; *Dial*, 3, 12; *Philocalia*, 2, 4; 23, 20; *homJer*, 16, 9; *commMatt*, 15, 27; 15, 32; *frPs*, 150, 3–5 (the same in *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1081.8); *commGen*, PG.12.84.25. The expression ἀρχὴ τῆς κοσμοποιίας in Origen: *commGen*, 3, PG.12.64.17; *Philocalia*, 23, 8; *deOr*, VI, 5; *frLuc*, 104. After him, the expression was upheld by the following authors: Athanasius,

πραγμάτων),¹⁰³ which marks the end of history. These two milestones determine the actual duration of history. Theology and philosophy of history is not about abstract ideas, it is about *events* (πραγμάτων) and things that have been seen (τῶν βλεπομένων).¹⁰⁴

It is significant that both 'events' and 'things seen' indicate *action*. The end is understood to be the end of 'things' (πραγμάτων) which occurred throughout the drama of history. It should then be not surprising that Origen speaks of 'things' (πράγματα) even in his exposition of 'eternal gospel', which has been advertised as the watchword allegedly showing dissolution of historicity. The emphatic recurrence of his conception of history as real πράγματα has unfortunately been disregarded by Origen's detractors.

The actual implication of his reference to πράγματα is not simply the full reality of history. It is the *one* truth revealed therein. On this account Origen never loses sight or concern for the natural and historical reality. He knows that the divine truth is to be found only *where* God speaks and *where* man can experience this in visible and intelligible manner: that is, in Time and History. Nowhere else could God possibly be found, because nowhere else does God speak. Referring to history as πράγματα means *full reality* of things happening in

Cyril of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Epiphanius of Salamis, Eusebius, John Chrysostom, Georgius Syncellus the Chronographer, John Philoponus, Pseudo-Justin Martyr, Nemesius of Emesa, Michael Psellus, John Zonaras. Also, it appears in Simplicius and Damascius. The expression ἀρχὴ τῆς κοσμοποιίας appears in no Christian author prior to Origen. Regarding Christian use of the term κοσμοποιία alone before Origen, it is only Clement of Alexandria who used this only twice, but he did not use the expression ἀρχὴ τῆς κοσμοποιίας at all.

¹⁰³ *Cels*, VIII, 72; *commMatt*, 10, 2; 14, 19; 17, 19; *commJohn*, 2, VIII; *Philocalia*, 23, 8; *commGen*, 3, PG.12.64.21. The expression τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων is one more bequest of Origen to Christian theology. Again, his source can be traced in Aristotle, yet transformed according to his own purposes. We have seen his knowledge and definitions of *telos* according to both Aristotle and Herophilus. The τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων appears in Aristotle as classification in 'four species': that is, *telos* 'according either to law, or to nature, or to art, or to blind chance' (*Divisiones Aristoteleae*, Page+column 23coll; Cf. 24coll; the same in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, 3.96). Once again, Athanasius followed faithfully: *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG.27.65, and, as usual, so did Didymus: *Commentarii in Psalmos* 20-21, Cod. p. 52; *Commentarii in Psalmos* 40-44.4, Cod. p. 326; *Commentarii in Zacchariam*, 5.97; *Fragmenta in Psalmos* (e commentario altero), Fr. 277 & Fr. 880. Likewise, Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 6.11.34; *Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG.23.525; 1204; 1180. John Chrysostom (eighteen instances), John of Damascus, *Sacra Parallela*, PG.95.1112, Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentaria in Isaiam*, 1; *Interpretatio in Ezechielem*, PG.81.1060; *Interpretatio in Jeremiam*, PG.81.648; *Interpretatio in Psalmos*, PG. 80:1253, 1400, 1933. Theodorus Studites, *Epistulae*, Epistle 32. Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, 6.97. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 222, Bekker p. 187a. Aristotelian commentators should also be mentioned, such as John Philoponus (*In Aristotelis Analytica Posteriora Commentaria*, V, 13,3, p. 385; *In Aristotelis Analytica Priora Commentaria*, v. 13,2, p. 311; *In Aristotelis Physicorum Libros Commentaria*, v. 16, pp. 216, 236), Syrianus, (*Commentarium in Hermogenis Librum Περί Στάσεων*, v. 4, pp. 89, 336, 364, 412) and Eustratius (*In Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea vi Commentaria*, p. 290.). Also, Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, v. 2, p.106; Olympiodorus of Alexandria, *In Platonis Alcibiadem Commentarii*, section 83.

¹⁰⁴ *Princ*, IV.1.1; *Philocalia*, 1, 1.

space / time. Referring even to the Divine Being, and asserting the real distinction of the Persons of Father and Son opposite any Sabbellian fallacy, he says that the Father and Son are ‘two things in regard of their individual hypostasis’ (δύο τῇ ὑποστάσει πράγματα),¹⁰⁵ by the term *πράγματα* emphasizing the *reality of distinction* of the two Persons. It is precisely in this sentiment that ‘the end of things’ (τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων) clearly proclaims end of *real* situations, not end of parables, types, and shadows.

Furthermore, since it is only within history that God speaks, it could be an utter nonsense to make the absurd distinction between a ‘truth of revelation’ contrasted with some presumed ‘truth of history’. Origen never indulged to any frivolous antithesis such as that. The word of God is ‘one’, while ‘those which are alien to God are many’.¹⁰⁶ Truth is one, it is universal since it stems from one single source, revelation.

Anyone would certainly profess that the truth is *one* (μίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν). For no one could ever dare assert that, regarding this, the ‘truth of God’ is one, while the ‘truth of angels’ is another, and again ‘the truth of men’ is still another one. For indeed there is only *one truth* regarding the nature of each being (ἐν γὰρ τῇ φύσει τῶν ὄντων μία ἡ περὶ ἐκάστου ἡ ἀλήθεια). And if truth is one (ἀλήθεια μία), it is quite obvious that the construction and foundation of this should reasonably be understood to be *one*, since everything claimed to be wisdom could not reasonably be called wisdom if truth did not prevail in it. And if truth is one (ἀλήθεια μία) and wisdom is one, then the Logos also who announces the truth and wisdom of things, which are plain and evident to those who can apprehend them, should also be *one* (ὁ λόγος ὁ ἀπαγγέλλων εἷς ἂν τυγχάνοι).¹⁰⁷

To hold that truth is spiritual does not entail that *real* is only the spiritual. Natural, as well as moral, precepts are all too real, simply each one speaks in its own terms and through its own voice—indeed each one bespeaks *the one and single* truth, deposited in the recorded facts of Scripture, the inexhaustible reservoir of truth. Therefore, comprehension and interpretation of experience can be only natural and historical. This is the notion of ἀπόδειξις (proof)¹⁰⁸ of truth, frequently used to make his point. This means that the truth of History cannot be anything other than the truth of Revelation. The single ‘one truth’ is ‘the truth

¹⁰⁵ *Cels*, VIII, 12.

¹⁰⁶ *de Or*, XXI, 2. εἷς μὲν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, πολλοὶ δὲ οἱ ἀλλότριοι θεοῦ. Cf. *ibid*. “Good is one, wicked things are many; truth is one (ἐν ἡ ἀλήθεια), but lies are many; true righteousness is one, while many evil habits caricature this; wisdom of God is one, while many are those ‘wisdoms’ abolished, being ‘of this aeon’ and ‘of the rulers of this aeon’.” Cf. p. 310 & n. 566.

¹⁰⁷ *commJohn*, 2, IV; italics mine. *op. cit.* VI, 6: ‘the truth being one’ (μίας οὔσης τῆς ἀληθείας). Cf. ‘any faithful is begotten from the Saviour, being wise [begotten] of wisdom, and true [begotten] of truth (ἀληθὴς ἐξ ἀληθείας), and life [begotten] of life, since the origin and birth of everything is one (τῆς πάντων ἀρχῆς καὶ γεννήσεως μιᾶς οὔσης).’ *frJohn*, CXXI 2 (bis).

¹⁰⁸ 1 Cor. 2, 4, an often quoted portion. *Cels*, I, 62; VI, 2; *Princ*, IV.1.2; *commJohn*, 1, VIII; 4, I & II; *frJer*, 61; *Philocalia*, 1, 7; 4, 1; 4, 2; 15, 2; 18, 8; *commMatt*, 14, 14; *commI Cor*, section 9; *commEph*, section 8.

of things' (ἀλήθεια τῶν πραγμάτων). This is an expression used invariably both for revelation and for the things of history: the promise to the disciples about the Paraclete, who would come in order to guide them to 'the entire truth',¹⁰⁹ is tantamount to Jesus saying about the Paraclete revealing 'the truth of things' (ὥς εἰ ἔλεγεν· εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν πραγμάτων).¹¹⁰ The things of history are considered 'truly' only once they are considered according to this one and unique truth (καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐὰν κρίνωμεν τὰ πράγματα ἀληθείᾳ).¹¹¹

History came to being for the sake of salvation. This milieu for the cosmic drama to take place and evolve is indispensable *means* towards salvation. Typology is a relation to be discovered between events and events, while allegory is the struggle to discover the truth of revelation expressed in, and by means of, historical occurrences. *Kairos*, understood in such an utterly dramatic sense within this theology, is concern with events, not ideas. *Prophecy* relates to historical events spanned in real time until the end of it. The truth of historical events, underscored by functions such as *kairos* and prophecy, is the truth of revelation—there is no other reason recognized for the very *raison d'être* of history. God the Logos not only announced the divine revelation elicited in the Biblical history, but also appeared Himself incarnate, in order to show that it is through history that this truth can be heard and comprehended. Christianity is not simply a blind faith: it is about divine truth being made known and indubitably confirmed through history (οὐχ ἀπλῶς δέ πεπιστευμένων, ἀλλὰ πεπληροφορημένων, τὸ ἀπαράβατον τοῖς λεγομένοις μαρτυρῶν). What Jesus did was not 'mere fantasy' (οὐ κατὰ φαντασίαν), it was manifest history, it was 'things' (πραγμάτων) performed by Jesus (ἐδραματούργησεν Ἰησοῦς): 'since he was truth himself, he acted within things so as they be directed towards truth' (τυγχάνων ἀλήθεια, πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἐνήργησε τὰ πράγματα).¹¹² This is why the testimony of the Gospel is about things which occurred in history and revealed the divine truth.¹¹³ Were this not so, Incarnation could make no sense, since history would be desolated in alienation from the divine truth. This is why Origen is concerned with the truth of historical events, which are understood to be the (only conceivable) manifestation of divine revelation. History has by this time been transformed on account of 'things' participating already 'in truth' (ἀληθείας ἔχει τὰ πράγματα). Although this truth is not yet fully understood, still it is the truth of Jesus, who can disclose this truth as a historical one.¹¹⁴ This means that the truth of history *is* the truth of revelation. God 'making use of truth and the testimony of things

¹⁰⁹ Quoting John, 16, 13.

¹¹⁰ *Cels*, II, 2.

¹¹¹ *homJen*, 4, 3.

¹¹² *frLuc*, 1c; *Scholia in Lucam*, PG.17.313.48–50.

¹¹³ Referring to Luke, 1, 1. *homLuc*, 1; *frLuc*, 1b; *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.312.8n, 34, 38.

¹¹⁴ *commMatt*, 14, 11.

and all the various miracles, actually using them all as a mode of his own voice as it were, he demonstrated to men his own sublimity' (τῇ γὰρ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων μαρτυρίᾳ καὶ ταῖς παντοδαπαῖς θαυματουργίαις οἷον φωνῇ τινι χρησάμενος ὁ Θεός, τὸ οἰκεῖον ὕψος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπέδειξεν).¹¹⁵

There are universal truths to be sought with regard to the world, to life, to man. These truths Origen saw to be expressed in the ongoing historical process, since biblical truth is conveyed through events and their outset is placed upon the moment of creation. This is why he contended that Christian teaching is not something new and struggled to demonstrate its ancientness. Theological doctrines are the epitome of this experience of events. This is why the roots of the divine truth extend to all historical reality. A theme favourite to Origen is the words of Moses in his *Ode* in Deuteronomium: "when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance".¹¹⁶ They are explained to pertain to the moment of creation, foreshadowing the drama of the entire history, and giving an inkling of the incarnation of the Logos, thus establishing the antiquity of the 'Lord's portion' ever since the very beginning of the world.¹¹⁷ Revelation then means communication of a certain *experience*, upon which knowledge of divine things is based.¹¹⁸ It is not Scripture itself which is the source of revelation. Scripture records events, this is a memorandum of events deposited therein. What is striven for is not a strenuous intellectual activity, but 'participation' and 'union' with God through the Logos in Holy Spirit, the Logos being light and truth which liberates.¹¹⁹ In this historical stretch, the Triune God sustains all creation and reveals Himself through his Logos. In Origen there is no room for Justin's notion of spermatic, or seminal, reason.¹²⁰ He did not need to employ this Stoic scheme by virtue of his concept of the perpetual presence and advent of the Logos in the world, who is present not only in the whole of this, but also in each individual hypostasis.¹²¹

By the power with which he [sc. the Logos] is said to fill the world,¹²² he comes to each man and speaks in his heart and teaches him discretion of good and evil.¹²³

¹¹⁵ *selPs*, 45, PG.12.1433.48–52.

¹¹⁶ Deut. 32, 8–9.

¹¹⁷ *Cels*, IV, 8; V, 29; 31; *commJohn*, 13, L; *Philocalia*, 22, 7; 22, 10.

¹¹⁸ *Cels*, III, 72; *commMatt*, 17, 2; *fiProv*, 1, PG.13.17.45; *expProv*, 24, PG.17.228.11f.

¹¹⁹ *commMatt*, 12, 15; 13, 11; *commJohn*, 19, III; 20, XIII; *fiJohn*, XCIII; *fiPs*, 4, 4; 118, 75. Cf. *John*, 8, 32.

¹²⁰ Justin Martyr, *Apologia Secunda*, 13.3. s. *supra*, p. 390 and note 62.

¹²¹ Cf. *supra*, *Cels*, VI, 71. The idea is present also in Justin, notwithstanding his indulgence to the notion of 'seminal reason'. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apologia Secunda*, 8.3.

