"Here, in a single volume, are virtually all of the written insights on the Sermon on the Mount from those Christians who lived during the first few centuries after the apostles. I am particularly impressed by the thoroughness of Nesch's research in gleaning these many quotations from the pre-Nicene Christians. This is a reference book that undoubtedly I will be using over and over again. In compiling this important work, Nesch has made a valuable contribution to the Kingdom of God."

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"Of many resources we can use to help us in our day, I believe this commentary will be greatly beneficial. It is not new theological ideas we need but to follow Christ and learn how. This volume brother Elliott has compiled will help us in our journey with the Lord."

 - Greg Gordon, founder of SermonIndex.net, and author of *The Following of Christ*

EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY

of the
SERMON on
the MOUNT

ELLIOTT NESCH, EDITOR

Early Christian Commentary of the Sermon on the Mount. Elliott Nesch, 2018, 2nd Edition.

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Unless stated otherwise, Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. The Bible passages quoted within the early Christian commentary have been modernized by the editor.

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About This Commentary

Early Christian Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount contains a series of illustrative and explanatory quotations which allow the reader to understand what the early Christians believed about the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Here the commentary of the early Christians are ordered verse by verse from Matthew 5:1-7:29. The commentary covers the Ante-Nicene period of biblical exegesis.

The Design of the Commentary

The selections have been divided into chapters with a heading to quickly introduce readers into the subject matter of that selection. Each section begins with a segment of Scripture from the Sermon on the Mount, quoted from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. Following most Scripture verses, there are cross-references and parallel Bible passages given. An overview is provided to give readers a brief summary of the cumulative interpretations of the Bible passage, and identify its major early Christian commentators.

The biblical text and summary is followed by the most noteworthy remarks of the early Christians on those specific verses or related subjects. The patristic quotations are organized according to the Bible chapter and verse(s) which they address. The Bible chapter number and verse number are given prior to the related group of early Christian quotes. Each grouping of quotations is organized from the earliest writer to the latest writer. Within the sections of early church commentary, the biblical passages from the Sermon on the Mount are in bold. The great majority of quotations are taken from the ten-volume set of the Ante-Nicene Fathers (ANF). After each excerpt the title of the quoted work is cited, followed by the volume and page number of the ANF. Quotations taken from additional writings are followed by the title and a footnote which identifies the source.

Sometimes brief editor's notes are given to introduce some of the important topics, to clarify complicated quotations, or to discuss early textual variation, especially as it relates to the patristic quotations. Footnotes are intended to assist the readers with obscurities and potential confusions, to cite those additional early Christian writings which are not included in the ANF, and to identify the biblical quotations and allusions within the patristic quotations. Abbreviations are used in the footnotes, and a list of abbreviations is included within this work.

The Introduction is the opening statement of the editor to preface the content and importance of the commentary. Provided in Appendix A is an alphabetical set of brief biographical sketches of the early Christians. Appendix B contains brief descriptions of early Christian heresies. These will serve as quick reference guides for the reader.

How to Use This Commentary

Rather than selectively reading the early Christian commentary on specific verses in the Sermon on the Mount, it is recommended that you read the commentary in its entirety or at least read entire chapters at a time. This is because many of the selected quotations often address more than a single verse in the Sermon on the Mount, so the quotations which occur earlier in the commentary will often focus on later passages as well. In other words, if the reader neglects to read the commentary from beginning to end, then they may miss other important and relevant commentary for those later passages in the Sermon on the Mount which are addressed earlier in the commentary.

The Method of Compilation

The method of the editor for making selections in this commentary was reading the pre-Nicene writings, consulting various early Christian dictionaries for related subject matter, and using various electronic tools for searching key words, phrases, and biblical passages within the ANF. Quotations are not limited to formal commentaries, but also include allusions, analogies, cross-references to biblical texts in all sorts of patristic literary sources.

While there has been no purposeful omission of any significant quotations from the early church, this commentary is not an exhaustive work. In other words, none of the early Christians' views or interpretations have been obscured or omitted, but not all of the relevant quotations have been included either. If an author addressed a biblical passage numerous times with the same consistent exegesis, then some quotes have been excluded in order to avoid being too redundant.

According to one comprehensive collection of complied allusions to the New Testament in the ANF,² there are nearly 700 references to Matthew 5-7

¹ The secondary sources are provided in the bibliography.

² E-Catena: Compiled Allusions to the NT in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. Peter Kirby, 2001-2017, available: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/e-catena.

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(based upon the editors' footnotes within the ANF volumes). All of these passages have been consulted, but not all of them have been included. In addition to commentary on these passages in Matthew 5-7, many quotations on Bible passages parallel to those have also been included, especially from Luke 6. Furthermore, there remain many quotations within the ANF which address the same subject matter in Matthew 5-7 as well as direct references or allusions to the Sermon on the Mount which are lacking an editor's footnote to identify them within the ANF volumes; many of these quotations have been included also.

That being said, if an early Christian author has merely quoted a passage of the Sermon on the Mount without commentary, it has only been included if the author shows early textual variation in his quotation of that Bible passage. However, as an exception to that general rule, quotations from Tatian's *Diatessaron* have always been included regardless of any textual variation in order to demonstrate how the author harmonized Matthew 5-7 with Luke 6.

Quotations have been updated to conform to contemporary English by modernizing the archaic words and language. If any of the selected quotations did not include the subject of the sentence, the editor has re-inserted the subject back into the quotation. Some of the quotations have been minimally edited for contextual clarification. Others have been slightly modified to avoid potential confusion. For instance, in his work The Stromata, Clement of Alexandria attempted to reclaim the term "gnostic" (one who knows) from the heretical sect and give it a Christian connotation. To avoid any confusion, the editor has rendered "gnostic" simply as "Christian" in these cases.³ Some of the lengthier passages have been broken up into more paragraphs in order to accommodate today's readers. On rare occasions, some of the sentences have been rearranged for a better reading, without ever changing the author's intended meaning. Some quotes have been left as single sentences which speak for themselves, while other quotations include several paragraphs for the sake of context. For those quotations which contain more than one Scripture verse from the Sermon on the Mount, placement is according to which verse best summarized the general context of the quotation.

The Selection of Writers and their Works

The quotations herein come from the period prior to the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Heretical writings and apocryphal writings from that period have not been included (see below). Though incorporated into the ANF, *The Apostolic Constitutions* was compiled near the end of the fourth century. The author is

³ Here I have done similarly to David Bercot who rendered "gnostic" as "spiritual man" in his *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998).

⁴ The most probable opinion dates the work around the year 380, possibly two decades earlier or later. The compilation consists of eight books. Books 1-6 are based on the Didascalia, a third century treatise which pretends to have been written by the apostles at the time of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15); Book 7.1-32 on the Didache; Book 7.33-49 is liturgical material; Book 8.1-2 may be connected with Hippolytus' work entitled

unknown but there are good reasons for identifying him as the fourth-century interpolator of Ignatius' epistles. Yet it purports to be the work of the Twelve Apostles,⁵ and the compiler makes the attempt to include the Constitutions in the New Testament canon.⁶ For these reasons *The Apostolic Constitutions* have been excluded from this work.

Most of the quoted works are found within Philip Schaff's English translation of the ten-volume ANF printed in 1885, which is in the public domain. Also included are English translations of more recently discovered early Christian documents which were not included in the ANF edition, such as *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* by Irenaeus, *The Apostolic Tradition* by Hippolytus, newly discovered letters by Dionysius of Alexandria, and Origen's *On Prayer, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, and *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Sometimes other English translations, more modern than the translations within the ANF, have been consulted, notably Clement of Alexandria's third book of *The Stromata* which was only translated from Greek into Latin for the ANF. Excluded works from the ANF are:

• Post-Nicene writings: Martyrdom of Ignatius (vol. 1), works

Concerning Spiritual Gifts; Book 8.3-27 is an elaborate version of the Antiochene Liturgy; Book 8.28-46 are canons; while Book 8.47 is the Apostolic Canons, which may have been added to the work later. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. Frank Leslie Cross, Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford University Press, 1974), 75-76.

See also H. Achelis, "Apostolic Constitutions and Canons" in *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I: Aachen – Basilians*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1951), 245-246; John B. Peterson, "Apostolic Constitutions," *Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 1* (New York, NY: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913); "Apostolic Constitutions," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., July 20, 1998); *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, ed. (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Kindle Edition, 1998), Kindle Locations 145-150

- ⁵ "The apostles and elders to all those who from among the Gentiles have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; grace and peace from Almighty God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto you in the acknowledgment of Him." (*The Apostolic Constitutions*, 1.1, ANF 7.391).
- "But our sacred books, that is, those of the New Covenant, are these: the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the fourteen Epistles of Paul; two Epistles of Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Jude; two Epistles of Clement; and the Constitutions dedicated to you the bishops by me Clement, in eight books; which it is not fit to publish before all, because of the mysteries contained in them; and the Acts of us the Apostles." (The Apostolic Constitutions, 8.85, ANF, 7.505).
- Other fragments have been included in this work from *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), taken from *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

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- incorrectly attributed to Hippolytus such as *Against Beron and Helix* (vol. 5), works incorrectly attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus (vol. 6), the quotations from the ninth-century bishop, Photius (vol. 6), the various post-Nicene liturgies (vol. 7), and the various Syriac works (vol. 8).
- Spurious writings: longer versions and spurious epistles of Ignatius (vol. 1), the pseudo-Clementine literature (vol. 8), and the false papal decretals (vol. 8).
- Heretical writings such as the apocryphal and Gnostic gospels: The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, The History of Joseph the Carpenter, The Gospel of Thomas, The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior. The Gospel of Nicodemus. The Letter of Pontius Pilate Concerning Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Report of Pilate the Procurator Concerning Our Lord Jesus Christ, The Report of Pontius Pilate, The Giving Up of Pontius Pilate, The Death of Pilate, The Narrative of Joseph, The Avenging of the Savior, Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, Acts of Paul and Thecla, The Acts of Barnabas, The Acts of Philip Acts and Martyrdom of the Holy Apostle Andrew, Acts of Andrew and Matthias, Acts of Peter and Andrew, Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle, Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas, Consummation of Thomas the Apostle, Martyrdom of the Holy and Glorious Apostle Bartholomew, Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, Acts of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, Revelation of Moses, Revelation of Esdras, Revelation of Paul, Revelation of John, The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary, and The Passing of Mary (vol. 8).

Much of Origen's commentary has been included, but his highly speculative interpretations on the implied deeper meanings of Scriptures have been generally avoided. Tertullian's Montanist writings have only been included when he speaks in agreement with what other early Christians taught on the same subjects; nevertheless they are identified with a footnote. If the Montanist view presented in the commentary is contrary to the historic church, then an editor's note has been made for clarification. Because writers like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen and Cyprian have much more commentary by comparison to other writers, they have generally been handled with more selective scrutiny, though the amount of content from them still outweighs that of other writers within the commentary.

The Goals of this Commentary

Finally, the *Early Christian Commentary of the Sermon on the Mount* has the following five goals:

- 1. To present the excerpted comments of the early Christians on the Sermon on the Mount.
- 2. To renew Gospel proclamation and Christian obedience based upon

- orthodox exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount.
- To intensify the study of the Scriptures among Christians who desire to think with the early church about the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4. To demonstrate the value of the patristic writers with regard to textual criticism.⁸
- 5. To stimulate Christian scholarship toward further inquiry into the interpretations of the early Christian writers.⁹

Dan Wallace, the Executive Director for the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, writes: "Early patristic writers are especially valuable in textual criticism." He continues, "So far as this writer is aware, in the last 80 years every critical study has concluded that the majority text was never the text used by the church fathers in the first three centuries." In other words, "when a critical study is made of a church father's text or when early copies of a church father's writings are discovered, the majority text is found wanting. The early fathers had a text that keeps looking more like modern critical editions and less like the majority text." "The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?", Bible.org, June 3, 2004, available: https://bible.org/article/majority-text-and-original-text-are-they-identical. Used with permission.

Thomas C. Oden, the Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology, at Drew University wrote, "Surprising to some, the most extensive new emergent audience for patristic exegesis is found among the expanding worldwide audience of evangelical readers who are now burgeoning from a history of revivalism that has often been thought to be historically unaware. This is a tradition that has often been caricatured as critically backward and hermeneutically challenged. Now Baptist and Pentecostal laity are rediscovering the history of the Holy Spirit. This itself is arguably a work of the Holy Spirit. As those in these traditions continue to mature, they recognize their need for biblical resources that go far beyond those that have been made available to them in both the pietistic and historical-critical traditions." *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 356-361.Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

Introduction

If every professing Christian would practice the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29), then the world would be turned upside down. What the lost and dying world needs today is not a new definition of Christianity, but a present-day *demonstration* of Christianity. Rather than re-define Christianity to accommodate our present generation, we must *re-discover* Christianity from the apostolic generation. In this regard, the early Christian writings may be a helpful tool in order to get us closer to that apostolic era of doctrine and practice.

Who Were the Early Christians?

The early Church Fathers fall into three basic categories: Apostolic Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, and post-Nicene Fathers. When I use the term early Christians, I am referring to those disciples of Christ, also known as the Apostolic Fathers and Ante-Nicene Fathers, who lived prior to the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. This does not include anyone considered a heretic by the Church, such as the Gnostics or other heretics. The pre-Nicene church gives us a glimpse into historic Christianity.

Although there were some disputes and schisms among the early Christians even from the time of the apostles, most Christians were all members of a single Church until the Great East-West Schism of 1054. For example, the churches in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem together were one Christian Church which generally shared the same beliefs, the same practices and the same spiritual life. Despite the fact that the Church remained undivided until the eleventh century, there were in the fourth century some notable deviations related to Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

Convened by Roman Emperor Constantine, the council of Nicaea marked the beginning of some major changes in Christianity. One of the primary changes which soon developed was the union of church and state. A second major change after this time was the paganization of the visible Church. Thirdly, the Church soon began to conquer and convert by the sword. Previously, all of the early Christians opposed the union of church and state, pagan customs and warfare.

In his book *History Of The Christian Church*, the Christian historian Philip Schaff wrote:

The Roman state, with its laws, institutions, and usages, was still deeply rooted in heathenism, and could not be transformed by a magical stroke. The christianizing of the state amounted therefore in great measure to a paganizing and secularizing of the church. The world overcame the church, as much as the church overcame the world, and the temporal gain of Christianity was in many respects cancelled by spiritual loss. . . . The very combination of the cross with the military ensign by Constantine was a most doubtful omen, portending an unhappy mixture of the temporal and the spiritual powers, the kingdom which is of the earth, and that which is from heaven. The settlement of the boundary between the two powers, which, with all their unity, remain as essentially distinct as body and soul, law and gospel, was itself a prolific source of errors and vehement strifes about jurisdiction, which stretch through all the middle age, and still repeat themselves in these latest times. I

During the pre-Nicene period, many books, commentaries, letters and sermons were being circulated among the ancient Church. Many of these writings have survived until our own time. Capturing the true essence of apostolic Christianity, the early disciples provide an extremely valuable post-New Testament history and commentary on the New Testament Scriptures. Today, their writings provide us a record of primitive Christianity during the time period directly following Jesus Christ and His apostles. Throughout the first three centuries of Christian history, the true Church was easily distinguished from the heretical sects like Gnosticism which developed around it.

Many of the early Christians personally knew the apostles of Jesus Christ (certainly Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Mathetes and possibly Hermas and Barnabas). Particularly Clement of Rome and Polycarp were approved by the apostles and appointed by them as bishops in the churches. Others were only one human link removed from the apostles, such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria

Why Are the Beliefs of the Early Christians Important?

We must rely upon these and other early Christian writers for information on important topics such as who wrote the New Testament documents, and how the canon of Scripture came about. The early Christians did not equate their own

Philip Schaff, History Of The Christian Church (The Complete Eight Volumes In One), Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 24885-24892.

writings with the inspired Scripture. But they did claim that they were faithfully passing on the Christian faith that the apostles had delivered to the Church. These facts make the early Christians' interpretation of the Scriptures among the most valuable commentary available to us today.

In a day when there are literally thousands of organized "Christian" denominations, the early Christians tell us what the historic and universal Church believed and practiced. Protestants believe in the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, the belief that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of Christianity. Yet the existence of Adventists, Anglicans, Baptists, Calvinists. Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and other denominations demonstrate how subjective, individualistic, and inherently divisive Sola Scriptura can potentially be. Whether they acknowledge it or not, Protestants hold to their own interpretative traditions of the Scriptures. In an ironic way, each Protestant can become his own ultimate interpretive authority that resembles the papal infallibility of Roman Catholicism. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches affirm a dual source of revelation-both Scripture and tradition. However, many of the traditions within Catholicism and Orthodoxy are extra-biblical, and most of those traditions, though ancient, actually developed after the pre-Nicene period.

Truly the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20), i.e., the authority of the Scriptures. But that divine revelation requires interpretation. I think early Christian commentary is a helpful point of reference for us to avoid the interpretive anarchy of Protestantism as well as the extra-biblical interpretative traditions associated with Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism alike. Why not examine the Scriptures in light of the general teachings of the early Christians? Whose interpretation is more likely to be generally correct—that of the later Christians or the early Christians? How do present-day Christian beliefs and practices compare to that of the early Christians? More importantly, how do early Christianity and modern Christianity compare to Scripture, especially the words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount.

Early Christian Life

Based upon their own writings, the earliest Christians considered themselves blessed or happy to be poor in spirit, to mourn, to be meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, and to be persecuted for righteousness' sake because there was the reward of the kingdom of God. For the sake of the kingdom of God, they considered it desirable to be poor, to be hungry, to weep, and to be hated. But they despised to be rich, to be full, to be laughing, and to be spoken of well by all men.

According to their own words, the early Christians let their good works shine before others. They strived to live sinless lives, free from anger and lust. They also believed that divorce and remarriage was adultery. They taught that a Christian should not swear oaths, but let their "Yes," be "Yes," and their "No,"

be "No." They not only had a profound love for one another, but they also loved their persecutors and enemies. They believed that Christians should not participate in the military, and should not do violence to anybody for any reason (or even look upon violence). They would not judge, punish or go to law against anybody, but rather forgave all those who sinned against them, so that God would also forgive them. They did to others what they would want others to do to them.

Their spiritual lives were characterized by much almsgiving, fasting and praying in secret. They often prayed the Lord's prayer as Christ had taught His followers to pray. They sold their possessions and gave to the poor, often holding their goods in common, and thereby storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. And they didn't worry about food and clothing because they trusted God would take care of their basic needs if they pursued first His kingdom and righteousness.

The early Christians also believed the way to eternal life was difficult and the gate was narrow. They understood that those who were not living as Jesus taught were not Christians at all, even if they professed to be; for not those who made profession, but those who did the works, would be saved. In sum, they believed in not only hearing, but also doing the sayings of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

Let us hear from their own words just a few examples of how early Christianity embodied the teachings of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. In about the year AD 130, shortly after the close of the apostolic era, a certain anonymous "disciple of the Apostles" described the manners of the Christians in the following words:

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.

They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet

make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.²

Various apologies were written by Christians to kings in the second century which give us a glimpse into early Christianity. For example, Aristides was an Athenian philosopher who is primarily known for his work *Apology of Aristides*. Very little is known of him, except for the information given by Eusebius and Jerome. Writing to the Emperor Hadrian in the early second century, Aristides explained the "law of the Christians" and "their manner of life" in which they kept Christ's commandments in the Sermon on the Mount. Aristides wrote:

But the Christians, O King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations. For they know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from whom are all things, to whom there is no other god as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe in hope and expectation of the world which is to come. Therefore they do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother, and show kindness to those near to them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols made in the image of man; and whatsoever they would not want others to do to them, they do not do to others; and they do not eat of the food which is consecrated to idols, for they are pure. And their oppressors they comfort and make them their friends. They do good to their enemies. Their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world.

Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who does not have, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his

² Mathetes, *Epistle to Diognetus*, chapter 5 (ANF, 1.26-27).

burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food.

They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindnesses toward them; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him. And if any righteous man among them passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that anyone of them dies in his ungodliness or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom.

Such, O King, is the commandment of the law of the Christians, and such is their manner of life.³

Also an Athenian philosopher, Athenagoras wrote *A Plea For the Christians* addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus. He explained how the Christians fulfilled Christ's commands in the Sermon on the Mount to love their enemies and not to resist evildoers (Matthew 5:38-48). In about the year AD 177, Athenagoras wrote:

If I go minutely into the particulars of our doctrine, let it not surprise you. It is that you may not be carried away by the popular and irrational opinion, but may have the truth clearly before you. For presenting the opinions themselves to which we adhere, as being not human but uttered and taught by God, we shall be able to persuade you not to think of us as atheists. What, then, are those teachings in which we are brought up? "I say to you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them that persecute you; that you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." Allow me here to lift up my voice boldly in loud and audible outcry, pleading as I do before philosophic princes. . . . [W]ho of them have so purged their souls as, instead of hating their enemies, to love them; and, instead of speaking ill of those who have reviled them (to abstain from which is of itself an evidence of no mean forbearance), to bless them; and to pray for those who plot against their lives? On the contrary, they never cease with evil intent to search out skilfully the secrets of their art, and are ever bent on working some harm, making the art of words and not the exhibition of deeds their business and profession. But among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds they exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again;

³ Aristides, *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 16 (ANF, 9.276-278).

when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves.⁴

As Christianity rapidly spread throughout the Roman Empire, the early Christians found themselves in the midst of a very hostile environment. The kingdom of God was a radical Christian counter-culture in the midst of Greco-Roman values and customs. Christians were truly separate from the world. They did not attend the mixed public baths, public banquets, the theatre, the coliseum, chariot races, Olympic games or other pagan ceremonies. They were not patriotic, nor would they hold public office. The women were veiled and did not adorn themselves with cosmetics, costly apparel or braided hair. They walked in the footsteps of Jesus and all believed the same basic doctrines. For this reason, there were many criticisms and false accusations against the early Christians.

For instance, the Roman historian Tacitus (d. c. 117) spoke of those "called Christians by the populace." He continued, "Christus [Christ] from whom the name had its origin, suffered extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of our procurator, Pontius Pilate." Tacitus spoke of early Christianity in a demeaning way: "A most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome." Similarly, the Roman historian Suetonious (70-130) said the Christians were "a sort of people who held a new and impious superstition."

Because the Christians did not believe in the traditional Roman and Greek gods, they were called "atheists." False accusations and rumors that Christians practiced incest, fornication, cannibalism and infant sacrifice were widespread. Other accusations against the Christians were true. One early Christian summarized the accusations from the heathen in this way:

For you are here in the habit of fastening upon us a very serious charge of impiety because we do not rear temples for the ceremonies of worship, do not set up statues and images of any god, do not build altars, do not offer the blood of creatures slain in sacrifices, incense, nor sacrificial meal, and finally, do not bring wine flowing in libations from sacred bowls; which, indeed, we neglect to build and do.⁹

The pagan critic Caecilius (c. 200) called Christianity a "vile religion"

⁴ Athenagoras, A Plea for the Christians, chapter 11 (ANF, 2.134).

⁵ Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, trs. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb (1876), 304.

Suetonius, The Lives of the Twelve Caesars: Nero Claudius Caesar, tr. Alexander Thomson (1796), XVI.

⁷ See Justin Martyr, ANF, 1.164.

See Justin Martyr, ANF, 1.199; Tatian, ANF, 2.76; Athenagoras, ANF, 2.130, 145; Theophilus, ANF, 2.112; Tertullian, ANF, 3.18, 23; Mark Minucius Felix, ANF, 4.177-178; Aristides, ANF, 9.279.

⁹ See Arnobius, ANF, 6.506.

because "they have no altars, no temples, no acknowledged images." ¹⁰ The words of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount were a living reality to the early Christians: "Blessed are you who hunger" (Luke 6:21; cf. Matthew 5:6); "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake" (Matthew 5:10). ¹¹ Caecilius continued,

Consider, wretched creatures, (from your lot) while you are yet living, what is threatening you after death. Behold, a portion of you—and, as you declare, the larger and better portion—are in want, are cold, are laboring in hard work and hunger; and your God allows it, He feigns. He either is not willing or not able to assist His people; and thus He is either weak or inequitable. . . . There are threats, punishments, tortures, and crosses for you. . . . Where is that God who is able to help you when you come to life again, since he cannot help you while you are in this life? . . . In the meantime, in suspense and anxiety, you are abstaining from respectable enjoyments. You do not visit exhibitions; you have no concern in public displays; you reject the public banquets, and abhor the sacred contests; the meats previously tasted by, and the drinks made a libation of upon, the altars. Thus you stand in dread of the gods whom you deny. . . . Thus, wretched as you are, you neither rise again, nor do you live in the meanwhile. 12

The pagan critic, Celsus (c. 248), wrote concerning Christians' non-resistant practice of turning the other cheek when struck as the Lord taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:39). Celsus observed, "They have also, a precept to this effect, that we ought not to avenge ourselves on one who injures us, or, as he expresses it, 'Whosoever shall strike you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.' . . . They cannot tolerate temples, altars, or images." ¹³

Christians were despised and rejected like their crucified Master because they walked as He walked. Their way of life was codified by Jesus in the Gospels and delineated in the Sermon on the Mount. For this reason, the early Christians very often referenced the Sermon on Mount when explaining their beliefs and practices.

The Apostolic Fathers

The term Apostolic Fathers refers to several of the earliest writers of early Christianity. ¹⁴ The Apostolic Fathers were in the age immediately succeeding the

¹⁰ Mark Minucius Felix, *The Octavius*, chapter 10 (ANF, 4.178).

¹¹ New King James Version

¹² Mark Minucius Felix, *The Octavius*, chapter 12 (ANF, 4.179).

Origen Against Clesus, book 3, chapter 64 (ANF, 4.634-635).

[&]quot;Though the familiar sense of the term 'Apostolic Fathers' is based on this ancient use of the word 'apostolicus,' yet the expression itself does not occur, so far as I have observed, until comparatively recent times. Its origin, or at least its general currency, should probably be traces to the idea of gathering together the literary remains of those who flourished in the age immediately succeeding the Apostles, and who presumably therefore were their

apostles. Thus, they are of special interest because of their comparative earliness to the other primitive Christians. Some of the Apostolic Fathers were direct personal disciples of the apostles and/or died as martyrs. The following writings are generally considered as having been written by the Apostolic Fathers: ¹⁵

- Letters attributed to Clement of Rome: The *First Epistle of Clement* (c. 96) and *Second Clement* (many scholars believe that Second Clement is actually a sermon written around 95–140 by an anonymous author)
- Seven letters attributed to Ignatius of Antioch (c. 105) (the longer versions of these letters, and those beyond the seven, are widely considered by scholars to be later emendations and spurious)
- The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (c. 110-140) and The Martyrdom of Polycarp (c. 155)
- *The Didache* (c. 80-140)
- Epistle of Barnabas (c. 70-130)
- *The Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 150)
- Epistle to Diognetus (c. 125-200)
- Fragments of the writings of Papias of Hierapolis (c.120), which have survived as quotations in later writers like Eusebius

All of these works were originally written in Greek, but the older English translations can be found in the ANF series. These writings are primary sources for the study of early Christianity, especially the post-apostolic period spanning from about AD 95 to AD 150. Some of these early writings were on the edge of the New Testament canon. For example, *The Shepherd of Hermas* and *The Epistle of Barnabas* are found in the Codex Sinaiticus, and *First Clement* in the Codex Alexandrinus.¹⁶

direct personal disciples. This idea first took shape in the edition of [Jean-Baptiste] Cotelier during the last half of the seventeenth century (A.D. 1672). Indeed such a collection would have been an impossibility a few years earlier. The first half of that century saw in print for the first time the Epistles of Clement (A.D. 1633), and of Barnabas (A.D. 1645), to say nothing of the original Greek of Polycarp's Epistle (A.D. 1633) and the Ignatian Letters in their genuine form (A.D. 1644, 1646). The materials therefore would have been too scanty for such a project at any previous epoch. In his title page however Cotelier does not use the actual expression, though he approximates to it, SS. Patrum qui temporibus Apostolicis floruerunt opera; but the next editor [Thomas] Ittig (1699), adopts as his title Patres Apostolici, and thenceforward it becomes common." (*The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. 1, Part 1, ed. J. B. Lightfoot [London: Macmillan and Co., 1890], 3).

One short fragment of a writing by Quadratus of Athens appears in some editions of the Apostolic Fathers after about 1980.

See "Apostolic Fathers" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. Frank Leslie Cross, Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford University Press, 1974), 91.