¹²² Cf. *COT*, pp. 165f. Jer. 23, 24; Wis. 1, 7. s. *commJohn*, 9, XXXIX; *Cels*, IV, 5; V, 12; *homLev*, 5, 2.

¹²³ Cf. *commJohn*, 1, XXXVII; 2, XV; *Princ* (Lat.), I.3.6.

It was then sufficient for him to urge that the Logos rules over all universe and all history, and that this command is tantamount to him sustaining all nature and history. Seminal reason has no the same meaning in Origen as in Justin. It either has a natural sense,¹²⁴ and where there seems to be some dependence on the Stoic notion¹²⁵ the case is simply a particular interpretation of a certain context which enlightens the historical course of the gentiles and the elected people. All in all, the relation of the Hellenic and Judaic world with the actual life of the Church stems from, and is founded on, the fact of the incorporeal and corporeal presence of the Logos in nature and history. No actual relation is established either through the notion of 'seminal reason' or that of the initial pedagogical value of the Law. The cardinal event is the presence of the Logos, particularly after his incarnation.¹²⁶

What comes first is the *history* of the divine dispensation; the written *records* of this just follow. The prime and foremost interest is for the *experience* of Moses, not for the *recording* of this. The same goes for the vision of Isaiah, of the Logos descending to Ezekiel, to Jeremiah, the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and so on.

In his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Origen uses the 'palace analogy' in order to expound the difference between the experience of Paul and his recorded words. Paul is said to have acted as a faithful and wise steward,¹²⁷ who 'will endure the necessity to make known what he has seen', still because 'he is wise and recognizes the necessity to conceal the mystery of the king',¹²⁸ he will use only tokens and intimations rather than detailed reports, so that, although the king's power is not obscured, yet the arrangement of the layout and the adornment and the condition of the palace remains a secret. . . . For we are not even able to grasp the things he knows in part. Thus he carefully weighs his speech and the chambers of each mystery he touches on and slightly opens to us in only one or two words.¹²⁹

This is how Origen posits the precise relation between a holy man's experience, as an *event* in Biblical history, and the *records* which proceed from this experience. The text may provide participation to the experience of the holy men through illumination by the Holy Spirit, but the text is not the paramount element, it is only a record: yes, it is written through enlightenment by the Holy Spirit, still the texts are subsequent to the initial events of *experience* which are recorded.

¹²⁴ *Cels*, I, 37; IV, 48; *commMatt*, 13, 26; *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1097.26f; *commJohn*, 20, III; V.

¹²⁵ *commJohn*, 13, XLI; 20, II.

¹²⁶ *commMatt*, 13, 26; *selPs*, 145, PG.12.1676.20f.

¹²⁷ Luke, 12, 42.

¹²⁸ Cf. Tobit, 12, 7. *Cels*, V, 19; V, 29; *Philocalia*, 22, 8; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6.8.2.

¹²⁹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 5.1.9–11. This analogy also used in the *Commentary on Psalms*, some excerpts of which were included in *Philocalia*, 2.3.

Origen's primary interest is in the divine *act* of revelation. Understanding the text, taking away the 'veil' from it is an intense struggle, still secondary to the foremost priority. What is sought for in these memoranda of the divine glory and action within the world is the 'mind of Christ':¹³⁰ that is, the revelation of the mystery of the renewing and unifying redemptive function of the Logos from the Father in Holy Spirit.¹³¹

Origen is interested in 'the grandiloquence of *facts*,' not in the 'grandiloquence of *words*' (οὐκ ἐν λέξεσι μεγαλοφωνίαν, ἀλλά ἐν πράγμασι μεγαλοφωνίαν).¹³² In this contrast between 'lofty utterances' issuing from 'facts', and those coming forth from 'words', there is crucial and conclusive token of his philosophy of history. Theology aims, among others, at correlating its propositions with the quest for a meaning in history. Unlike particular sciences which deal only with a part of reality, theology aspires to an omniscient method to deal with the totality of reality and to afford an answer to the question about the ultimate and universal meaning of events in nature and history. It is then all too normal that Origen's hermeneutic rules were built according to this objective of theology. In this context, his understanding and exegesis of 'symbols' is never a definitive proposition, it is to be understood as temporary, since there is always the possibility of a better understanding and rendering in future. His modesty, to which I referred in the Introduction, is not simply a psychological attitude, but stems precisely from this premise.

No part of creation, no matter which this is, is ever elevated to the point of being regarded as something unconditional, unqualified, unrestricted, indeed something absolute, in the sense of a self-contained idol, a golden calf, as it were. On the contrary, everything is placed and understood within the context of the metamorphic course of the Church. It is there that the Uncreated and the Created reality encounter each other, it is there that the 'mystery of the Church'

¹³⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 16. s. *surpa*, p. 370, note 98.

¹³¹ Cf. *Homilies on Leviticus*, 4.2.3: "communion was bestowed to us 'with the Father and the Son' and with the Holy Spirit". He comments on 1 John, 1, 3, adding the Person of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, *op. cit.* 8.11.10: "purification cannot be attained without the mystery of the Trinity". Likewise, in *op. cit.* 8.11.15.

¹³² *Cels*, II, 73. Cf. *Cels*, III, 58; *commMatt*, 12, 32 & 33; 16, 5 & 10. The term μεγαλοφωνία comes from Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*, 787a3&7. Authors either prior or contemporary to Origen used the word: Flavius Philostratus (3rd cent. B.C.), *Vitae Sophistarum*, ch. 2; Strabo (1st cent. BC–1st cent. A.D.), *Geographica*, 15.3.18; Julius Pollux (2nd cent. A.D.), *Onomasticon*, 2.112; 6.148; Lucian of Samosata (2nd cent. A.D.), *De Domo*, 16; *Juppiter Tragoedus*, 6; *Icaromenippus*, 17; 28; *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda*, 8. Of Christian authors, the term was amply upheld by Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus the Blind, Eusebius, Eustathius of Thessaloniki (12nd cent. A.D.); also, at a couple of points, by Maximus Confessor, Photius, Michael Psellus and once by Oecumenius. Besides, in philosophy, Proclus, John Philoponus, Himerius, and possibly Alexander of Aphrodisias (the text is dubious) also employed the term.

(τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐκκλησίας)¹³³ takes place as a both historical and eschatological reality and the entire body of the Church participates in this encounter through the action of sacraments.¹³⁴ When Paul says, 'you are labourers together with God', he means those people in which 'all the mysteries and ineffable doctrines' are built (ἐν ᾧ οἰδοκομεῖται τὰ μυστήρια καὶ τὰ ἄρρητα δόγματα): this is the 'body' of *His* people, which is 'the temple of God and the holy of holies'.¹³⁵ All these functions can on no account be understood outside the natural and historical milieu. It is exactly there that the heart of the 'mystery' is to be found: in the natural reality of time, in the various *kairoi*, in the Incarnation, in *prophecies* pronounced throughout history, in the entire conception of dialectical relation between divine and human will encountering each other within history. All the fragments of nature and all occurrences of history are ceaselessly put together under a light revealing their coherence, their meaningful consequence, their harmony, congruity, integration, and eventually their unity, their oneness and essential continuity behind the revealed interrelation.

All these cannot be understood outside a physical, tangible and sensible setting. Not only philosophy of history, but also theological understanding itself, build their own theories looking watchfully at this (and *into* this) historical and dramatic flux of events by means of a penetrating eye. The records of Scripture constantly point to great events of nature and history, viewed in the light of the process just mentioned, the process of a meaningful consequence towards perfection despite all odds and setbacks.

All the propositions, therefore, even when appearing as an outcome of allegorical or typological exegesis, are not simply bare abstractions of mind, for the simple reason that they always point to perceptible circumstances, standings, structures, and not rarely predicaments of creation. It is precisely at this point that Origen's hermeneutic method, portion to portion of Scripture, reveals its real and indisputable objective. A multitude of created images (such as seas, mountains, rivers, valleys, numerous kinds of animals) reveal this deep mystery of history within the mystery of the Church. The *theoria* is of use because, through this, the fragmentary character of natural elements is overcome, without nevertheless parting way with reality. Allegory does not preclude the idea of *real* episodes. There is then an unwavering grasp of historical facts being the *conditio sine qua non* for coming to terms with the 'truth of things'.

Apart from unimportant and implausible details, the only case in which historicity of events is denied is the obvious one of *parables*. No one ever contended

¹³³ *homJer*, 18, 5; *fiLuc*, 58a; *Commentariorum Series in Evangelium Matthaei* (Mt. 22.34–27.63), p. 147; *commMatt*, 16, 21; *homJob*, PG.12.1036.4.

¹³⁴ *In Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, p. 441.

¹³⁵ 1 Cor. 3, 9. *fiJer*, 58.

that parables narrate real historical incidents; everyone knows that their truth lies in the principles of life proclaimed thereby. This is the only case where a narration ‘according to things’ is contrasted with one ‘in an anagogical sense’ (Αἱ παραβολαὶ οὐ κατὰ τὰ πράγματα ἀκούγονται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἀναγωγήν).¹³⁶

This procedure (the flux of meaningful events) is a continuous sacrament, of which Origen is perfectly aware, alluding to this ‘mystery’ (μυστήριον) at every opportune point. A term favourite to him is the verb *τελέσαι*, which points to historical action understood as dispensation of the divine economy (οἰκονομίαν τελέσαντος).¹³⁷ Τέλεσις is the act of carrying out a mystery, according to the notion in the New Testament, ‘I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished (τελεσθῇ)’.¹³⁸ Also, when Jesus delivered his teaching on the mountain, the term used is that he ‘accomplished’ this act, in the sense of a sacrament, like all his actions on earth (τελέσας διδασκαλίαν, θεραπείας ἐπιτελέσας).¹³⁹ The entire teaching of Jesus was such an ‘accomplishment’ of a sacrament, as it were, as indeed his life was.¹⁴⁰ The same term is used in reference of actions of his disciples, to whom he said, ‘You shall not have gone over (οὐ μὴ τελέσητε) the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come’.¹⁴¹ The verb is applied to every Christian’s proper actions throughout history,¹⁴² and nonetheless to the episodes of the Old Testament which were ‘prefigurations’ of the New one, such as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, who is stated to have composed them.¹⁴³ Even in regard of relapse into sin, the term is used accordingly, since sin and fall during the process to perfection are part of the mystery accomplished in the teleological course of history.¹⁴⁴ The term is important, since it bears upon function both in natural as well as theological terms, in the unity just pointed out. An interpretation of a Psalm containing thanksgiving to God (τελεσθείσης τῆς εὐχαριστίας)¹⁴⁵ is couched by usage of the same term, as it is for the natural process through which a seed becomes leaven (τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σπόρου τελεσιουργηθεῖσαν δύναμιν).¹⁴⁶ This is relevant to my foregoing

¹³⁶ *selEz*, 18, PG.13.816.37; italics mine.

¹³⁷ *Cels*, II, 65.

¹³⁸ Luke, 12, 50. Cf. Origen, *commJohn*, 6, XLIII; 6, LVI; *exhMar*, XXX.37. He uses this in this scriptural sense. At one point the word *τελεσταί* is used simply because Celsus introduced this in his argument, in the pagan sense, meaning ‘interpreters of the mysteries’. It is only at that point that Origen uses the word in this sense: *τελεστάς* (*Cels*, VIII, 48).

¹³⁹ *commJohn*, 10, XIX.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. reference to Jesus’s teaching, in *commMatt*, 14,14: ἐτέλεσε, τελεσθέντα, τελεσθεῖσι.

¹⁴¹ Matt. 10, 23. Cf. *exhMar*, XXXIV.

¹⁴² *homJob*, PG.12.1033: ἐὰν μὴ τελέσω τὸ πάλαισμα, οὐκ ἔρχεται τὸ κρίμα τοῦ στεφάνου.

¹⁴³ *frLam*, 1. Once again the same verb is used (μετὰ τὸ τελέσαι τὸν ὕφ’ ἐκάστου θρήνον).

¹⁴⁴ *selDeut*, PG.12.813.49: τελεσθῆναι. *expProv*, 19, PG.17.208.14–16: τελεσιουργεῖ κακίαν and λόγους. *ibid.*, 24, PG.17.229.53–54: κακῶς τελεσιουργοῦντα νοῦν.

¹⁴⁵ *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1124.27.

¹⁴⁶ *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.357.36.

argument, about natural elements, facts and processes used invariably to reveal the mystery of history within the mystery of the Church.

What we have, therefore, is a process of its own inherent logic. This is why it is misleading to overstress reference to a presumed 'hermeneutical method' of Origen's and to stop at that point, as if this were something similar, say, with the hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger. For what we have is not simply a 'method', but an comprehensive function, both scientific and existential; we have a light cast upon things, through which a meaningful coherence and unity of this process is revealed. What is sought for is a comprehensive grasp of all reality, the chief and foremost concern being with assessing things so as they be viewed in their real operation in the course of history. This operation is evaluated mainly in its relation to the anticipated *end* of the process. This is a principal criterion for historical events to be considered.

Any Christian who approaches the Scripture is summoned to meet with the Logos, he is not commanded a blind faith and obedience in verbal expressions, let alone to a text as a whole. Origen's method did not allow room for such obedience, since the struggle is always to find out *what* the biblical texts mean to say. This strife is not exempt from danger, and Origen is alert to this danger of fault, as well as to the danger of divulging the doctrines to unsuited audience.¹⁴⁷ There is always a need for revealing Scripture since 'especially the prophets are full of accredited enigmas and of sayings of which the meaning is not clear to the multitude'. The same goes for 'the parables of the gospels and the rest of the text of the law, the history of Jews, and the utterances of the apostles', which should be read 'thoughtfully and with a desire to be introduced into the meaning of the words'.¹⁴⁸

His allegorical method and typological symbolic resolutions (frequently complemented by historical investigation, nonetheless) left no much room for blind faith in texts just *because* they say something. Origen's allegorical method was not a free interpretation, since the rule of piety was the starpole guiding all of his assertions. This is why he found *physical, moral, spiritual* sense in Scripture.¹⁴⁹ It would be wrong to say that according to him Scripture creates faith and obedience. It is faith which creates Scripture. For faith precedes the records comprising Scripture. Faith springs from the recorded *historical events*, not

¹⁴⁷ The infinitive παρακεκινδυνεύκεναι (having committed a bold venture) is indicative of his anxiety; *commMatt*, 17.30; *Cels*, V, 48; VI, 44. Cf. pp. 20, n. 65; 80 n. 137; 241 n. 25.