Clement of Rome

The second or third bishop of Rome after the apostle Peter, Clement (c. 30-100) was certainly one of the prominent early Christians leaders toward the end of the first century. 17 Clement was personally instructed by the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul. The apostles Peter and Paul were said to have been martyred in Rome. Emperor Nero persecuted Christians after Rome burned in 64, followed by further persecution under Emperor Domitian (81-96). Clement succeeded Anecletus as Bishop of Rome in 88.

Clement is even mentioned by name in Paul's epistle to the Philippians: "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlaborers, whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). 18 *First Clement* is cited as the biblical Clement's by Irenaeus, who said:

In the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone in this, for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome despatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles¹⁹

Several times did Clement of Alexandria affirm Clement's authorship to the epistle, and in one place calls him the "apostle Clement." "Clement," affirmed Origen, was "indeed a disciple of the apostles." Eusebius also identified this Clement as Paul's "fellow-worker" spoken of in his letter the Philippians. Some said that Clement may have even translated the epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews.

Today, we can read *First Clement*, one of the oldest extant Christian documents outside the New Testament. Clement wrote the letter in the name of

Evidence that Clement of Rome was a prominent leader in the church of Rome is supplied by the *Shepherd of Hermas* (ANF, 2.12), the author of which claims to have been contemporary with Clement. See also *A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography*, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 171-176.

See also Origen (ANF, 9.377) and Eusebius, *The Church History*, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 93.

¹⁹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3:3.3 (ANF, 1.416).

²⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* 4.17 (ANF 2.428). See also ANF 2.308; 2.495,

²¹ Origen, *De Principiis*, 2:3:6 (ANF, 4.273).

²² Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.15:1.

Eusebius reported, "For as Paul had written to the Hebrews in his native tongue, some say that the evangelist Luke, others that this Clement himself, translated the epistle" (*The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890], 3.38:2).

the Church at Rome to the troubled congregation in Corinth, where certain "bishops" or "presbyters" had been deposed. The epistle offers valuable insight into Church history at that time. It was highly regarded, and was read in the Corinthian church along with the Scriptures. Eusebius said the epistle is "acknowledged to be genuine and is of considerable length and of remarkable merit," and, "has been publicly used in a great many churches both in former times and in our own." The Codex Alexandrinus (5th century), one of the earliest and most complete manuscripts of the Bible, contains both *First Clement* and *Second Clement*.²⁵

In the epistle, Clement addressed the Corinthians about division within the church. First, Clement expressed his praise of the Corinthians prior to the schism by saying, "For you did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honor to the presbyters among you." As in the New Testament, "presbyters" and "bishops" are used interchangeabley. The deposition of bishops is not spoken of as a usurpation of a single bishop, but a plurality of bishops. Thus, Rome sent a letter to the Corinthians, according to Eusebius, "reconciling them in peace, renewing their faith, and proclaiming the doctrine lately received from the apostles." Clement also mentioned the apostles Peter and Paul were in his own generation. Clement wrote:

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labors and when he had at length suffered martyrdom,

Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.16.

²⁵ The Codex Alexandrinus is a fifth-century manuscript of the Greek Bible, containing the majority of the LXX and the NT. Along with the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus, it is one of the earliest and most complete manuscripts of the Bible.

²⁶ Clement of Rome, *First Clement*, chapter 1, (ANF, 1.5).

²⁷ Cf. Acts 20:17, 28; Eph 4:11; Phil 1:1; Tit 1:5, 7; 1 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 5:1-2.

Clement spoke of the order of ministers in the church as follows: "The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith." (First Clement, chapter 42 [ANF, 1.16]).

²⁹ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 5.6:3.

departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.³⁰

Throughout his epistle Clement frequently introduced Old Testament passages by such well known formulas as "the Scripture says," "the Scriptures also bear witness," "look carefully into the Scriptures," "it is written," "and then was fulfilled that which is written." But the New Testament material is introduced in a different way. He exhorts the Corinthians to be "especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus" or "remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" and proceeds to quote the words of Jesus found in the Gospels. ³¹ It may be that Clement was quoting the Lord's teaching by memory from the inspired oral history, or that he was making use of some written document used by the Roman church. Either way, Clement calls them to *remember* the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quoting the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Clement did not refer to a direct quotation of the Scriptures but again calls to remembrance the words of the Lord Jesus. In this exhortation to humility, Clement wrote,

Being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spoke: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured to you." By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words.³²

³⁰ Clement of Rome, *First Clement*, chapter 5 (ANF, 1.6).

For example, he wrote: "Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, 'Woe to that man by whom offenses come! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a millstone should be hung about his neck, and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones.' Your schism has subverted the faith of many, has discouraged many, has given rise to doubt in many, and has caused grief to us all. And still your sedition continues" (Clement of Rome, First Clement, chapter 46 [ANF, 1.17-18], emphasis added). Though Clement did not quote any gospel precisely, the teaching of the Lord is preserved in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt 18:6-7; Mk 9:42; Lk 17:1-2), except for the clause about stumbling His elect. Obviously Clement has some sort of knowledge of a gospel tradition that preserved the doctrine of Christ. See also Bruce M. Metzger, The Canon of the New Testament (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 40-43.

³² Clement of Rome, First Clement, chapter 13 (ANF, 1.8), emphasis added.

Though there is no direct parallel in our written Gospels, these phrases obviously come from the Synoptic gospel tradition of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matthew 5:7; 6:12–15; 7:2; Luke 6:36–38).

Second Clement (c. 150) is the oldest surviving complete Christian sermon. It is generally considered by scholars to be an anonymous work, though it was at one time attributed to Clement. There may be good reason why it has been put together with First Clement, but the author is actually unknown. According to Eusebius, "We do not know that this [the second epistle of Clement] is recognized like the former, for we do not find that the ancients have made any use of it." The date and occasion of Second Clement is also open for question. Among the ten directly quoted sayings of Jesus in Second Clement, three of the quotations are found in the Sermon on the Mount:

- Let us, then, not only call Him Lord, for that will not save us. For He says, "Not every one that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall be saved, but he that works righteousness." Therefore, brethren, let us confess Him by our works, by loving one another, by not committing adultery, or speaking evil of one another, or cherishing envy; but by being continent, compassionate, and good.³⁵
- We ought also to sympathize with one another, and not be covetous. By such works let us confess Him, and not by those that are of an opposite kind. And it is not fitting that we should fear men, but rather God. For this reason, if we should do such wicked things, the Lord has said, "Even though you were gathered together to me in my very bosom, yet if you were not to keep my commandments, I would cast you off, and say to you, 'Depart from me; I do not know where you are from, you workers of iniquity."
- Now the Lord declares, "No servant can serve two masters." If we desire, then, to serve both God and mammon, it will be unprofitable for us.³⁷

The first quotation is clearly from Matthew 7:21, though the quotation is not exact. The last phrase of the second quotation may have its origin in either Matthew 7:23 or Luke 13:27, but that which precedes is not found in the canonical Gospels. Nonetheless, there is no reason to doubt the sayings are truly from the Lord, especially since there are cross-references which would teach a similar concept.³⁸ The passage is also one of four of the quoted sayings of Jesus in *Second Clement* that do not occur in the canonical Gospels.³⁹ The last quote

Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.38:4.

³⁴ See The Apostolic Fathers in English, tr. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 73-76.

³⁵ Second Clement, chapter 4 (ANF, 9.252).

³⁶ Second Clement, chapter 4 (ANF, 9.252).

³⁷ Second Clement, chapter 6 (ANF, 9.252).

³⁸ Such as Mt 22:11-14; 23:37-38; Jn 15:1-10.

³⁹ The other three are the following: "For the Lord saith, 'Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of

from above is a fairly direct quotation of Matthew 6:24.

In yet another quotation, the author said, "And another Scripture says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Therefore the author appears to be relying upon at least some written source(s), probably the gospels of Matthew and Luke (cf. Matthew 9:13; Luke 5:32). This is the earliest historical document in which one of the gospels is called Scripture.

Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius (c. 30-108) was a disciple of the apostle John and companion of Polycarp (another personal disciple of the apostle John). According to Eusebius, Ignatius was "chosen bishop of Antioch, second in succession to Peter." ⁴¹

Ignatius was sent from Syria to Rome, where he became food for wild beasts on account of his Christian faith. On his way to Rome as a prisoner under strict military surveillance, Ignatius wrote letters to several churches. The seven authentic letters are:

- The Epistle to the Ephesians
- The Epistle to the Magnesians
- The Epistle to the Trallians
- The Epistle to the Romans
- The Epistle to the Philadelphians

wolves' [Mt 10:16]. And Peter answered and said unto Him, 'What, then, if the wolves shall tear in pieces the lambs?' Jesus said unto Peter, 'The lambs have no cause after they are dead to fear the wolves; and in like manner, fear not ye them that kill you, and can do nothing more unto you; but fear Him who, after you are dead, has power over both soul and body to cast them into hell-fire' [Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4, 5] (Second Clement, chapter 5, ANF, 7.518); "For the Lord saith in the Gospel, 'If ye have not kept that which was small, who will commit to you the great? For I say unto you, that he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much' [Lk 16:10, 11]. This, then, is what He means: 'Keep the flesh holy and the seal undefiled, that ye may receive eternal life" (Second Clement, chapter 8, ANF, 7.519); "For the Lord Himself, being asked by one when His kingdom would come, replied, 'When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither male nor female.' Now, two are one when we speak the truth one to another, and there is unfeignedly one soul in two bodies. And 'that which is without as that which is within' meaneth this: He calls the soul 'that which is within,' and the body 'that which is without.' As, then, thy body is visible to sight, so also let thy soul be manifest by good works. And 'the male with the female, neither male nor female,' this meaneth, that a brother seeing a sister should think nothing about her as of a female, nor she think anything about him as of a male. If ye do these things, saith He, the kingdom of my Father shall come" (Second Clement, chapter 12, ANF, 7.520).

- ⁴⁰ Second Clement, chapter 2 (ANF, 7.517).
- Eusebius, The History of the Church, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.36:2. Wace and Piercy say that Ignatius is the second bishop of Antioch between Evodius and Hero, but he is sometimes reckoned the 3rd bishop, if the Apostle Peter is reckoned the first. See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 509-516.

- The Epistle to the Smyrnaeans
- The Epistle to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

These letters of Ignatius give considerable insight into the beliefs and practices of the churches in Asia Minor at the close of the apostolic age. All of his epistles are available for us to read today. He encouraged churches to be on guard against new heresies and urged them to hold fast to the apostolic tradition, which he thought necessary to put into writing for the sake of safety. ⁴² To the Romans he requested that they not attempt to release him from martyrdom. He wrote:

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries to act as a disciple of Christ; "yet am I not thereby justified." May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray that they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me in this. I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple, and have no desire after anything visible or invisible, that I may attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let breakings, tearings, and separations of bones; let cutting off of members; let bruising to pieces of the whole body; and let the very torment of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ. Let

We find three references to the Sermon on the Mount in his letter to the Ephesians. ⁴⁵ However, the three references occur in the longer version of the epistle which is probably spurious. In his epistle to the Trallians, also the longer version (and probably dubious), there is a quotation of Matthew 6:14 in the Sermon on the Mount. ⁴⁶ Also in the longer and most likely spurious version of Ignatius' epistle to the Philadelphians are a few references to the Sermon on the

Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 109.

⁴³ 1 Cor 4:4

⁴⁴ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*, chapter 5, (ANF 1.76).

[&]quot;He, therefore, that separates himself from such, and does not meet in the society where sacrifices are offered, and with 'the Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven,' is a wolf in sheep's clothing [Mt 7:15], while he presents a mild outward appearance" (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chapter 5, ANF, 1.51); "For 'blessed are the meek' [Mt 5:4] and Moses was meek above all men; and David was exceeding meek" (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chapter 10, ANF, 1.54); "It is good to teach, if he who speaks also acts. For he who shall both 'do and teach, the same shall be great in the kingdom'" [Mt 5:19] (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, chapter 15, ANF, 1.56).

⁴⁶ "For says our Lord, 'Forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you" [Mt 6:14]. (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, chapter 8, ANF, 1.69).

Mount.47

There is an authentic saying of Ignatius within his epistle to the Philadelphians, which may be an allusion to Matthew 7:15 in the Sermon on the Mount: "For there are many wolves that appear worthy of credit who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, carry captive those that are running towards God; but in your unity they shall have no place." 48

Once in Rome, Ignatius was led into the amphitheater where he was fed to wild beasts. The martyrdom of Ignatius took place at Rome under Emperor Trajan in about AD 107. Irenaeus knew of the martyrdom of Ignatius and quotes from his letters:

As a certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God." 49

The church at Philippi had requested copies of the letters which Ignatius had written. Polycarp fulfilled their request and also wrote of the martyrdom of Ignatius in his letter to the Philippians. He wrote:

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as you have seen set before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. This do in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are now in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they did not love this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead.⁵⁰

[&]quot;Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia, which has obtained mercy through love, and is established in the harmony of God, and rejoiceth unceasingly, in the passion of our Lord Jesus, and is filled with all mercy through His resurrection; which I salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal and enduring joy, especially to those who are in unity with the bishop, and the presbyters, and the deacons, who have been appointed by the will of God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His own will, has firmly established His Church upon a rock, by a spiritual building, not made with hands, against which the winds and the floods have beaten, yet have not been able to overthrow it [Mt 7:25]: yea, and may spiritual wickedness never be able to do so, but be thoroughly weakened by the power of Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, ANF, 1.79); "Wherefore 'He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' [Mt 5:45]; of whose kindness the Lord, wishing us also to be imitators, says, 'Be ye perfect, even as also your Father that is in heaven is perfect" [Mt 5:48] (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, chapter 3, ANF, 1.80).

⁴⁸ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, chapter 2 (ANF, 1.80).

⁴⁹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 5.28 (ANF, 1.557).

Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapter 9 (ANF, 1.35).

Polycarp of Smyrna

Polycarp (c. 69-155) was one of the most prominent figures of the second century Church. He was a personal companion of the apostle John, and the faithful bishop of Smyrna. Not only did Polycarp personally know the apostle John, but he was appointed to the position of church leadership by the apostles. Eusebius said that Polycarp was "a disciple of the apostles" and was appointed Bishop of Smyrna "by those who had seen and heard the Lord." If the angels of the churches in Revelation refer to the bishops of those churches, it's possible that Smyrna's angel could be identified as Polycarp (Revelation 2:8). Smyrna was one of two churches out of seven to which Jesus had no rebuke concerning their doctrine and practice (Revelation 2:8-11). Irenaeus reported the following about Polycarp:

Polycarp was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried on earth a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time. . . .

He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles,—that, namely, which is handed down by the Church.

There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus [a Gnostic heretic], the enemy of the truth, is within." And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Do you know me?" "I do know you, the firstborn of Satan." Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinning, being condemned of himself."

There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth. Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.⁵²

⁵¹ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.36:1

⁵² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 3, chapter 3.4 (ANF, 1.416).

Today we can read Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians*. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians is connected with the epistles which Ignatius wrote on the way to Rome where he was martyred.⁵³ In his epistle to the Magnesians, Ignatius wrote, "The Ephesians from Smyrna (from where I also write to you), who are here for the glory of God, as you are also, who have in all things refreshed me, salute you, as does also Polycarp."⁵⁴ Eusebius continued,

And when he [Ignatius] had left Smyrna he wrote again from Troas to the Philadelphians and to the church of Smyrna; and particularly to Polycarp, who presided over the latter church. And since he knew him well as an apostolic man, he commended to him, like a true and good shepherd, the flock at Antioch, and besought him to care diligently for it.⁵⁵

In another passage from the same *Epistle to the Philippians*, we see that Polycarp assumes that the doctrine of Jesus, whether oral or written, was familiar to the Philippian church. He tells them to *remember* or *be mindful* what the Lord taught and then relays a body of teaching similar to the Sermon on the Mount. He wrote:

Being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: "Judge not, that you be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; with what measure you use, it shall be measured to you again;" and once more, "Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God." 56

In the first part, we find a combination of Matthew 7:1-2 and Luke 6:36-38: "Judge not, that you be not judged." This is followed by references to Matthew 5:7: "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (cf. Luke 6:36-38) and Matthew 7:2: "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (cf. Luke 6:36-38). The final quotation is a combination of two of Jesus' beatitudes found in Matthew 5:3, 10 and Luke 6:20.

Later in the letter, Polycarp wrote, "If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive." Although not an exact quotation, this is

According to Eusebius, "So when he came to Smyrna, where Polycarp was, he wrote an epistle to the church of Ephesus, in which he mentions Onesimus, its pastor; and another to the church of Magnesia, situated upon the Maeander, in which he makes mention again of a bishop Damas; and finally one to the church of Tralles, whose bishop, he states, was at that time Polybius.

[&]quot;In addition to these he wrote also to the church of Rome, entreating them not to secure his release from martyrdom" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890], 3.36:5-6).

⁵⁴ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians*, chapter 15 (ANF, 1.65).

Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.36:10.

Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapter 2 (ANF, 1.33).

Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapter 5 (ANF, 1.34).

clearly a reference to Matthew 6:12-14, also in the Sermon on the Mount. Polycarp said also,

Therefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; "watching unto prayer," and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God "not to lead us into temptation," as the Lord has said: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." 58

Here we find a reference to the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:13) followed by a quotation of Matthew 26:41. Finally, Polycarp said to pray "for those that persecute and hate you," 59 a definite reference to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:44).

In his old age, Polycarp was arrested and martyred by being burned alive around the year AD 155. Today we can read that account in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

The Didache

The Didache (c. 50-140) is also a very important document of the early church because it may be one of the oldest Christian texts in existence. It is also known as The Teaching of the Apostles, or The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles. It is apparently a written form of an oral instruction for Gentile Christians. To some early Christians, the Didache was considered Scripture. For instance, quoting from the Didache, Clement of Alexandria wrote: "It is such a person that the Scripture calls a thief. For that reason it is said, 'Son, do not be a liar; for lying leads to theft." But Eusebius described it as one of the non-canonical books. ⁶²

There are three apparent sections in the document. The first section is the teaching about the "two ways" of life and death (also recorded in Barnabas). ⁶³ This relates to why the early Christians in the book of Acts were known as followers of "the way" (Acts 9:1-2; 18:25-26; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22). In the section on the way of life, the author quotes extensively from the Sermon on the Mount (specifically Matthew 5:39, 41, 44, 46-48; cf. Luke 6:29, 30-32):

The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you;

Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapter 7 (ANF, 1.34-35).

⁵⁹ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chapter 12 (ANF, 1.36).

Most scholars now assign *The Didache* to the first century. The root of this tradition may even be referenced in Acts 2:41-42. Within those verses, the "apostle's doctrine" is literally the apostle's *didache* in Greek, which means "instruction" or "teaching."

⁶¹ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, 1:20 (ANF, 2.324).

⁶² Eusebius, *The Church History*, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 101.

⁶³ See Barnabas, ANF, 1.148.

second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself; and whatever you do not wish to occur to you, do not do to another. And of these sayings the teaching is this: Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for them that persecute you. For what credit is it if you love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But you must love them that hate you; and you will not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If someone gives you a blow upon your right cheek, turn to him the other also; and you will be perfect. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. If someone takes away your cloak, give him also your coat. If someone takes from you what belongs to you, do not ask it back, for indeed you are not able. Give to every one that asks you, and do not ask it back.⁶⁴

Evidently the author was not quoting from a specific written Gospel, but he relies primarily upon the inspired traditions of Matthew and Luke. All of the references and allusions to the Gospels and the Sermon on the Mount within *The Didache* are too numerous to provide here.

The second segment is instructions about church practice and order. The second section also contains instructions on fasting and prayer (based upon the Sermon on the Mount), the Eucharist, teachers, apostles, prophets, assembly on the Lord's Day, and appointing bishops and deacons. The third and final section of the *Didache* is a brief apocalyptic passage.

When the author refers to the gospel, he cites the words of Jesus rather than a written Gospel. For example, the author wrote,

- As the Lord commanded in His Gospel, thus pray: "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily (needful) bread, and forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (or, evil); for Yours is the power and the glory for ever." 65
- But concerning the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the Gospel, thus do. Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord.⁶⁶
- And reprove one another, not in anger, but in peace, as you have it in the Gospel; but to every one that acts amiss against another, let no one speak, nor let him hear anything from you until he repent. But your prayers and alms and all your deeds so do, as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord.⁶⁷

In these three quotations, the author refers to the gospel, and then quotes the Lord Jesus. The first quotation refers to the Lord's prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13). The latter part of the last quotation appears to be a reference to the entire Sermon on the Mount, especially Matthew 6. It is

⁶⁴ *Didache*, chapter 1 (ANF, 7.377).

⁶⁵ *Didache*, chapter 8 (ANF, 7.379).

⁶⁶ *Didache*, chapter 11 (ANF, 7.380).

⁶⁷ Didache, chapter 15 (ANF, 7.382).

apparent that the Gospel of Matthew was the author's chief source of authority for the teachings of Jesus. However, the author makes no mention of a written Gospel of Matthew. All of this evidence may suggest that the author of the *Didache* is relying upon the inspired oral history of the gospel tradition, prior to the written gospels.

The Epistle of Barnabas

The *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70-130), a polemical letter directed against Judaism, was widely circulated among the early church. This epistle may be one of the oldest Christian epistles outside of the New Testament. External evidence is in favor of its authenticity. Though the work itself was anonymous, Clement of Alexandria attributed its composition to the "apostle Barnabas" "apostolic Barnabas" "one of the seventy, and a fellow-worker of Paul." Tertullian identified also identified the author of the epistle as the biblical Barnabas, "a man sufficiently accredited by God, as being one whom Paul has stationed next to himself in the uninterrupted observance of abstinence." Origen quoted from the *Epistle of Barnabas* twice.⁷²

In Scripture Barnabas is referred to as the "beloved Barnabas" (Acts 15:25), "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Christian tradition holds that Barnabas was one of the seventy disciples appointed by Jesus, ⁷³ and that he was martyred at Salamis, Cyprus (AD 61). Most modern scholars doubt that the epistle was written by the same Barnabas of the Scriptures.

Some early Christians thought the *Epistle of Barnabas* was entitled a place in the canon based upon its authenticity and being authored by the Barnabas of Scripture.⁷⁴ Along with the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is included in the Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth century Greek Bible which includes the oldest complete copy of the New Testament. However, most early churches apparently did not include it in the New Testament canon. Eusebius described it

⁶⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, 2:6 (ANF, 2.354).

⁶⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *The Stomata*, 2:20 (ANF, 2.372).

Clement of Alexandria, *The Stomata*, 2:20 (ANF, 2.372). See also ANF 2.366, 459.

⁷¹ Tertullian, On Modesty, (ANF 4.97).

⁷² Origen, ANF 4.332, 424.

Eusebius, *The Church History*, 7.2:1; See also ANF, 2.579.

The early church made a distinction between the apostles and the companions of the apsotles. Although the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the Book of Acts, being written by companions of the apsotles, were received into the New Testament canon, the connection between the writers of these books and one of the apostles was believed to be such that the apostolic authority could be transferred to the author. But such a transference of apostolic authority would be more difficult in the case of Barnabas, because, although a companion at one time with the apostle Paul, the two had differed in opinion and separated (Acts 15:36-41). See *A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography*, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 98.

as one of the non-canonical books.⁷⁵ Tertullian said, "the Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the Churches than that apocryphal "Shepherd" of adulterers."⁷⁶

One passage from the epistle is obviously a reference from Matthew 5:42 in the Sermon on the Mount: "Give to every one that asks you,' and you will know who is the good Recompenser of the reward." Clearly the author had access to the gospel traditions of Matthew and Luke. In the same section, the author discusses the "two ways of doctrine and authority" which resembles the two ways discussed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:13-14).

The Shepherd of Hermas

The Shepherd of Hermas (c. 150) was an allegory written by a first or second century Christian author. Some believe that the apostle Paul spoke of the same Hermas in the salutations of his epistle to the Romans (16:14). Otherwise the author may be the brother of Pius, the second century bishop of Rome. Some internal evidence suggests that the document was contemporary with Clement of Rome. If it is the case that we are to identify this Clement as the bishop of Rome who wrote the Corinthians in the end of the first century, then *The Shepherd* would also have to be placed at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century.

Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen accepted *The Shepherd* as Scripture.⁸¹ Tertullian also considered *The Shepherd* inspired, although later, after he became a Montanist, he referred to it as the "apocryphal 'Shepherd' of adulterers" for allowing a "second repentance" for the sexually immoral.⁸² In the Codex Sinaiticus (4th century), *The Shepherd* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* stand after the close of the New Testament. But *The Shepherd* is not received in other canons. For example, the Muratorian Canon is a copy of perhaps the oldest known New Testament canon, the text of which is traditionally dated to about 170. We find reference in the Muratorian fragment to *The Shepherd* as follows:

The Pastor, moreover, did Hermas write very recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother bishop Pius sat in the chair of the Church of Rome. And therefore it also ought to be read; but it cannot be made public in

Fusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 101.

⁷⁶ Tertullian, On Modesty, (ANF, 4.97).

⁷⁷ Epistle of Barnabas, chapter 19 (ANF, 1.149).

⁷⁸ Epistle of Barnabas, chapters 18-20 (ANF, 1.148-149).

⁷⁹ Muratorian Fragment (ANF, 5.604).

[&]quot;Therefore, you will write two books, and you will send the first to Clement and the other to Grapte. And Clement will send his to foreign countries, for permission has been granted to him to do so" (*Shepherd of Hermas*, book 1, vision 2, chapter 4, ANF, 2.12).

⁸¹ See ANF, 1.488; 2.341; 4.270.

⁸² Tertullian, On Modesty, chapter 10 (ANF, 4.97).

the Church to the people, nor placed among the prophets, as their number is complete, nor among the apostles to the end of time.⁸³

Also the Christian historian, Eusebius, declared that *The Shepherd* was among the non-canonical writings. 84 He noted:

[The] apostle [Paul], in the salutations at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, has made mention among others of Hermas, to whom the book called The Shepherd is ascribed, it should be observed that this too has been disputed by some, and on their account cannot be placed among the acknowledged books; while by others it is considered quite indispensable, especially to those who need instruction in the elements of the faith. Hence, as we know, it has been publicly read in churches, and I have found that some of the most ancient writers used it.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, *The Shepherd* was very popular in the second and third centuries and held in high regard by many early Christian churches. The document consists of three books: Visions, Commandments, and Similitudes. By means of imagery and parables, the author addresses many issues, a continual topic being post-baptismal sin, repentance and morality.

Hermas makes no definite quotations to the New Testament, but there are certain reminiscences to the Lord's teaching, especially the Sermon on the Mount. These examples are extensive and include:

- Evil desire in the heart (Vis. 1, Ch. 1; cf. Matthew 5:27-30)
- On riches (Vis. 3, Ch. 6; cf. Matthew 6:24)
- Giving alms (Vis. 4, Ch. 9; cf. Matthew 6:1-4)
- Giving to all (Com. 2; cf. Matthew 5:33-42)
- On speaking the truth (Com. 3; cf. Matthew 5:33-37)
- Adultery in the heart (Com. 4, Ch.1; cf. Matthew 5:27-30)
- On putting one's wife away (Com. 4, Chs. 1, 5; cf. Matthew 5:31-32)
- The angel of righteousness and angel of iniquity (Com. 6, Ch. 2; cf. Matthew 7:13-14)
- Asking and receiving in prayer (Com. 9; cf. Matthew 7:7-12)
- The prophets to be tried by their works (Com. 11; cf. Matthew 7:15-20)
- The two-fold desire (Com. 12; cf. Matthew 7:13-14)
- On accumulation of wealth (Sim. 1; cf. Matthew 6:19-21)
- The reward with God for giving to the poor (Sim. 2; cf. Matthew 6:1-4)
- On true fasting and its reward (Sim. 5, Chs. 1, 3; cf. Matthew 6:16-18)
- On being immersed in business (Sim. 9, Ch. 8; cf. Matthew 6:24)
- Riches and being immersed in business (Sim. 9, Ch. 20cf. Matthew 6:24)
- On not remembering evil against a fellow man (Sim. 9, Ch. 23; cf. Matthew 6:14-15)
- On retaining a recollection of offenses (Sim. 9, Ch. 32; cf. Matthew 6:14-

⁸³ Muratorian Fragment (ANF, 5.604).

Eusebius, The History of the Church, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.25:4..

Eusebius, The History of the Church, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.3:6.

15)

The Epistle to Diognetus

The Epistle to Diognetus (c. 125-200) was written to an unbeliever by an unknown Christian apologist who gives himself the title "Mathetes" (a transliteration of the Greek word for *disciple*). The author stated, "I do not speak of things strange to me, nor do I aim at anything inconsistent with right reason; but having been a disciple of the Apostles, I am become a teacher of the Gentiles." On this ground the writer of the epistle has been included among the apostolic Fathers. And because of the Pauline references and allusions within the letter, some scholars believe that the author was a disciple of Paul the apostle. It is possible that the epistle is actually a lost apology of Quadratus, a disciple of the apostles who is mentioned by Eusebius. Whoever the author of the epistle was, he provides some valuable information about early Christian life.

Though he does not make direct quotations of the Gospels in his letter, Mathetes describes the manners of the early Christians in a way which portrays their obedience to the Sermon on the Mount. Here are some excerpts below:

- They love all men, and are persecuted by all (cf. Matthew 5:44).88
- Christians likewise love those that hate them (cf. Matthew 5:44).⁸⁹
- They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless (cf. Matthew 5:11, 44; Luke 6:28); they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life (cf.

"He himself reveals the early date at which he lived in the following words: 'But the works of our Saviour were always present, for they were genuine:— those that were healed, and those that were raised from the dead, who were seen not only when they were healed and when they were raised, but were also always present; and not merely while the Saviour was on earth, but also after his death, they were alive for quite a while, so that some of them lived even to our day.' Such then was Quadratus." (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890], 4.3:1-2).

Though the sentence quoted above does not occur in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, there is a gap between 7.6 and 7.7 in the epsitle into which the sentence would fit very well. See *The Apostolic Fathers in English*, tr. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 288-291.

⁸⁶ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 11 (ANF, 1.29).

[&]quot;After Trajan had reigned for nineteen and a half years Ælius Adrian became his successor in the empire. To him Quadratus addressed a discourse containing an apology for our religion, because certain wicked men had attempted to trouble the Christians. The work is still in the hands of a great many of the brethren, as also in our own, and furnishes clear proofs of the man's understanding and of his apostolic orthodoxy.

⁸⁸ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 5 (ANF, 1.27).

⁸⁹ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 6 (ANF, 1.27).

Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23).90

 We should not be anxious concerning clothing and food (Matthew 6:25-34).⁹¹

The apologist also discusses such topics as the vanity of idols, the superstitions and observances of the Jews, the miserable state of humanity, the manifestation of Christ, and the blessings of faith. Though the writer is unknown, his epistle captures the godly devotion of early Christian life. With regard to the imitation of God (cf. Matthew 5:48), the the author wrote:

If you also desire to possess this faith, you likewise shall receive first of all the knowledge of the Father. For God has loved mankind, on whose account He made the world, to whom He rendered subject all the things that are in it, to whom He gave reason and understanding, to whom alone He imparted the privilege of looking upwards to Himself, whom He formed after His own image, to whom He sent His only-begotten Son, to whom He has promised a kingdom in heaven, and will give it to those who have loved Him. And when you have attained this knowledge, with what joy do you think you will be filled? Or, how will you love Him who has first so loved you?

And if you love Him, you will be an imitator of His kindness. And do not wonder that a man may become an imitator of God. He can, if he is willing. For it is not by ruling over his neighbors, or by seeking to hold the supremacy over those that are weaker, or by being rich, and showing violence towards those that are inferior, that happiness is found; nor can any one by these things become an imitator of God. But these things do not at all constitute His majesty. On the contrary he who takes upon himself the burden of his neighbor; he who, in whatsoever respect he may be superior, is ready to benefit another who is deficient; he who, whatsoever things he has received from God, by distributing these to the needy, becomes a god to those who receive his benefits: he is an imitator of God.

Then you will see, while still on earth, that God in the heavens rules over the universe; then you shall begin to speak the mysteries of God; then you shall both love and admire those that suffer punishment because they will not deny God; then you shall condemn the deceit and error of the world when you shall know what it is to live truly in heaven, when you shall despise that which is here esteemed to be death, when you shall fear what is truly death, which is reserved for those who shall be condemned to the eternal fire, which shall afflict those even to the end that are committed to it. Then you shall admire those who for righteousness' sake endure the fire that is but for a moment, and shall count them happy when you shall know the nature of that fire 92

⁹⁰ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 5 (ANF, 1.27).

⁹¹ Letter to Diognetus, chapter 9 (ANF, 1.29).

⁹² Letter to Diognetus, chapter 10 (ANF, 1.29).

Papias of Hierapolis

Papias (c. 60-130) was bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor.⁹³ According to Irenaeus, Papias was a "hearer of John" and "companion of Polycarp."⁹⁴ In one fragment of Papias, he explains how he also had access to living eyewitnesses who were the Lord's disciples or who had received the gospel directly from the apostles.⁹⁵ From the prologue of his work, Papias said:

But I shall not be unwilling to put down, along with my interpretations, whatsoever instructions I received with care at any time from the elders, and stored up with care in my memory, assuring you at the same time of their truth. For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those who spoke much, but in those who taught the truth; nor in those who related strange commandments, but in those who rehearsed the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and proceeding from truth itself. If, then, any one who had attended on the elders came, I asked minutely after their sayings,—what Andrew or Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples: which things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I imagined that what was to be got from books was not so profitable to me as what came from the living and abiding voice.⁹⁶

In addition to written documents, Papias was eager to learn the details of the life of Jesus from living tradition transmitted by the inspired apostles. He was not interested in the quantity of the oral history, but the quality as corresponding to the truth of the gospel. Some of these traditions are remarkable. According to Eusebius,

Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he received the words

⁹³ See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 799-802.

⁹⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 4:33:4 (ANF, 1.563).

⁹⁵ Richard Bauckham designates four categories of people which Papias mentions: "(1) those who 'had been in attendance on the elders,' i.e., people who had been present at their teaching: (2) the elders themselves; (3) the Lord's disciples, consisting of Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, and others; (4) Aristion and John the Elder, who are also called 'the Lord's disciples.' ...

[&]quot;At the time of which Papias is speaking, those in category (3) were already dead and Papias could learn only what they had said, reported by the elders, whereas Aristion and John the Elder were still teaching. . . . These two had been personal disciples of Jesus but at the time of which Papias speaks were prominent Christian teachers in the province of Asia. He calls the second of them 'John the Elder' to distinguish him from the John he includes in category (3). Both Johns were 'disciples of the Lord' but only 'John the Elder' was also a prominent teacher in the churches in Asia." (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006], 16-17). Used with permission from Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co

Papias, Fragment From the Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord (ANF, 1.153).

of the apostles from those that followed them, but says that he was himself a hearer of Aristion and the presbyter John. At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. These things, we hope, have not been uselessly adduced by us.

But it is fitting to subjoin to the words of Papias which have been quoted, other passages from his works in which he relates some other wonderful events which he claims to have received from tradition.

That Philip the apostle dwelt at Hierapolis with his daughters has been already stated. But it must be noted here that Papias, their contemporary, says that he heard a wonderful tale from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that in his time one rose from the dead. And he tells another wonderful story of Justus, surnamed Barsabbas: that he drank a deadly poison, and yet, by the grace of the Lord, suffered no harm. . . .

The same writer gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Savior, and some other more mythical things.⁹⁷

Unfortunately most of the works of Papias are lost. Within the extant fragments of Papias are no direct references to the Sermon on the Mount.

Papias does provide the earliest extant account of the authorship of the gospels of Matthew and Mark. 98 Papias is also an important ancient witness to the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), a problematic passage which is absent or relocated in many ancient manuscripts. 99 According to Eusebius, Papias "relates another story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the

⁹⁷ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.39:7-11.

See Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 114.

[&]quot;For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John's Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the pericope adulterae. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West)." Daniel B. Wallace, "My Favorite Passage that's Not in the Bible," Bible.org, June 24, 2008, https://bible.org/article/my-favorite-passage-thats-not-bible. available: permission.

Hebrews."100

Papias stands as an important link between the oral and written stages in the transmission of the gospel tradition. Books existed during his time, but he preferred to consult with the eyewitnesses of apostolic tradition. He is a primary source which surpasses any modern historian or commentator because he was a hearer of the living eye-witnesses who could rehearse the inspired doctrine which they received from the apostles.

Post-Apostolic Christians

There are many more Ante-Nicene Christians who lived later than the Apostolic Fathers and apostolic writings. Nonetheless, some of these early Christians were only one human link removed from the apostles! It is not within the scope of this work to provide a detailed biographical sketch of all of them, but below are introductions to the other major writers among the Ante-Nicene Christians. ¹⁰¹ Irenaeus and Justin Martyr are particularly important because of their early date and extent of writings available to us today. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and Lactantius are also worthy of note for their vast number of works which are available for us to read today.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus (c. 130-202), the bishop of Lyons (modern-day France), was a hearer of Polycarp, the disciple of the apostle John. The church historian Eusebius said, "We have been told that in his early youth he had listened to Polycarp." So Irenaeus, a pupil of Polycarp, was only one human link removed from the apostles. In his own words, Irenaeus wrote:

For, while I was yet a boy, I saw you [Florinus]¹⁰⁴ in Lower Asia with Polycarp, distinguishing yourself in the royal court, and endeavoring to gain his approbation. For I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events (inasmuch as the experiences of childhood, keeping pace with the growth of the soul, become incorporated with it); so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse—his going out, too, and his coming in—his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever things he had heard from them respecting

Eusebius, The History of the Church, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1890), 3.39:16.

¹⁰¹ See Appendix A: Pre-Nicene Christian Biographies

¹⁰² See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999). 520-525.

¹⁰³ Eusebius, *The Church History*, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 162.

¹⁰⁴ A former friend of Irenaeus had lapsed to Valentinianism.

the Lord, both with regard to His miracles and His teaching, Polycarp having thus received information from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures. These things, through God's mercy which was upon me, I then listened to attentively, and treasured them up not on paper, but in my heart; and I am continually, by God's grace, revolving these things accurately in my mind. 105

During the persecution of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180), Irenaeus was sent to Rome in the year 177. While he was in Rome, a massacre took place in Lyon. Returning to Gaul, Irenaeus succeeded the martyr Pothinus and became the second bishop of Lyon. It was the spread of Gnosticism in Gaul, and the effect it was having among the Christians of his diocese, that inspired him to undertake the task of exposing its errors in *Against Heresies*, his best known extant book. In 190, Irenaeus wrote to Victor, bishop of Rome, not to excommunicate the Christians of Asia Minor who celebrated Pascha¹⁰⁶ on a different day than did Rome.

In describing the "teaching of the Lord" Irenaeus relied heavily upon the Sermon on the Mount. He wrote:

Not only is the adulterer rejected, but also the man who desires to commit adultery (cf. Matthew 5:27-30); and not only is the actual murderer held guilty of having killed another to his own damnation, but the man also who is angry with his brother without a cause (cf. Matthew 5:21-26): who commanded His disciples not only not to hate men, but also to love their enemies (cf. Matthew 5:43-48); and enjoined them not only not to swear falsely, but not even to swear at all (cf. Matthew 5:33-37); and not only not to speak evil of their neighbors, but not even to style any one "Raca" and "fool;" declaring that otherwise they were in danger of hell-fire (cf. Mt 5:21-22); and not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek to those that mistreated them (cf. Matthew 5:38-39); and not only not to refuse to give up the property of others, but even if their own were taken away, not to demand it back again from those that took it (cf. Matthew 5:40-42; Luke 6:30); and not only not to injure their neighbors, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those that injured them, and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved (Matthew 5:43-48)—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others. Since, therefore, He whom these men boast of as their Master, and of whom they affirm that He had a soul greatly better and more highly toned than others, did indeed, with much earnestness, command certain things to be done as being good and excellent, and certain things to be abstained from not only in their actual perpetration, but even in the thoughts which lead to their performance, as being wicked, pernicious, and abominable (cf. Mt 5:21-30),—how then can they escape being put to confusion, when they affirm that such a Master was more highly toned in

¹⁰⁵ Irenaeus, Fragment, (ANF, 1.568).

Also called Easter, the holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the Christian fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.

spirit and better than others, and yet manifestly give instruction of a kind utterly opposed to His teaching?¹⁰⁷

Also in his book *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus wrote about how Christ extended and fulfilled the Mosaic Law within the Sermon on the Mount:

And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural precepts of the law, by which man is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them (cf. Matthew 5:17), is shown from His words. "For," He remarks, "it has been said to them of old time, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say to you, 'That every one who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28). And again: "It has been said. 'Do not kill.' But I say to you. 'Every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22). And, "It has been said, 'Do not forswear yourself.' But I say to you, 'Do not swear, not at all; but let your conversation be, Yes, yes, and No, no" (Matthew 5:33, etc.) And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the precepts of the past, ... but they exhibit a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). For what meant the excess referred to? In the first place, we must believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, we must not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not do. And we must not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law (Matthew 5:17), and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law. That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to the law, as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it. . . .

And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that commandment, "Do not commit adultery," forbid even lust (Matthew 5:27-30); and instead of that which runs thus, "Do not kill," He prohibited anger (Matthew 5:21-26); and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, He told us to share all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbors only, but even our enemies (Matthew 5:44); and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For "to him that takes away your coat," He says, "give to him your cloak also (Matthew 5:40); and from him that takes away your goods, do not ask for them again; and as you would that men should do to you, do likewise to them" (Luke 6:29-31): so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly,

¹⁰⁷ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 2:32:1 (ANF, 1.408).

and as rather conferring a favor upon our neighbors than yielding to necessity. "And if any one," He says, "shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two" (Matthew 5:41); so that you may not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing yourself in all things kindly disposed and useful to your neighbor, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing your kind offices, assimilating yourself to the Father, "who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

Now all these precepts, as I have already observed, were not the injunctions of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us. For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord's benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him. Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father. 108

Justin Martyr

An evangelist and apologist, Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) was a philosopher who converted to Christianity. Prior to his conversion he recalls the persecution of Christians who were "fearless of death" and "perceived that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure." In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin tells of his conversion from Greek philosophy to the Christian faith after an old evangelist witnessed to him. It Thus Justin became an

¹⁰⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4:13:1-3 (ANF, 1.477-478).

When Justin was examined by the prefect before his martyrdom, he said, "I have endeavored to learn all doctrines; but I have acquiesced at last in the true doctrines, those namely of the Christians, even though they do not please those who hold false opinions." (The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs Justin, Chariton, Charites, Paeon, and Liberianus, who Suffered at Rome, ANF, 1.305).

[&]quot;For I myself, too, when I was delighting in the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death, and of all other-things which are counted fearful, perceived that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure. For what sensual or intemperate man, or who that counts it good to feast on human flesh, could welcome death that he might be deprived of his enjoyments, and would not rather continue always the present life, and attempt to escape the observation of the rulers; and much less would he denounce himself when the consequence would be death?" (Justin Martyr, Second Apology, chapter 12, ANF, 1.192).

[&]quot;When he had spoken these and many other things, which there is no time for mentioning at present, he went away, bidding me attend to them; and I have not seen him since. But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher. Moreover, I would wish that all, making a resolution similar to my own, do not keep themselves away from the words of the Savior. For they possess a terrible power in

evangelist and apologist for the Christian faith. Justin wrote more concerning Christianity than any other disciple prior to his time. Many of his writings are available to us today like his *First Apology, Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, The Discourse to the Greeks, Hortatory Address to the Greeks, On the Sole Government of God,* and various fragments.

In his *First Apology,* Justin discussed how Christians were unjustly condemned and charged with atheism because they did not believe in the pagan gods. Justin described the Christian faith by explaining from memory what Christ himself taught in the gospel, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. Addressed to the Emperor, his sons, and to the Senate, with the whole people of the Romans, Justin passionately defended the morality of the Christian life in the following words:

Concerning chastity, He uttered such sentiments as these: "Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart before God" (Matthew 5:28). And, "If your right eye causes you to sin, cut it out; for it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire" (Matthew 5:29). And, "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband, commits adultery" (Matthew 5:32). And, "There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but all cannot receive this saying." So that all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her. For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery (Matthew 5:27-20): since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God. And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I boast that I could produce such from every race of men. For what shall I say, too, of the countless multitude of those who have reformed intemperate habits, and learned these things? For Christ called not the just nor the chaste to repentance, but the ungodly, and the licentious, and the unjust; His words being, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." For the heavenly Father desires rather the repentance than the punishment of the sinner. And of our love to all, He taught thus: "If you love them that love you, what new thing do you do? for even fornicators do this. But I say to you, 'Pray for your enemies, and love them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44-46; Luke 6:28).

And that we should give to the needy, and do nothing for glory, He said, "Give to him that asks, and from him that would borrow do not turn

themselves, and are sufficient to inspire those who turn aside from the path of rectitude with awe; while the sweetest rest is afforded those who make a diligent practice of them. If, then, you have any concern for yourself, and if you are eagerly looking for salvation, and if you believe in God, you may—since you are not indifferent to the matter—become acquainted with the Christ of God, and, after being initiated, live a happy life" (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 8, ANF, 1.198).

away; for if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what new thing do you do? Even the publicans do this. Do not lay up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where robbers break through; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for it? Lay up treasure, therefore, in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt" (Luke 6:30, 34: Matthew 6:19-20: 16:26). And, "Be kind and merciful, as your Father also is kind and merciful, and makes His sun to rise on sinners, and the righteous, and the wicked. Take no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall put on: are you not better than the birds and the beasts? And God feeds them. Take no thought, therefore, what you shall eat, or what you shall put on: for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added to you. For where his treasure is, there also is the mind of a man" (Luke 6:36; Matthew 5:45; 6:25, 26, 33, 21). And, "Do not do these things to be seen of men: otherwise vou have no reward from your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1).

And concerning our being patient of injuries, and ready to serve all, and free from anger, this is what He said: "To him that smites you on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that takes away your cloak or coat, do not forbid. And whosoever shall be angry, is in danger of the fire. And every one that compels you to go with him a mile, follow him two. And let your good works shine before men, that they, seeing them, may glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Luke 6:29; Matthew 5:22, 41, 16). For we ought not to strive; neither has He desired us to be imitators of wicked men, but He has exhorted us to lead all men, by patience and gentleness, from shame and the love of evil. And this indeed is proved in the case of many who once were of your way of thinking, but have changed their violent and tyrannical disposition, being overcome either by the constancy which they have witnessed in their Christian neighbors' lives, or by the extraordinary forbearance they have observed in their fellow-travelers when defrauded, or by the honesty of those with whom they have transacted business.

And with regard to our not swearing at all, and always speaking the truth, He enjoined as follows: "Do not swear at all; but let your yes be ves, and your no. no: for whatsoever is more than these comes of evil" (Matthew 5:34, 37). And that we ought to worship God alone. He thus persuaded us: "The greatest commandment is, Worship the Lord your God, and Him only serve, with all your heart, and with all your strength, the Lord God that made you." And when a certain man came to Him and said, "Good Master," He answered and said, "There is none good but God only, who made all things." And let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to His word: "Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. For whosoever hears Me, and does My savings, hears Him that sent Me. And many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Your name, and done wonders?' And then will I say to them, 'Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.' Then there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth, when the righteous shall shine as the sun, and the wicked are sent into everlasting fire. For many shall come in My name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly being ravening wolves. By their works you will know them. And every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Matthew 7:15, 16, 19, 21).¹¹²

Justin was a native of Samaria, but he spent the last years of his life in Rome. 113 Refusing to sacrifice to the gods, he was sentenced to scourging and decapitation, thus sealing his witness with the blood of martyrdom. 114

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) was a presbyter in the church at Alexandria, Egypt. A convert to Christianity, Clement was an educated man who was familiar with Greek philosophy and literature. According to his testimony, Clement received the Christian faith from "blessed and truly remarkable men" who "preserved the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul."

Prominent for his study of Scripture, Clement became an instructor at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. 116 Pantaenus was Clement's instructor and founder of the school for new converts. Among Clement's students were Alexander of Jerusalem and Hippolytus of Rome. His most well-known pupil was Origen, his distinguished successor in the school.

Like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus before him, Clement of Alexandria was

¹¹² Justin Martyr, First Apology, chapters 15-17 (ANF, 1.167-168).

¹¹³ A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999). 617-635.

¹¹⁴ The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs Justin, Chariton, Charites, Paon, and Liberianus, who Suffered at Rome (ANF, 1.306).

[&]quot;Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men.

[&]quot;Of these the one, in Greece, an Ionic; the other in Magna Graecia: the first of these from Coele-Syria, the second from Egypt, and others in the East. The one was born in the land of Assyria, and the other a Hebrew in Palestine.

[&]quot;When I came upon the last (he was the first in power) [most likely Pantaenus], having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found rest. He, the true, the Sicilian bee, gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a deathless element of knowledge.

[&]quot;Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. (Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, book 1, chapter 1, ANF, 2.301, *emphasis mine*).

Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 166.

one of the first early disciples to write an extensive amount of Christian literature. Three of Clement's major works have survived in full, and they are collectively referred to as the trilogy: *Exhortation to the Heathen* (c. 195), *The Instructor* (c. 198), and *The Stromata* (c. 198 – c. 203). Much of his *Hypotyposes* contains supplemental information about the apostles and is preserved in Eusebius' *Church History*.

When the persecutions under Emperor Septimius Severus became intense, Clement fled to Syrian Antioch in AD 202. He may have died around AD 220.

Tertullian

Tertullian (c. 160-230) was a well-known leader or presbyter of the church in Carthage, North Africa. Nearly all of his works were written in Latin. He was a prolific writer of Christian apologies, works against heresies, including Gnosticism, and exhortations to other Christians.

Around 211, Tertullian joined the Montanist sect. Some of Tertullian's writings reflect the teachings of Montanism. In the latter part of the second century, Montanism was a movement which originated with a man named Montanus who lived in Phrygia. It Known by the early Christians as Phrygians, the Montanists referred to their movement as New Prophecy. Among the heretical Montanist teachings are that the Holy Spirit continued to give new commandments and teachings, that it was wrong to flee from persecution, that it was wrong to remarry even after the death of a spouse, and that there was no forgiveness for post-baptismal sins. It According to Hippolytus, the Montanists also introduced "the novelties of fasts, and feasts, and meals of parched food, and repasts of radishes, alleging that they have been instructed by women." In spite of his schism from the Church, he continued to write against heresy, especially Gnosticism.

Origen

Origen (c. 185-251) was deemed a great philosopher and scholar of the Scriptures. Born in a Christian family, Origen had a passion for the divine Scriptures and martyrdom since he was a boy. Before his own father, Leonides, was beheaded for the faith, Origen wrote him a letter urging martyrdom and said, "Don't change your mind on my account!" During the persecution, Origen was known for assisting the martyrs in prison and in court, and even would courageously approach them with a holy kiss as they were being led to their

See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 176-182.

¹¹⁸ Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 169-177.

¹¹⁹ Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, ed. David Bercot (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), Kindle Locations 17236-17241.

¹²⁰ Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, book 8, chapter 12 (ANF, 5.123).

deaths.

Enduring extreme poverty, Origen followed the Savior's teachings concerning material possessions and not worrying about the future. Eusebius related that in his rashness, Origen castrated himself because of his "too literal" understanding of Matthew 19:12: "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

One of the most prolific writers of the pre-Nicene Church, Origen wrote around two thousand works which included commentaries on most of the books of the Bible, doctrinal and apologetic works. One of Origen's best known writings is his refutation of Celsus, a pagan critic. Providing us much historical information about early Christian life, *Against Celsus* is a valuable work because it not only reveals the pagan criticisms of the early church, but also how a Christian responded to them. Origen's book *De Principiis* is one of the first efforts toward a systematic theology. Another work was his *Hexapla*, a large edition of the Bible arranged in six columns which contained the Hebrew text, a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Greek versions by Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion. He also wrote commentaries on Genesis, the Psalms, Song of Songs, Lamentations, the prophets, Matthew, John, and the Pauline corpus. His homilies treated Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Luke. The total body of his work has not been preserved.

Origen traveled widely and became acquainted with Christian leaders throughout world. He visited Rome, Greece, Palestine, and Arabia, where he gained approval from many bishops of the churches. So famous did he become that Mamaea, mother of Emperor Alexander Severus, summoned him to Antioch to teach her. During his travels through Palestine, Origen was ordained a presbyter by the bishop of Caesarea. That ordination was protested by his own bishop of Alexandria, Demetrius. A common misconception today is that Origen was excommunicated for teaching heresy, but this is not the case. According to Eusebius, this was a result of the bishop's jealousy. Origen never returned to Egypt but settled down at Caesarea in Palestine, where he taught for the remainder of his life. He publicly preached, taught, and defended the Church against heretics and pagan critics. During the persecution under Emperor Decius, Origen was made to endure chains and torture in a dungeon. ¹²² This excruciating torture may have contributed to his death a few years later (250). Thus he died in the communion of the Church as a confessor.

¹²¹ Eusebius, *The Church History*, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 193-194.

Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 188-222.

Cyprian

Cyprian (d. 258) was bishop of the church in Carthage, North Africa, during a period of aggressive persecution. He was born into a rich, pagan Carthage family sometime during the early third century. Before his conversion, he was a leading member of a legal fraternity, an orator, and a teacher of rhetoric. After his baptism, he devoted himself to chastity, sold entire estates and distributed his wealth to the poor of Carthage. ¹²³ An extensive collection of treatises and letters to and from Cyprian are extant.

During the Decian persecution (250), Roman officials demanded that all citizens sacrifice to the gods, and Christian bishops were especially targeted. For those Christians who had fallen away and sacrificed to pagan gods, Cyprian suggested that they undergo public penance before being reconciled to the Church. Cyprian took a middle course between the followers of Novatus of Carthage who were in favor of welcoming back all the lapsed Christians with little of no penance, and Novatian of Rome who refused reconciliation to any of the lapsed. The unyielding but moderate position adopted by Cyprian strengthened his influence. Moreover, his dedication during the time of a great plague and famine gained him still further popular support.

During the persecution under Emperor Valerian, Cyprian refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods and firmly professed Christ before the Roman proconsul Aspasius Paternus (c. 257). In 258, Cyprian was imprisoned, and the day following he was examined and sentenced to death by the sword. 124 Cyprian's only answer was, "Thanks be to God!" His pastoral strength and eventual martyrdom at Carthage vindicated his reputation and proved his testimony in the eyes of the Church. 125

Lactantius

A well-known Christian apologist at the end of the Pre-Nicene period, Lactantius (c. 250-325) was a successful Roman teacher of rhetoric who later became a disciple of Christ. Having converted to Christianity, he resigned his post before the publication of Diocletian's first "Edict against the Christians" (303). The Emperor Constantine appointed the elderly Lactantius as a Latin tutor to his son Crispus at Gaul (modern day France). Lactantius wrote apologetic works, the most important is his *Divine Institutes* which was a systematic presentation on Christianity. ¹²⁶ He is the last major Christian writer before the council of Nicaea.

¹²³ Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr, ANF, 5.268.

¹²⁴ Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr, ANF, 5.274.

¹²⁵ See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 217-233.

See A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, eds. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 638-640.

Additional Writers

There are many more Ante-Nicene Christians, but we have covered the major writers (see Appendix A: Pre-Nicene Christian Biographies for a quick reference guide to additional writers). All of the references to the Sermon on the Mount within the Ante-Nicene Christian writings are too numerous to quote here, but many are provided within this commentary. Particularly because of their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ and their adherence to the Sermon on the Mount, the early disciples confront us with a Christianity quite different than the Christianity of today.

Protestant Evangelical Perspective

Increasing numbers of Evangelical Protestants are newly discovering the early Christian writings and taking interest in patristic exegesis. However, they should not expect the early Christians to conform to their interpretive traditions and assumptions which they have inherited from the Protestant Reformation. For instance, Mark Galli, Senior Managing Editor of *Christianity Today*, wrote the introduction to *The Apostolic Fathers*. Galli's criticism of the early Christian writings is what we might expect to hear from an Evangelical Protestant:

[M]any modern readers balk at the ethical tone of these writings. Some call it moralistic; others "works righteousness." There isn't as much talk of grace and justification by faith as we would hope to find here. There may be something to that. Every generation of Christians is tempted to turn faith into works. When the gospel seems too good to be true, we try to earn God's favor instead of simply receiving it as a gift. . . .

That being said, you're not holding Scripture here. These writings sometimes cross theological boundaries set by the New Testament. They can be "perfectionist" in the worst sense of that word, teaching that one can lead a nearly sinless life. Some passages do smack of salvation by works.¹²⁷

Could it be that Christianity today is counterfeit and early Christianity is actually more genuine? Perhaps it is Christians today that are preaching a false message by turning the gospel into salvation by "faith alone." Perhaps it is

¹²⁷ The Apostolic Fathers (Moody Classics), (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 9-10. Used with permission.