¹⁴⁸ *Cels*, I, 12.

¹⁴⁹ *expProv*, 1, PG.7.161.2526: ἡ περὶ ἠθικῆς καὶ φυσικῆς καὶ θεολογικῆς ἀποκαλύπτουσα θεωρίαν. *ibid.*, 22, PG.17.220.54: πᾶσα γὰρ ἡ κατὰ τὴν Γραφὴν πραγματεία τέμενται τριχῶς, εἰς ἠθικὴν καὶ φυσικὴν καὶ θεολογικὴν. *frLam*, 14: τῶν ποικίλων δογμάτων, μυστικῶν τε καὶ φυσικῶν καὶ ἠθικῶν, τάχα δὲ καὶ λογικῶν. Cf. *frPs*, 76, 21, ref. to φυσικὴ θεωρία, ἠθικὴ πραγματεία, θεολογικὸν εἶδος.

from the *words* recording these events. A lot a stress has been laid on Origen's interpretation of Scripture, so many myths about this putative method allegedly dissolving historicity have been contended, but one simple truth is ignored: Scripture is not the supreme authority according to Origen. The authority of Scripture originates in the supreme authority of the historical events of revelation. What was communicated to the holy men by God through his epiphanies was far superior to that which has been recorded in Scripture. Correspondence of the two Testaments on the grounds of typology means correspondence of facts (τύπος πράγματος), which holds also true for whatever 'is denotative' of the eschatological reality (ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι δηλωτικόν).¹⁵⁰

This point is marvelously made in *commJohn*, where a pithy contrast is made: the 'water' that Jesus gives is superior to the 'water' of the Scriptures.¹⁵¹ This is the point which definitively demonstrates Origen's attitude to Scripture in respect of historical self-revelations of God and the experience of the holy men out of them. Sections V and VI (paragraphs 26–39) of Book 13 of *commJohn* are actually an excursus delineating the extent to which the authority of Scripture provides the divine revelation. He draws a sharp distinction between those who 'will live and will be with truth itself' (τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ὁμιλησόντων καὶ συνεσομένων) and those who 'are thought to benefit from the Scriptures' (τὴν νομιζομένην ὠφέλειαν γίνεσθαι ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν) even in case they 'are accurately understood' (κἄν νοηθῶσιν ἀκριβῶς). The difference is described in terms of the instance in John, 4, 13–14: one who drinks from the fountain of Jacob will thirst again, but he who drinks from the water which Jesus offers possesses a fountain of water within himself which leaps unto eternal life. The point is made in terms of this instance, in order to explicate Origen's opinion that the *recording* in Scripture is lesser to the *experience* which this recording is meant to communicate. His point is that Scripture has not contained some of the more principal and more divine mysteries of God, nor indeed is there any human voice or human language capable of expressing some of them, since these mysteries cannot be contained within the common meanings communicated among people. 'For there are also other things that Jesus did, which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written'.¹⁵² John is forbidden to pen all that the seven thunders said.¹⁵³ Paul accordingly says that he has heard ineffable words which is not lawful for a man to utter.¹⁵⁴ These were not words that were not permitted

¹⁵⁰ *commMatt*, 12, 3.

¹⁵¹ Ref. to John, 4, 14. *commJohn*, 13, IV. Cf. *supra*, 'Our concurrence is based on divine action'. *Cels*, III, 14.

¹⁵² Cf. John, 21, 25.

¹⁵³ Cf. Rev. 10, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. 2 Cor. 12, 4.

to be uttered by anyone, for angels were permitted to utter them, but not men, 'for all things are permitted, but not all things are beneficial'.¹⁵⁵ It is indeed Paul who says that 'it is not lawful for a man to utter' those things that he had heard, 'words that are ineffable'.¹⁵⁶

In view of these considerations, Origen's conclusion in *commJohn*, 13, V, is expressive of his overall attitude towards Scripture and History:

And I think that all of the Scriptures, even when perceived very accurately, are only very elementary rudiments of and very brief introductions to all knowledge.

Going ahead with using John's language, he outlines his considerations: the fountain of Jacob, from which Jacob once drunk but no longer drinks, and from which his sons also drunk but now have a better drink than that, and from which their livestock too have drunk, can mean all Scripture. The water of Jesus, however, is 'beyond that which is written'.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, not all men are permitted to examine the things that are 'beyond that which is written',¹⁵⁸ unless *one has become like these things* which are beyond all those written (οὐ πᾶσιν δὲ ἔξεστιν ἐρευνᾶν τὰ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται, ἐὰν μὴ τις αὐτοῖς ἐξομοιωθῇ).¹⁵⁹ This means only those 'deified' are allowed to search into those ineffable things. Unless this is the case, one may hear the saying, 'Seek not the things that are too high for you, and search not into things beyond your ability'.¹⁶⁰ To say that someone knows that which is beyond what is written, does not mean that these things can be known to anyone. They were known to John who heard what kind of words were those of the thunders, but he is not licenced to write them down.¹⁶¹ He comprehended those things, still he did not write them in order to spare the world, because he thought that not even the entire world itself could contain the books that should be written.¹⁶² Still the case of John the evangelist is not unique. Paul also had learned that 'words that cannot be spoken' should remain 'beyond that which is written'.¹⁶³ So are the things 'that eye has not seen', that is, those beyond that which is written, as indeed are the things 'that ear has not heard'.¹⁶⁴ Also, the things that have not entered the heart of man (τὰ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου μὴ ἀναβεβηκότα)¹⁶⁵ are greater than

¹⁵⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 6, 12.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. 2 Cor. 12, 4.

¹⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 4, 6.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor. 4, 6.

¹⁵⁹ *commJohn*, 13, V & VI. Cf. Scripture being 'introduction', *op. cit.* 10, XIV.

¹⁶⁰ Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirah, (Ecclesiasticus) 3, 21.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Rev. 10, 4.

¹⁶² Cf. John, 21, 25.

¹⁶³ 1 Cor. 4, 6.

¹⁶⁴ 1 Cor. 2, 7–9.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 9. *commJohn*, 13, VI.

the fountain of Jacob. These things are made manifest from the fountain of water leaping unto eternal life to those who no longer have the heart of man, but who are able to say, 'But we have the mind of Christ'¹⁶⁶ 'that we may know the things that are given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in words learned of the Spirit.'¹⁶⁷ And consider, Origen says, if one can call 'human wisdom' not false tenets, but the elementary constituents of the truth (στοιχειωτικά τῆς ἀληθείας),¹⁶⁸ and the things that are appropriate to those who are still humans. On the other hand, the things that are learned of the Spirit are perhaps the fountain of water that leaps unto eternal life. Scripture 'signifies' (σημαίνει) certain realities. In regard of the eschatological reality, for instance, 'when it is written that the saints are the limbs of each other', this means 'that they all comprise one body': this is how Scripture 'signifies' (σημαίνει) the unity and coherence of the many' members,¹⁶⁹ which is indeed what was meant when 'the tower, although made of many stones, seemed as it were made by one single stone'.¹⁷⁰

Here is then the conclusion out of these considerations: "Therefore, the Scriptures are introductions (εἰσαγωγὰ οὖν εἰσιν αἱ γραφαί)". Once they have been accurately comprehended, one must ascend from them (at present called 'the fountain of Jacob') to Jesus, so that he may present us with the fountain of water that leaps unto eternal life.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 2, 16. Cf. pp. 370, 383, 404.

¹⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 2, 12–13.

¹⁶⁸ *commJohn*, 13, VI.

¹⁶⁹ *frOs*, PG.13.828.40f, *apud*: *Philocalia*, 8, 3.

¹⁷⁰ *Loc. cit.*, referring to the non-canonical 2nd century book entitled *Shepherd* (Ποιμὴν) by Hermas (Cf. *commJohn*, 1, 17 and *commMatt*, 14, 21). Origen used the *Shepherd*, 'eventhough some treat this with contempt': *Princ.* IV.2.4 (*Philocalia*, 1, 11). Beside 2 Maccabees, 7, 28, he appealed to this book in order to bolster up his doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (ἐκ τοῦ μη ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα. *Shepherd*, 25.7. *commJohn*, 1, XVII & 32, XVI. Cf. ch. 6, n. 126). According to Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.8.7), Irenaeus quoted from *Shepherd* the phrase, 'the Scripture then aptly said' (*Adversus Haereses*, 4.20.2, Gr. text, Fr. 8) which is the same portion that Origen later appealed to (*commJohn*, 32, XVI. Cf. *Scholia in Matthaeum*, PG.17.289.35; *selPs*, 54, PG.12.1469.16; *selPs*, 115, PG.12.1557.4; *selPs*, 130, PG.16.1661.48; *frPs*, 54, 21 & 138, 14–16.). This may suggest that Irenaeus granted the book as canonical. Athanasius quoted the same portion, calling the *Shepherd* 'most beneficial' (ὠφελιμωτάτης, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, 3.1; parallels, in *De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi*, 18.3; *Epistula ad Afros Episcopos*, PG.26.1037.28.) To the latter epistle of Athanasius mention is made by Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 35. As late as the end of 4th century, Didymus the Blind availed himself of the *Shepherd*. Cf. *Commentarii in Zachariam*, 1.384; 3.196; 4.312; *Commentarii in Psalmos 35–39*, Cod. p. 262. Hence, although a devout student of the canonical books, Origen was apt to countenance certain written or unwritten increments of ancient legacy. Cf. use of the *Book of Enoch* (*commJohn*, 6, XLII) although stated as non-canonical (*Cels*, V, 54); *Acta Pauli* (*commJohn*, 20, XII, s. p. 110, n. 401); also, Jewish apocrypha testifying to the saying of Jesus in Matt. 23, 35 (ἐν ἀποκρύφους, *commMatt*, 10, 18); portions of the book of Daniel (ἐν ἀποκρύφους, *epAfrt*, PG.11.65.17); the books of Tobit and Judith, which 'do not exist among their [sc. Jews'] apocrypha' (*epAfrt*, PG.11.80.17). The same he did quoting the expression αἰθήσιν θείαν εὐρήσεις (in considerable divergence from Prov. 2, 3–5) from an unknown source. s. *infra*, n. 228.

¹⁷¹ *commJohn*, 13, VI. s. *supra*, note 159.

Availing himself of John 21, 25, Origen in fact wishes to remain consistent with his fundamental tenet that theology and history is about 'things' (πραγμάτων), not abstract ideas. This is why at a certain point he feels it necessary to clarify the meaning of this portion of John: when he says that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written',¹⁷² he does not say so because of the 'vast number' of books (οὐ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν γραμμάτων) which might be necessary to relate the events that happened (an interpretation which 'some people might be apt to embrace'), but in consideration of 'the magnitude of things' (ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν πραγμάτων). This grandeur of events is not only impossible to record (τοῦ μεγέθους τῶν πραγμάτων οὐ μόνον οὐ δυναμένον γράφεσθαι), but also it is impossible to signify (σημαίνεισθαι) through 'a fleshly tongue, or in any human language'. 'This is why Paul, being about to learn things which are impossible to utter, is taken out of this earthly place, and is elevated up to the third heaven, so that he be able to hear unspeakable words.'¹⁷³

Thus, the divine letters, Scripture, is indeed an object of reverence, not because this is considered in itself to be a kind of idol, but because the 'holy letters' is the point of departure for us to become able to 'construct' the recorded *events* 'out of them' (ἀπὸ τῶν θείων γραμμάτων κατασκευάσαι):¹⁷⁴ that is, to reconstruct the *events* through which God manifested himself and intervened in history, and we ourselves experience such events within the Church. In short, Scripture is highly valued, because through this we can reconstruct and comprehend God's 'action'. Through Scripture 'the doctrine is standing as the doctrine of God, and Jesus is proven to be Son of God both before he was incarnated and after he was incarnated.'¹⁷⁵

Certainly not everyone draws from Scripture ('Jacob's fountain') in the same way and to the same degree. Perhaps Jacob and his sons drunk with full knowledge, the Samaritan woman when she thirsted drunk in another way, and Jacob's cattle drunk in still another way. In fact, those who are 'wise in the Scriptures' drink as Jacob and his sons. Others, however, who are simple and more innocent, the so-called 'ship of Christ',¹⁷⁶ drink as Jacob's livestock. Others still, misconstruing the Scriptures and maintaining certain profane things on the pretext that they have comprehended them, drink as the Samaritan woman drank before she believed in Jesus.¹⁷⁷

Quite sharp is the distinction made between those who are directly instructed by God through his epiphanies, and those who study the records. The two

¹⁷² Cf. John, 21, 25.

¹⁷³ *Philocalia*, 15, 19.

¹⁷⁴ *Cels*, VI, 49.

¹⁷⁵ *Cels*, III, 14, s. *supra*.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. John, 10, 26.