[&]quot;The most important example of dogmatic influence in Luther's version is the famous interpolation of the word alone in Rom. 3:28, by which he intended to emphasize his solifidian doctrine of justification, on the plea that the German idiom required the insertion for the sake of clearness. But he thereby brought Paul into direct verbal conflict with James, who says (James 2:24), "by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." It is well known that Luther deemed it impossible to harmonize the two apostles in this article, and characterized the Epistle of James as an "epistle of straw," because it had no evangelical character." Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (The Complete Eight Volumes In One), Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 74223-74227.

Christians today that have created a false dichotomy between faith and works. Perhaps it is Christians today that are preaching another Jesus who is detached from His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

It's true that the early Christian writings are not Scripture. The early Christians didn't claim to be writing Scripture, but they were claiming to be direct recipients of the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Many Christians today have trouble reading the New Testament Scriptures with a blank slate, but the early Christians were in such a position to understand the teachings of Christ without hundreds of years worth of conflicting interpretations. Hopefully their commentary can help us to become less traditional and more biblical.

A Valuable Commentary on Scripture

A ship was an ancient Christian symbol of the Church. 129 The situation of Christendom today can be compared to a sailing ship. When a new ship sets sail, it can travel with significant speed. However, barnacles soon begin to adhere to the underside of the ship. Over time, large barnacle colonies will create considerable weight and drag for the ship. Eventually, the ship has to be careened or placed in a dry dock so the barnacles may be removed from the hull. Similarly, Christianity today has become like a ship weighed down with the countless interpretations and heresies that have accumulated throughout church history. The early Christians can help us clean off the barnacles.

Consider a stream which flows from a clear mountain spring. Over time and distance, it gradually collects woody debris and refuse. By the time the stream empties into an inland lake or ocean, it has gradually become more and more polluted from the purity of its beginning source. Similarly, innovative interpretations and heresies have muddied the waters of Christianity throughout church history. The early Christians can help us get back upstream and drink from the source.

Both of these analogies demonstrate how the Pre-Nicene period is significant. Those early Christians were the disciples of the Lord's apostles or not far removed. Because of their advantages, the Pre-Nicene writings are perhaps the greatest biblical commentary and post-New Testament history that you will ever read. The early Christians had the following advantages over Christians today:

[&]quot;In the Apostolic Constitutions (II, xlvii) the bishop surrounded by the assembly of the faithful is compared to the helmsman of a ship; but the idea is as old as Tertullian (De bap., xii; P.L., l, 1214) and it was varied sometimes by comparing the Church to the Ark of Noah. In any case the ship was a recognized Christian symbol and Clement of Alexandria approved it for a signet ring. 'Let the dove or the fish', he says, 'the vessel flying before the wind, — or the marine anchor be our signets' (The Pedagogue III.2), and numerous representations of ships, sometimes serving as the design for a lamp, with the figure of Christ or St. Peter as helmsman are preserved to us." (Herbert Thurston, "Symbolism," Catholic Encyclopedia (1909), available: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14373b.htm).

- They were closer in time to Jesus and the apostles; some of them even knew the apostles.
- They were closer in distance to the apostolic churches in the Mediterranean world.
- Many of them spoke in Koine Greek (the same language in which the New Testament Scriptures were written).
- They lived in a culture that was far less removed from Jesus and the apostles than ourselves.
- They possessed a relatively unchanged apostolic tradition.
- Their catholic (i.e., universal) church was generally united in doctrine and in fellowship.
- They possessed the Scriptures which had undergone less textual variation and were closer to the original New Testament manuscripts.

These are several reasons why we might expect the historic church to be a more accurate expression of biblical Christianity. We are also dependent upon the early Christians for our New Testament canon, as well as important historical information about Christianity. To a large extent, it is because of their testimony that we can determine which first-century writings were inspired versus those which were considered heretical such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Matthias, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Judas, the Acts of Andrew, the Acts of John, and other Gnostic documents. 130 One important benefit from these heretical challenges is that the Church was compelled to agree on an authoritative canon of New Testament Scriptures. Many Christians today recognize the authority of the early Christians' canon of the Scriptures, but they grant little to no credence to the early church interpretations of the same Scriptures. In fact, many modern denominations often proclaim that the teachings of the early church are heretical and that the early Christians were actually heretics. But this is self-defeating like sawing off the branch on which they sit.

The early church's overall separation from the world, unfailing love, and childlike faith and obedience far surpasses the overall devotion of any denomination today. The beliefs and practices found within modern Christendom (whether it be Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant Reformed or Non-Denominational) most often part ways with early Christianity when it comes to interpretation of the Lord's sayings in the Sermon on the Mount and participation in the divine life. Moreover, there are men of education and expertise, esteemed widely as safe and sound expositors of Scripture, who make it their business to hinder the disciples of Christ who would go up the mountain where Christ's own words are to be heard.

Eusebius, The Church History, tr. Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 101.

Obviously the hermeneutical tradition of the early Christians does not carry the same weight as Scripture, but it's important to look at how the early church traditionally interpreted the Scriptures, in this case the Sermon on the Mount. We ought to have good reason to depart from the exegetical tradition within the early church, especially among the Ante-Nicene Fathers, among whom are the Apostolic Fathers.

Finally, a substantial number of the early Christians-Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Apollonius, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyprian, Victorinus, and Methodius-died as martyrs. Like the apostles, the early Christians were willing to die for their beliefs. Unlike the Gnostics, this is proof that the early Christians were sincere. Therefore we ought to seriously consider what they have to say to us today, especially when it comes to their understanding of history's greatest sermon ever preached.

May the reader be edified and blessed as we ascend the mountain together with the early Christians to hear the words of eternal life from our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

Abbreviations

General

New Testament	NT
Old Testament	OT
The Septuagint	LXX
Ante-Nicene Fathers	ANF
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers	NPNF

The Old Testament

Genesis Gen Exodus Exod Leviticus Lev Numbers Num Deuteronomy Deut Josh Joshua Judges Jdgs Ruth Ru 1 Samuel 1 Sam 2 Samuel 2 Sam 1 Kings 1 Kgs 2 Kings 2 Kgs 1 Chronicles 1 Chron 2 Chronicles 2 Chron Ezra Ezra Nehemiah Neh Esther Esth

ABBREVIATIONS

Job Job Psalm P_{S} Proverbs Prov **Ecclesiastes** Eccles Song of Solomon Song Isaiah Isa Jeremiah Jer Lamentations Lam Ezekiel Ezek Daniel Dan Hosea Hos Joel Joel Amos Amos Obadiah Obad Jonah Jon Micah Mic Nahum Nah Habakkuk Hab Zephaniah Zeph Haggai Hag Zechariah Zech Malachi Mal

The Apocrypha

1 Esdras 1 Esdr 2 Esdras 2 Esdr Tobit Tob Judith Jdth Additions to Esther Add Esth Wisdom of Solomon Wis Sirach Sir Baruch Bar Letter of Jeremiah Let Jer

Song of Three Children Song of Three

Susanna Sus
Bel and the Dragon Bel
Prayer of Manasseh Pr of Man
1 Maccabees 1 Mac
2 Maccabees 2 Mac

The New Testament

Matthew Mt Mark Mk Luke Lk John Jn Acts Acts Romans Rom 1 Corinthians 1 Cor 2 Corinthians 2 Cor Galatians Gal **Ephesians** Eph Philippians Phil Colossians Col 1 Thessalonians 1 Thess 2 Thessalonians 2 Thess 1 Timothy 1 Tim 2 Timothy 2 Tim Titus Tit Philemon Philem Hebrews Heb James Jas 1 Peter 1 Pet 2 Peter 2 Pet 1 John 1 Jn 2 John 2 Jn 3 John 3 Jn Jude Jud Revelation Rev

The Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12

- And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: LK 6:20
- [2] And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, LK 6:20
- [3] Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. LK 6:20; JAS 2:5
- ^[4] Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. LK 6:21, 25; JAS 4:9
- [5] Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. PS 37:11
- $^{[6]}$ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. $^{\rm LK~6:21}$
- 171 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. PS 18:25; MT 18:33-35; LK 6:36: JAS 2:13
- [8] Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. JAS 4.8; 1 PET 1-22
- $^{[9]}$ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. $^{\rm ROM\,12:18;\,HEB\,12:14;\,JAS\,3:18}$
- [10] Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ^{2 TIM 2:12; JAS 1:12; 1 PET 3:13-14; 4:13-16;}
- ^[11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ^{LK} 6:22; 1 PET 4:14
- [12] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. LK 6:23; ACTS 5:41; ROM 5:3; JAS 1:2; 1 PET 4:13

SUMMARY: The Beatitudes are nine blessings recounted by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount may be compared to the shorter version in the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:17-49. Therefore, the early Christian commentary for both sermons are included. Four of the blessings in the Beatitudes also appear in Luke 6:20-22, followed by four woes which parallel the blessings in Luke 6:24-26. This is also how the parallel passages are arranged in *The Diatessaron* of TATIAN.

The "disciples" are distinguished from the "multitudes" (ORIGEN). Jesus does not give the same blessedness to all (METHODIUS). Those who do righteousness will enter the kingdom and receive the promises (SECOND CLEMENT). Blessedness belongs to the poor, whether in spirit or circumstance, for righteousness' sake (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA), but not the rich (TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN). Poor in spirit refers to obedience (ORIGEN) and humility (ARCHELAUS). Consolation and laughter is promised to those who weep and mourn (TERTULLIAN). Righteous men suffer and mourn more because they are proved (CYPRIAN). Be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth (THE DIDACHE). The meek are the gentle (TERTULLIAN) and obedient to the Word (ORIGEN). The meek will inherit the earth, that is the future kingdom at the resurrection of the just (IRENAEUS). Those who hunger after righteousness itself are blessed (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). God shows mercy only to the merciful (CLEMENT OF ROME, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, CYPRIAN, LACTANTIUS). The pure in heart are those who have been purified from evil (ORIGEN) and have a circumcised heart (ARCHELAUS). They will see God in the life to come (IRENAEUS, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). Thus, Christ was not God the Father (NOVATIAN). If we are sons of God, we ought to be peacemakers (CYPRIAN). The peacemaker has tamed their passions, leads others to the peace of the Word (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA), does not carry on war, or mix himself with the passions of others (LACTANTIUS). We must closely follow Jesus, even in persecutions, to be blessed (TERTULLIAN). Christians are killed, but not hurt (JUSTIN MARTYR). We are to despise death (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA) because there is a reward for those who are persecuted (Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian).

5:1ff Tatian: Then he lifted up his eyes unto them, and opened his mouth, and taught them and said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are the sorrowful: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the humble: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful: for on them shall be mercy. Blessed are the pure in their hearts: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are they that were persecuted for righteousness' sake: for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and separate you from them, and persecute you, and reproach you, and shall speak against you with all evil talk, for my sake, falsely. Then rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets before you.

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"But woe unto you rich! for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are satisfied! You shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now! You shall weep and be sad. Woe to you when men praise you! For so did their fathers do to the false prophets." The Diatessaron, 9.56.

ORIGEN: It should be observed how often it is mentioned the word, "the multitudes," and another word, "the disciples," so that by observing and bringing together the passages about this matter it may be seen that the aim of the Evangelists was to represent by means of the Gospel history the differences of those who come to Jesus; of whom some are the multitudes and are not called disciples, and others are the disciples who are better than the multitudes. It is sufficient, however, for the present, for us to set forth a few sayings, so that any one who is moved by them may do the like with the whole of the Gospels. It is written then—as if the multitudes were below, but the disciples were able to come to Jesus when He went up into the mountain, where the multitudes were not able to be—as follows: "And seeing the multitudes He went up into the mountain, and when He had sat down His disciples came to Him; and He opened His mouth and taught them saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,'" etc. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.433.

5:3ff POLYCARP: "Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Epistle to the Philippians, 1.33.

IRENAEUS: And in His office of teacher this is what He has said to the rich: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation;" and "Woe to you that are full, for you shall hunger; and you who laugh now, for you shall weep;" and, "Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you: for so did your fathers to the false prophets." All things of the following kind we have known through Luke alone. *Against Heresies*, 1.438.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Scripture is to be believed which says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man" to lead a philosophic life. But, on the other hand, it blesses "**the poor**;" as Plato understood when he said, "It is not the diminishing of one's resources, but the augmenting of insatiableness, that is to be considered poverty; for it is not slender means that ever constitutes poverty, but insatiableness, from which the good man being free, will also be rich." *The Stromata*, 2.352.

¹ Lk 6:24-26

² Cf. Mt 5:3, 10; Lk 6:20

³ Lk 6:24

⁴ Lk 6:26

⁵ Lk 6:26

⁶ Mt 19:24

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "And blessed are the poor," whether "in spirit or in circumstance"—that is, if for righteousness' sake. It is not the poor simply, but those that have wished to become poor for righteousness' sake, that He pronounces blessed—those who have despised the honors of this world in order to attain "the good." *The Stromata*, 2.413.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: That soul is unclean which is rich in lusts, and is in the throes of many worldly affections. For he who holds possessions, and gold, and silver, and houses, as the gifts of God; and ministers from them to the God who gives them for the salvation of men; and knows that he possesses them more for the sake of the brethren than his own; and is superior to the possession of them, not the slave of the things he possesses; and does not carry them about in his soul, nor bind and circumscribe his life within them, but is ever laboring at some good and divine work, even should he be necessarily some time or other deprived of them, is able with cheerful mind to bear their removal equally with their abundance. This is he who is blessed by the Lord, and called poor in spirit, a suitable heir of the kingdom of heaven, not one who could not live rich. Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?, 2.595.

TERTULLIAN: For whom but the patient has the Lord called happy, in saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens?" No one, assuredly, is "poor in spirit," except he be humble. Well, who is humble, except he be patient? For no one can abase himself without patience, in the first instance, to bear the act of abasement. *Of Patience*, 3.714.

TERTULLIAN: It is "the poor," not the rich, "whose are the kingdoms of the heavens." To His Wife, 4.48.

ORIGEN: Those who have been obedient to the word of God, and have henceforth by their obedience shown themselves capable of wisdom, are said to deserve the kingdom of that heaven or heavens; and thus the prediction is more worthily fulfilled, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" and, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." De Principiis, 4.275.

ORIGEN: In the next place, with regard to the declaration of Jesus against rich men, when He said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," . . . Now, if Celsus [a pagan critic] had not perused the Gospels in a spirit of hatred and dislike, but had been imbued with a love of truth, . . . he would not have left without examination the fact that "the poor" are termed "blessed" by Jesus, while "the rich" are designated as "miserable;" and whether these words refer to the rich and poor who are visible to the senses, or whether there is any kind of poverty

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⁷ Mt 19:24

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known to the Logos⁸ which is to be deemed "altogether blessed," and any rich man who is to be wholly condemned. For even a common individual would not thus indiscriminately have praised the poor, many of whom lead most wicked lives. *Against Celsus*, 4.580-581.

ORIGEN: But if you enquire into the meaning of the words, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven," you may say that Christ is theirs in so far as He is absolute Kingdom, reigning in every thought of the man who is no longer under the reign of sin which reigns in the mortal body of those who have subjected themselves to it. And if I say, reigning in every thought, I mean something like this, reigning as Righteousness and Wisdom and Truth and the rest of the virtues in him who has become a heaven, because of bearing the image of the heavenly, and in every power, whether angelic, or the rest that are named saints, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come, and who are worthy of a kingdom of such a kind. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.498.

ORIGEN: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This then is a blessed poverty that says, "Gold and silver I do not have; but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk." A poor man of this sort always dwells in Jerusalem while possessing spiritual riches. His gold is wisdom and his silver is words of knowledge. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 11

METHODIUS: And the Lord does not profess to give the same honors to all; but to some He promises that they shall be numbered in the kingdom of heaven, to others the inheritance of the earth, and to others to see the Father. *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, 6.332.

ARCHELAUS: It is well that he declared that in the law God said, "I make the rich man and the poor man;" while in the Gospel Jesus called the poor blessed, and added, that no man could be His disciple unless he gave up all that he had. ¹³ *The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6.214.*

ARCHELAUS: Let us look, again, at the fact that in the Old Testament we find the

The Christian concept of the Logos is derived from John 1:1 where the Logos (translated as "Word") is described in terms that resemble, but likely surpass, the ideas of Philo of Alexandria, a first century Jew. In John 1:14, the Logos is explicitly identified with Jesus.

⁹ Cf. Rom 6:12

¹⁰ Acts 3:6

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 285-286. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

¹² Prov 22:2

¹³ Lk 14:33

words, "I make the rich man and the poor man," 14 whereas Jesus calls the poor blessed. In that saying Jesus did not refer to those who are poor simply in worldly substance, but to those who are poor in spirit, that is to say, who are not inflamed with pride, but have the gentle and lowly dispositions of humility, not thinking of themselves more than they ought to think. 15 . . . I perceive that Jesus also looks on willingly at the gifts of the rich men, when they are put into the treasury. 16 All too little, at the same time, is it if gifts are cast into the treasury by the rich alone; and so there are the two mites of the poor widow which are also received with gladness; and in that offering verily something is exhibited that goes beyond what Moses prescribed on the subject of the receipt of moneys. For he received gifts from those who had; but Jesus receives them even from those who do not have. But this man says, further, that it is written, that "except a man shall forsake all that he has, he cannot be my disciple."17 I observe again, that the centurion, a man exceedingly wealthy and well dowered with worldly influence, possessed a faith surpassing that of all Israel; 18 so that, even if there was any one who had forsaken all, that man was surpassed in faith by this centurion. But some one may now reason with us thus: It is not a good thing, consequently, to give up riches. Well, I reply that it is a good thing for those who are capable of it; but, at the same time, to employ riches for the work of righteousness and mercy, is a thing as acceptable as though one were to give up the whole at once. The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6.217.

5:4 EDITOR'S NOTE: In almost all Greek manuscripts Matthew 5:4 comes before Matthew 5:5, but in some early manuscripts the order is reversed. ¹⁹ This reversed order occurred as early as the second century as it appears in some of the early Christian writings (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, ORIGEN).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." And the meek are those who have quelled the battle of unbelief in the soul, the battle of wrath, and lust, and the other forms that are subject to them. And He praises those meek by choice, not by necessity. . . . Therefore, with reason, "blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;" for they who have repented of their former evil life shall attain to "the calling," for this is the meaning of being comforted. *The Stromata*, 2.415-416.

TERTULLIAN: "Blessed," He says, "are the weepers and mourners." Who, without patience, is tolerant of such unhappinesses? And so to such,

¹⁴ Prov 22:2

¹⁵ Rom 12:3

¹⁶ Mk 12:41

¹⁷ Lk 14:33

¹⁸ Mt 8:10

See Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 9; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 32.

"consolation" and "laughter" are promised. Of Patience, 3.714.

ORIGEN: Those who have been obedient to the word of God, and have henceforth by their obedience shown themselves capable of wisdom, are said to deserve the kingdom of that heaven or heavens; and thus the prediction is more worthily fulfilled, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" and, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and the declaration in the Psalm, "He shall exalt you, and you shall inherit the land." ²⁰ De Principiis, 4.275.

ORIGEN: "Weep with those who weep": ²¹ We are not being commanded to weep with those who weep over their own dead²² or who weep over worldly losses. For we know that "the grief of this world brings about death." ²³ Thus, our tears are not to be associated with such people. Instead we are to weep with those of whom the Lord says, "Blessed are those who weep, for they will be comforted." If anyone weeps over his own sins, if anyone is converted to repentance after committing transgressions, and washes away his errors with tears, if anyone, placed in this habitation, even groans²⁴ and desires to go back to Christ²⁵ and alleviates this holy longing with an outpouring of tears, we should join our tears and associate our groans with such persons. For "the grief that is according to God produces a sure salvation through repentance." ²⁶ Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. ²⁷

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

²⁰ Ps 37:34

²¹ Rom 12:15

²² cf. Mt 8:22

²³ 2 Cor 7:10

²⁴ 2 Cor 5:4

²⁵ Cf. 2 Cor 5:8

^{26 2} Cor 7:10

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 216. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

²⁸ 2 Cor 1:5

consolation."29 Exhortation to Martyrdom.30

CYPRIAN: All good and righteous men suffer more, but ought to endure because they are proved. In Solomon: "The furnace proves the vessels of the potter, and the trial of tribulation proves righteous men."31 Also in the fiftieth Psalm: "The sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and humbled heart God will not despise."32 Also in the thirty-third Psalm: "God is nearest to them that are contrite in heart, and He will save the lowly in spirit."33 Also in the same place: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver them out of them all."34 Of this same matter in Job: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked also shall I go under the earth: the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: as it has pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all these things which happened to him Job sinned in nothing with his lips in the sight of the Lord."35 Concerning this same thing in the Gospel according to Matthew: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."36 Also according to John: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you may have peace. But in the world you shall have affliction; but have confidence, for I have overcome the world."³⁷ Concerning this same thing in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted. For which thing I besought the Lord three times, that it should depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for strength is perfected in weakness."38 Concerning this same thing to the Romans: "We glory in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also glory in afflictions: knowing that affliction works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope does not confound; because the love of God is infused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us."39 . . . Of this same thing in Tobias: "Where are your righteousnesses? Behold what you suffer."40 Also in the Wisdom of Solomon: "In the places of the wicked the righteous groan; but at their ruin the

²⁹ 2 Cor 1:7

Origen, Exhortation to Martyrdom 42. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 423. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

³¹ Sir 27:5

³² Ps 51:17

³³ Ps 34:18

³⁴ Ps 34:19

³⁵ Job 1:21-22

³⁶ Mt 5:4

³⁷ In 16:33

³⁸ 2 Cor 12:7-9

³⁹ Rom 5:2-5

⁴⁰ Tob 2:14

righteous will abound."41 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.534.

5:5ff The Didache: Be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth. Be longsuffering and pitiful and trustworthy and gentle and good and always trembling at the words which you have heard. Do not exalt yourself, nor give over-confidence to your soul. Your soul shall not be joined with lofty ones, but with just and lowly ones shall it have its intercourse. The workings that befall you receive as good, knowing that apart from God nothing comes to pass. 7.378.

IGNATIUS: And pray without ceasing in behalf of other men. For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting: to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be stedfast in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brethren in all true kindness; and let us seek to be followers of the Lord (who ever more unjustly treated, more destitute, more condemned?), that so no plant of the devil may be found in you, but you may remain in all holiness and sobriety in Jesus Christ, both with respect to the flesh and spirit. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1.53-54.

PAPIAS: As the presbyters say, then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of Paradise, and others shall possess the splendor of the city; 42 for everywhere the Savior will be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see Him. But that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold; for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second class will dwell in Paradise, and the last will inhabit the city; and that on this account the Lord said, "In my Father's house are many mansions:"43 for all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place, even as His word says, that a share is given to all by the Father, 44 according as each one is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch⁴⁵ in which they shall recline who feast, being invited to the wedding. The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, say that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; and that, moreover, they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father; and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, "For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is

⁴¹ Prov 28:28

⁴² The new Jerusalem on earth.

⁴³ In 14:2

⁴⁴ cf. Mt 20:23

⁴⁵ Mt 22:10

death."⁴⁶ For in the times of the kingdom the just man who is on the earth shall forget to die. "But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued to Him, then the Son shall also be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."⁴⁷ *Fragments*, 1.154.

IRENAEUS: The flesh does not inherit, but is inherited; as also the Lord declares, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth by inheritance;" as if in the future kingdom, the earth, from which exists the substance of our flesh, is to be possessed by inheritance. This is the reason for His wishing the temple (i.e., the flesh) to be clean, 48 that the Spirit of God may take delight therein, as a bridegroom with a bride. Against Heresies, 1.535.

IRENAEUS: Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

For this reason, when about to undergo His sufferings, that He might declare to Abraham and those with him the glad news of the inheritance being thrown open, Christ, after He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it to the disciples, said to them: "Drink all of it: this is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink from this time on of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."49 Thus, then, He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will reorganize the mystery of the glory of His sons; as David says, "He who has renewed the face of the earth."50 He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup. And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his disciples above in a super-celestial place; nor, again, are they who drink it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit.

And for this reason the Lord declared, "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends, nor your neighbors, nor your family members, in case they ask you in return, and so repay you. But call the lame, the blind, and the poor, and you will be blessed, since they cannot repay you, but a reward

^{46 1} Cor 15:25-26

⁴⁷ 1 Cor 15:27-28

⁴⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 3:17

⁴⁹ Mt 26:27

⁵⁰ Ps 104:30

shall be given to you at the resurrection of the just."⁵¹ And again He says, "Whosoever shall have left lands, or houses, or parents, or brethren, or children because of Me, he shall receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in that to come he shall inherit eternal life."⁵² For what are the hundred-fold rewards in this word, the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are to take place in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.

The blessing of Isaac with which he blessed his younger son Jacob has the same meaning, when he says, "Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed."53 But "the field is the world."54 And therefore he added, "God give to you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. And let the nations serve you, and kings bow down to you; and be lord over your brother, and your father's sons shall bow down to you: cursed shall he be who shall curse you, and blessed shall he be who shall bless you."55 If any one, then, does not accept these things as referring to the appointed kingdom, he must fall into much contradiction and contrariety, as is the case with the Jews, who are involved in absolute perplexity. For not only did not the nations in this life serve this Jacob; but even after he had received the blessing, he himself going forth from his home, served his uncle Laban the Syrian for twenty years;⁵⁶ and not only was he not made lord of his brother, but he did himself bow down before his brother Esau, upon his return from Mesopotamia to his father, and offered many gifts to him.⁵⁷ Moreover, in what way did he inherit much corn and wine here, he who emigrated to Egypt because of the famine which possessed the land in which he was dwelling, and became subject to Pharaoh, who was then ruling over Egypt?

The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: "The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give twenty-

⁵¹ Lk 14:12-13

⁵² Mt 19:29; Lk 18:29-30

⁵³ Gen 27:27

⁵⁴ Mt 13:38

⁵⁵ Gen 27:28-29

⁵⁶ Gen 41:31

⁵⁷ Gen 33:3

five metretes⁵⁸ of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, 'I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me." In like manner the Lord declared that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions; and that all animals feeding only on the productions of the earth, should in those days become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man.

And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled by him. And he says in addition, "Now these things are credible to believers." And he says that, "when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How then can things about to bring forth so abundantly be worked by the Lord?' the Lord declared, 'They who shall come to those times shall see.""59 Against Heresies, 1.561-563.

IRENAEUS: For since there are real men, so must there also be a real establishment, so that they do not vanish away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated (for faithful and true is He who has established it), but "the fashion of the world passes away;" that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them. And therefore this present fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; . . . and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things. But when this present fashion of things passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, then there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain continually, always holding fresh converse with God. And since (or, that) these

⁵⁸ A unit of liquid measure, in Ancient Greece, equal to about 40 litres.

These are otherwise-unknown saying of Jesus. Eusebius has this passage in mind when he concludes: "[Papias] gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical things.

[&]quot;To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures.

[&]quot;For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses. But it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Irenæus and any one else that may have proclaimed similar views" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert ([890], 3.39:11-13).

^{60 1} Cor 7:31

things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, says the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain." And as the presbyters say, "Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendor of the city; for everywhere the Savior shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy.

They say, moreover, that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, "In My Father's house are many mansions."63 For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding.⁶⁴ The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."65 For in the times of the kingdom, the righteous man who is upon the earth shall then forget to die. "But when He says, 'All things shall be subdued to Him,' it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued to Him, then the Son will also Himself be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."66

John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first "resurrection of the just," ⁶⁷ and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth; and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize with his vision. For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom. ⁶⁸ The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, so as to pass into the liberty of the sons of God. ⁶⁹ And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth from bondage at the

⁶¹ Isa 66:22

⁶² Some guess that the saying of the presbyters is taken from the work of Papias.

³ Jn 14:2

⁶⁴ Cf. Mt 22:10

^{65 1} Cor 15:25-26

^{66 1} Cor 15:27-28

⁶⁷ Lk 14:14

⁶⁸ Cf. Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18

⁶⁹ Rom 8:21

resurrection of the just, and fulfills the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has thought concerning them arisen within the heart of man. To For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are worked, "which the angels desire to look into;" and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature, that is, to what had been molded, and that it should be contained by Him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God. *Against Heresies*, *1.566-567*.

TERTULLIAN: "Blessed are the gentle:" under this term, surely, the impatient cannot possibly be classed. Of Patience, 3.714.

ORIGEN: "Moreover," Celsus [a pagan critic] continues, "these persons utter against one another dreadful blasphemies, saying all manner of things shameful to be spoken; nor will they yield in the slightest point for the sake of harmony, hating each other with a perfect hatred." Now, in answer to this, we have already said that in philosophy and medicine sects are to be found warring against sects. We, however, who are followers of the word of Jesus, and have exercised ourselves in thinking, and saying, and doing what is in harmony with His words, "when reviled, bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat;"⁷² and we would not utter "all manner of things shameful to be spoken" against those who have adopted different opinions from ours, but, if possible, use every exertion to raise them to a better condition through adherence to the Creator alone, and lead them to perform every act as those who will (one day) be judged. And if those who hold different opinions will not be convinced, we observe the injunction laid down for the treatment of such: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinful, being condemned of himself."73 Moreover, we who know the maxim, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and this also, "Blessed are the meek," would not regard with hatred the corrupters of Christianity. Against Celsus, 4.570-571...

5:6ff SECOND CLEMENT: If, therefore, we shall do righteousness in the sight of God, we shall enter into His kingdom, and shall receive the promises. *7.520*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Our holy Savior applied poverty and riches, and the like, both to spiritual things and objects of sense. For when He said, "Blessed

⁷⁰ 1 Cor 2:9: Isa 64:4

⁷¹ 1 Pet 1:12

⁷² 1 Cor 4:12-13

⁷³ Tit 3:10-11

are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," He clearly taught us in every circumstance to seek for the martyr who, if poor for righteousness' sake, witnesses that the righteousness which he loves is a good thing; and if he "hunger and thirst for righteousness' sake," testifies that righteousness is the best thing. Likewise he, that weeps and mourns for righteousness' sake, testifies to the best law that it is beautiful. As, then, "those that are persecuted," so also "those that hunger and thirst" for righteousness' sake, are called "blessed" by Him who approves of the true desire, which not even famine can put a stop to. And if "they hunger after righteousness itself," they are blessed. The Stromata, 2.413.

5:7 CLEMENT OF ROME: Let us therefore, brethren, be of humble mind, laying aside all haughtiness, and pride, and foolishness, and angry feelings; and let us act according to that which is written (for the Holy Spirit says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in the Lord, in diligently seeking Him, and doing judgment and righteousness,")⁷⁴ being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching us meekness and longsuffering. For He spoke: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured to you." By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words. For the holy word says, "On whom shall I look, but on him that is meek and peaceable, and that trembles at My words?" Epistle to the Corinthians, 1.8.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And "the merciful" He blesses, "for they shall obtain mercy." *The Instructor, 2.293*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He again says, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." And mercy is not, as some of the philosophers have imagined, pain on account of others' calamities, but rather something good, as the prophets say. For it is said, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And He means by the merciful, not only those who do acts of mercy, but those who wish to do them, though they are not able; who do as far as purpose is concerned. *The Stromata*, 2.416.

CYPRIAN: For he shall not be able to deserve the mercy of the Lord, who himself shall not have been merciful; nor shall he obtain aught from the divine pity in his prayers, who shall not have been humane towards the poor man's prayer. *The*

⁷⁴ Jer 9:23-24; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17

⁷⁵ Cf. Lk 6:36-38

⁷⁶ Isa 66:2

⁷⁷ Cf. Mt 9:13; 12:7; Hos 6:6

Treatises of Cyprian, 5.477.

LACTANTIUS: He shows mercy to him whom He sees to be merciful; He is without mercy to him whom He sees to be harsh to those who entreat him. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 7.250.

5:8 IRENAEUS: As, therefore, when that which is perfect is come, we shall see Him whom we now desire to see (for "blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;") . . . and Him who was born of the Virgin Mary, who also suffered, in whom also we trust, and whom we love. *Against Heresies*, 1.472.

IRENAEUS: The prophets, then, indicated beforehand that God should be seen by men; as the Lord also says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But in respect to His greatness, and His wonderful glory, "no man shall see God and live," for the Father is incomprehensible; but in regard to His love, and kindness, and as to His infinite power, even this He grants to those who love Him, that is, to see God. *Against Heresies, 1.489*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And since there are two paths of reaching the perfection of salvation, works and knowledge, He called the "pure in heart blessed, for they shall see God." And if we really look to the truth of the matter, knowledge is the purification of the leading faculty of the soul, and is a good activity. Some things accordingly are good in themselves, and others by participation in what is good, as we say good actions are good. But without things intermediate which hold the place of material, neither good nor bad actions are constituted, such I mean as life, and health, and other necessary things or circumstantials. Pure then as respects carnal lusts, and pure in respect of holy thoughts, he means those are, who attain to the knowledge of God, when the chief faculty of the soul has nothing spurious to stand in the way of its power. *The Stromata*, 2.416.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We find in Moses: "No man shall see My face, and live." For it is evident that no one during the period of life has been able to apprehend God clearly. But "the pure in heart shall see God," when they arrive at the final perfection. For since the soul became too enfeebled for the apprehension of realities, we needed a divine teacher. The Savior is sent down—a teacher and leader in the acquisition of the good—the secret and sacred token of the great Providence. *The Stromata*, 2.446.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The presence of wealth in these is deadly to all, the loss of it is health-giving. Of which, making the soul pure,—that is, poor and bare,—we must hear the Savior speaking thus, "Come, follow Me." For to the

⁷⁸ Exod 33:20

⁷⁹ Exod 33:20

⁸⁰ Mt 4:19; 8:19-23; 16:24-27; Mk 8:34-35; Mk 10:21; Lk 5:27-28; 9:23-24, 57-62; Jn 1:43;

pure in heart He now becomes the way. But into the impure soul the grace of God finds no entrance. Who is the Rich Man that shall Be Saved?, 2.595.

ORIGEN: Wise men—Moses, the most ancient of them all, and the prophets who followed him,—knowing that the chief good could by no means be described in words, were the first who wrote that, as God manifests Himself to the deserving, and to those who are qualified to behold Him, He appeared to Abraham, or to Isaac, or to Jacob. But who He was that appeared, and of what form, and in what manner, and like to which of mortal beings, they have left to be investigated by those who are able to show that they resemble those persons to whom God showed Himself: for He was not seen by their bodily eyes, but by the pure heart. For, according to the declaration of our Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Against Celsus, 4.575.

ORIGEN: To see God belongs to the pure heart, out of which no longer proceed "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, the evil eye," or any other evil thing. Therefore it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But as the strength of our will is not sufficient to procure the perfectly pure heart, and as we need that God should create it, he therefore who prays as he ought, offers this petition to God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Against Celsus, 4.624.

ORIGEN: For ourselves, we hold that not God alone is unspeakable, but other things also which are inferior to Him. Such are the things which Paul labors to express when he says, "I heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," where the word "heard" is used in the sense of "understood;" as in the passage, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear. We also hold that it is a hard matter to see the Creator and Father of the universe; but it is possible to see Him in the way thus referred to, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" and not only so, but also in the sense of the words of Him "who is the image of the invisible God;" He who has seen Me has seen the Father who sent Me." And one over, that these words, "He that has seen Me, has seen the Father who sent Me," are not to be taken in their grosser sense, is plain from the answer which He gave to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet you do not know Me, Philip?" after Philip had asked, "Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." He, then, who perceives how these words, "The Word was

^{12:25-26.}

⁸¹ Mt 15:19

⁸² Ps 51:10

^{83 2} Cor 12:4

⁸⁴ Mt 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mk 4:9; Lk 8:8; 14:35

⁸⁵ Col 1:15

⁸⁶ Jn 14:9

made flesh,"⁸⁷ are to be understood of the only begotten Son of God, ⁸⁸ the firstborn of all creation, ⁸⁹ will also understand how, in seeing the image of the invisible God, we see "the Creator and Father of the universe." *Against Celsus*, *4.628*.

ORIGEN: Those who bear the hope of seeing this glory, then, are the ones of whom it has been said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." At that time when pain and sadness and sighing flee 90 and when things which are now seen in a mirror and in a riddle are set aside, those things which are face to face remain. 91 Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. 92

ARCHELAUS: For what, indeed, can it profit a man to circumcise himself, if nevertheless he cherishes the worst of thoughts against his neighbor? He desired, accordingly, rather to open up to us the ways of the fullest life by a brief path, lest perhaps, after we had traveled across long courses of our own, we should find our day prematurely closing upon us in night, and lest, while outwardly indeed we might appear splendid to men's view, we should inwardly be comparable only to ravening wolves, 93 or be likened to whited sepulchers. 4 For far above any person of that type of character is to be placed the man who, although clothed only in dirty and tattered attire, keeps no evil hidden in his heart against his neighbor. For it is only the circumcision of the heart that brings salvation; and that merely carnal circumcision can be of no advantage to men, 95 unless they happen also to be fortified with the spiritual circumcision. 4 Listen also to what Scripture has to say on this subject: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6.217.

NOVATIAN: If Christ Himself had been the Father, why did He promise as future, a reward which He had already granted and given? For that He says, "Blessed are they of a pure heart, for they shall see God," it is understood to promise the contemplation and vision of the Father; therefore He had not given this; for why should He promise if He had already given? For He had already given if He

⁸⁷ Jn 1:14

⁸⁸ Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18

⁸⁹ Col 1:15

⁹⁰ Cf. Isa 35:10; 51:11; Rev 21:4

⁹¹ Cf. 1 Cor 13:12

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 283. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁹³ Cf. Mt 7:15

⁹⁴ Cf. Mt 23:27

^{95 1} Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15

⁹⁶ Deut 10:16; Rom 2:29

was the Father: for He was seen, and He was touched. But since, when Christ Himself is seen and touched, He still promises, and says that he who is of a pure heart shall see God, He proves by this very saying that He who was then present was not the Father, seeing that He was seen, and yet promised that whoever should be of a pure heart should see the Father. It was therefore not the Father, but the Son, who promised this, because He who was the Son promised that which had yet to be seen; and His promise would have been superfluous unless He had been the Son. For why did He promise to the pure in heart that they should see the Father, if already they who were then present saw Christ as the Father? But because He was the Son, not the Father, rightly also He was then seen as the Son, because He was the image of God; and the Father, because He is invisible, is promised and pointed out as to be seen by the pure in heart. *Treatise Concerning the Trinity*, 5.639-640.

5:9 IRENAEUS: [On the disagreement in Asia about the celebration of Pascha:] For the controversy is not merely as regards the day, but also as regards the form itself of the fast. For some consider themselves bound to fast one day, others two days, others still more, while others do so during forty: the daily and the nightly hours they measure out together as their fasting day. And this variety among the observers of the fasts had not its origin in our time, but long before in that of our predecessors, some of whom probably, being not very accurate in their observance of it, handed down to posterity the custom as it had, through simplicity or private fancy, been introduced among them. And yet nevertheless all these lived in peace one with another, and we also keep peace together.

Thus, in fact, the difference in observing the fast establishes the harmony of our common faith. And the presbyters preceding Soter in the government of the Church which you now rule—I mean, Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus and Telesphorus, and Sixtus—did neither themselves observe it after that fashion, nor permit those with them to do so. Notwithstanding this, those who did not keep the feast in this way were peacefully disposed towards those who came to them from other dioceses in which it was so observed although such observance was felt in more decided contrariety as presented to those who did not fall in with it; and none were ever cast out of the Church for this matter.

On the contrary, those presbyters who preceded you, and who did not observe this custom, sent the Eucharist to those of other dioceses who did observe it. And when the blessed Polycarp was sojourning in Rome in the time of Anicetus, although a slight controversy had arisen among them as to certain other points, they were at once well inclined towards each other with regard to the matter in hand, not willing that any quarrel should arise between them upon this head. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp to forego the observance in his own way, inasmuch as these things had been always so observed by John the disciple of our Lord, and by other apostles with whom he had been conversant; nor, on the other hand, could Polycarp succeed in persuading Anicetus to keep the observance in his way, for he maintained that he was bound to adhere to the usage of the presbyters who preceded him. And in

this state of affairs they held fellowship with each other; and Anicetus conceded to Polycarp in the Church the celebration of the Eucharist, by way of showing him respect; so that they parted in peace one from the other, maintaining peace with the whole Church, both those who did observe this custom and those who did not. ⁹⁷ *Fragment*, 1.568-569.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Truly "blessed are the peacemakers," who instructing those who are at war in their life and errors here, lead them back to the peace which is in the Word. *The Stromata*, 2.300.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Blessed, then, are the peacemakers," who have subdued and tamed the law which wars against the disposition of the mind, the menaces of anger, and the baits of lust, and the other passions which war against the reason; who, having lived in the knowledge both of good works and true reason, shall be reinstated in adoption, which is dearer. It follows that the perfect peacemaking is that which keeps unchanged in all circumstances what is peaceful; calls Providence holy and good; and has its being in the knowledge of divine and human affairs, by which it deems the opposites that are in the world to be the fairest harmony of creation. They also are peacemakers, who teach those who war against the stratagems of sin to have recourse to faith and peace. *The Stromata*, 2.416.

TERTULLIAN: He marks "the peacemakers" . . . and names them "sons of God." Do the impatient have any affinity with "peace?" Even a fool may perceive that. *Of Patience*, 3.714.

CYPRIAN: The Holy Spirit warns us, and says, "What man is he that desires to live, and would see good days? Refrain your tongue from evil, and your lips that they speak no guile. Abstain from evil, and do good; seek peace, and follow it." The son of peace ought to seek peace and follow it. He who knows and loves the bond of charity, ought to refrain his tongue from the evil of dissension. Among His divine commands and beneficial teachings, the Lord, when He was now very near to His passion, added this one, saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." He gave this to us as an heritage; He promised all the gifts and rewards of which He spoke through the preservation of peace. If we are fellow-heirs with Christ, let us abide in the peace of Christ; if we are sons of God, we ought to be peacemakers. "Blessed," says He, "are the peacemakers;

Eusebius wrote, "Thus Ireaeus, who truly was well named, became a peacemaker in this matter, exhorting and negotiating in this way in behalf of the peace of the churches. And he conferred by letter about this mooted question, not only with Victor, but also with most of the other rulers of the churches" (*The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890]. 5.24:18).

⁹⁸ Cf. 1 Pet 2:11

⁹⁹ Ps 34:12-13

¹⁰⁰ Jn 14:27

for they shall be called the sons of God." It behooves the sons of God to be peacemakers, gentle in heart, simple in speech, agreeing in affection, faithfully linked to one another in the bonds of unanimity. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.429.

LACTANTIUS: The just man is neither at enmity with any human being, nor desires anything at all which is the property of another. For why should he take a voyage, or what should he seek from another land, when his own is sufficient for him? Or why should he carry on war, and mix himself with the passions of others, when his mind is engaged in perpetual peace with men?¹⁰¹ *The Divine Institutes*, 7.153.

5:10ff Anonymous: All the martyrdoms, then, were blessed and noble which took place according to the will of God. For it becomes us who profess greater piety than others, to ascribe the authority over all things to God. And truly, who can fail to admire their nobleness of mind, and their patience, with that love towards their Lord which they displayed?—who, when they were so torn with scourges, that the frame of their bodies, even to the very inward veins and arteries, was laid open, still patiently endured, while even those that stood by pitied and bewailed them. But they reached such a pitch of magnanimity, that not one of them let a sigh or a groan escape them; thus proving to us all that those holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when they suffered such torments, were absent from the body, or rather, that the Lord then stood by them, and communed with them. And, looking to the grace of Christ, they despised all the torments of this world, redeeming themselves from eternal punishment by the suffering of a single hour. For this reason the fire of their savage executioners appeared cool to them. For they kept before their view escape from that fire which is eternal and never shall be quenched, 102 and looked forward with the eyes of their heart to those good things which are laid up for such as endure; things "which ear has not heard, nor eye seen, neither have entered into the heart of man,"103 but were revealed by the Lord to them, inasmuch as they were no longer men, but had already become angels. And, in like manner, those who were condemned to the wild beasts endured dreadful tortures, being stretched out upon beds full of spikes, and subjected to various other kinds of torments, in order that, if it were possible, the tyrant might, by their lingering tortures, lead them to a denial of Christ. The Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.39.

JUSTIN MARTYR: Reason directs those who are truly pious and philosophical to honor and love only what is true, declining to follow traditional opinions, if these be worthless. For not only does sound reason direct us to refuse the guidance of those who did or taught anything wrong, but it is incumbent on the lover of truth, by all means, and if death be threatened, even before his own life,

¹⁰¹ Cf. Rom 12:8; Heb 12:14

¹⁰² Cf. Mk 9:46

^{103 1} Cor 2:9

to choose to do and say what is right. . . . For as for us, we reckon that no evil can be done to us, unless we be convicted as evil-doers or be proved to be wicked men; and you, you can kill, but not hurt us. *The First Apology, 1.163*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And it is the sum of all virtue, in my opinion, when the Lord teaches us that for love to God we must despise death. "Blessed are they," says He, "who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for they shall be called the sons of God;" or, as some of those who transpose the Gospels say, "Blessed are they who are persecuted by righteousness, for they shall be perfect." And, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for my sake; for they shall have a place where they shall not be persecuted." And, "Blessed are you when men shall hate you, when they shall separate you, when they shall cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake;" 104 if we do not detest our persecutors, and undergo punishments at their hands, not hating them under the idea that we have been put to trial more tardily than we looked for; but knowing this also, that every instance of trial is an occasion for testifying. *The Stromata*, 2.416.

TERTULLIAN: It is still the same sentiment which he follows up in the passage in which he puts the recompense above the sufferings: "for we know;" he says, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" in other words, owing to the fact that our flesh is undergoing dissolution through its sufferings, we shall be provided with a home in heaven. He remembered the award (which the Lord assigns) in the Gospel: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Yet, when he thus contrasted the recompense of the reward, he did not deny the flesh's restoration; since the recompense is due to the same substance to which the dissolution is attributed,—that is, of course, the flesh. On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 3.575.

TERTULLIAN: In the case of Christ both the divine nature and the will and the sect are different from any previously known! He will have commanded either no martyrdoms at all, or those which must be understood in a sense different from the ordinary, being such a person as to urge no one to a risk of this kind as to promise no reward to them who suffer for Him, because He does not wish them to suffer; and therefore does He say, when setting forth His chief commands, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Scorpiace, 3.641.

ORIGEN: I beseech you, therefore, throughout the present conflict to remember the great reward laid up in the heavens for those who are persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake and for the Son of Man's sake, ¹⁰⁶ and that you rejoice and

¹⁰⁴ Lk 6:22

^{105 2} Cor 5:1

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Mt 5:10-12; Lk 6:23

THE BEATTITUDES —MATTHEW 5:1-12

be glad and exult just as the apostles rejoiced when on one occasion they were "counted worthy to suffer insults for his name." Exhortation to Martyrdom. ¹⁰⁸

CYPRIAN: For to this battle our Lord, as with the trumpet of His Gospel, stimulates us when He says, "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves his own soul more than me is not worthy of me. And he that does not take up his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me."109 And again, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed shall you be, when men shall persecute you, and hate you. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for so did their fathers persecute the prophets which were before you." And again, "Because you shall stand before kings and powers, and the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son, and he that endures to the end shall be saved;"110 and "To him that overcomes I will give to sit on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down on the throne of my Father."111 Moreover the apostle: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors for Him who loved us."112 The Epistles of Cyprian, 5.303.

CYPRIAN: Moreover, the Lord in the Gospel, Himself the avenger of our persecution and the rewarder of our suffering, says: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And again: "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and shall separate you, and shall expel you, and shall revile your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven." And once more: "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Nor do the rewards of the divine promise attend those alone who are reproached and slain; but if the passion itself be lacking to the faithful, while their faith has remained sound and unconquered, and having forsaken and disdained all his possessions, the Christian has shown that he is following Christ, even he also is honored by Christ among the martyrs, as He

⁰⁷ Acts 5:41

Origen, Exhortation to Martyrdom 4. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 395. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

¹⁰⁹ Mt 10:37-38

¹¹⁰ Mt 10:18-22

¹¹¹ Rev 3:21

¹¹² Rom 8:35

¹¹³ Lk 6:22-23

¹¹⁴ Lk 9:24

Himself promises and says: "There is no man that has left house, or land, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who will not receive seven times as much in this present time, and in the world to come eternal life." 115 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.506.

5:11ff MATHETES: They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life. *Epistle to Diognetus*, *1.27*.

TERTULLIAN: The following statement, indeed, applies first to all without restriction, then specially to the apostles themselves: "Blessed shall you be when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, since very great is your reward in heaven; for so their fathers used to do even to the **prophets.**" So He likewise foretold they also would have to be slain themselves, after the example of the prophets. Though, even if He had appointed all this persecution in case He were obeyed for those only who were then apostles, assuredly through them along with the entire sacrament, with the shoot of the name, with the layer of the Holy Spirit, the rule about enduring persecution also would have had respect to us too, as to disciples by inheritance, and, (as it were,) bushes from the apostolic seed. And again He gives words of guidance to the apostles: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;" and, "Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles," etc. 116

Now when He adds, "But the brother will deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death," He has clearly announced with reference to the others, (that they would be subjected to) this form of unrighteous conduct, which we do not find exemplified in the case of the apostles. For none of them had experience of a father or a brother as a betrayer, which very many of us have. Then He returns to the apostles: "And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." How much more shall we, for whom there exists the necessity of being delivered up by parents too! Thus, by allotting this very betrayal, now to the apostles, now to all, He pours out the same destruction upon all the possessors of the name, on whom the name, along with the condition that it be an object of hatred, will rest.

¹¹⁵ Lk 18:29

¹¹⁶ Mt 10:16

¹¹⁷ Mt 10:21: Mk 13:12

¹¹⁸ Mt 10:22; Mk 13:13

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But he who will endure on to the end—this man will be saved. 119 By enduring what but persecution, betrayal, death? For to endure to the end is nothing other than to suffer the end. And therefore there immediately follow, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his own lord;" 120 because, seeing the Master and Lord Himself was stedfast in suffering persecution, betrayal and death, much more will it be the duty of His servants and disciples to bear the same, that they may not seem as if superior to Him, or to have got an immunity from the assaults of unrighteousness, since this itself should be glory enough for them, to be conformed to the sufferings of their Lord and Master; and, preparing them for the endurance of these, He reminds them that they must not fear such persons as kill the body only, but are not able to destroy the soul, but that they must dedicate fear to Him rather who has such power that He can kill both body and soul, and destroy them in hell. 121 Scorpiace, 3.641-642.

TERTULLIAN: If the tongue's bitterness break out in malediction or reproach, look back at the saying, "When they curse you, rejoice." The Lord Himself was "cursed" in the eye of the law; and yet is He the only Blessed One. Let us servants, therefore, follow our Lord closely; and be cursed patiently, that we may be able to be blessed. *Of Patience*, 3.712.

5:12 TERTULLIAN: He says, "**Rejoice and be glad, as often as they shall curse and persecute you; for very great is your reward in heaven**," of course it is not to the impatience of exultation that He makes that promise; because no one will "exult" in adversities unless he has first learned to regard them with contempt, which no one will do unless he has learned to practice patience. *Of Patience*, 3.714.

¹¹⁹ Mt 24:13

¹²⁰ Mt 10:24: Lk 6:40

¹²¹ Mt 10:28

¹²² Lk 6:22-23

¹²³ Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13

Christians are Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16

list Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. MK 9:49-50; LK 14:34-35

If I Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. In 8:12; PHIL 2:14-15; EPH 5:8

[15] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. MK 4:21; LK 8:16; 11:33

lib Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. ^{2 THES 1:11-12}

SUMMARY: The Church is the salt of earth (IRENAEUS, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, ORIGEN, CYPRIAN). There are important characteristics about salt, that it stings and disinfects (METHODIUS). More importantly, the Lord warns us that the salt can lose its saltiness. Salt preserves meat as Christians preserves the world (ORIGEN). We are commanded therefore to be salted, since we will be convicted by our savor (IGNATIUS). Our good works make us the light of the world (TERTULLIAN). The light of the world is the church (ORIGEN). We give light by proclaiming the Lord's teachings (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN). Since God made man a free agent, possessing his own power, to obey the commands of God voluntarily, we ought to let our light shine by doing good (IRENAEUS). Let your "works" shine (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN, METHODIUS).

5:13ff IGNATIUS: Be salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted, since by your savor you shall be convicted. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, *1.63*.

IRENAEUS: Lot's wife remained in the territory of Sodom, no longer corruptible flesh, but a pillar of salt which endures forever; and by those natural processes which apply to the human race, indicating that the Church also, which is the salt of the earth, has been left behind within the confines of the earth, and subject to human sufferings; and while entire members are often taken away from it, the pillar of salt still endures, thus typifying the foundation of the faith which makes strong, and sends forward, children to their Father. *Against Heresies*, 1.505.

TATIAN: To you do I say, you which hear, 1 You are the salt of the earth: if then the salt become tasteless, how shall it be salted? For any purpose it is of no use, but is thrown outside, and men tread upon it. You are the light of the world. It is impossible that a city built on a mountain should be hid. Neither do they light a lamp and place it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. So shall your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. There is nothing secret that shall not be revealed, or hidden that shall not be known. 2 Whoever has ears that hear, let him hear. 3 The Diatessaron, 9.56-57.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We are the salt of the earth. *The Instructor*, 2.291.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "There are," he says, "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers." Therefore it was not said to all, "You are the salt of the earth." For there are some even of the hearers of the word who are like the fishes of the sea, which, reared from their birth in saltwater, yet need salt to dress them for food. *The Stromata*, 2.309.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: All the faithful, then, are good and godlike, and worthy of the name by which they are encircled as with a diadem. There are, besides, some, the elect of the elect, and so much more or less distinguished by drawing themselves, like ships to the strand, out of the surge of the world and bringing themselves to safety; not wishing to seem holy, and ashamed if one call them so; hiding in the depth of their mind the ineffable mysteries, and disdaining to let their nobleness be seen in the world; whom the Word calls "the light of the world, and the salt of the earth." Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?, 2.601.

ORIGEN: If all the Romans . . . embrace the Christian faith, they will, when they pray, overcome their enemies; or rather, they will not war at all, being guarded by that divine power which promised to save five entire cities for the sake of

¹ Lk 6:27

² Mk 4:22

³ Mk 4:23

⁴ Tit 1:10

fifty just persons.⁵ For men of God are assuredly the salt of the earth: they preserve the order of the world; and society is held together as long as the salt is uncorrupted: for "if the salt has lost its savor, it is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill; but it shall be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. He that has ears, let him hear" the meaning of these words. When God gives to the tempter permission to persecute us, then we suffer persecution; and when God wishes us to be free from suffering, even in the midst of a world that hates us, we enjoy a wonderful peace, trusting in the protection of Him who said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And truly He has overcome the world. Therefore the world prevails only so long as it is the pleasure of Him who received from the Father power to overcome the world; and from His victory we take courage. Should He even wish us again to contend and struggle for our religion, let the enemy come against us, and we will say to them, "I can do all things, through Christ Jesus our Lord, which strengthens me."8 For of "two sparrows which are sold for a farthing,"9 as the Scripture says, "not one of them falls on the ground without our Father in heaven." And so completely does the Divine Providence embrace all things, that not even the hairs of our head fail to be numbered by Him. Against Celsus, 4.666.

ORIGEN: Salt is useful for so many purposes in human life! What need is there to speak about this? Now is the proper time to say why Jesus' disciples are compared with salt. Salt preserves meats from decaying into stench and worms. It makes them edible for a longer period. They would not last through time and be found useful without salt. So also Christ's disciples, standing in the way of the stench that comes from the sins of idolatry and fornication, support and hold together this whole earthly realm. *Fragment 91*.¹¹

ORIGEN: "You," it is said, "are the salt of the earth," the rest of mankind being conceived as the earth, and believers are their salt; it is because they believe that the earth is preserved. For the end will come if the salt loses its savor, and ceases to salt and preserve the earth, since it is clear that if iniquity is multiplied and love waxes cold upon the earth, ¹² as the Savior Himself uttered an expression of

⁵ Gen 18:26

⁶ Cf. Lk 14:34-35

⁷ In 16:33

⁸ Phil 4:13

⁹ A farthing is a quadrans (about the fourth part of an "as"); in the NT a coin equal to one half the Attic chalcus worth about 3/8 of a cent.

¹⁰ Mt 10:29-30

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:52. Taken from *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 4255-4259. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

¹² Cf. Mt 24:12

doubt as to those who would witness His coming, saying, "When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith upon the earth?" Then the end of the age will come. Supposing, then, the Church to be called the world, since the Savior's light shines on it—we have to ask in connection with the text, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," whether the world here is to be taken intellectually of the Church, and the taking away of sin is limited to the Church. In that case what are we to make of the saying of the same disciple with regard to the Savior, as the propitiation for sin? "If any man sin," we read, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world?" Paul's dictum appears to me to be to the same effect, when he says, "Who is the Savior of all men, especially of the faithful." Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.380.