¹⁷⁷ *comm John*, 13: V, VI.

kinds of benefit are ‘heterogeneous’ (τὸ ἑτερογενὲς τῆς ὠφελείας).¹⁷⁸ This places Scripture in the status of a chronicle of the experience of the divine men, a divinely inspired chronicle, still a document *of* a historical *experience* recorded therein. At any rate, what is *recorded* is subsequent to the *actual content* of revelation, as experienced by holy men such as John the author of Revelation, or Paul. This is why Origen holds steadfast to his fundamental tenet about Scripture being ‘only a part and least in comparison to the whole truth and to the entire wisdom’ (οἱ θεῖοι λόγοι τὸ ἐκ μέρους εἶναι καὶ ἐλάχιστοι συγκρίσει τοῦ ὅλου λόγου καὶ τῆς πάσης σοφίας).¹⁷⁹ If the entire wisdom of the ‘eternal gospel’ were to be a ‘book’, then Scripture is not a book, but only ‘a certain table of contents’ of a book (οὐ βιβλίον, ἀλλὰ τις κεφαλὴς βιβλίου).¹⁸⁰

Thus Scripture is held to be divinely inspired, but this is not itself deified, this is not made an idol within the world. This means that what has to be comprehended in the first place is *life*, as an uninterrupted consequence of historical events, through which God speaks to men. That which is assumed to be concealed in Scripture, ‘the mind of Christ’,¹⁸¹ is precisely the meaning of history, the significance of particular events for the historical perspectives of the ‘people of God’. Setting out to expound his assertion about Scripture being divinely inspired, he starts with a significant introduction:

Now in our investigation of these important *things* (τηλικούτων πραγμάτων), we do not rest satisfied with common opinions and the clear evidence of things that are seen, but we use in addition, for the manifest truth of our statements, *testimonies* (μαρτύρια) drawn from the scriptures, which we believe to be divine, both from what is called the Old Testament and also from the New, endeavouring to confirm our faith by reason.¹⁸²

What is pursued is ‘things’ (πραγμάτων), the vehicle to achieve this is the ‘testimonies’ (μαρτύρια). This means that what happens *first* is vivid *events* (πραγμάτων), which have been distinctly seen (τῇ ἐναργείᾳ τῶν βλεπομένων), and which are the call for participation in the community; *then* the charismatic messengers of the Spirit (and, through them, the entire community) are endowed with the *capability to see* and to experience the divine presence, the divine events, and *then* to record them. This is how *life* comes first as a vigorous expression of the ecclesiastical body, and after this various records follow, being memoranda and

¹⁷⁸ *commJohn*, 13.V. Origen places himself on the side not of those who ‘will live and will be with truth itself’ (τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ὁμιλησόντων καὶ συνεσομένων), but of those who simply ‘are thought to benefit from the Scriptures’ (τὴν νομιζομένην ὠφέλειαν γίνεσθαι ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν), even if they ‘are accurately understood’ (κἂν νοηθῶσιν ἀκριβῶς).

¹⁷⁹ *selEz*, 2, PG.13.772.36–45.

¹⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸¹ 1 Cor. 2, 16.

¹⁸² *Princ*, IV.1.1; italics mine.

landmarks recording the history of the divine *oikonomia*. The Testaments are the 'testimonies' (μαρτύρια) recording revelation, they are not themselves the *act* of revelation. This is why 'the righteousness of God' is held to be 'supported by testimonies'.¹⁸³ Revelation comprises *events*, Scriptures are 'testimonies' of Revelation: 'the law and the prophets are witnesses to the righteousness of God.'¹⁸⁴

This action, however, is not a chain of isolated moments. As I said in reference to the notion of *kairos*, all the moments of time are in fact *kairoi*. This actually means that the activity of the Holy Spirit is not intermittent, but an uninterrupted presence in the community, a fundamental qualitative datum of its life. Divine inspiration, therefore, means two things. Firstly, all those who receive the Holy Spirit are made able to announce and interpret *events* that have taken place. Secondly, their own experience itself is a safeguard against illusion in theory and default in praxis. Thus the holy texts are the fruits of an experience which is to be participated in by the entire community. This is why Origen's concern is first and foremost with the 'mind of Christ'.¹⁸⁵ He seeks for that divine *experience* which safeguards revelation of the *true* import of the records. For he knows that the activity of the Holy Spirit is present not only in the *recording* of the events that occurred at different times of the past, but also in the events themselves. The activity of the Holy Spirit is primarily present in the events, then in their recording, then in their interpretation and, finally, in the way in which the life of the community will be organized and progress into the future. This development takes place under the supervision and action of the divine presence and superintendence, under incessant vigilance for the rightness of the process, in a battle full of setbacks and restorations, a battle towards perfection.¹⁸⁶

The teleological process in time and history, as discussed earlier, means that revelation (epiphanies of God and Incarnation, as well perpetual advent of the Logos) does not come about for the sake of one individual's progress, but for the sake of the entire community, and ultimately for all humanity. At this point, my discussion about the real meaning of *prophecy* and its difference from pagan oracles, as well as Origen's concept of the 'delayed judgement', should be recalled. For they both betoken this conception of divine *oikonomia* aiming at universal salvation. An individualized revelation or announcement has value

¹⁸³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.7.13.

¹⁸⁴ *Op. cit.* 3.7.12.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 16. *commJohn*, 1, IV; 10, XXVIII & XLI; 13, VI; 20, II; 28, 1; *Cant*, 1, PG.17.253.45; *commMatt*, 10, 10; 15, 30; *selPs*, 4, PG.12.1149.40; *commEph*, section 37; *frPs*, 77, 3-6; 124, 5; *deOr*, I, 1; XXVII, 14; *Princ* (Gr. & Lat.), IV.2.3; *Cels*, III, 21; V, 1.

¹⁸⁶ Inspiration of this historical adventure Origen finds in the 11th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the 11th one of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

only in so far as this can be considered in universal terms, that is, only once this is addressed to the average member of the community who has not the privilege of direct revelation from God, the man who is called to believe that which God said or showed to the holy persons of the population. This is why mystical experience in Origen's thought has nothing to do with paranormal, eccentric, or mythical personal experience or way of living, which is impossible to communicate to the entire community. No doubt in Biblical history there are individual revelations to charismatic persons through 'visions, dreams, epiphanies of the angel',¹⁸⁷ signs, and different symbols. In no case, however, do all these relate to the personal life of individuals. They all pertain to the historical course and perspectives of all community, being servitors to its progression unto perfection. This means that there is no personal or individual revelation, even if this takes place 'in dream'. Such revelations are simply minute parts instrumentally related to the entire historical drama of a people, the people of God.

This is the reason why all these minute instances of Biblical history are deemed worthy of being clarified and interpreted. This is why Origen regards this as a huge task to be fulfilled. Exegesis has to be carried out because this is for the sake of the entire people of the Church, and it pertains not to the perfection of a few elect persons, but to all of her members and ultimately to all humanity. This is what I mean by asserting that Origen's view of salvation on no account has any aristocratic character. He knows that the divine truth can be found only *where* God speaks and *where* man can experience this comprehensibly: that is, in history. If the letter has to be disclosed, this is so because 'most of the works of God are veiled' (τὰ πλείονα τῶν ἔργων τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν ἐν ἀποκρύφους).¹⁸⁸ Origen's biblical exegesis is then set out to unveil *the works* of God expressed through the *words* of Scripture. These works are present, yet not always *evidently* present, in history and they, not the words, is his main priority.

Therefore, comprehension and interpretation of experience can be only natural and historical. On this account Origen never loses sight or concern for the cosmic and historical reality. This is also why he uses the notion of ἀπόδειξις (proof) in order to make a point.¹⁸⁹

The insistence on interpreting physical evidence through which God makes himself known shows that in fact Origen makes no distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' evidence, which is rather an invention of the centuries

¹⁸⁷ *epAfr*, PG.11.72.28.

¹⁸⁸ A quotation from the book of Jesus, son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus, 16, 21), which is a canonical book in the expanded canon of LXX, normally used by Origen and Eastern Orthodox Church alike. *commJohn*, 13, LVII; *homJer*, 12, 13.

¹⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 2, 4 is a portion repeatedly quoted: *Cels*, I, 62; VI, 2; *Princ*, IV.1.2; *commJohn*, 1, VIII; 4, I & II; *frJer*, 61; *Philocalia*, 1, 7; 4, 1; 4, 2; 15, 2; 18, 8; *commMatt*, 14, 14; *comm1Cor*, section 9; *commEph*, section 8.

which followed. God's presence permeates all nature and all history. There is no creature of any kind (animate or inanimate) which is not maintained in being by the Logos, since this is in fact the only way for any creature to exist throughout time. Considering Paul's phrase, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things',¹⁹⁰ he explains that all life (both natural and historical) is permeated by the providential and supporting action of God.

'From him' means the creation of all things in the first place and that the things which exist received their creation 'from God'. 'Through him' indicates that the things which were made are being controlled and supervised 'through' him from whom they derive the source of their being. 'In him' means that those who have now been reformed and corrected stand steadfast 'in' his perfection. So then just as these things contain most important differences, these things are taught. We are said to possess 'from God' the fact that we exist; that we are being supervised and ruled is indicated to come to pass 'through him'; and that we hold fast to the summit of perfection is said to take place 'in him'.¹⁹¹

This is all about *action* of God, not God himself permeating the world, since the world in its present form is to be overcome and a new creation is reserved for those saved from the bondage of wickedness. The material realm is to be overcome, it does not contain the germ of its own salvation unless as a present experience and anticipation of a real future within the *locus* of the Church.

This eventually means that the conception of the world as a creature is predominant in considering history. There is no element which is held to be supernatural, or standing absolutely on its own merits, thus becoming an idol. Origen's interpretation of Rom. 11, 36, patently shows the entire world being in fact sanctified by the presence and function of the Logos. This is perfectly sufficient for all the natural elements of this world to be found worthy of association with the sacrament of the divine self-revelation in history.

Through turning points of natural and historical reality, there comes the unifying administration of the divine glory for the sake of the *mystery of unification*, which advances and regresses, even though the direction of history is teleological and the end is definitely anticipated.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Rom. 11, 36. Cf. chapter 9, p. 336.

¹⁹¹ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 3.10.3. Cf. *ibid.* 8.13.10: "'from him' points to the fact that we exist; 'through him' to the fact that we are being directed in life through his providence; and 'in him', that the perfection and end of everything will be in him at that time when God will be all in all." (Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28). This Latin portion renders Origen's thought, although the reader can see for himself some obvious discrepancy in view of its parallel in *Cels*, VI, 65 (s. chapter 9, p. 336). In regard of the cosmic function of the Logos, Origen upheld the view of Hippolytus. Notice the remarkable analogy in the following: Origen, *de Or.* XXIII, 1: δέον τῇ ἀφάτῳ δυνάμει τῆς θεότητος αὐτοῦ πεπεῖσθαι περιέχεσθαι καὶ συνέχεσθαι τὰ πάντα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. Hippolytus, *Demonstratio Temporum Paschatis* (in catenis), Fr. 3: ἀχώρητος γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὡς ὁ πατὴρ, καὶ πάντα περιέχει.

¹⁹² *comm John*, 10, XXXV.

This is in fact Origen's hermeneutic procedure. His intention is not simply to demonstrate the unity of the voice, or even the meaning of the divine history. He struggled to make obvious the incessant *unifying* and *renewing* administration of the divine glory in the world. Along with creatures, the Logos is here to administer towards unity, so that those which are regarded as 'signs of wickedness',¹⁹³ such as 'multitude of number' (πλήθος ἀριθμοῦ), 'schism' (σχίσμα), 'division' (διαίρεσις) and 'disagreement' (διαφωνία) be overcome and 'the youth' of the soul 'be renewed like the eagle's'.¹⁹⁴ The Logos is acting for the purpose of 'the restoration of the world and the renewal of the whole creation, which has been re-established through the resurrection of the Lord'.¹⁹⁵

He constantly oriented himself to this mystery of unity, under the light of which no part of the world could be elevated to being regarded as an absolute self-contained being—not even the holy text. However sacrosanct, were the holy text considered as self-sufficient and absolute being, this could not play its proper part in this process of perfection. Scripture is a *sign* (σημαίνει) by the Holy Spirit who authored this (τὴν τῶν πολλῶν συμφωνίαν καὶ ἐνότητα σημαίνει ἡ Γραφή).¹⁹⁶ The actual objective is the real unity of all, recorded in the prayer of Jesus, 'that they may be one, as we are'.¹⁹⁷ What is sought for in the records is the 'unity of the Spirit in all Scripture'¹⁹⁸ and 'the unity of the Logos'¹⁹⁹ appearing and acting as recorded therein. However, it is not the letter itself which is of prime importance, nor indeed is it the spiritual meaning concealed therein: rather it is the actual historical progress to be achieved out of this exegesis, which will be manifested as 'unity accomplished through love and truth' (ἡ δὲ ἐνότης γίνεται δι' ἀγάπης καὶ ἀληθείας).²⁰⁰ The holy texts record the doxology by angels at the birth of Jesus, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, good will toward them',²⁰¹ still the important thing is not the letter or the exegesis of it, but the eventual reality which has to be striven for in history: this is 'heaven and earth going to be fixed together in unity' (εἰς ἐνότητα συνάπτεσθαι),²⁰² after the anticipated victory over 'those who engage in battle against the unity of the temple' (τῇ ἐνότητι τοῦ ναοῦ) which is 'the body of Christ', that is, 'the Church'.²⁰³

¹⁹³ *selGen* (comm. on Gen. 11, 7), PG.12.112.10; also, *commJohn*, 5, V. Cf. chapter 9, pp. 312–13 and note 580.

¹⁹⁴ *frPs*, 102, 5. *selPs*, 102, PG.12.1560.15. Cf. *selPs*, 42, PG.12.1421.

¹⁹⁵ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 4.7.3.

¹⁹⁶ *frOs*, PG.13.828.54; *Philocalia*, 8, 3; italics mine.

¹⁹⁷ *Op. cit.* and *Philocalia*, 8, 3. Cf. John, 17, 11.

¹⁹⁸ *commJohn*, 10, XVIII; Cf. *commEph*, 16: τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος, *apud* Eph. 4, 3.

¹⁹⁹ *commJohn*, 20, VI.

²⁰⁰ *frJer*, 28.

²⁰¹ Luke, 2, 14.

²⁰² *frLuc*, 59c.

²⁰³ *commJohn*, 10, XXXV.

This particular conception of 'unity' is therefore at variance with secular philosophical tenets which identify 'unity' with 'good', as it happened in Pythagoreanism or Posidonius. The apparent similarity exists only in sound. For unity in Origen means a function in history, under and through the 'mind of Christ'. His aim is to support people, so that they eventually 'unite to the supreme God through the Son of God, the Logos, Wisdom, Truth, and Righteousness, who unites to him (καὶ οὕτως ἐνωθῶσι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ διὰ τοῦ ἐνοῦντος αὐτῷ υἱοῦ θεοῦ λόγου) everyone who has been persuaded to live according to God's will in all things.'²⁰⁴

This unification with God through the Logos is therefore dependent upon the way of *living* (τὸ κατὰ θεὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι ζῆν), that is, upon historical *action*.²⁰⁵ Participation in the 'mind of Christ' means not just interpretation of Scripture, but all aspects of historical activity. It is thus that one can attain to unity with the Logos, as a concrete reality, unceasingly acting in history until the end of time. In the interim, the drama of history lies in what *happens* in everyday life all along. This is what I called the 'setbacks' in history: this regress occurs when 'one man, when sinning becomes multifarious, tearing himself off the love of God and being diverse, falling from the unity'.²⁰⁶

The foregoing conception of revelation and its modes of manifestation actually stems from creation being dependent on its Creator. Origen's understanding of Rom. 11, 36 is that not only the world is from nonexistence, but also this is sustained in being through the incessant cohesive function of its its Creator, as discussed above and in chapter 9. Therefore, in the relationship between these two kinds of being (Uncreated and created) the Creator is indispensable. The *contingency* of the world refers not only to this having come to being out of no necessity whatever, but also to its inability to exist independently, to its reliance on another ontological order, the divine one. This relationship makes the appearance of Creator both necessary and possible, so that, those which are of 'different substance' (ἐτεροοῦσις)²⁰⁷ will be able not only to exist, but also to progress.²⁰⁸ This is the reason why revelation is a lasting phenomenon in time and history—since God is not only the originator of being (ἐξ αὐτοῦ), but also it is he who maintains the world in existence (ᾧ αὐτοῦ), and 'our ancient fatherland' is 'in him' (εἰς αὐτόν), who is the final destination of the world.²⁰⁹ He is the one 'to whom' all creation is directed. In other words, God is an objective for

²⁰⁴ *Cels*, VIII, 75.

²⁰⁵ *Op. cit.*

²⁰⁶ *frOs*, PG.13,828.35–37; *Philocalia*, 8.3.

²⁰⁷ *commJohn*, 20, XXIV.

²⁰⁸ *commJohn*, 6, XX; 13, XIV; *Princ*, III.1.23 & 24; *Philocalia*, 21, 22; 21, 23; *homJer*, 13, 3; *In Jesu Nave Homiliae xxvi* (Gr. fr. in catenis), (Baehrens, v. 7) p. 434; *commMatt*, 12, 19; 13, 26; 13, 28; *commICor*, section 53; *frPs*, 38, 7; 118, 1; 118, 74; *selPs*, 38, PG.12.1389.7–10.

²⁰⁹ Cf. analysis of Rom. 11, 36 in chapter 9, p. 336.

all creation, through deification by grace. Revelation, therefore, can take place only through the charismatic messengers, who announce God's appearance in history to all community.

This is why there is very limited room for 'natural revelation'. At most, creation can provide an inkling of a Creator, but it can say nothing about Him. Nature and history is the milieu where God acts incessantly. Divine action is everywhere, since the world is that which is 'from him, in him and to him'.²¹⁰ Should divine action were withdrawn, created being will immediately cease to exist. Creation is neither self-contained, nor self-supporting, or self-reliant, or self-sufficient. What was called 'natural revelation' is simply the natural receptiveness of creatures to be susceptible of the divine actions of God's self-revelation. Responsible agents acting in history participate in truth due to their own rationality, that is, by virtue of their innate relation to the Logos, who is the one and single truth.²¹¹

On account of this oneness of truth, sentient agents progress or regress, depending of their receptiveness or rejection of this truth. This means that there is not first a natural way to go through, and then a consequent metaphysical one. The way is *natural* all along. Divine self-manifestation and revelation is a continuous phenomenon, which stands in unity with nature sustained in existence thanks to the divine will. This energy of the Logos is permeating all nature, even the minutest things, so there is actually no way for severing natural reality from its own foundation. Divine revelation is *historical* precisely on this account. It preserves and glorifies natural reality, while at the same time divine truth makes evident to 'those who have eyes to see' and 'ears to hear, who are the wise'²¹² what is 'according to nature', in stark contrast with what is 'over against nature', calling upon everyone not to fall into conflict with rationality.

Let us ceaselessly contemplate this image of God, so that we may be transformed to his likeness. For if man, who was made according to the image of God, has been made like the devil through sin by assuming the image of the devil *contrary to nature*, much more he will receive that form, which was given to him *by nature*, through the Logos and his power, by assuming the image of God.²¹³

²¹⁰ Cf. Rom. 11, 36. *Cels*, VI, 65.

²¹¹ Cf. *supra*, *commJohn*, 2, IV: 'the truth is one' (μία ἐῖναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν), and, 'it is in the nature of beings that the truth about each of them is one' (ἐν γὰρ τῇ φύσει τῶν ὄντων μία ἡ περὶ ἐκάστου ἡ ἀλήθεια). s. *supra*, pp. 400–1.

²¹² *commMatt*, 12, 32. Cf. Mark, 4, 9; 4, 23; Luke, 8, 8; 14, 35; Rom. 11, 8; Deut. 29, 3; Wis. 15, 15; Zach. 7, 11; Is. 32, 3; Jer. 6, 10; Ez. 12, 2.

²¹³ *Homilies on Genesis* I.13; italics mine. The Stoic distinction of being either 'according to nature' or 'against nature' is a frequent motif in Origen. Cf. being or done 'according to nature' (κατὰ φύσιν) is good: *Cels*, II, 29; IV, 19; V, 39; VI, 15 & 55; VII, 3; *commJohn*, 13, XLV & LX; *frJohn*, CLX; *deOr*, XXIX, 15; *frLam*, 20 & 27; *frLuc*, 42; 122; 191; *Philocalia*, 21, 13; *homEz*, p. 378 (Baehrens); *commMatt*, 10, 13; *selLev*, PG.12.400.9; *selPs*, 2, PG.12.1108.22; 10, PG.12.1197.14. Being or done 'against nature' (παρὰ φύσιν) is evil: *Cels*, V, 14 & 23; *commJohn*,

This is the account on which Origen never made any distinction between natural and metaphysical reality. Whenever he sets out to interpret events, miracles, divine interference with human history, he deals with them as conveniently as with events of everyday life. Events are not distinguished in physical or supernatural. Revelation, like truth and virtue, is one. It takes place within life and history, making use of all kinds and aspects of natural reality. For all the allegorical interpretations of the dimensions of the ark of Noah, as well as all instances of this narration, Origen staunchly defends the historicity of those events confronting the Marcionite Appelles, who rejected the biblical narration arguing that the dimensions of the ark allowed no room for so many animals. The line of argument conforming to Gnostic purposes was a facet of the wonted denigrating assault against the God of OT: 'if the narration is a lie, therefore, this scripture is not of God' (ψευδὴς ἄρα ὁ μῦθος· οὐκ ἄρα ἐκ θεοῦ ἢ γραφῇ).²¹⁴ Origen's apologetic thrust against the Gnostics who disputed the reality of events was continual, even though it was urged that literal interpretations smack of barren Judaism: those events actually occurred at a certain real time of history.²¹⁵ This is how once more Origen reaffirms his precocious reverence for bare facts. The Gnostics simply failed to conceive the fair harmony of things and marvelous sacramental accord, whereby nature and history alike supply types and imprints of the one and single truth.

On that account, Origen considers scriptural instances as *natural* ones: the baptism of Jesus in Jordan and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove was seen not only by Jesus, but also by John the Baptist, who saw 'the heavens open'.²¹⁶ Likewise, the vision of John in Revelation,²¹⁷ the events on the day of Pentecost²¹⁸ and Jesus's transfiguration are all treated as natural events, they were natural at least to all those who were endowed with the grace to really see them as such.²¹⁹

History is a succession of events, no matter whether they are ones of everyday life or 'signs of the Holy Spirit', which were 'numerous at the time when Jesus was preaching', still they were not absent afterwards, although they were 'less in number after that time'. In fact such events continue to make their mark throughout history in those who are sanctified, by virtue of their quality

1, XXVI; *deOr*, XXIX, 12; *commMatt*, 13, 7; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (Gr. Fr. P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 140; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1132.34; 20, PG.12.1252.32.

²¹⁴ *homGen*, 2, p. 30 (also in Latin, Homily 2.2). About Appelles, Cf. *Cels*, V, 54, Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.13, and Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 30.34.

²¹⁵ *commJohn*, 6, XXXVI: ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζομένης κιβωτοῦ. Cf. *homGen*, 2, pp. 23–30. *selGen*, PG.12.105.30–51; *selGen*, PG.12.108.25–30; *adnotGen*, 17.13.7–30. *selPs*, 1, PG.12.1076.11–22; *selPs*, 3, PG.12.1129.1–4; *frPs*, 77, 38.

²¹⁶ *Cels*, I, 48; also, *frJohn*, XX. Cf. John, 1, 32.

²¹⁷ *commJohn*, 1, XIV. Cf. Rev. 14, 6–7.

²¹⁸ *Cels*, VIII, 22; *commMatt*, 11, 3; *frPs*, 17, 9.

²¹⁹ *commMatt*, 12, 36–41 & 43; *commJohn*, 13, XLVII; 32, XXV; *frJohn*, CVI; CXIX; *Cels*, IV, 16; *frLuc*, 139c; 140; 255.

of life.²²⁰ All this is real history, not distinguishable in natural and supernatural one. In the same sense that in political history periods of time are signalized ‘after the names of Roman emperors’, Origen marks history after events such as ‘the presence of the Spirit’ on the day of Pentecost and the circumstances which happened on that day.²²¹

This is the context in which his conception of ‘wisdom’, as stated in the beginning of this chapter, should be understood: the notion is indiscriminately defined as both ‘deep knowledge of the divine things’ (ἐπιστήμη θείων), as well as comprehension of human things (ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων κατάληψις).²²² There is no distinction between knowledge of either supernatural or natural things. Wisdom is one, and this is

spiritual knowledge, containing the knowledge about God, and about incorporeals and judgement and providence; this reveals all moral and natural and theological contemplation. Or, [alternatively] wisdom is knowledge of corporeals and incorporeals, in which [knowledge] judgement and providence can be comprehended.²²³

This point is fundamental for comprehending Origen’s grasp of revelation of the divine truth. His numerous references to natural instances in the two Testaments which bear upon divine dispensation simply show that to him nature and history alike is a terrain where God appears, acts, and reveals something of his will. It is from this revelation that the mind sometimes perceives things that might be called *natural* revelation. On this account, knowledge of God takes logical and intellectual activity by man within history, constructing and apprehending God’s own manifestation through ‘logical evidence’ (λογικὴ ἀπόδειξις)²²⁴ and ‘logical contemplation’ (λογικὴ θεωρία).²²⁵

Human being is ‘a whole’ (κρᾶσις μία)²²⁶ (physical body, soul, volition, reason, thought, sensation) stands *vis-à-vis* the enlightening action of the Holy Spirit, which is an illuminative, instructive, edifying action. The man of history is perfectly the same man who stands facing God. He strives for attaining to

²²⁰ *Cels*, VII, 8.

²²¹ *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.345.25; the same, *frLuc*, 148.

²²² After 4 Macc. 1, 16: “wisdom is then knowledge of divine and human things and the causes of them both” (σοφία δὴ τοίνυν ἐστὶν γνῶσις θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν τούτων αἰτιῶν). Cf. *Cels*, III, 72; *homJer*, 8, 2; *commMatt*, 17, 2; *frProv*, 1, PG.13.17.45.

²²³ *expProv*, 1, PG.17.161.20–28. s. *supra*, p. 381, definition of wisdom as knowledge of the logoi, and ‘contemplation of corporeals and incorporeals’ (θεωρία σωμάτων καὶ ἀσωμάτων) which ‘contains the reasons about judgement and providence’.

²²⁴ *Cels*, VII, 4; *Princ*, IV.1.1; *Philocalia*, 1, 1.

²²⁵ *Cels*, V, 20; *commJohn*, 13, LXV; *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (I.1–XII.21)*, section 1; *Philocalia*, 25, 2; *selEz*, 4, PG.13.777.53. Origen made clear that this methodology is sheer different from the Greek methods of constructing truth. s. *supra*, p. 390

²²⁶ *commJohn*, 13, L; Cf. *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.357.56. s. chapter 1, p. 61, notes 146, 147.

salvation not *from* time, but *through* time.²²⁷ This means that the whole of human being is open to revelation, and this revelation is apprehended as a whole. The presence of God is received by all human functions. Silently, and sometimes incomprehensibly, the senses, sentiments, human will, intellect—they all collect all the data of divine revelation in order to reconstruct and interpret them towards divine knowledge. These data are recognized through the 'divine sense'²²⁸ which is clung above all else to the divine reality. This is how truth is substantiated through the 'proof of the Spirit and of power'.²²⁹ Human reason brings them together, composing a coherent and congruent whole, and faith assimilates them all. Still all this issues from the revelation and presence of God, which the whole man receives and by which he is sanctified. This is how ignorance of God is transformed into knowledge of Him. It is subsequently to this procedure that experience, faith and conviction exist side by side.

In Origen it is par excellence the *historical practice* which forms the dogmas as the content of life, of faith and of theological understanding. In this theology, there are fundamental premises, such as the *continuity of history*, the continuity of the two Testaments, and the historical character of the Christological doctrine. According to them, life moves in a historical sequence: Creation, Israel, prophets, apostles, saints, under the incorporeal and corporeal presence of the Logos. What is important is this *continuity* from the history of Israel to the Pentecost and to the ongoing events within the ecclesiastical community. The incorporeal, and then corporeal, Logos revealing the Trinity through his own self-presentation, *realizes the history* of divine oikonomia, or history of salvation. This 'realization in history', originates in, and aims at, real *events*. This orientation to seeing, listening to, and interpreting the πράγματα of *historia*, is the solid ground on which this philosophy considers history as a concrete, dynamic, and dramatic reality.

History is not a parable.

²²⁷ COT, p. 370.

²²⁸ Cels, I, 48; VII: 34, 36, 37; VIII, 20; commJohn, 10, XI; 20, XLIII; frLuc, 186; 192; frPs, 37, 6; 113, 3–4; 134, 15–18; selPs, 27, PG.12.1284.26; excPs, 27, PG.17.116.45. *Commentarii in Romanos (III.5–V.7)* (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 210; Cant, PG.17.281.52. Origen invariably quotes the expression αἴσθησιν θεῖαν εὐρήσεις (presumably after Proverbs 2, 3–5), which does not belong to the text of Septuagint. Probably he quotes from Clement of Alexandria, who is the sole Christian author to make a quotation substantially deviating in letter from the LXX text at Proverbs, 2, 3–5: Cf. Clement, *Stromateis*, 1.4.27.2: εἰδὼν γὰρ τὴν φρόνησιν τὴν τε αἴσθησιν ἐπικαλέσῃ μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ καὶ ζητήσῃ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ ἀργυρίου θησαυροῦς καὶ προθύμως ἐξιχνιάσῃ, νοήσεις θεοσέβειαν καὶ αἴσθησιν θεῖαν εὐρήσεις. Cf. *supra*, n. 170.