CYPRIAN: And it may be thus understood, beloved brethren, that since the Lord commands and admonishes us even to love our enemies, and to pray even for those who persecute us,¹⁷ we should ask, moreover, for those who are still earth, and have not yet begun to be heavenly, that even in respect of these God's will should be done, which Christ accomplished in preserving and renewing humanity. For since the disciples are not now called by Him earth, but the salt of the earth, and the apostle designates the first man as being from the dust of the earth, but the second from heaven,¹⁸ we reasonably, who ought to be like God our Father, who makes His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust,¹⁹ so pray and ask by the admonition of Christ as to make our prayer for the salvation of all men; that as in heaven—that is, in us by our faith—the will of God has been done, so that we might be of heaven; so also in earth—that is, in those who do not believe—God's will may be done, that they who as yet are by their first birth of earth, may, being born of water and of the Spirit,²⁰ begin to be of heaven. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.452.

METHODIUS: Now the whole spiritual meditation of the Scriptures is given to us as salt which stings in order to benefit, and which disinfects, without which it is impossible for a soul, by means of reason, to be brought to the Almighty; for "**you are the salt of the earth**," said the Lord to the apostles. *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, 6.311.

5:14ff THE DIDACHE: Watch for your life's sake. Do not let your lamps be

¹³ Lk 18:8

¹⁴ In 1:29

¹⁵ 1 Jn 2:1-2

^{16 1} Tim 4:10

¹⁷ Mt 5:44

^{18 1} Cor 15:47

¹⁹ Mt 5:45

²⁰ In 3:5

quenched, nor your loins unloosed;²¹ but be ready, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord comes.²² But often you shall come together, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time. 7.382.

IRENAEUS: He is therefore one and the same God, who called Abraham and gave him the promise. But He is the Creator, who does also through Christ prepare lights in the world, namely those who believe from among the Gentiles. And He says, "You are the light of the world;" that is, as the stars of heaven. Him, therefore, I have rightly shown to be known by no man, unless by the Son, and to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him. ²³ But the Son reveals the Father to all to whom He wills that He should be known; and neither without the goodwill of the Father nor without the agency of the Son, can any man know God. Therefore the Lord said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also: and from this time on you have both known Him, and have seen Him." ²⁴ From these words it is evident, that He is known by the Son, that is, by the Word. *Against Heresies*, *1.470*.

ORIGEN: Our earnest desire is both to see for ourselves, and to be leaders of the blind, to bring them to the Word of God, that He may take away from their minds the blindness of ignorance. And if our actions are worthy of Him who taught His disciples, "You are the light of the world," and of the Word, who says, "The light shines in darkness," then we shall be light to those who are in darkness; we shall give wisdom to those who are without it, and we shall instruct the ignorant. *Against Celsus*, 4.632.

ORIGEN: The reader will do well to consider what was said above and illustrated from various quarters on the question what is meant in Scripture by the word "world;" and I think it proper to repeat this. I am aware that a certain scholar understands by the world the Church alone, since the Church is the adornment of the world, and is said to be the light of the world. "You," he says, "are the light of the world." Now, the adornment of the world is the Church, Christ being her adornment, who is the first light of the world. We must consider if Christ is said to be the light of the same world as His disciples. . . . Should any one consider that the Church is called the light of the world, meaning thereby of the rest of the race of men, including unbelievers, this may be true if the assertion is taken prophetically and theologically; but if it is to be taken of the present, we remind him that the light of a thing illuminates that thing, and would ask him to show how the remainder of the race is illuminated by the Church's presence in the

²¹ Cf. Lk 12:35

²² Mt 24:42

²³ Lk 10:22

²⁴ In 14:6

²⁵ In 1:5

world. If those who hold the view in question cannot show this, then let them consider if our interpretation is not a sound one, that the light is the Church, and the world those others who call on the Name. *Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.380.*

5:15 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now the Scripture kindles the living spark of the soul, and directs the eye suitably for contemplation; perchance inserting something, as the husbandman when he ingrafts, but, according to the opinion of the divine apostle, exciting what is in the soul. "For there are certainly among us many weak and sickly, and many sleep. But if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged." Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men. Of these the one, in Greece, an Ionic; the other in Magna Graecia: the first of these from Coele-Syria, the second from Egypt, and others in the East. The one was born in the land of Assyria, and the other a Hebrew in Palestine.

When I came upon the last²⁷ (he was the first in power), having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found rest. He, the true, the Sicilian bee, gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a deathless element of knowledge.

Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it. For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from escape the blessed tradition. "In a man who loves wisdom the father will be glad." Wells, when pumped out, yield purer water; and that of which no one partakes, turns to putrefaction. Use keeps steel brighter, but disuse produces rust in it. For, in a word, exercise produces a healthy condition both in souls and bodies. "No one lights a candle, and puts it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to those who are regarded worthy of the feast." For what is the use of wisdom, if it does not make him who can hear it wise? For still the Savior saves, "and always works, as He sees the Father." For by teaching, one learns more; and in speaking, one is often a hearer along with his audience. For the teacher of him who speaks and of him who hears is one—who waters both the mind and the word. Thus the Lord did not hinder from doing good while keeping the Sabbath; but allowed us to communicate of those divine mysteries,

^{26 1} Cor 11:31-32

²⁷ Probably Pantaenus, master of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, and the instructor of Clement.

²⁸ Prov 29:3

²⁹ Jn 5:17-19

and of that holy light, to those who are able to receive them. He did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing, as is the case with God. *The Stromata*, 2.301-302.

TERTULLIAN: Openly did the Lord speak,³⁰ without any indication of a hidden mystery. He had Himself commanded that, "whatsoever they had heard in darkness" and in secret, they should "declare in the light and on the house-tops."³¹ He had Himself foreshown, by means of a parable, that they should not keep back in secret, fruitless of interest, a single pound, that is, one word of His. He used Himself to tell them that a candle was not usually "pushed away under a bushel, but placed on a candlestick," in order to "give light to all who are in the house." *The Prescription Against Heretics*, 3.255.

5:16 IRENAEUS: This expression of our Lord, "How often would I have gathered your children together, and you were not willing,"32 set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free agent from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the commands of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God, but a good will towards us is present with Him continually. And therefore He gives good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, not be found in possession of the good, and shall receive deserved punishment: for God did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness. Rejecting therefore the good, and as it were spewing it out, they shall all deservedly incur the just judgment of God, which also the Apostle Paul testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, where he says, "But do you despise the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "But glory and honor," he says, "to every one that does good."³³ God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honor, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they

³⁰ Jn 18:20

³¹ Mt 10:27

³² Mt 23:37

³³ Rom 2:4-7

did not work good when they had it in their power to do so.34

But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made originally. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power to do so, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets.

For this reason the Lord also said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." And, "Take heed to vourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with excess, and drunkenness, and worldly cares."35 And, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and be like men that wait for their Lord, when He returns from the wedding, that when He comes and knocks, they may open to Him. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so doing."36 And again, "The servant who knows his Lord's will, and does not do it, shall be beaten with many stripes."37 And, "Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things which I say?"38 And again, "But if the servant say in his heart, 'The Lord delays,' and begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken, his Lord will come in a day on which he does not expect Him, and shall cut him in two, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites."³⁹ All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from the sin of unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us. Against Heresies, 1.518-519.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But we ought to have works that cry aloud, as becoming "those who walk in the day." *Let your works shine," and behold a man and his works before his face. "For behold God and His works." For the

³⁴ Cf. Mt 25:32-46

³⁵ Lk 21:34

³⁶ Lk 12:35-36

³⁷ Lk 12:47

³⁸ Lk 6:46

³⁹ Lk 12:45-46; Mt 24:48-51

⁴⁰ Jn 11:9; Rom 13:13

⁴¹ Isa 62:11

Christian must, as far as is possible, imitate God. *The Stromata*, 2.441.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Do you not realize, my worthy friends (I speak as if you were present with me) that by conflict with these excellent commandments you fight against your own salvation? You overturn yourselves, not these beneficial instructions. The Lord said, "Let your good works shine out." But you make your licentiousness manifest to all. Besides, if your aim is to destroy the lawgiver's commands, why is it the commands, "You shall not commit adultery," and, "You shalt not corrupt boys,"⁴² and all the commandments enjoining purity, which through your lack of self-restraint you seek to destroy? *On Marriage*.⁴³

TERTULLIAN: But "let your works shine," He says. On Idolatry, 3.70.

TERTULLIAN: Perhaps some woman will say: "To me it is not necessary to be approved by men; for I do not require the testimony of men: God is the inspector of the heart." We all know that; provided, however, we remember what the same God has said through the apostle: "Let your integrity appear before men." For what purpose, except that malice may have no access at all to you, or that you may be an example and testimony to the evil? Else, what is that: "Let your works shine?" Why does the Lord call us the light of the world; why has He compared us to a city built upon a mountain; if we do not shine in the midst of darkness, and stand eminent amid them who are sunk down? If you hide your lamp beneath a bushel, you must necessarily be left quite in darkness, and be run against by many. The things which make us luminaries of the world are these—our good works. On the Apparel of Women, 4.25.

ORIGEN: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." It was not therefore in harmony to reason that those who had been taught sublimely to ascend above all created things, and to hope for the enjoyment of the most glorious rewards with God on account of their virtuous lives, and who had heard the words, "You are the light of the world," and, "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven," and who possessed through practice this brilliant and unfading wisdom, or who had secured even the "very reflection of everlasting light," should be so impressed with the mere

⁴² Cf. Didache, 2:1; Epistle of Barnabas, 19:4

⁴³ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4.36, Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 56. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁴⁴ See Phil 4:5, 8; Rom 12:17; 2 Cor 8:21

^{45 1} Cor 15:40

visible light of sun, and moon, and stars, that, on account of that sensible light of theirs, they should deem themselves . . . to be somehow inferior to them, and to bow down to them; seeing they ought to be worshipped, if they are to receive worship at all, not for the sake of the sensible light which is admired by the multitude, but because of the rational and true light, if indeed the stars in heaven are rational and virtuous beings, and have been illuminated with the light of knowledge by that wisdom which is the "reflection of everlasting light." For that sensible light of theirs is the work of the Creator of all things, while that rational light is derived perhaps from the principle of free will within them. *Against Celsus*, 4.547

ORIGEN: If we fail to walk as the sons of light⁴⁶ and sons of God, if we do not behave as God's people, "so that men who see our good works may glorify our Father in heaven," it has to be feared lest we fall upon that word of the Apostle when he says, "For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you." *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*

ORIGEN: Let everyone in the Church consider these same things in relation to himself so that in whatever position he stands, whether in the clergy or among the people, he should make the ministry of his faith illustrious and do such deeds "that men, by seeing his good works, will glorify the Father who is in heaven." Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.⁴⁹

ORIGEN: "Let your light shine before men and when they see your good works may they glorify your Father in heaven." Through this surely he is not exhorting the disciples to seek glory from men;⁵⁰ but that, as they live honestly and uprightly,⁵¹ they should bestow edification to those who see, and God, who has disclosed to men the way of amendment and salvation, may be glorified. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁵²

⁴⁶ Cf. Eph 5:8

⁴⁷ Rom 11:21

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 124. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 174. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁵⁰ Cf. 1 Thess 2:6

⁵¹ Cf. Tit 2:12

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 266. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

CYPRIAN: For as the Jews were alienated from God, as those on whose account "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles," 53 so on the other hand those are dear to God through whose conformity to discipline the name of God is declared with a testimony of praise, as it is written, the Lord Himself forewarning and saying, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Epistles of Cyprian, 5.284.

CYPRIAN: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Also Paul to the Philippians: "Shine as lights in the world." ** The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.542.

METHODIUS: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom." .55 . . . By profession they had equally proposed the same end, and therefore they are called ten, since, as I have said, they chose the same profession; but they did not, for all that, go forth in the same way to meet the bridegroom. For some provided abundant future nourishment for their lamps which were fed with oil, but others were careless, thinking only of the present. . . . For whether, on the one hand, we do right, or, on the other, do wrong through these senses, our habits of good and evil are confirmed. . . . Now the oil represents wisdom and righteousness; for while the soul rains down unsparingly, and pours forth these things upon the body, the light of virtue is kindled unquenchably, making its good actions to shine before men, so that our Father which is in heaven may be glorified. *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins, 6.329-330*.

⁵³ Rom 2:24

⁵⁴ Phil 2:15

⁵⁵ Mt 25:1

Christ Fulfills the Law Matthew 5:17-20

ITHINK not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. LK 16:16-18; 21:21-22; ROM 3:31; GAL 3:19

[18] For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. MT

24:34-35; LK 21:22-24, 32; 24:44

(19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. MT 28:20; JAS 2:10

[20] For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. MT 23:1-39; LK 11:37-54; ROM 10:2-3; PHIL 3:9; 1 JN 2:29: 3:7

SUMMARY: The antithesis is between "destroy the Law" and "fulfill" or "complete" (TATIAN), not "destroy the Law" and "perpetuate the Law." The Ebionites, however, were a heretical sect who continued to keep the Mosaic Law (HIPPOLYTUS). But the early Church understood that the New Covenant abrogated the Old and Jesus Christ gave a new law. An eternal and final lawnamely Christ—has been given to us (JUSTIN MARTYR). Christ fulfilled the Law:

See also Appendix B: Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies; Justin Martyr, ANF, 1.218; Irenaeus, ANF, 1.352, 428, 439, 451, 507, 527; Tertullian, ANF, 3.259, 541-542; Origen, ANF, 4.371, 429, 570, 571; 9.440; Hippolytus, ANF, 5.114; The Apostolic Constitutions, ANF, 7.452.

therefore the Law and the prophets were with the Jews until John the Baptist (IRENAEUS, TERTULLIAN). On the other hand, a leading heretical teacher of the second century, Marcion taught many Gnostic beliefs, including the belief that the God of the Old Testament was a different God from the Father of Jesus (Tertullian).² The early Christians understood that Christ came as the anticipated Messiah to fulfill the promises of God from the Old Testament, not to destroy the message of the Old Testament. Christ did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill, extend, and afford greater scope to it (IRENAEUS). By His advent Christ fulfilled all things, and does still fulfill in the Church the new covenant foretold by the Law (IRENAEUS). In keeping the commandments, Christ fulfilled the Law (HIPPOLYTUS). All the Scriptures will be fulfilled because by the mouth of the Lord the Holy Spirit has spoken these things (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). It behooves us to obey and do that which Christ did, and what He commanded (CYPRIAN). We labor not only with words, but also deeds (CYPRIAN). The things which you teach cannot have any weight unless you shall be the first to practice them (LACTANTIUS). We are exhorted to surpass the pharisaic way of living in order to be saved (Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria). For extended discussion, see Justin Martyr (1.200-206).

5:17ff JUSTIN MARTYR: We do not trust through Moses or through the law; for then we would do the same as yourselves. But now — (for I have read that there shall be a final law, and a covenant, the chiefest of all, which it is now incumbent on all men to observe, as many as are seeking after the inheritance of God. For the law promulgated on Horeb is now old, and belongs to yourselves alone; but this is for all universally. Now, law placed against law, has abrogated that which was before it, and a covenant which comes after in like manner has put an end to the previous one; and an eternal and final law—namely, Christ—has been given to us. *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.200*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: [Addressed to the Jews:] Wash therefore, and be clean, and put away iniquity from your souls, as God bids you be washed in this laver, and be circumcised with the true circumcision. For we too would observe the fleshly circumcision, and the Sabbaths, and in short all the feasts, if we did not know for what reason they were enjoined you,—namely, on account of your transgressions³ and the hardness of your hearts.⁴ For if we patiently endure all things contrived against us by wicked men and demons, so that even amid

See also Appendix B: Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies; Justin Martyr, ANF, 1.171, 182; Irenaeus, ANF, 1.352, 416, 436, 459, 470, 506, 507, 511; Clement of Alexandria, ANF, 2.356; Tertullian, ANF, 3.197, 257, 259, 262, 272, 275, 282, 284, 285, 291-294, 313, 327, 341, 342, 347, 348, 350, 351, 361, 405, 406, 412, 418, 438, 443, 450, 453, 457, 467, 471, 546; Hippolytus, ANF, 5.110-113; Cyprian, ANF, 5.380; Origen, ANF, 9.384, 463, 504. Also the Encratites sprung from Marcion. They abstained from meats and drank only water. See Irenaeus, ANF, 1.353; Hippolytus, ANF, 5.124; Origen, 4.571.

³ Gal 3:19

⁴ Mt 19:8; Mk 10:5

cruelties unutterable, death and torments, we pray for mercy to those who inflict such things upon us, and do not wish to give the least retort to any one, even as the new Lawgiver commanded us: how is it that we would not observe those rites which do not harm us,—I speak of fleshly circumcision, and Sabbaths, and feasts? *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.203*.

Justin Martyr: As, then, circumcision began with Abraham, and the Sabbath and sacrifices and offerings and feasts with Moses, and it has been proved they were enjoined on account of the hardness of your people's heart,⁵ so it was necessary, in accordance with the Father's will, that they should have an end in Him who was born of a virgin, of the family of Abraham and tribe of Judah, and of David; in Christ the Son of God, who was proclaimed as about to come to all the world, to be the everlasting law and the everlasting covenant, even as the aforementioned prophecies show. And we, who have approached God through Him, have received not carnal, but spiritual circumcision, which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it through baptism, since we were sinners, by God's mercy; and all men may equally obtain it. *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.216*.

IRENAEUS: Therefore by newness of the spirit is our calling, and not in the oldness of the letter; even as Jeremiah prophesied: "Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will accomplish for the house of Israel and for the house of Judah the covenant: of the testament which I covenanted with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt: because they did not continue in the covenant, and I did not regard them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant of the testament that I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach any more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will pardon and be merciful unto the sins of their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more."

And that these promises the calling from among the Gentiles should inherit, to whom also the new testament was opened up, Isaiah says thus: "These things says the God of Israel: In that day a man shall trust in his Maker, and his eyes shall look to the Holy One of Israel: and they shall not trust in altars, nor in the work of their own hands, which their fingers have made. For very plainly this was said of such as have forsaken idols and believed in God our Maker through the Holy One of Israel. And the Holy One of Israel is Christ: and He became visible to men, and to Him we look eagerly and behold Him; and we do not trust in altars, nor in the works of our hands." And that He should become

⁵ Mt 19:8; Mk 10:5

⁶ Rom 7:6

⁷ Jer 31:31-34

⁸ Isa 17:7-8

visible amongst us—for the Son of God became Son of man—and be found of us who before had no knowledge of Him, the Word Himself says thus in Isaiah: "I became manifest to them that did not seek me; I was found of them that asked not for me. I said, Behold, here am I, to a race that called not on my name."

And that this race was to become an holy people was declared in the Twelve Prophets by Hosea, thus: "I will call that which was not my people, my people; and her that was not beloved, beloved. It shall come to pass that in the place where it was called not my people, there shall they be called sons of the Living God." This also is that which was said by John the Baptist: "That God is able of these stones to raise up sons to Abraham." For our hearts being withdrawn and taken away from the stony worship by means of faith behold God, and become sons of Abraham, who was justified by faith.

And therefore God says by Ezekiel the prophet: "And I will give them another heart, and a new spirit will I give them: and I will withdraw and take away the stony heart from their flesh, and I will give them another heart of flesh: so that they shall walk in my precepts, and shall keep my ordinances and do them. And they shall be to me for a people, and I will be to them for a God." 12

So then by the new calling a change of hearts in the Gentiles came to pass through the Word of God, when He was made flesh and tabernacled with men; as also His disciple John says: "And his Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." ¹³

Therefore the Church bears much fruit of the redeemed: because no longer Moses as mediator nor Elijah as messenger, but the Lord Himself has redeemed us, granting many more children to the Church than to the first Synagogue; as Isaiah declared, saying: "Rejoice you barren, that did not bear." The barren is the Church, which never at all in former times presented sons to God. "Cry out and call, you that did not travail: for the children of the desolate are more than of her which has an husband." Now the first Synagogue had as husband the law.

Moreover Moses in Deuteronomy says that the Gentiles should be the head, and the unbelieving people the tail. ¹⁵ And again he says: "You provoked me to jealousy with those that are no gods, and angered me with your idols: and I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, and with a foolish nation will I anger you." ¹⁶ Because they forsook the God who is, and worshipped and served the gods who are not; and they slew the prophets of God, and prophesied for Baal, who was the idol of the Canaanites. And the Son of God, who is, they despised and condemned, but they chose Barabbas the robber who had been taken for murder: and the eternal King they disavowed, and they

⁹ Isa 65:1

¹⁰ Hos. 2:23; 1:10

¹¹ Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8

¹² Ezek 36:26-28

¹³ In 1:14

¹⁴ Isa 54:1

¹⁵ Deut 28:44

¹⁶ Deut 32:21; cf. Rom 10:19

acknowledged as their king the temporal Caesar.¹⁷ So it pleased God to grant their inheritance to the foolish Gentiles, even to those who were not of the polity of God and did not know what what God is. Since, then, by this calling life has been given us, and God has summed up again for Himself in us the faith of Abraham, we ought not to turn back any more—I mean, to the first legislation. For we have received the Lord of the law, the Son of God; and by faith in Him we learn to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Now the love of God is far from all sin, and love to the neighbor works no ill to the neighbor.¹⁸

Therefore also we do not need the law of Moses as a tutor. ¹⁹ Behold, with the Father we speak, and in His presence we stand, being children in malice, and grown strong in all righteousness and soberness. For no longer shall the law say, "Do not commit adultery," ²⁰ to him who has no desire at all for another's wife; and "Do not kill," ²¹ to him who has put away from himself all anger and enmity; and "Do not covet your neighbor's field or ox or ass," ²² to those who have no care at all for earthly things, but store up the heavenly fruits: nor "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," ²³ to him who counts no man his enemy, but all men his neighbors, and therefore cannot stretch out his hand at all for vengeance. It will not require tithes of him who consecrates all his possessions to God, leaving father and mother and all his kindred, and following the Word of God. ²⁴ And there will be no command to remain idle for one day of rest, to him who perpetually keeps sabbath, that is to say, who in the temple of God, which is man's body, does service to God, and in every hour works righteousness. *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching.* ²⁵

IRENAEUS: Since, then, the law originated with Moses, it terminated with John as a necessary consequence. Christ had come to fulfill it: therefore "the law and the prophets were" with them "until John." And therefore Jerusalem, taking its commencement from David, and fulfilling its own times, must have an end of legislation when the new covenant was revealed. For God does all things by measure and in order; nothing is unmeasured with Him, because nothing is out of order. *Against Heresies, 1.466*.

¹⁷ Mt 27:16-26

¹⁸ Cf. Rom 13:10

¹⁹ Cf. Gal 3:24

²⁰ Exod 20:14

²¹ Exod 20:13

^{12.10}d 20.13

² Exod 20:17

²³ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

²⁴ Cf. Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29; Lk 14:26

²⁵ Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, tr. Armitage Robinson, D.D. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 144-148.

²⁶ Lk 16:16

²⁷ Cf. 2 Sam 5:7

IRENAEUS: And that the Lord did not abrogate the natural precepts of the law, by which man is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law, but that He extended and fulfilled them, is shown from His words. "For," He remarks, "it has been said to them of old time, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say to you, that every one who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart." And again: "It has been said, 'Do not kill.' But I say to you, every one who is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." And, "It has been said, 'Do not forswear yourself.' But I say to you, do not swear not at all; but let your conversation be, 'Yes,' 'yes,' and, 'No,' 'no." And other statements of a like nature. For all these do not contain or imply an opposition to and an overturning of the precepts of the past, . . . but they exhibit a fulfilling and an extension of them, as He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." For what meant the excess referred to? In the first place, we must believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, we must not only say, but we must do; for they said, but did not do. 28 And we must not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the law. That would have been contrary to the law, if He had commanded His disciples to do anything which the law had prohibited. But this which He did command—namely, not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them—is not contrary to the law, as I have remarked, neither is it the utterance of one destroying the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and affording greater scope to it. . . .

And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that commandment, "Do not commit adultery," forbid even lust; and instead of that which runs thus, "Do not kill," He prohibited anger; and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, He told us to share all our possessions with the poor; 29 and not to love our neighbors only, but even our enemies; 30 and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods. For "to him that takes away your coat," He says, "give to him your cloak also; and from him that takes away your goods, do not ask for them again; and as you would that men should do to you, do likewise to them:"31 so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, 32 and as rather conferring a favor upon our neighbors than yielding to necessity. "And if any one," He says, "shall

²⁸ Cf. Mt 23:3; 1 Jn 3:18

²⁹ Mt 19:21; Lk 12:33; 14:13

³⁰ Cf. Mt 5:44

³¹ Lk 6:29-31

³² Cf. 1 Cor 6:7

compel you to go a mile, go with him two;" so that you may not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing yourself in all things kindly disposed and useful to your neighbor, not regarding their evil intentions. but performing your kind offices, assimilating yourself to the Father, "who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and unjust." Now all these precepts, as I have already observed, were not the injunctions of one doing away with the law, but of one fulfilling, extending, and widening it among us; just as if one should say, that the more extensive operation of liberty implies that a more complete subjection and affection towards our Liberator had been implanted within us. For He did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him (no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord's benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation), but that the more we receive His grace, the more we should love Him. Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father. Against Heresies, 1.477-478.

IRENAEUS: He said, "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law and the prophets till all come to pass." For by His advent He Himself fulfilled all things, and does still fulfill in the Church the new covenant foretold by the law, onwards to the consummation of all things. To this effect also Paul, His apostle, says in the Epistle to the Romans, "But now, without the law, has the righteousness of God been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; for the just shall live by faith." But this fact, that the just shall live by faith, had been previously announced by the prophets. Against Heresies, 1.511.

TATIAN: Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to complete. Truly I say to you, Until heaven and earth shall pass, there shall not pass one point or one letter of the law, until all of it shall be accomplished. Every one who shall violate now one of these small commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called lacking in the kingdom of heaven: every one that shall do and teach shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I say to you now, unless your righteousness abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. The Diatessaron, 9.57.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But the apostles were perfected in all. You will find, then, if you choose, in their acts and writings, knowledge, life, preaching, righteousness, purity, prophecy. We must know, then, that if Paul is young in respect to time—having flourished immediately after the Lord's ascension—yet

³³ Rom 1:17

³⁴ Hab 2:4

his writings depend on the Old Testament, breathing and speaking of them. For faith in Christ and the knowledge of the Gospel are the explanation and fulfillment of the law; and therefore it was said to the Hebrews, "If you do not believe, neither shall you understand;" that is, unless you believe what is prophesied in the law, and oracularly delivered by the law, you will not understand the Old Testament, which He by His coming expounded. *The Stromata*. 2.434.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Lord is not "come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." "To fulfill" does not imply that it was defective, but that by his coming the prophecies of the law are accomplished, since before the law the demand for right conduct was proclaimed by the Logos to those also who lived good lives. On Marriage.³⁶

TERTULLIAN: He is the subject of the prophecy, which shows that at the very outset of His ministry, He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but rather to fulfill them; for Marcion [the heretic] has erased the passage as an interpolation. It will, however, be vain for him to deny that Christ uttered in word what He forthwith did partially indeed. *Against Marcion*, 3.352.

TERTULLIAN: I can now make out why Marcion's god was for so long an age concealed. He was, I suppose, waiting until he had learned all these things from the Creator. He continued his pupillage up to the time of John, and then proceeded forthwith to announce the kingdom of God, saying: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is proclaimed."37 Just as if we also did not recognize in John a certain limit placed between the old dispensation and the new, at which Judaism ceased and Christianity began without, however, supposing that it was by the power of another god that there came about a cessation of the law and the prophets and the commencement of that gospel in which is the kingdom of God, Christ Himself. For although, as we have shown, the Creator foretold that the old state of things would pass away and a new state would succeed, yet, inasmuch as John is shown to be both the forerunner and the preparer of the ways of that Lord who was to introduce the gospel and publish the kingdom of God, it follows from the very fact that John has come, that Christ must be that very Being who was to follow His harbinger John. So that, if the old course has ceased and the new has begun, with John intervening between them, there will be nothing wonderful in it, because it happens according to the purpose of the Creator; so that you may get a better

is Isa 7:9

Glement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.6.46, Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 61. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

³⁷ Lk 16:16

proof for the kingdom of God from any quarter, however anomalous, than from the conceit that the law and the prophets ended in John, and a new state of things began after him. "More easily, therefore, may heaven and earth pass away—as also the law and the prophets—than that one tittle of the Lord's words should fail." "For," as says Isaiah: "the word of our God shall stand for ever." Since even then by Isaiah it was Christ, the Word and Spirit of the Creator, who prophetically described John as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord" and as about to come for the purpose of terminating thenceforth the course of the law and the prophets; by their fulfillment and not their extinction, and in order that the kingdom of God might be announced by Christ, He therefore purposely added the assurance that the elements would more easily pass away than His words fail; affirming, as He did, the further fact, that what He had said concerning John had not fallen to the ground. *Against Marcion*, *3.404*.