²²⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 4. Cels, I, 2 & 62; VI, 2; Princ (Gr. & Lat.), IV.1.7; commJohn, 1, VIII; 4, I; II; frJer, 61; commMatt, 14, 14; comm1Cor, section 9; commEph, section 8; Philocalia, 1, 7; 4, 1; 4, 2; 15, 2; 15, 3; 18, 8.

CONCLUSION

My scope in this book has been to explore Origen's philosophy of history and eschatology. It was also my task to see whether or not he assigns an intrinsic meaning to history; and, if the answer to this question were positive, to see what this meaning is. His conception of certain functions in time provides the basis for him to establish a view of the historical process, since they play a crucial role in establishing a particular and unique *character* of history.

His conceptions of prolongation of time and causality raised the question of the existence of human being throughout an aeon, while the event of incarnation of Christ, and its significance, play a decisive part in forming a theology of history—by 'history' meaning the origin and ultimate perspectives of the entire world, not only of human existential condition. How the function of prophecy is perceived and what the actual significance of *kairos* is (quite at variance with some modern accounts of it)—these are questions, the treatment of which renders the character of Origen's history a teleological and, nonetheless, a dramatic one.

I have entitled Part II as 'The notion of *eternal*', deliberately refraining from using the term 'eternity'. Not only because this non-scriptural term is never used by Origen, but mainly because the notion of *eternal* is in fact a homonym attributed to no less than three different realities. It is one thing to speak of 'eternal God', but it is quite another to speak of 'eternal life', whereas to speak of 'eternal death' alludes to a different reality. Analysis of the actual existential standing in either of these realities evinces the differences of Origen's dialectics from respective conceptions in Platonism, Neoplatonism and Gnosticism.

Whereas for the ontology of time Origen made some use of Stoic conceptions without capitulating to Stoicism, on the question of philosophy of history his liability to Hellenism is virtually nil. Regarding the significance of historical being and action, his grasp of this is alien to any Greek stream of thought and he conspicuously moves in a different vein from pagan philosophy. Certain technical terms may receive a countersign from Greek thought, but this is most perfunctory and functions in a quite different rationale. The term 'extension' does not make Origen a Stoic, the 'arc of heavens' does not make him a Platonist, the 'Ogdoad' does not make him a Gnostic any more than the term 'homousios' makes the council of Nicaea an assembly of Valentinian Gnostics—assuming they had any inkling of the philosophical import of *ousia* (let alone *homousios*) at all. He did not fear semblance with heterodox nomenclature and imagery, since his philosophy of history and eschatology is what it is not *because of* this terminology, but because this attitude procures a novel import peculiar to his

own philosophy of history and eschatology. Alien terms are there, but the heretical doctrines composed by means of those terms are not. Origen upheld pagan terms, but he eschewed the doctrines they were designed to couch. The sheer range of arguments which bolster up this specific conception of history is fully found and understood only within the context of his theology.

As promised, I refrained from making claims about 'orthodoxy' or 'non-orthodoxy' in Origen, since assessments of this kind were beyond my scope. To approach this thought from either a 'polemical' or a 'sympathizing' point of view would be scholarship of mean value. Between being a defender or detractor of Origen, there is assiduous study, both in Greek and Latin, in a manner similar to which he himself perused and interpreted Scripture. That is, to study not only the general views of his entire theology, but also to ponder upon the crucial nuances of his phrases and even words, with a constant cross examination between *ideas* as well as usages found both in him and others, prior and posterior to him. The study of any aspect of Origen's thought takes much more than studying his work alone. His epoch was at the crossroads of different streams of thought, different mentalities and sundry traditions that had inevitably been part of the education of this polymath cannot be left out of consideration. This is why the bibliography of this book concerning ancient sources is so extensive. In fact only sources cited and commented on in this book are included in this catalogue, since my express thesis has been that it is indispensable to peruse critically the adventures of philosophical and theological ideas through the centuries, both before and well after Origen. As stressed in the Preface, terms and notions did not arrive at the pen of authors in vacuum. Philosophers read them somewhere, they discussed them with others, they reflected and debated upon them and expressed themselves to the degree and manner they found them articulate of their own philosophical thrust. Being a theologian, Origen has always deserved a hearing by theologians—which he did not actually receive. Perhaps the reason for this is his philosophical erudition that no theologian ever had, probably with the exception of Didymus the Blind, John Philoponus and Thomas Aquinas. Hippolytus should be included, but he was an older contemporary to Origen. Well after his death, pagan and Christians went on discussing with each other, not rarely sharing common teachers and classes. The difference is that whenever philosophers disagreed, they simply (but not always) parted way with each other, articulately expounding their own dissent: they did not anathematize each other, they did not send opponents to exile, let alone to fire. Theologians after Origen to the present day find it all too convenient to trade on the notoriety of Plato or of the Stoics, on Aristotle's opinions of providence and Plotinus's inferioristic ontological scheme, but hardly the real import of Origen's writings has been studied in detailed juxtaposition to the *writings* of those philosophers. Modern Christian scholarship appears to have utterly discounted these qualifying factors. Philosophical studies, to the level and extent that they match and address the

intellectual and historical reality of Late Antiquity, are hardly a theologian's interest and scarcely could be found in the syllabus. Philosophers, on the other hand, content themselves with the (originated in modernity) patrimonial shunning of theology, in an epoch when a new world-picture revealed by science renders their inveterate hackneyed convictions obsolete.

Origen was a Christian who knew and had assimilated philosophy, being at the same time aware of practices of oriental cults, astrologers, magicians, apocrypha of all kinds and Judaic mentality and conduct, both austere and liberal. The texts are there—not only those of Origen's, but also of divers thinkers well before and well after him. He cannot be studied on his own apart from his dialectical relations with his past and his contemporary mindset, or ignoring the dependence of his posterity on him. Origen does not need defenders any more than detractors—only truth needs defenders, and this has always been a very heavy and difficult undertaking. This is what I have essayed to do in this work.

In his philosophy of history, the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus stands in the center and determines the core of his thought and exegesis of Scripture. The Cross and Resurrection is the pivotal point designating all history: it reveals all its inherent meaning since the dawn of it, and exemplifies in prefiguration its ultimate objective. Putting alongside and considering in juxtaposition the opening of Genesis, the opening of John's Gospel and the cosmic significance accorded to the Cross by Paul, he did fulfil the task of a Christian thinker of his era, which was to develop an entirely new conception of history, stemming from the historical events related to the life of Jesus, affording at the same time a universal fresh hold of all history from start to finish. His entire work shows, in the clearest and strongest terms possible, that he formed a completely new philosophy of history, a meaning for both the origin and the final destiny of the entire world, through the light cast upon past, present and future occurrences after the incarnation of the Logos.

The nature of the divine / creaturely relation is enlightened by the *end*, toward which history is directed. The primary concern is with the relation between Now and After by reason of the teleological character of history. The relation between present time and the eschatological eventuality has entered a new stage after the incarnation of Christ. A critical stress is put upon the vicarious passion of Christ and its significance of cosmic proportions in terms of philosophy of history. The world is regarded as being in a 'fallen' state, and yet at the same time it is has already been 'saved' out of God's action, which nevertheless requires creaturely voluntary cooperation within the context of a certain relation in order to attain to the anticipated end. Along with *faith*, the dynamic idea of an incessant *action of righteousness* is constantly entertained. At no moment of his considerations are these two (*viz.* faith and action) disentangled from each other. He stresses the necessity of human cooperation in salvation—a cooperation which extends to all that pertains to salvation: election, self-transformation and perseverance.

Paul's main theme in Romans is highlighted, which is the transfer of religion from Judaism to Christianity, from the letter to the spirit, from salvation of the individual to rectification of all history.

The world is regarded as resurrected *already*, while at the same time it is not resurrected *yet*. In this apparent paradox lies the tension between Present and Future. In the dramatic character of history (due to the encounter of divine and creaturely will in it) the element of *urgency* has been established after the incarnation of the Logos. What I mean by dramatic character of history is this: for all his emphasis upon divine omnipotence, Origen is not all too quick to bargain for God being always the master of circumstances. Quite often God is the mere adjutant of them. This philosophy is more expedient in stipulating and securing the divine omniscience *vis-à-vis* creaturely freedom, rather than standing still before the divine omnipotence. Divine impassibility notwithstanding, Origen lays more stress on God's 'impartiality' with respect to moral choice and on the ongoing 'passion' of Christ along with his 're-crucifixion' by wickedness at any time.

A characteristic of this teleological thought is the typological thesis that the former events bear in them an image of the latter ones. The dramatic character of history has become particularly intense and the element of urgency is already established in it, since the event of death and resurrection 'prefigured' and 'exemplified' the *end* toward which the entire world is directed. This event was a *real* historical occurrence, as well as an *anticipation* of the future: an eschatological perspective and expectation, which is to be fulfilled in the *real* future. This means that the eschatological fulfillment is looked out for coming to pass through time and *only through time*. By now, however, the eschatological reality is present 'in betrothal' only in the Church. The Church herself, by way of her established relation with the expected end, constitutes an eschatological reality in the present time. This is expressively pointed out through the homonym 'Jerusalem', attributed to realities both primeval, current (the Church, or the soul), as well as eschatological ones. In the Church, and through the sacraments of the Church, the urgent character of history is most vividly realized. Not only the Incarnation unveiled the meaning of history before that event, but also it enlightened the meaning of history until the very end. The teleological character of the historical process has become more intense since the eschatological direction of the entire world has already been realized in the person of Jesus. If there is a notion of 'cyclicity' in Origen's thought, this can be found only in his affirmations that 'cyclicity' is a manifestation of 'vanity', which is the antipodal of the meaningful and earnestly desired *end*, toward which the entire world is directed.

In the light of this conception, the *natural* reality of space/time is conceived of as the milieu where a struggle takes place. In this drama, the divine and creaturely volition are fully and ceaselessly involved. The dramatic character

of history is stressed by the fact that *each moment* of history is a *kairos*. The Incarnation introduced a particular tension in this struggle, thus the dramatic character of history reached its culmination. The end has been realized already, still the struggle is going on and it will not be finished until the 'subjection' of all to Christ becomes a reality in terms of a future, still *actual*, not mythical, historical reality.

The very fact that the course toward the end can be realized through history only, determines Origen's attitude. History is the means through which salvation will be attained and it is thanks to the existence of this spatio-temporal venue that creaturely freedom makes sense. Time does not constitute a 'slavery'; it is not regarded as a 'curse'. Time is not a 'destroyer' of free moral action, since there is an existential causality established in the world and the process of history is, among others, perceived through this causality. There is neither senselessness nor hopelessness in action, because there will be a judgement of it. Therefore, in Origen's thought there is nothing of the melancholy (far less: weariness) which the very existence of time caused to the later Stoics, let alone Gnostics. The destiny of the world is not governed or regulated by the astronomical order or movement. In his strong refutation of astrology, he actually rejects fatality and underscores the dramatic character of history. The brilliant John Philoponus, an admirer of Origen's genius, ascribes to him an argument which he adduces as a real breakthrough (ἐπιχειρήσεως καινοπρεποῦς). No one ever thought of making such a contention about Origen, which almost no one of his successors mentions, and only few of them knew. The argument discredits the astrological path of seeing into the future (τῆς γενεθλιαλογικῆς μεθόδου ἐλεγχούσης). Origen argues that it is surprising that, of all the methods of observing omens that pagans had invented (oneiroscopy, prognostication, exploration of idolothytes and other kinds of 'deceit'), it was only astrology that was postulated as being 'active' (δραστήριον), that is, producing the effects that it predicted.¹

It is patently clear that what he saw through in Gnosticism was virtually their deprecation of history. Far from being a slavery (δουλεία),² this milieu *serves* to freedom and renders it meaningful. Time is not a Platonic 'image' of the divine life; far less is this a Gnostic 'caricature' of it, and certainly not a 'lie'. This is simply the indispensable means *through* which the world will be able to return to God. There is nothing of the Gnostic negation of the world, nothing of their anticosmic or acosmic attitude. The world is a 'perfect creature' (τὸ τέλειον τοῦτο δημιουργημα).³ He inculcated his entire philosophy of history with the

¹ John Philoponus, *De Opificio Mundi*, p. 196.

² Cf. *Cels*, VII, 19; *commMatt*, 13, 26; (*pace*, Rom. 8: 15, 19–21, 23); *Cels*, VII, 65; VIII, 5; *commJohn*, 1, XXVI; 20, XXXIII & XXXIV; 32, X; slavery is already abolished after the Incarnation: *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos (I.I–XII.21)* section 30; *Commentarii in Romanos* (cod. Athon. Laura 184 B64), chapter 8, section 21.

³ *commJohn*, 12, XXXVI. Cf. *Cels*, IV, 99; *Princ.*, IV.2.5; *Philocalia*, 1, 12; 20, 26; *commMatt*, 12, 36; *Scholia in Lucam* (fragmenta e cod. Venet. 28), PG.17.344.29.

notion that space / time makes up the world in order to *serve* creaturely freedom within the context of a meaningful process, and this is a cause for admiring God's creative work and to be grateful to Him for His grace.

Regarding the earnestly desired *future* eschatological fulfillment, Origen proclaims salvation *through* history—not *from* history. Time in itself means *hope*, not despair, certainly not 'panic terror',⁴ as it did to the Gnostics. It means *freedom*, not slavery. It means *expectation*, because through history the *promise* will be *fulfilled*, indeed it has already been fulfilled in anticipation, and is already realized in the sacraments of the Church. Being in history as a responsible person is not a source of anguish. On the contrary, historical action is earnestly needed so that the anticipated reality can be eventually reached. Evil proper is only a tendency of mind, it is not the world itself, evil is certainly not matter proper, evil is not actually *being*, it is simply an *accident* realized as the denial and absence of the Logos. Thus, the attitude towards the reality of being in time and history is alien to any sense of emptiness and melancholy. Neither has it anything to do with the Gnostic negation of time as 'lie' or, at most, as having no full reality. Origen is then far from the subsequent Gnostic disgust, hatred, terror, anguish and despondency at the existence of being in history. Abhorrence and revolt are feelings against evil, not time. Once history does not nullify freedom but serves it, there is nothing of the Gnostic attitude of hopelessness, uselessness and fruitlessness. On the contrary, it is because Praxis is *first* and Knowledge comes *subsequently* to this, that Knowledge has an entirely different significance than that in the Gnostics. This causative relation between Praxis and Knowledge, being antipodal to both the Platonic and Gnostic conceptions of knowledge, places Origen definitively on the side opposite to those streams of thought. This Praxis is not a *passive* self-sinking into an atemporal mysticism; it is an *active* motion within a meaningful process perceived in real spatio-temporal terms. It is because 'salvation' is understood to lie in the *real future time*, and to be not an 'escape' from the world into a personal mysticism, that history is considered with an existential attitude at odds with either the Greek or the Gnostic ones.

Affirmation to the very existence of being in history, *hope*, and a profound feeling of a certain responsible *freedom*, constitute fundamental existential characteristics of this Christian attitude. The course in space / time is perceived as a continuous movement forward—a movement towards the *future*: a process perceived not as a machinelike natural procedure, but as movement towards *salvation*. In Origen's thought such a meaningful course is unthinkable outside of the actual history. Knowledge through mystical experience *here and now* is possible only to a limited extent. Salvation will be attained in the real future time.

⁴ Cf. Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist, I: Die mythologische Gnosis*, p. 100; Cf. also, H.C. Puech, "Gnosis and Time", pp. 67f.

The 'perfection of resurrection' will take place when all rational natures will have been 'subjected' to Christ. This universal salvation marks the absolute *end*. Eternal life is also an end, which, however, has a personal and individual character. This is a *τέλος* of an individual rational hypostasis, not the absolute end of the world. Eternal life is a 'place' to be reached only through history, therefore in the future time; yet it is a place *within* the world, it is a spatio-temporal status, like the rest of the world. This is a state of activity appropriate to that condition. According to the existential causality then, a 'fall' from this standing (a notion that has nothing to do with the original Fall from the divine reality) is contingent. Perpetual activity and the dramatic character of time pertain to eternal life, as it happens with the rest of the world.

The absolute end will occur when evil will have been entirely abolished and there will be no rational creature in need of the existence of space / time in order to entertain freedom. It is only then that the 'perfection of resurrection' will come to pass and history will reach its end, since *the raison d'être* of it will have ceased to exist. The notion of 'body' of Christ plays a decisive role. For the *non-individualistic* and non-egocentric character of resurrection is underlined through the notion of the 'delayed judgement'. Salvation is not a self-centered prospect: it can come to pass only as salvation of the entire Body of the Son. The considerations surrounding this point constitute a rejection of the Platonic and Gnostic aristocratic conception of salvation. In this eschatology, sanctification is bestowed by the Holy Spirit at the end, indeed all the three Persons of the Trinity are involved in the ultimate end coming to pass.

This discussion confirms the intense eschatological character of Origen's thought. The teleological character of history is determined by the fact that the world is directed towards an end, the actual meaning of which is canvassed in Part III. One can see how Origen conceives of the reality in the end of history, as well as of the reality ensuing, so to speak, this end, which portrays the ultimate destiny of what came into being out of non-being by God's benevolent decision. Discussion of how will the end be reached and why will history reach an end in the sense of termination makes the *raison d'être of history* come forth as a coherent theory.

He was after all aware of the crucial distinction made in John 3, 3–5, between 'seeing' the 'kingdom' and 'entering' into this.

The final eschatological reality is adumbrated to the extent this is possible. If anything, Origen's theory of recurrent worlds does not lead to hopeless depression, since the number of these worlds is not endless. Still the object of original creation, that which Origen regards as having come into being out of non-being, will not pass away.

I consider certain views about various kinds of eschatology making some remarks (though not a full assessment) about the simplistic criteria established in order to classify and discern what is 'Greek' and what is 'Hebrew'. Origen's

eschatology is beyond criteria of this kind, since his theory involves both rectification of the world and consummation of nature. His conception of history is profoundly determined by a fact which does not exist either in Greek or Hebraic thought: this is the historical event of the Incarnation and its crucial eschatological implications. Therefore, the way to eliminate misconception of Origen's thought must not be vitiated by over-simplistic and misleading criteria of what is 'Greek' or what is 'Hebrew'. Granted, the cultural environment of Hellenistic Alexandria was impregnated with Platonic idealism. Granted, the critical interplay between Christianity and paganism is not absent from Origen's thought. In this environment, the idea of incarnation of the Deity was uncongenial to people imbued with Greek philosophical culture. Still, his background was profitably and fruitfully brought into the study of these questions. Coping with daunted challenges, Origen put a confluence of ideas into a single stream and created a philosophy of history of distinct Christian colouration, which is indeed the furthest reach that any theologian has attained. Therefore, claims that he simply draws on the common stock of philosophical teaching are simply plain wrong. His way of writing is brilliant and has nothing of the obscure and off-putting manner in which many Middle and Neo-Platonists wrote. He handled these questions in a readable way. He was sturdy in his abiding by the Biblical tradition and the canon of the New Testament, from which he struggles to bring forth what was the purport of Revelation, assuming that Old Testament must have been utterly superseded by the new law proclaimed by the Saviour. Valid though this contrast of the two Testaments is, it should not be pressed to the extent of overlooking the underlying unity of Scripture.

Not only did Origen outdistance his forebears of Apologetism, but also his philosophy of history set him apart from his successors. For if we look into the discussion of time and history, they seem to have added little that proved influential. Although it is not hard to find subsequent authors who did capitalize on his inspirations, still there are ideas which he bequeathed to his successors that have not always been fruitfully appropriated. Christians by upbringing declined to apply proposals put forward by Origen: Gregory of Nazianzus and John of Damascus appear to have no inkling of his notion of 'aeon' as a 'natural system', a signification through which the term αἰὼν reverted to its original meaning.⁵

To be sure, it was not only Plato himself, but also subsequent Christian authors, such as John Philoponus, who argued against eternity having duration, while, on the other hand, the Neoplatonist Proclus upheld the idea that eternity has duration and it was against him that Philoponus argued on this issue. Indeed Philoponus departed from Plotinus, when he gave extension to eternity. Regarding Philo, who has been advertised as having influenced Origen, it has been disputed whether he had an unwavering grasp of the idea even of timeless

⁵ s. chapter 6, p. 188.

eternity. At points where he is vague on this issue, this is not because he assigns time to this state, but simply because he falls short of the timeless conception.

Hence the character of Origen's thought arises as, I think, it really is: an intensely eschatological thought, searching for God and his will within history, since there is nowhere else to find God as nowhere else does God speak. History, in the sense of action making its mark in the scenery of the world, spans from the Genesis to the end of space / time. In this incessant process, the pivotal and illuminating point is the historical life of Jesus and its implications in terms of philosophy of history. This grasp of history is profoundly imbued and determined by notions such as *providence—prophecy—promise—expectation—realization—anticipation—faith—hope—awaiting for—fulfillment—end*. This is an attitude earnestly orientated towards a promised and, thus, anticipated end: a thought clearly visualizing the realization of this end through a historical view of the world, of its function and its perspectives.

This is what I call *recapturing historicity*. This means revealing and experiencing the proper relations within the real historicity of things and occurrences, far from any intellectual search of any tantalizing abstract 'essence' in history. If a certain value is to be found in typology, this value lies only in proper orientation of disposition and action within the real circumstances of the present and of the forthcoming chain of events in life. If there should be an intensive assiduousness in trying to reveal the 'sequence of things' (τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῶν πραγμάτων),⁶ this is so because history is understood to embody the potentiality of salvation in the course of a teleological process. Origen is chiefly preoccupied with the historical process and its inherent meaning—the apocalyptic meaning that will lead to salvation once properly comprehended and followed through praxis. This is why typology plays so important a role in his understanding of history. His typological exegeses par excellence underline his teleological conception of history. References of this kind are scattered throughout his work.⁷ The Old Testament prefigured (τύπος) the New one; and the New Testament contains the 'signs' (σημεῖον) designating the meaning and actual content of the eschatological reality.⁸ However, 'the perceptible story of things', that is, the palpable historical truth of the scriptural events, is not denied. On the contrary, the study of the scriptural narration in its literal sense is regarded as 'highly beneficial',⁹ and Origen himself spent much of his time in search of all kinds of evidence confirming the literal narration of Scripture.

Being in history is something different from just being under the sun. For being in history means action, perception and understanding of being-in-relation-to,

⁶ *Cels*, I, 41; I, 61; *commMatt*, 12, 34; 17, 30.

⁷ *frMatt*, 556; *homLuc*, 27; *commMatt*, 16, 27.

⁸ *commMatt*, 12, 3.

⁹ *selNum*; *comm. on Num.* 22, 4, PG. 12.577.36–37; PG. 12.577.36–37.

as well as a dynamic influence on the transformation of the world. This presupposes an active person, who is operative, influential and effective not only upon his own life, but also upon the lives of his fellow-persons. It takes active historical consciousness, agents being able to read the meaning and ultimate consequences of historical situations and events. It takes a subject able to discover the innate *reasons* which make up history at each moment; a subject who responds instrumentally to the circumstances which denote whether the *telos* of history is supported or undermined within the context of one's action, and nonetheless within the actions of every other person playing his own part in history. Origen addresses himself to human beings endowed with freedom of will, that is, to responsible persons, who justify their own qualities through deeds. Hence, he saw philosophy of history not as an intellectual exercise, but as a drama in which things progress or regress, are carried through or relapse, all of them being within the historical time, within a dynamic whole moving towards a *telos*. Everything taking place is of interest to him not as an *essence*, but as a volatile nature of precarious perspectives, capable however of either achieving the best or falling into the worst of potential outcomes.

Origen's theology does not relegate salvation to heaven in an undetermined mythical future. His references to 'deification' here on earth allows for this as of now. Redemption is possible, and should be pursued, within history, although its perspectives are of a neither egoistic nor aristocratic character. He highlights the immense significance of man himself in formation and evolution of history. Time is historical, time is historical *only*. Episodes and circumstances appear as an incessant challenge. At each moment man has to undertake his own personal struggle, to reveal the real task arising from specific historical events. This disclosure assigns a particular meaning upon specific historical circumstances, a meaning proven to be related to both past and future once grasped accurately. This is the real meaning of 'wisdom', defined as comprehension of the 'reasons of things', employed *pace* Aristotle as footnoted on page 381. In order to grasp this meaning, illumination by the Logos and the Holy Spirit is indispensable. This encounter however does not introduce any a-historic experience. For it is not man who gets out of space / time, it is the Logos who acts into history, indeed upon the person who receives the gift. Man receives history and acts within it as *his own* history, as a process morally shaped by man himself, under his own responsibility.

History of salvation is a sequence of real occurrences within the world, it is accomplished through time, not through any subjective, if illusory, escape from time. There is no possibility for salvation other than *through* time, that is, through history. Salvation by means of escaping time does not exist, this is rejected as an absurd fanciful delusion.

Hence any subsequent moment, the future coming as the next second, is not something that a human being has to undergo or endure. This is something

which is received as a hopeful challenge, a venture undertaken as a real and promising opportunity. The future is held to arrive as a benefaction, as a gift. Any forthcoming moment is extended before rational agents, inviting them to participate actively in history for a certain common goal to be attained. This moment is not proffered in order to escape this. Salvation is not possible for inert agents.

Origen emphasized the need and value of historicity obviously out of necessities and exigencies of his own epoch. Christianity enjoyed neither political privileges nor social immunity. On the contrary, it was persecuted by the state and ridiculed and held in contempt by the intelligentsia. His reaction was not consolation forwarded to the mythical atemporality, but a *hic et nunc* response, opting for historicity as the milieu for the way out from distressing social predicament and lethal intellectual stalemate. He layed stress on the capacity for salvation through historical action and accented eternal life being experienced within this life, even though this is a real spatio / temporal situation to be actually lived in the future. Eternal life can nonetheless be experienced as of the next moment within the Church, which is both a present as well as an eschatological reality.

Origen took part in the affairs which had to do with the formation of Christianity at his time, his sway reaching until our day through his influence upon Christian reflection and scholarship. He was a man of history, of action, of historicity, firmly sustaining that salvation will come about *through* time, not *out* of time, which was a point of his contraposition with the Gnostics. Moreover, he believed not in endless meditation on inert immobility, such as reflection upon notions such as *ousia* (this is why he bypassed such philosophical questions in rather indifferent disposition), but in transforming rational nature. This was one more of his differences from the Gnostics. Origen urges man to encounter and come upon God, neither through symbolic mythological characters nor through headlong jump into esoteric meditation, but through active historical action and consideration of the adventures of both the historical and the allegorized Israel. To this, his exemplary personalities were Abraham, Moses and his great hero, Paul.

It was Origen who perceived history as a movement towards a certain telos *through time*, as a meaning of events which has to be disclosed, who saw history not as a simply temporal flux. He made all this (that is, quest for the historical purport of events) out of the desire to demonstrate how Christianity can show the way forward as of now, within real historical circumstances.

He put himself (and essayed to put every student of his) on a leverage Archimedean point above (but not beyond) historical episodes, in order to transform history towards the desirable direction, that is, the desirable quality. This is what he struggled for, since he was not simply interested in a passive understanding of some 'essence' of things, but in the dynamics of things. This is

why he was able to communicate with the demanding surroundings of his time, since he was equipped with considerable philosophical and scientific knowledge. For it is indeed scientific knowledge that above all grants communication with one's social surroundings, spiritual atmosphere and everyday environment.

He did not allow himself to sink into a non-historical approach, out of which only a non-historical prospect could emerge. Had he done this, then he could see *outside* history. But outside history there is no *historical meaning*, everything is only fragmentary episodes with no cohesive import. Origen saw persons and incidents from the viewpoint of their historical significance and strove for realization of the designated historical perspective.