TERTULLIAN: "A certain man asked him, 'Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus inquired whether he knew, that is, in other words, whether he kept, the commandments of the Creator, in order to testify that it was by the Creator's precepts that eternal life is acquired. 42

Then, when he affirmed that from his youth up he had kept all the principal commandments, Jesus said to him: "One thing you yet lack: sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."43 Well now, Marcion [the heretic], and all you who are companions in misery, and associates in hatred with that heretic, what will you dare say to this? Did Christ rescind the aforementioned commandments: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother?" Or did He both keep them, and then add what was wanting to them? This very precept, however, about giving to the poor, was very largely diffused through the pages of the law and the prophets. This vainglorious observer of the commandments was therefore convicted of holding money in much higher estimation than charity. This verity of the gospel then stands unimpaired: "I have not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but rather to fulfill them." He also dissipated other doubts, when He declared that the name of God and of the Good belonged to one and the same being, at whose disposal were also the everlasting life and the treasure in heaven and Himself too-whose commandments He both maintained and augmented with His own supplementary precepts. Against Marcion, 3.410.

TERTULLIAN: The epistle which we also allow to be the most decisive against

³⁸ Lk 16:17; 21:23

³⁹ Isa 40:8

⁴⁰ Isa 40:3

⁴¹ Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18

⁴² Lk 18:18-20

⁴³ Lk 18:21-22

Judaism, is that wherein the apostle instructs the Galatians. For the abolition of the ancient law we fully admit, and hold that it actually proceeds from the dispensation of the Creator.—a point which we have already often treated in the course of our discussion, when we showed that the innovation was foretold by the prophets of our God. Now, if the Creator indeed promised that "the ancient things should pass away,"44 to be superseded by a new course of things which should arise, while Christ marks the period of the separation when He says, "The law and the prophets were until John"⁴⁵—thus making the Baptist the limit between the two dispensations of the old things then terminating—and the new things then beginning, the apostle cannot of course do otherwise, (coming as he does) in Christ, who was revealed after John, than invalidate "the old things" and confirm "the new," and yet promote thereby the faith of no other god than the Creator, at whose instance it was foretold that the ancient things should pass away. Therefore both the abrogation of the law and the establishment of the gospel help my argument even in this epistle, wherein they both have reference to the fond assumption of the Galatians, which led them to suppose that faith in Christ (the Creator's Christ, of course) was obligatory, but without annulling the law, because it still appeared to them a thing incredible that the law should be set aside by its own author. Against Marcion, 3.431.

TERTULLIAN: "The law and the prophets were until John," 46 according to the Lord. For even if we are just now beginning with the law in demonstrating the nature of adultery, it is justly with that phase of the law which Christ has "not dissolved, but fulfilled." For it is the "burdens" of the law which were "until John," not the remedial virtues. It is the "yokes" of "works" that have been rejected, not those of disciplines. "Liberty in Christ" has done no injury to innocence. The law of piety, sanctity, humanity, truth, chastity, justice, mercy, benevolence, modesty, remains in its entirety; in which law "blessed is the man who shall meditate by day and by night. 48" About that law the same David says again: "The law of the Lord is unblameable, converting souls; the statutes of the Lord are direct, delighting hearts; the precept of the Lord far-shining, enlightening eyes."49 Thus, too, the apostle: "And so the law indeed is holy, and the precept holy and most good"50—"Do not commit adultery," of course. But he had withal said above: "Are we, then, making void the law through faith? Far be it; but we are establishing the law"51—indeed in those points which, being even now interdicted by the New Testament, are prohibited by an even more emphatic precept: instead of, "Do not commit adultery," "Whoever shall have seen

⁴⁴ Cf. Isa 43:18-19; 45:17; 2 Cor 5:17

⁴⁵ Lk 16:16

⁶ Lk 16:16

⁴⁷ cf. Gal 2:4; 5:1

⁴⁸ Ps 1:2

⁴⁹ Ps 19:7-8

⁵⁰ Rom 7:12

⁵¹ Rom 3:31

with a view to lust, has already committed adultery in his own heart;" and instead of, "Do not kill," "Whoever shall have said to his brother, 'Racha,' shall be in danger of hell." Ask yourself whether the law of not committing adultery be still in force, to which has been added that of not indulging lust. *On Modesty, 4.78-79.* 52

HIPPOLYTUS: The Ebionites acknowledge that the world was made by Him Who is in reality God, but they propound legends concerning the Christ similarly with Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They live conformably to the customs of the Jews, alleging that they are justified according to the law, and saying that Jesus was justified by fulfilling the law. And therefore it was, according to the Ebionites, that the Savior was named the Christ of God and Jesus, since not one of the rest of mankind had observed completely the law. For if even any other had fulfilled the commandments contained in the law, he would have been that Christ. And the Ebionites allege that they themselves also, when in like manner they fulfill the law, are able to become Christs; for they assert that our Lord Himself was a man in a like sense with all the rest of the human family. *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 5.114.

HIPPOLYTUS: He says Himself: "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden," set. For they who keep the commandments, and do not disclaim the ordinances of the law, enjoy rest both in them and in the doctrine of our Lord. . . As the Lord says, "I have not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them." For even our Lord, in the fact that He keeps the commandments, does not destroy the law and the prophets, but fulfills them, as He says in the Gospels. *Exegetical Fragments*, 5.165.

ORIGEN: He who came to put an end to things, and to fulfill what was defective in the law, by saying, "It was said to them of old time," etc., and, again, "That the things spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled." *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.504.

ORIGEN: The "righteous requirements" of the law are a matter of its moral aspect. For "law" is a general term; righteous requirements are but a part of the law. For the law contains righteous requirements, judgments, commands, formalities, and many other categories like this. If [Paul] is not saying that the uncircumcised keeps not the law itself, but the righteous requirements of the law, then he is put so far ahead of the circumcised one who transgresses the law that he may even judge [the law]. And he has added well, "who perfects the law." For he who lives according to the letter is said to keep the law; but he

⁵² Montanist work.

⁵³ Mt 11:28

⁵⁴ Mt 26:56

⁵⁵ Rom 2:26

⁵⁶ Rom 2:25

who lives according to the spirit perfects it. The perfection of the law takes place in Christ, who said, "I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." Now to fulfill the law means to perfect the law. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁵⁷

ORIGEN: It is not the same thing to say, "we set aside the law," 58 and, "the law is set aside." Thus in the present passage Paul is declaring that he himself does not set aside the law. For even if the law is set aside through the glory which surpasses it, 59 it is not set aside through Paul or through any other saint. This is also why the Lord was saying, "I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." No saint then, not even the Lord himself, sets aside the law, but its temporal and transient glory is set aside and surpassed by the eternal and abiding glory. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. 60

ORIGEN: If we love this neighbor, we are fulfilling the entire law and all the commandments by his love. ⁶¹ "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe." ⁶² It is absolutely impossible for one who loves Christ with his whole heart and with all his inner being ⁶³ to do anything displeasing to Christ. For the one who loves him not only does not commit murder, which is prohibited by the law, but he does not become angry with his brother ⁶⁴ because he whom he loves takes delight in this. And not only does he not commit adultery, but he does not look at a woman in order to desire her. ⁶⁵ But instead he says to him, "My soul desires and faints for the living God." ⁶⁶ When would one who loves Christ, who has even abandoned everything he owns to follow Christ, think about stealing? ⁶⁷ On what occasion does the one who loves Christ bear false testimony, when he knows that the one he loves was betrayed by false testimony? ⁶⁸ He who loves Christ inevitably loves his neighbor as well. ⁶⁹ For a

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 145-146. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁵⁸ Cf. Rom 3:31

⁵⁹ 2 Cor 3:10

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⁶¹ Cf. Rom 13:10

⁶² Rom 10:4

⁶³ Cf. Deut 6:5; Mt 22:37

⁶⁴ Cf. Exod 20:13; Mt 5:21-22

⁶⁵ Cf. Mt 5:27-28

⁶⁶ Cf. Ps 84:2

⁶⁷ Cf. Mt 19:27; Lk 5:11, 28; 14:33

⁶⁸ Cf. Exod 20:16; Mt 26:59

⁶⁹ Cf. 1 Jn 4:20-21

disciple is marked as belonging to Christ by this proof alone, if he loves his neighbors. ⁷⁰ For it is certain that he who does not love his neighbor does not know Christ. ⁷¹ Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. ⁷²

ARCHELAUS: Moreover, from the creation of the world God has always been with righteous men, and has never ceased to require their blood at the hands of the wicked, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias. 73 From what source did righteous Abel and all those succeeding worthy men, who are enrolled among the righteous, derive their righteousness when there was not yet the law of Moses, and when the prophets had not yet arisen and discharged the functions of prophecy? Were they not constituted righteous in virtue of their fulfilling the law, "every one of them showing the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing them witness?"⁷⁴ For when a man "who does not have the law does naturally the things contained in the law, he, not having the law, is a law to himself."75 And consider now the multitude of laws thus existing among the several righteous men who lived a life of uprightness, at one time discovering for themselves the law of God implanted in their hearts, at another learning of it from their parents, and yet again being instructed in it further by the ancients and the elders. But inasmuch as only few were able to rise by this medium to the height of righteousness, that is to say, by means of the traditions of parents, when as yet there was no law embodied in writing, God had compassion on the race of man, and was pleased to give through Moses a written law to men, since verily the equity of the natural law failed to be retained in all its perfection in their hearts. In consonance, therefore, with man's first creation, a written legislation was prepared which was given through Moses in behoof of the salvation of very many. For if we reckon that man is justified without the works of the law, and if Abraham was counted righteous, how much more shall those obtain righteousness who have fulfilled the law which contains the things that are expedient for men? The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6,201.

ARCHELAUS: There is the law of Moses that in this world that does not give pardon to the offender; and there is the law of Christ that punishes in the future world. From this, therefore, mark how He confirms the law, not only not destroying it, but fulfilling it. *The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, 6.204.

⁷⁰ Jn 13:35

⁷¹ Cf. 1 Jn 4:8

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 230. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁷³ Mt 13:35

⁷⁴ Rom 2:15

⁷⁵ Rom 2:14

5:18 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: I could adduce ten thousand Scriptures of which not "one tittle shall pass away," without being fulfilled; for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, has spoken these things. *Exhortation to the Heathen*, *2.195.*

ORIGEN: But the "**one dot**" is not only the iota of the Greeks but also that which among the Hebrews is called the yod. And the "**one iota**" or "**one dot**" can symbolically be said to be Jesus, since the beginning of his name is written not only by Greeks with an iota but also by Hebrews with a yod. So Jesus will be the one dot, the Word of God in the law which does not pass from the law until all is accomplished. *Fragment 99*⁷⁶

5:19 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He is a Christian, who is after the image and likeness of God, who imitates God as far as possible, deficient in none of the things which contribute to the likeness as far as compatible, practicing self-restraint and endurance, living righteously, reigning over the passions, bestowing of what he has as far as possible, and doing good both by word and deed. "**He is the greatest**," it is said, "**in the kingdom who shall do and teach**;" imitating God in conferring like benefits. *The Stromata*, 2.369.

CYPRIAN: It behooves us to obey and do that which Christ did, and what He commanded to be done, since He Himself says in the Gospel, "If you do whatsoever I command you, from now on I don't call you servants, but friends." And that Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father also testifies from heaven, saying, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him." Therefore, if Christ alone must be heard, we ought not to give heed to what another before us may have thought was to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did. Neither is it becoming to follow the practice of man, but the truth of God; since God speaks by Isaiah the prophet, and says, "In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men." And again the Lord in the Gospel repeats this same saying, and says, "You reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition." Moreover, in another place He establishes it, saying, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Epistles of Cyprian, 5.362.

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:56. Taken from Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 4441-4447. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

⁷⁷ Jn 15:14-15

⁷⁸ Mt 17:5

⁷⁹ Isa 29:13

⁸⁰ Mk 7:13

CYPRIAN: All which things, most brave and faithful soldiers of Christ, you have suggested to your brethren, fulfilling in deeds what you have previously taught in words, hereafter to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, as the Lord promises and says, "Whosoever shall do and teach so, shall be called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." *Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.404.

CYPRIAN: To put on the name of Christ, and not to go in the way of Christ, what else is it but a mockery of the divine name, but a desertion of the way of salvation; since He Himself teaches and says that he shall come unto life who keeps His commandments, and that he is wise who hears and does His words; that he, moreover, is called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven who thus does and teaches; that, then, will be of advantage to the preacher what has been well and usefully preached, if what is uttered by his mouth is fulfilled by deeds following? *The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.494*.

CYPRIAN: We must labor not with words, but with deeds. In Solomon, in Ecclesiasticus: "Do not be hasty with your tongue, and in your deeds useless and remiss." And Paul, in the first to the Corinthians: "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Also to the Romans: "Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Also in the Gospel according to Matthew: "He who shall do and teach so, shall be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Also in the same place: "Every one who hears my words, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it did not fall: because it was founded upon a rock. And every one who hears my words, and does not do them, I will liken him to the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and its ruin became great." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.554.

LACTANTIUS: For the things which you teach cannot have any weight unless you shall be the first to practice them. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.125.

5:20 JUSTIN MARTYR: For He exhorted His disciples to surpass the pharisaic way of living, with the warning, that if they did not, they might be sure they could not be saved; and these words are recorded in the memoirs: "Unless your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.252.*

JUSTIN MARTYR [Addressed to Jews]: Furthermore, I have proved in what has preceded, that those who were foreknown to be unrighteous, whether men or angels, are not made wicked by God's fault, but each man by his own fault is

⁸¹ Sir 4:29

^{82 1} Cor 4:20

⁸³ Rom 2:13

what he will appear to be.

But that you may not have a pretext for saying that Christ must have been crucified, and that who transgressed must have been among your nation, and that the matter could not have been otherwise, I said briefly by anticipation, that God, wishing men and angels to follow His will, resolved to create them free to do righteousness; possessing reason, that they may know by whom they are created, and through whom they, not existing formerly, do now exist; and with a law that they should be judged by Him, if they do anything contrary to right reason: and of ourselves we, men and angels, shall be convicted of having acted sinfully, unless we repent beforehand. But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be certainly punished, it did so because it foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, but not because God had created them so. So that if they repent, all who wish for it can obtain mercy from God: and the Scripture foretells that they shall be blessed, saying, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin;"84 that is, having repented of his sins, that he may receive remission of them from God; and not as you deceive yourselves, and some others who resemble you in this, who say, that even though they be sinners, but know God, the Lord will not impute sin to them. We have as proof of this the one fall of David, which happened through his boasting, which was forgiven then when he so mourned and wept, as it is written. 85 But if even to such a man no remission was granted before repentance, and only when this great king, and anointed one, and prophet, mourned and conducted himself so, how can the impure and utterly abandoned, if they do not weep, and do not mourn, and do not repent, entertain the hope that the Lord will not impute to them sin? And this one fall of David, in the matter of Uriah's wife, proves that the patriarchs had many wives, not to commit fornication, but that a certain dispensation and all mysteries might be accomplished by them; since, if it were allowable to take any wife, or as many wives as one chooses, and how he chooses, which the men of your nation do over all the earth, wherever they sojourn, or wherever they have been sent, taking women under the name of marriage, much more would David have been permitted to do this." Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.269-270.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Christian, then, is impressed with the closest likeness, that is, with the mind of the Master; which He being possessed of, commanded and recommended to His disciples and to the prudent. Comprehending this, as He who taught wished, and receiving it in its grand sense, he teaches worthily "on the housetops" those capable of being built to a lofty height; and begins the doing of what is spoken, in accordance with the example of life. For He enjoined what is possible. And, in truth, the kingly man and Christian ought to be ruler and leader. For we are commanded to be lords over not only the wild beasts without us, but also over the wild passions within

⁸⁴ Ps 32:2; Rom 4:6, 8

^{85 2} Sam 12:13-14

⁸⁶ Mt 10:27; Lk 12:3

CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW —MATTHEW 5:17-20

ourselves.

Through the knowledge, then, as appears, of a bad and good life is the Christian saved, understanding and executing "more than the scribes and Pharisees." *The Stromata*, 2.506-507.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: After abandoning idols, then, the Greeks will hear the Scripture, "Unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (who justified themselves in the way of abstinence from what was evil),—so as, along with such perfection as they reveal, and "the loving of your neighbor," to be able also to do good, you shall not "be kingly." *The Stromata*, 2.519.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Those who think they are superior to others by their nobility of birth ought to be superior to them also in their moral characters, that they may escape incarceration in the prison. For indeed as the Lord said: "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of God." On Marriage.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4.33, Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 55. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

Murder Begins in the Heart Matthew 5:21-26

^[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: EXOD 20:13; DEUT 5:17

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. LEV 19:17; EPH 4:26-27, 31-32; 1 JN 2:9; 3:14-15; 4:20-21

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; HEB 13:10; REV 6:9

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

^[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. LK 12:58

^[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. LK 12:59

SUMMARY: Instead of, "Do not kill" (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), Christ prohibited anger (IRENAEUS). Anger leads the way to murder (THE DIDACHE). All anger is forbidden us (TERTULLIAN). He that wishes to commit murder is a murderer, although he is unable to kill (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). To give assent to sin is already a completed evil, even if someone does not actually commit the deed (ORIGEN). "The altar" refers to a place of sacrifice. There is one

Eucharist, one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, one cup, and one altar (IGNATIUS). Our sacrifice is our prayers (IRENAEUS, ORIGEN, VICTORINUS) and the altar is in heaven (IRENAEUS, VICTORINUS). The altar that is with us here is the congregation of those who devote themselves to prayer (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). According to CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, "the adversary" may be a reference to Satan. Tertullian understood "the prison" to be Hades, and interpreted "the uttermost farthing" to mean the very smallest offense.

5:21ff IRENAEUS: Moreover, this impious opinion of theirs [Gnostics] with respect to actions—namely, that it is incumbent on them to have experience of all kinds of deeds, even the most abominable—is refuted by the teaching of the Lord, with whom not only is the adulterer rejected, but also the man who desires to commit adultery; and not only is the actual murderer held guilty of having killed another to his own damnation, but the man also who is angry with his brother without a cause: who commanded His disciples not only not to hate men, but also to love their enemies; and enjoined them not only not to swear falsely, but not even to swear at all; and not only not to speak evil of their neighbors, but not even to style any one "Raca" and "fool;" declaring that otherwise they were in danger of hell-fire; and not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek to those that maltreated them; and not only not to refuse to give up the property of others, but even if their own were taken away, not to demand it back again from those that took it; and not only not to injure their neighbors, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those that injured them, and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others. Against Heresies, 1.408.

IRENAEUS: Instead of that which runs thus, "Do not kill," He prohibited anger. *Against Heresies*, 1.477.

TATIAN: You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "Do not kill; and every one that kills is worthy of the judgement." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause is worthy of the judgement; and every one that says to his brother, "You foul one," is condemned by the synagogue; and whoever says to him, "You fool," is worthy of the fire of Gehenna. If you are now offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has any grudge against you, leave your gift at the altar, and go first and satisfy your brother, and then return and offer your gift. Join your adversary quickly, and while you are still with him in the way, give a ransom and free yourself from him; lest your adversary delivers you to the judge, and the judge delivers you to the tax-collector, and you fall into prison. And truly I say to you, you shall not get

Lk 12:58

out from there until you pay the last penny. The Diatessaron, 9.57.

TERTULLIAN: The memory of God's precepts paves for our prayers a way into heaven; of which precepts the chief is, that we do not go up to God's altar² before we compose whatever of discord or offense we have contracted with our brethren. For what sort of deed is it to approach the peace of God without peace? The remission of debts while you retain them? How will he appease his Father who is angry with his brother, when from the beginning "all anger" is forbidden us? For even Joseph, when dismissing his brethren for the purpose of fetching their father, said, "And do not be angry in the way." He warned us, to be sure, at that time (for elsewhere our Discipline is called "the Way"), 4 that when, set in "the way" of prayer, we do not go to "the Father" with anger. After that, the Lord, "amplifying the law," openly adds the prohibition of anger against a brother to that of murder. Not even by an evil word does He permit it to be vented.⁵ Ever if we must be angry, our anger must not be maintained beyond sunset, as the apostle admonishes.⁶ But how rash is it either to pass a day without prayer, while you refuse to make satisfaction to your brother; or else, by perseverance in anger, to lose your prayer? On Prayer, 3.685.

ORIGEN: To give assent to sin is already a completed evil, even if someone does not actually commit the deed. And by this saying our Savior, hurling us away from the cause of sins, endeavors to cut sin off completely. For when this intention is not present in our souls, neither shall the action accompany it. Fragment 103.7

CYPRIAN: In Solomon in the Proverbs: "Better is a patient man than a strong man; for he who restrains his anger is better than he who takes a city." Also in the same place: "The imprudent man declares his anger on the same day, but the crafty man hides away his dishonor." Of this same thing to the Ephesians: "Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun set upon your wrath." Also in the Gospel according to Matthew: "You have heard that it was said by the ancients, Do not kill; and whoever shall kill shall be guilty of the judgment.

² Heb 13:10

³ Gen 45:24 LXX

⁴ Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23

⁵ cf. Titus 3:2; 1 Pet 3:9

⁶ Eph 4:26

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:58. Taken from *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 4700-4702. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

⁸ Prov 16:32

⁹ Prov 12:16

¹⁰ Eph 4:16

But I say to you, That every one who is angry with his brother without cause shall be guilty of the judgment." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.535.

5:22ff Editor's Note: The qualifier "without a cause" appears in Irenaeus, Tatian and Cyprian. But certain Greek manuscripts, the Gospel of the Nazarenes (2nd c.) and Origen do not contain "without a cause." This addition may have been an attempt by scribes to soften Jesus' bold assertion. ¹¹

THE DIDACHE: Do not be prone to anger, for anger leads the way to murder; neither jealous, nor quarrelsome, nor of hot temper; for out of all these murders are engendered. 7.378.

IRENAEUS: "He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." All this is declared, that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which condition a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. *Against Heresies*, 1.482.

IRENAEUS: From that Father, therefore, from whom the Son was sent to those husbandmen who slew Him, from Him also were the servants sent. ¹² But the Son, as coming from the Father with supreme authority, used to express Himself thus: "But I say to you." The servants, again, who came as from their Lord, spoke after the manner of servants, delivering a message; and they therefore used to say, "Thus says the Lord." *Against Heresies*, 1.515.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: This filthy speaking the apostle beats off, saying, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good." And again, "As is fitting for saints, do not let filthiness be named among you, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which things are not seemly, but rather giving of thanks." And if "he that calls his brother a fool be in danger of the judgment," what shall we pronounce regarding him who speaks what is foolish? Is it not written respecting such: "Whosoever shall speak an idle word, shall give an account to the Lord in the day of judgment?" And again, "By your speech you will be justified," He says, "and by your speech you will be condemned." What, then, are the salutary ear-guards, and what the regulations for slippery eyes? Conversations with the righteous, preoccupying and forearming the ears

See Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 10-11; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 37.

¹² Mt 21:33-44

¹³ Eph 4:29

¹⁴ Eph 5:3-4

¹⁵ Mt 12:36

¹⁶ Mt 12:36-37

against those that would lead away from the truth. The Instructor, 2.250-251.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Wisdom pronounces anger a wretched thing. *The Instructor*, 2.293.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He that wishes to commit murder is a murderer, although he is unable to kill. *The Stromata*, 2.424.

TERTULLIAN: He judges murder to consist even in a word of curse or of reproach, and in every impulse of anger, and in the neglect of charity toward a brother just as John teaches, that he who hates his brother is a murderer. ¹⁷ On Idolatry, 3.62.

TERTULLIAN: If concupiscence or malice have ascended into a man's heart, Jesus says it is held as a deed. *On Idolatry, 3.75*.

ORIGEN: And now, to confirm the deductions of reason by the authority of Scripture—namely, that it is our own doing whether we live rightly or not, and that we are not compelled, either by those causes which come to us from without, or, as some think, by the presence of fate—we adduce the testimony of the prophet Micah, in these words: "If it has been announced to you, O man, what is good, or what the Lord requires of you, except that you should do justice, and love mercy, and be ready to walk with the Lord your God."18 Moses also speaks as follows: "I have placed before your face the way of life and the way of death: choose what is good, and walk in it."19 Isaiah, moreover, makes this declaration: "If you are willing, and hear me, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you be unwilling, and will not hear me, the sword shall consume you; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken this."²⁰ In the Psalm, too, it is written: "If My people had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, I would have humbled her enemies to nothing;"21 by which he shows that it was in the power of the people to hear, and to walk in the ways of God. The Savior also saying, "I say to you, do not resist evildoers;" and, "Whoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment;" and, "Whoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart;" and in issuing certain other commands,—conveys no other meaning than this, that it is in our own power to observe what is commanded. And therefore we are rightly rendered liable to condemnation if we transgress those commandments which we are able to keep. De Principiis, 4.305-306.

ORIGEN: There are commands in the Gospel about which there is no doubt as to whether they are to be literally observed or not; for instance, that which says,

¹⁷ 1 Jn 3:15

¹⁸ Mic 6:8

¹⁹ Deut 30:15

²⁰ Isa 1:19-20

²¹ Ps 81:13-14

"But I say to you, whoever shall be angry with his brother," and so on; and, "But I say to you, do not swear at all." The Philocalia of Origen.²²

CYPRIAN: For since it is written, "Neither shall revilers inherit the kingdom of God," and again the Lord says in His Gospel, "Whoever shall say to his brother, "You fool;" and whoever shall say, "Raca," shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire," how can they evade the rebuke of the Lord the avenger, who heap up such expressions. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.340.

CYPRIAN: For even in the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered. God did not look at their gifts, but at their hearts, so that he was acceptable in his gift who was acceptable in his heart. Abel, peaceable and righteous in sacrificing in innocence to God, taught others also, when they bring their gift to the altar, thus to come with the fear of God, with a simple heart, with the law of righteousness, with the peace of concord. With reason did he, who was such in respect of God's sacrifice, become subsequently himself a sacrifice to God; so that he who first set forth martyrdom, and initiated the Lord's passion by the glory of his blood, had both the Lord's righteousness and His peace. Finally, such are crowned by the Lord, such will be avenged with the Lord in the day of judgment; but the quarrelsome and disunited, and he who does not have peace with his brethren, in accordance with what the blessed apostle and the Holy Scripture testifies, even if he have been slain for the name of Christ, shall not be able to escape the crime of fraternal dissension, because, as it is written, "He who hates his brother is a murderer,"24 and no murderer attains to the kingdom of heaven, nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who had rather be an imitator of Judas than of Christ. How great is the sin which cannot even be washed away by a baptism of blood—how heinous the crime which cannot be expiated by martyrdom! The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.454.

CYPRIAN: Why do you stand like Cain? For that he who is jealous of his brother, and has him in hatred, is bound by the guilt of homicide, the Apostle John declares in his epistle, saying, "Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath life abiding in him." And again: "He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now, and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because that darkness has blinded his eyes." Whosoever hates, says he, his brother, walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going. For he is going unconsciously to Gehenna, in ignorance and blindness; he is hurrying into punishment, departing, that is, from the light of Christ, who warns and says, "I am the light of the

Origen, *The Philocalia of Origen*, English Translation (1911), 1.20. This text was transcribed by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2003.

²³ 1 Cor 6:10

²⁴ 1 Jn 3:15

²⁵ 1 Jn 3:15

²⁶ 1 Jn 2:9-11

world. He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."²⁷ But he follows Christ who stands in His precepts, who walks in the way of His teaching, who follows His footsteps and His ways, who imitates that which Christ both did and taught; in accordance with what Peter also exhorts and warns, saying, "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps."²⁸ The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.494.

5:23ff THE DIDACHE: But every Lord's day,²⁹ gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: In every place and time offer to me a pure sacrifice for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations.³⁰ 7.381.

IGNATIUS: Let no man deceive himself: if any one is not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1.51.

IGNATIUS: He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure; that is, he who does anything apart from the bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience. *Epistle To The Trallians*, 1.69.

IGNATIUS: Take heed to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show forth the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to the will of God. *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, 1.81.

IRENAEUS: The offering of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. For by the gift both honor and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: "Therefore, when you offer your gift upon the altar, and remember that your brother has anything at all against you, leave your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then return and offer your gift."