In Biblical history, which is the source of revelation through the apparitions of the Logos, we see God intervening into the chain of events, in order to change the course of history. Despite allegations for the contrary, Origen conceives of God primarily in historical terms, as He appears within the dynamics of things happening. As a matter of fact, *pistis* (faith) is an assurance provided by historical demonstration and understanding of occurrences of divine apparition throughout history. The mystical correlation between human nature, nature of things and the mystery of *kairos*, is what shows the way to salvation. The relation with Jesus comes through history, that is, through the nature of things emerging out of real events.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.¹⁰

This portion of Revelation is used in a context stressing the historicity of the relation with Jesus. He comes through history, that is, through the dynamics of persons and things correlated, ceaselessly acting and reacting with each other. Relation with God and history of salvation is, and has always been, an incessant relation in the form "...*if...then...*", as in the foregoing passage. Although the role of grace is acknowledged and human will alone is not sufficient to attain to the end¹¹ in Christ, the stress is laid on man *choosing* rather than *being chosen*.

Considered in terms of Greek philosophy, the way to God is uncertain, unsettled, sometimes erratic, unsure, and volatile nonetheless. How could possibly one guarantee that one's own mystical experience actually corresponds to an objective eternal reality? How could one assure that 'god' is not actually the 'depth of the self' with its own psychological deficiencies, its unconscious needs and wants? How can one really confirm that all this is not a fallacy?

The way out of this standoff may only come through correlating *experience* with *history*. Enlightenment in reading things, grasping and interpreting the *reasons* of

¹⁰ Rev., 3,20. *commJohn*, 13, XXXII; 32, II; *selEz*, 3, PG.13.780.49; *selEz*, 8, PG.13.797.32.

¹¹ *Princ*, III.1.19 (*Philocalia*, 21, 18). Cf. *exhMar*, V, 28: "those who think they are self-sufficient to attain to the end in Christ delude themselves". Cf. *Princ*, III.1.18 (*Philocalia*, 21, 17).

things is an activity tantamount to looking at things under the light cast upon them by the divine wisdom, still taking into consideration the real circumstances. Grasping the *reasons* of things is in fact identical with comprehending the *nature* of things. Establishment of a *relation* with God, *faith* itself regarded as *relation*, does not stem from intuition of any 'substance', but from experiencing and interpreting the nature of things. What is done within history is experience of the action of God in real historical events. This is why Origen took the letter of these texts very seriously (—eventhough we have been reminded often enough that the gospels are not primarily biographies, but concise records of events the consideration of which makes a man wise unto salvation).

Thus the acclaimed erudition and the critical spirit of Origen are simply the technical aspect of his feat. What is of principal importance is his ability to grasp the mystical gist of historical process and (which is concurrent to this) to elicitate unfolding events, particularly the events of divine revelation. It is under this grasp that all data are reorganized, correlated, and apparently insignificant details and events are interpreted under a new light. Hence the whole is reconstructed as a unity made up in a different manner than its appearance—a manner that makes up a certain historical meaning. This meaning in Origen is the *teleology of history*.

Subsequent writers made their own contributions to Christian philosophy of history. But whenever this was the case, it was so because they moved not beyond Origen, but *in the spirit* of Origen.

During the last decades, and indeed the past centuries, a view which held sway was that Origen did not have any sense of the significance of history, and that he did not hold any eschatological ideas. What I have essayed in this book is to show that such a theory does not deserve to have any followers any more.

APPENDIX

ORIGEN INTRODUCING THE EXPRESSION, ‘Ο ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς (My Jesus)

A short story

Taking the expression ‘Our Lord Jesus’ as ‘My Lord Jesus’, resulting in ‘my Jesus’ (or, indeed, ‘the Jesus *of mine*’, which is a more accurate rendering of the spirit of ὁ ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς),¹ Origen is the theologian to introduce ‘Ο ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς into Christian scholarship. No doubt it was Paul who inspired him. For indeed in Gal. 2, 20, he had utterly *personalized* the love of Jesus for man, adducing his own self as the token of the love of Jesus for every human being.

I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me
(ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ).

What Origen did *pace* Paul was to utterly personalize not only the love of Jesus for man, but also *man’s love for Jesus*. Hence his expression ‘my Jesus’ (or, ‘the Jesus of mine’), which appears at four points of his Greek extant writings,² while in a Homily on Jeremiah,³ he addresses ‘Jerusalem’ who ‘killed my Jesus’ (τὴν ἀποκτείνασάν μου τὸν Ἰησοῦν).

The expression ‘my Jesus’ is not absent from Latin renderings. In the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*,⁴ the expression ‘my Christ’ appears. This is similar to the Greek one, but it has to be said that in Greek writings this expression (although reasonably expected) appears as ‘my Christ’ alone at two points only,⁵ the normal case being ‘my Jesus Christ’. Thus, in the Latin opening phrase of Homily on Luke, 12.1, we have ‘my Lord Jesus’, similarly in Homily 18.1 and in Homily 22.4, which is the rendering for ‘ὁ κύριός μου Ἰησοῦς’ appearing also in Greek.⁶ Also in Latin, Homily 27.2.4

¹ In LXX, we have the expression ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐμὸς. Cf. Gen. 49, 25; Judith 9, 4.

² Cf. ὁ ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς: *Cels*, III, 31; III, 32; *homJer*, 20, 5; *In Jesu Nave Homiliae* xxvi, p. 293.

³ *homJer*, 13, 1.

⁴ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 7.11.3.

⁵ *homLuc*, 28, p. 165; *deOr*, VI, 5.

⁶ *commJohn*, 6, XLVII; *homJer*, 7, 1; 7, 2; 13, 1; 14, 12; 18, 2; 19, 12; *De Engastrimytho (Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3–25)*, section 9 (bis); *commICor*, sections 15, 49; *homLuc*, 26, p. 154.

on Jeremiah has ‘My Lord Jesus Christ’, which is the reasonable rendering for ‘ὁ κύριός μου Ἰησοῦς Χριστός’, also showing up in Greek.⁷

Origen does not appear to use the expression ‘my Christ’ in the Greek remnants. Instead, he opts for ‘my Lord Jesus Christ’. This is different from the proposition ‘my Jesus’, which is the point I wish to make here. Otherwise, he does not use the expression ‘my Christ’ at all. This is important to bear in mind, since the diction ‘my Christ’ had been already used by Justin Martyr, but not in the sense of affection Origen applies the phrase ‘my Jesus’. He simply meant the ‘Christ of my faith’ as contrasted with that of the Jews.⁸

However, both phrases as above (‘my Lord Jesus’ and ‘My Lord Jesus Christ’), although relevant to the expression ὁ ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς, correspond to a rather different sentiment, which comes from Paul’s Gal. 6, 14, namely, from the expression ‘τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ’ (‘of our Lord Jesus’), which Origen modifies. As a matter of fact, he renders the phrase ‘our’ Lord Jesus Christ’, of Gal. 6, 14, making up his own modified quotation of the scriptural text: ‘my Lord Jesus’, indeed not just once.⁹ This does not mean that he used a modified version of Scripture, since at other points, he quotes the text precisely.¹⁰ Thus the exceptions where ‘My Jesus’ appears suggests specific moments of expressing his affection for Jesus. Likewise, he modifies his quotation of Paul’s words in Acts, 21, 13, adding the word ‘my’, and rendering the phrase as follows: “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of my Lord Jesus’ (τοῦ κυρίου μου Ἰησοῦ).”¹¹

Posterity

Although the expression ‘Jesus of mine’ originated in Origen’s spirit and heart, posterity reserved the credit to be granted to Gregory of Nazianzus. This, for two reasons. First, Gregory used the expression—as a matter of fact he was the only one of the Cappadocians who did so, since in Gregory of Nyssa and Basil of Caesarea the expression is absent.¹² Secondly, there is a narration about Gregory having performed a miracle, which goes thus: a certain servant called

⁷ *Cels*, II, 69; *homJer*, 7, 1; *De Engastrimytho* (*Homilia in i Reg. [i Sam.] 28.3-25*), section 9, lines 30 & 44; *homJer*, 18, 2; 19, 12; *commI Cor*, sections 15 & 49.

⁸ Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 71.3: καὶ ὑπεσχόμεν ἀπόδειξιν ποιήσασθαι... τὴν προφητείαν εἰρήσθαι εἰς τοῦτον τὸν ἐμὸν Χριστόν.

⁹ *Cels*, II, 69; *Commentarii in Romanos* (III.5–V.7) (P. Cair. 88748 + cod. Vat.), p. 166; *commJohn*, 19, XXI.

¹⁰ Cf. *commJohn*, 10, XXXV; *homJer*, 11, 4; *commMatt*, 12, 25; *commI Cor*, section 6; *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos* (I.1–XII.21) (in catenis), section 17. At one point he quotes using neither ‘our’ nor ‘my’, but simply ‘Jesus Christ’: *commJohn*, 28, XIX.

¹¹ *commMatt*, 16, 1.

¹² Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Sancta Lumina* (orat. 39), PG.36.336.3; *In Laudem Athanasii* (Orat. 21), PG.35.1116.35; *Funebris Oratio in Laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappadocia Episcopi*, 56.5;

Constantinus, whose name had been changed to Basil, had lost his voice after he had been castrated together with others in an island called Prote. As a result of this painful experience, he had lost his voice. He then intensively prayed to God to unlock his voice, and he also entreated in front of a restored icon (ἀνεστηλωμένου) of Gregory of Nazianzus the Theologian, which had been placed somewhere nearby. Gregory indeed heard of his petition and appeared in vision bidding him to go to the early morning liturgy, to take the candle and read the passage starting with the words, 'Again My Jesus' (πάλιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἐμὸς), which is the opening of one of Gregory's celebrated sermons.¹³ This he did and, to his wonder, he found out that he was indeed able to read in loud and clear voice this text. As a result, he renounced his objection to the restoration of icons and, as of that day, he started paying his respects to them.

This is the summary of the story, in which the opening of the sermon goes side by side with the name of Gregory and the miracle that was believed to had been performed by him. This instance enjoyed a wide currency, since this is found at a good many sources, in almost identical vocabulary, which means that this was reproduced from one historian or chronicler to another.¹⁴

Gregory's sermon *In Theophania* became in fact a legendary piece of work. It has been regarded as an exemplar of rhetoric art and there are comments regarding this as a unique model to be perused and emulated. The expression was used by the same Gregory in two other instances and was taken up by posterity, if not abundantly, at a considerable number of instances.¹⁵

The phrase 'the Christ of mine' (ὁ ἐμὸς Χριστὸς) is a rather different issue. This is nevertheless used by Gregory also, and enjoyed a more profuse appliance in Byzantine thought.¹⁶ In the sense of personal appropriation of the relation with Christ there is also the footnoted dubious reference ascribed to Athanasius.

In Laudem Athanasii (orat. 21), PG.35.1116.35. Cf. John of Damascus, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum*, PG.96.625.16. Ignatius, *Vita Nicephori*, p. 177. Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *Oratio de Translatione Chrysostomi*, p. 309. John Galen (the grammarian, A.D. cent. 12, Constantinople), *Allegoriae in Hesiodi Theogoniam*, p. 336. Michael Psellus, *Theologica, Opuscula* 66 & 105; *Orationes Forenses et Acta*, Oratio 1.

¹³ *In Sancta Lumina*, (Εἰς Τὰ Ἁγία Φῶτα), Oratio 39; PG.36.336–360.

¹⁴ Georgius Cedrenus, *Compendium Historiarum*, v. 2, p. 72. John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, section 3. Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia*, p. 620. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia* (lib. 1–6), p. 47. John Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* (lib. 13–18), p. 336.

¹⁵ *In Laudem Athanasii* (Orat. 21), PG.35.1116.35; *Funebris Oratio in Laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappadocia Episcopi*, 56.5; *In Laudem Athanasii* (orat. 21), PG.35.1116.35. Cf. Rhetorica Anonyma, *Περὶ τῶν Σχημάτων τοῦ Λόγου*, v. 3, p. 182. Rhetorica Anonyma, *Περὶ τῶν Τεσσάρων Μερῶν τοῦ Τελείου Λόγου*, v. 3, p. 571. John the Rhetor (or, Joannes Siceliota, A.D. cent. 11, Sicily), *Commentarium in Hermogenis Librum Περὶ Ἰδεῶν*, v. 6, pp. 240, 434. *Lexicon Vindobonense*, Alphabetic letter alpha, entry 191. Pseudo-Nonnus, *Scholia Mythologica*, Oratio 39. Athanasius, *Quaestiones in Scripturam Sacram* (sp.), PG.28.756.47.

¹⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Funebris Oratio in Laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappadocia Episcopi*, 61.2; *In Sancta Lumina* (orat. 39), PG.36.336.10; *In Sanctum Baptisma* (orat. 40),

Likewise, I find this in a text ascribed to Basil of Caesarea,¹⁷ which however could hardly be regarded to stand in the same spirit with later Byzantine references.

Conclusion

Origen is the initiator of the expression ὁ ἐμὸς Ἰησοῦς ('my Jesus' or, indeed, 'the Jesus of mine'). This is an expression of both heart and spirit, which had a considerable impact upon Gregory of Nazianzus, who reserved this for posterity through his rhetorical aptitude and forcefulness. This note is to acknowledge that the inventor of the ingenious and nonetheless moving scheme was Origen, a recognized authority and spiritual father of Gregory's.

PG.36.361.7; *Carmina Dogmatica*, pp. 462, 463, 566, 1488, 1565, 1569. In *Dictum Evangelii: Cum Consummasset Jesus hos Sermones* (orat. 37), PG.36.285.35; In *Aegyptiorum Adventum* (orat. 34), PG.36.241.21. John of Damascus, *Passio Sancti Artemii* (dub.), PG.96.1277.53. Nicephorus I, *Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815*, chapter 144. Michael Attaliates, *Historia*, p. 27. Georgius Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* (*Libri vi de Michaele Palaeologo*), p. 403. John VI Cantacuzenus, *Historiae*, v. 2, p. 300. Apophthegmata, *Apophthegmata* (collectio anonyma), Apophthegm 313.

¹⁷ Basil of Caesarea, *De Vita et Miraculis Sanctae Theclae libri ii* (sp), 1.26: καὶ Χριστὸν τὸν ἐμὸν βασιλέα καὶ νυμφίον ἀπολαβεῖν. Athanasius, *De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi*, 41.4: τίς ἐστίν, ὅς τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἐμοῦ δεσπότου πάθος δι' αἰδῶ μᾶλλον ἢ μωρίαν δέδειεν?

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