And the class of offerings in general has not been set aside; for there were both offerings there among the Jews, and there are offerings here among the

²⁷ In 8:12

²⁸ 1 Pet 2:21

²⁹ Sunday

On the spiritual sense of "sacrifice," see Rom 12:1; Phil 2:17; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 2:5.

Christians. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen. For the Lord is ever one and the same; but the character of a servile offering is peculiar to itself, as is also that of freemen, in order that, by the very offerings, the indication of liberty may be set forth. For with Him there is nothing purposeless, nor without signification, nor without design. And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things hereafter; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God.³¹

For at the beginning God had respect for the gifts of Abel, because he offered with single-mindedness and righteousness; but He had no respect for the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with envy and malice, which he cherished against his brother, as God says when reproving his hidden thoughts, "Though you offer rightly, yet, if you do not divide rightly, haven't you sinned? Be at rest;" since God is not appeased by sacrifice. For if any one shall endeavor to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbor that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God;— he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an offering profit him anything, but only the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, . . . Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure. . . .

As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these services, yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of offerings, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. The altar, then, is in heaven, for our prayers and offerings are directed toward that place. *Against Heresies*, 1.484-486.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The altar, then, that is with us here, the terrestrial one, is the congregation of those who devote themselves to prayers, having as it were one common voice and one mind. *The Stromata*, 2.531.

TERTULLIAN: Does the Eucharist cancel a service devoted to God, or bind it more to God? Will not your station³⁴ be more solemn if you have stood at God's altar?

³¹ Mk 12:42-44

³² Cf. Gen 4:7 LXX

³³ Cf. Ps 51:16

Fasting on certain days was known as "stations."

On Prayer, 3.687.

TERTULLIAN: As regards the rule of peace, which is so pleasing to God, who in the world that is prone to impatience will even once forgive his brother, I will not say "seven times," or "seventy-seven times?" Who that is contemplating a lawsuit against his adversary will compose the matter by agreement, unless he first begin by lopping off chagrin, hardheartedness, and bitterness, which are in fact the poisonous outgrowths of impatience? How will you "remit, and remission shall be granted" you³⁶ if the absence of patience makes you tenacious of a wrong? No one who is at variance with his brother in his mind, will finish offering his "duteous gift at the altar," unless he first, with intent to "conciliate his brother," return to patience. If "the sun go down over our wrath," we are in jeopardy: "we are not allowed to remain one day without patience. Of Patience, 3.714.

MARK MINUCIUS FELIX: Do you think that we conceal what we worship, if we do not have temples and altars? *The Octavius of Minucius Felix, 4.193*.

ORIGEN: "If then you are offering your gift at the altar and there think you that your brother has anything at all against you, leave there your gift before the altar, and go back—first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift;" for what greater gift can be sent up to God from a rational creature than fragrant words of prayer that is offered from a conscience devoid of taint from sin? Similarly instructive is "Do not deprive one another, except by agreement for a season that you may give yourselves to prayer and may be together at another time again, in order that Satan may not have occasion to exalt over you by reason of your lack of self-restraint." 38

For prayer "as we ought" is restrained unless the marriage mysteries which claim our silence be consummated with more of solemnity and deliberation and less of passion, the "agreement" referred to in the passage obliterating the discord of passion, and destroying lack of self-restraint, and preventing Satan's malicious exultation. Yet again instructive for prayer "as we ought" is the passage: "If you are standing at prayer, forgive anything that you have against any man;" and also the passage in Paul "Any man who prays or preaches with his head covered dishonors his head, and any woman who prays or preaches with unveiled head dishonors her head" is descriptive of the right manner of prayer. On Prayer. **I

³⁵ Mt 18:21

³⁶ Lk 6:37

³⁷ Eph 4:26

³⁸ 1 Cor 7:5

³⁹ Mk 11:25

^{40 1} Cor 11:4-5

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), i.

CYPRIAN: In Malachi: "Has not one God created us? Is there not one Father of us all? Why have we certainly deserted one another?" ⁴²

Of this same thing according to John: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." Also in the same place: "This is my commandment, That you love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love than this has no man, than that one should lay down his life for his friends." Also in the same place: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Also in the same place: "Verily I say to you, That if two of you shall agree on earth concerning everything, whatever you shall ask it shall be given you from my Father which is in heaven. For wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with them."

Of this same thing in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "And I indeed, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I have given you milk for drink, not meat: for while you were yet little you were not able to bear it, neither now are you able. For you are still carnal: for where there are in you emulation, and strife, and dissensions, are you not carnal, and walk after man?" Likewise in the same place: "And if I should have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, but have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods for food, and if I should deliver up my body to be burned, but do not have charity, I avail nothing. Charity is great-souled; charity is kind; charity does not envy; charity does not deal falsely; is not puffed up; is not irritated; does not think evil; does not rejoice in injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It loves all things, believes all things, hopes all things, bears all things. Charity shall never fail." Of this same thing to the Galatians: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and accuse one another, see that you are not consumed one of another."

Of this same thing in the Epistle of John: "In this appear the children of God and the children of the devil. Whosoever is not righteous is not of God, and he who does not love his brother. For he who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." Also in the same place: "If any one shall say that he loves God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he who does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he does not see?" 50

Of this same thing in the Acts of the Apostles: "But the multitude of them that had believed acted with one soul and mind: nor was there among them any

⁴² Mal 2:10

⁴³ Jn 14:27

⁴⁴ Jn 15:12

⁴⁵ Mt 18:19-20

^{46 1} Cor 3:1-3

⁴⁷ 1 Cor 13:2-8

⁴⁸ Gal 5:14-15

⁴⁹ 1 Jn 3:10,15

⁵⁰ 1 Jn 4:20

distinction, neither did they esteem as their own anything of the possessions that they had; but all things were common to them."51

Of this same thing in the Gospel according to Matthew: If you would offer your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you; leave your gift before the altar, and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift at the altar."

Also in the Epistle of John: "God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." Also in the same place: "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is a liar, and walks in darkness even until now." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.533.

VICTORINUS: "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain." John relates that he saw under the altar of God, that is, under the earth, the souls of them that were slain. For both heaven and earth are called God's altar, as the law says, commanding in the symbolical form of the truth two altars to be made,—a golden one within, and a brazen one without. But we perceive that the golden altar is thus called heaven, by the testimony that our Lord bears to it; for He says, "When you bring your gift to the altar" (assuredly our gifts are the prayers which we offer), "and there remember that your brother has anything at all against you, leave your gift before the altar." Assuredly prayers ascend to heaven. Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John, 7.351.

5:25ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: It is said, "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him." The adversary is not the body, as some would have it, but the devil, and those assimilated to him, who walks along with us in the person of men, who emulate his deeds in this earthly life. It is inevitable, then, that those who confess themselves to belong to Christ, but find themselves in the midst of the devil's works, suffer the most hostile treatment. For it is written, "Lest he deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officers of Satan's kingdom." "For I am persuaded that neither death," through the assault of persecutors, "nor life" in this world, "nor angels," the apostate ones, "nor powers" (and Satan's power is the life which he chose, for such are the powers and principalities of darkness belonging to him), "nor things present," amid which we exist during the time of life, as the hope entertained by the soldier, and the merchant's gain, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," in consequence of the energy proper to a man,—opposes the faith of him who acts according to free choice. "Creature" is synonymous with activity, being our work, and such activity "shall not be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."55 You have got a

⁵¹ Acts 4:32

⁵² 1 Jn 4:16

⁵³ 1 Jn 2:9

⁵⁴ Rev 6:9

⁵⁵ Rom 8:38-39

compendious account of the Christian martyr. The Stromata, 2.426.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But the Savior himself, whom alone they think one should obey, has forbidden hatred and reviling and says: "When you go with your adversary to court, try to achieve a friendly reconciliation with him." Accordingly, they will either refuse to accept Christ's exhortation, in that they are in opposition to the adversary, or they will become his friends and cease to oppose him. *The Stromata*. 56

TERTULLIAN: In short, inasmuch as we understand "**the prison**" pointed out in the Gospel to be Hades, and as we also interpret "**the uttermost farthing**" to mean the very smallest offense which has to be recompensed there before the resurrection, no one will hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline, without prejudice to the full process of the resurrection, when the recompense will be administered through the flesh besides. *A Treatise on the Soul*, 3.235.⁵⁷

TERTULLIAN: For the Judge, who commits to prison, and allows no release out of it without the payment of "the very last mite," they treat of in the person of the Creator, with the view of disparaging Him. Which petty objection, however, I deem it necessary to meet with the same answer. For as often as the Creator's severity is paraded before us, so often is Christ (shown to be) His, to whom He urges submission by the motive of fear. *Against Marcion*, 3.399.

ORIGEN: In this life, this way traveled by all, you do well to accept and not ignore the suggestions of the conscience. But if you are inconsiderate and negligent in this life, conscience itself, assuming the role of a prosecutor, will accuse you before the judge. Conscience will subject to the juryman's decision, and you will be handed over to incurable punishments. Such things you would not have suffered, if along the way you had in fact acquired goodwill toward your accuser, accepting his reproaches as offered out of goodwill. For this also the divine Evangelist John says in his letter: "If our conscience does not condemn us, we have confidence before God." Fragment 102.60

Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4.36, Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 56. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁵⁷ Montanist work.

⁵⁸ Lk 12:58-59

⁵⁹ 1 Jn 3:21

⁶⁰ Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:58. Taken from *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 5134-5139. Used with permission of

5:26 THE DIDACHE: Happy is he that gives according to the commandment; for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receives; for if one having need receives, he is guiltless; but he that receives not having need, shall pay the penalty, why he received and for what, and, coming into imprisonment, he shall be examined concerning the things which he has done, and he shall not escape from there until he pay back the last farthing. 61 7.377.

TERTULLIAN: For who is there that will not desire, while he is in the flesh, to put on immortality, and to continue his life by a happy escape from death, through the transformation which must be experienced instead of it, without encountering too that Hades which will exact the very last farthing? Notwithstanding, he who has already traversed Hades is destined also to obtain the change after the resurrection. For from this circumstance it is that we definitively declare that the flesh will by all means rise again. *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, 3.575.

ORIGEN: Mark with me that each deed which is good or seemly is like a gain and an increment, but a wicked deed is like a loss; and as there is a certain gain when the money is greater and another when it is less, and as there are differences of more or less, so according to the good deeds, there is as it were a valuing of gains more or less. To reckon what work is a great gain, and what a less gain, and what a least, is the prerogative of him who alone knows to investigate such things, looking at them in the light of the disposition, and the word, and the deed, and from consideration of the things which are not in our power cooperating with those that are; and so also in the case of things opposite, it is his to say what sin, when a reckoning is made with the servants, is found to be a great loss, and what is less, and what, if we may so call it, is the loss of the very last mite, 62 or the last farthing. The account, therefore, of the entire and whole life is exacted by that which is called the kingdom of heaven which is likened to a king, when "we must all stand before the judgment-sent of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad"63 and then when the reckoning is being made, shall there be brought into the reckoning that is made also every idle word that men shall speak, 64 and any cup of cold water only which one has given to drink in the name of a disciple. 65 Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.499.

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⁶¹ A farthing is a quadrans (about the fourth part of an "as"); in the NT a coin equal to one half the Attic chalcus worth about 3/8 of a cent.

⁶² Lk 12:59

^{63 2} Cor 5:10

⁶⁴ Mt 12:36

⁶⁵ Mt 10:42

Adultery in the Heart Matthew 5:27-30

 $^{[27]}$ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: $^{\rm EXOD\,20:14;\,DEUT\,5:18}$

¹²⁸ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. ^{2 PET} ^{2:14}

thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. MK 9:47-48 [30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut if off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. MK 9:43-46

SUMMARY: Instead of that commandment, "Do not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18), the Lord forbids even lust (Irenaeus). The Lord teaches us not only not to sin in act, but even in thought (Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria). Lust leads the way to fornication and adultery (The Didache). He who wishes to commit adultery is an adulterer, although he does not succeed in committing adultery (Clement of Alexandria). He who looks upon a woman, even though he escapes the temptation, does not come away pure of all lust (Hippolytus). It is not lawful among Christians to indulge in a lustful look (Athenagoras). These precepts are to be literally observed (Origen). We shall give account to God not of deeds only, but even of our thoughts (Irenaeus, Hermas, Clement of Alexandria). The mind is polluted by the desire, though unaccomplished (Lactantius). Better is the kingdom of God to a man with one eye, than the fire to one who is unmutilated

(CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). We cannot take literally the passage in the Gospel in which the right eye is said to cause one to stumble (ORIGEN). Hell is the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly (POLYCARP), a place where those are to be punished who have lived wickedly (JUSTIN MARTYR), eternal fire (IRENAEUS), a reservoir of secret fire under the earth for purposes of punishment (TERTULLIAN), a place of eternal punishment (ORIGEN, CYPRIAN).

5:27ff IRENAEUS: Moreover, this impious opinion of theirs [the heretics] with respect to actions—namely, that it is incumbent on them to have experience of all kinds of deeds, even the most abominable—is refuted by the teaching of the Lord, with whom not only is the adulterer rejected, but also the man who desires to commit adultery. *Against Heresies*, 1.408.

IRENAEUS: The Lord, instead of that commandment, "**Do not commit adultery**," forbids even lust. *Against Heresies*, 1.477.

TATIAN: You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery:" but I now say to you, that everyone that looks at a woman lusting after her has forthwith already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye injure you, put it out and cast it from you; for it is preferable for you that one of your members should perish, and not your whole body go into the fire of hell. And if your right hand injure you, cut it off and cast it from you; and it is better for you that one of your members should perish, and not your whole body fall into Gehenna. *The Diatessaron*, 9.57.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The man of understanding will find out the particular Scripture which deals with each individual heresy, and at the right time will quote it to refute those who teach doctrines contrary to the commandments. Right from the beginning the law, as we have already said, lays down the command, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife," long before the Lord's closely similar utterance in the New Testament,-where the same idea is expressed in his own mouth: "You have heard that the law commanded, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say, you shall not lust." That the law intended husbands to cohabit with their wives with self-control and only for the purpose of begetting children is evident from the prohibition which forbids the unmarried man from having immediate sexual relations with a captive woman. If the man has conceived a desire for her, he is directed to mourn for thirty days while she is to have her hair cut;2 if after this the desire has not passed off, then they may proceed to beget children, because the appointed period enables the overwhelming impulse to be tested and to become a rational act of will. On Marriage.³

¹ Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21

² Deut 21:10-25

³ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.11.71. Extract from The Library of

5:28ff Editor's Note: A textual variant "everyone looking at a woman with lust" has early testimony, also in Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria.⁴ But the majority of the writers below do not provide witness to the variant reading, neither does the variation detract from the meaning.

THE DIDACHE: Do not be lustful; for lust leads the way to fornication; neither a filthy talker, nor of lofty eye; for out of all these adulteries are caused. 7.378.

JUSTIN MARTYR: Concerning chastity, He uttered such sentiments as these: "Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart before God." And, "If your right eye offends you, cut it out; for it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire." The First Apology, 1.167.

IRENAEUS: "He who has looked upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart;" . . . All this is declared, that we may know that we shall give account to God not of deeds only, as slaves, but even of words and thoughts, as those who have truly received the power of liberty, in which condition a man is more severely tested, whether he will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord. *Against Heresies*, 1.482.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH: And concerning chastity, the holy word teaches us not only not to sin in act, but not even in thought, not even in the heart to think of any evil, nor look on another man's wife with our eyes to lust after her. Solomon, accordingly, who was a king and a prophet, said: "Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you: make straight paths for your feet." And the voice of the Gospel teaches still more urgently concerning chastity, saying: "Whosoever looks on a woman who is not his own wife, to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart." To Autolycus, 2.115.

ATHENAGORAS: We are so far from practicing promiscuous intercourse, that it is not lawful among us to indulge even a lustful look. "For," He says, "he that looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery already in his heart." Those, then, who are forbidden to look at anything more than that for

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⁴ See Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 12; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 38.

⁵ Prov 4:25

which God formed the eyes, which were intended to be a light to us, and to whom a wanton look is adultery, the eyes being made for other purposes, and who are to be called to account for their very thoughts, how can any one doubt that such persons practice self-control? For our account lies not with human laws, which a bad man can evade, . . . but we have a law which makes the measure of rectitude to consist in dealing with our neighbor as ourselves. A Plea for the Christians, 2.146.

ATHENAGORAS: On behalf of those, then, to whom we apply the names of brothers and sisters, and other designations of relationship, we exercise the greatest care that their bodies should remain undefiled and uncorrupted; for the Logos again says to us, "If any one kiss⁶ a second time because it has given him pleasure, he sins;" adding, "Therefore the kiss, or rather the salutation, should be given with the greatest care, since, if there be mixed with it the least defilement of thought, it excludes us from eternal life." A Plea for the Christians, 2.146.

HERMAS: He who had brought me up, sold me to one Rhode in Rome. Many years after this I recognized her, and I began to love her as a sister. Some time after, I saw her bathe in the river Tiber; and I gave her my hand, and drew her out of the river. The sight of her beauty made me think with myself, "I should be a happy man if I could but get a wife as attractive and good as she is." This was the only thought that passed through me: this and nothing more. A short time after this, as I was walking on my road to the villages, and magnifying the creatures of God, and thinking how magnificent, and beautiful, and powerful they are, I fell asleep. And the Spirit carried me away, and took me through a pathless place, through which a man could not travel, for it was situated in the midst of rocks; it was rugged and impassible on account of water. Having passed over this river, I came to a plain. I then bent down on my knees, and began to pray to the Lord, and to confess my sins.

And as I prayed, the heavens were opened, and I see the woman whom I had desired saluting me from the sky, and saying, "Hail, Hermas!"

And looking up to her, I said, "Lady, what are you doing here?"

And she answered me, "I have been taken up here to accuse you of your sins before the Lord."

"Lady," I said, "are you to be the subject of my accusation?"

"No," she said, "but hear the words which I am going to speak to you. God, who dwells in the heavens, and made out of nothing the things that exist, and multiplied and increased them on account of His holy Church, is angry with you for having sinned against me."

I answered her, "Lady, have I sinned against you? How? Or when did I speak an unseemly word to you? Did I not always think of you as a lady? Did I not always respect you as a sister? Why do you falsely accuse me of this

⁶ The "holy kiss" or "kiss of love" is mentioned in Scripture: Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14.

Probably from some apocryphal writing.

wickedness and impurity?"

With a smile she replied to me, "The desire of wickedness arose within your heart. Is it not your opinion that a righteous man commits sin when an evil desire arises in his heart? There is sin in such a case, and the sin is great," she said, "for the thoughts of a righteous man should be righteous. For by thinking righteously his character is established in the heavens, and he has the Lord merciful to him in every business. But such as entertain wicked thoughts in their minds are bringing upon themselves death and captivity; and especially is this the case with those who set their affections on this world, and glory in their riches, and don't look forward to the blessings of the life to come. For many will their regrets be; for they have no hope, but have despaired of themselves and their life. But do pray to God, and He will heal your sins, and the sins of your whole house, and of all the saints." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *2.9-10*.

HERMAS: "I charge you," said he, "to guard your chastity, and let no thought enter your heart of another man's wife, or of fornication, or of similar iniquities; for by doing this you commit a great sin. But if you always remember your own wife, you will never sin. For if this thought enter your heart, then you will sin; and if, in like manner, you think other wicked thoughts, you commit sin. For this thought is great sin in a servant of God. But if any one commit this wicked deed, he works death for himself. Attend, therefore, and refrain from this thought; for where purity dwells, there iniquity ought not to enter the heart of a righteous man." *The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.21*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: [Addressed to pagans:] And of what kind, on the other hand, are your other images? Diminutive Pans, and naked girls, and drunken Satyrs, and phallic tokens, painted naked in pictures disgraceful for filthiness. And more than this: you are not ashamed in the eyes of all to look at representations of all forms of licentiousness which are portrayed in public places, but set them up and guard them with scrupulous care, consecrating these pillars of shamelessness at home, as if, indeed, they were the images of your gods. . . . Not only the use of these, but the sight of them, and the very hearing of them, we denounce as deserving the doom of oblivion. Your ears are debauched, your eyes commit fornication, your looks commit adultery before you embrace. § Exhortation to the Heathen, 2.189.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "**Do not lust, for by lust alone you have committed adultery**." How much better, therefore, is it for men from the beginning not to wish to desire things forbidden, than to obtain their desires! *Exhortation to the Heathen*, 2.202.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Much more must we keep pure from shameful deeds: on the one hand, from exhibiting and exposing parts of the body which we ought

⁸ Cf. 2 Pet 2:14

not; and on the other, from beholding what is forbidden. The Instructor, 2.251.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Men, therefore, affording to women a noble example of truth, ought to be ashamed at their stripping before them, and guard against these dangerous sights; "for he who has looked curiously," it is said, "has sinned already." At home, therefore, they ought to regard with modesty parents and domestics. *The Instructor*, 2.279.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Above all, it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women. For it is sin not only to touch, but to look; and he who is rightly trained must especially avoid them. "Let your eyes look straight, and your eyelids wink right." For while it is possible for one who looks to remain stedfast; yet care must be taken against falling. For it is possible for one who looks to slip; but it is impossible for one who does not look to lust. For it is not enough for the chaste to be pure; but they must give all diligence, to be beyond the range of criticism, shutting out all ground of suspicion, in order to the consummation of chastity; so that we may not only be faithful, but appear worthy of trust. For this is also consequently to be guarded against, as the apostle says, "that no man should blame us; providing things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." But turn away your eyes from a graceful woman, and contemplate not another's beauty," says the Scripture. 11 And if you require the reason, it will further tell you, "For by the beauty of woman many have gone astray, and at it affection blazes up like fire;"12 the affection which arises from the fire which we call love, leading to the fire which will never cease in consequence of sin. The Instructor, 2.291.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Christian, therefore, will abstain from errors in speech, and thought, and sensation, and action, having heard "that he that looks so as to lust has committed adultery." *The Stromata*, 2.359.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "And he that looks so as to lust" is judged. Therefore it is said, "You shall not lust." *The Stromata*, 2.361.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He who wishes to commit adultery is an adulterer, although he does not succeed in committing adultery. *The Stromata*, *2.424*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Lord has said: "**But I say unto you, you shall not lust**." How then can he live according to God's will who surrenders himself to every desire? *On Marriage*.¹⁴

⁹ Prov 4:25

^{10 2} Cor 8:20-21

¹¹ Sir 9:8

¹² Sir 9:8

¹³ Exod 20:17

¹⁴ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4:33. Extract from The Library of

TERTULLIAN: The Christian husband has nothing to do with any but his own wife. Democritus, in putting out his eyes, because he could not look on women without lusting after them, and was pained if his passion was not satisfied, owns plainly, by the punishment he inflicts, his lack of self-restraint. But a Christian with grace-healed eyes is sightless in this matter; he is mentally blind against the assaults of passion. *The Apology*, 3.51.

TERTULLIAN: He defines adultery to consist even in lust, "if one shall have cast an eye lustfully on," and stirred his soul with immodest commotion. On Idolatry, 3.62

TERTULLIAN: We were not given eyes to lust, and the tongue for speaking evil, and ears to be the receptacle of evil speech, and the throat to serve the vice of gluttony, and the belly to be gluttony's ally, and the genitals for unchaste excesses, and hands for deeds of violence, and the feet for an erring life. *The Shows*, 3.80.

TERTULLIAN: How does the Lord demonstrate Himself as adding a superstructure to the law, except by prohibiting sins of the will as well as other sins; while He defines not only the man who had actually invaded another's wedlock to be an adulterer, but likewise him who had contaminated a woman by the lust of his gaze? Accordingly it is dangerous enough for the mind to set before itself what it is forbidden to perform, and rashly through the will to perfect its execution. And since the power of this will is such that, even without fully satisfying its selfgratification, it stands for a deed; as a deed, therefore, it shall be punished. It is utterly vain to say, "I willed, but yet I did not do." Rather you ought to carry the thing through, because you will; or else not to will, because you do not carry it through. But, by the confession of your consciousness, you pronounce your own condemnation. For if you eagerly desired a good thing, you would have been anxious to carry it through; in like manner, as you do not carry an evil thing through, you ought not to have eagerly desired it. Wherever you take your stand, you are fast bound by guilt; because you have either willed evil, or else have not fulfilled good. On Repentance, 3.659.

HIPPOLYTUS: For he who looks upon a woman, even though he escape the temptation, does not come away pure of all lust. And why should one have trouble, if he can be chaste and free of trouble? See what Job says: "I made a covenant with my eyes, that I should not think of another's wife." Thus well does he know the power of abuse. And Paul for this reason kept "under his body,

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¹⁵ Job 31:1

and brought it into subjection." ¹⁶ And, figuratively speaking, he keeps a fire in his breast who permits an impure thought to dwell in his heart. And he walks upon coals who, by sinning in act, destroys his own soul. *Exegetical Fragments*, 5.173.

ORIGEN: The Savior said, "Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart;" and in issuing certain other commands, conveys no other meaning than this, that it is in our own power to observe what is commanded. And therefore we are rightly rendered liable to condemnation if we transgress those commandments which we are able to keep. *De Principiis*, 4.305.

ORIGEN: And with respect to the precepts enjoined in the Gospels, no doubt can be entertained that very many of these are to be literally observed, as, for example, when our Lord says, . . . "Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart." De Principiis, 4.368.

ORIGEN: Suppose chastity should begin with the inner man. It will undoubtedly extend to the outer, for it is impossible for someone who does not previously commit adultery in his heart to be able to commit adultery with his body. But if chastity begins in the outer man, it does not immediately pass as well into inner self control, as if the one who avoids committing adultery in the body will be free from adultery in his heart. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.* ¹⁷

ORIGEN: Judaic boasting is excluded, not through the law of works but through the law of faith, which is in Christ Jesus, in whose cross the Apostle boasts. ¹⁸ For who will legitimately boast about his own chastity when he reads what is written, "anyone who has looked at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"? Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. ¹⁹

LACTANTIUS: This also is added for the completion of chastity, that there should be an absence not only of the offense, but even of the thought. For it is evident that the mind is polluted by the desire, though unaccomplished; and so that a just

^{16 1} Cor 9:27

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 163-164. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

¹⁸ Cf. Rom 3:27-28

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 229. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

man ought neither to do, nor to wish to do, that which is unjust. Therefore the conscience must be cleansed; for God, who cannot be deceived, inspects it. The breast must be cleared from every stain, that it may be a temple of God, which is enlightened not by the gleam of gold or ivory, but by the brightness of faith and purity. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 7.251.

5:29ff Editor's Note: "Be cast into hell." Hell is mentioned three times in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:22, 29, 30). Translated as "hell" in these verses, *Gehenna* is one of three Greek words that are translated as "hell" in the KJV. The other two are *Tartarus*, found only in 2 Peter 2:4, and *Hades*, the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word *Sheol* in the Old Testament (cf. Ps 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31). However, these words would be better understood if they were not all translated "hell." According to the early Christians, these were different places. *Gehenna* is the lake of fire, the place of eternal punishment after the resurrection, whereas *Hades* is an intermediate place where souls await the resurrection. Jesus also referred to Paradise (Luke 23:43) or Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22, 23) as a part of *Hades*. And *Hades* has also been translated "grave" (1 Corinthians 15:55; cf. Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:22-27, 31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14). The following quotations reflect what the early Christians believed about Gehenna, translated "hell" in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP: But again the proconsul said to him, "I will cause you to be consumed by fire, seeing that you despise the wild beasts, if you will not repent."

But Polycarp said, "You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why do you tarry? Bring forth what you will." 1.41.

SECOND CLEMENT: And "their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched, and they shall be for a spectacle unto all flesh." He speaks of that day of judgment, when they shall see those among us that have been ungodly and acted deceitfully with the commandments of Jesus Christ. But the righteous who have done well and endured torments and hated the enjoyments of the soul, when they shall behold those that have gone astray and denied Jesus through their words or through their works, how that they are punished with grievous torments in unquenchable fire, shall be giving glory to God, saying, "There will be hope for him that has served God with his whole heart." 7.522.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And hell [Gehenna] is a place where those are to be punished who have lived wickedly, and who do not believe that those things which God has taught us by Christ will come to pass. *The First Apology, 1.169*.

²⁰ Isa 66:24

IRENAEUS: "And death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death." Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord called eternal fire. *Against Heresies*, 1.566.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The eyes especially are to be sparingly used, since it is better to slip with the feet than with the eyes. Accordingly, the Lord very summarily cures this malady: "If your eye offends you, cut it out," He says, dragging lust up from the foundation. But languishing looks, and ogling, which is to wink with the eyes, is nothing else than to commit adultery with the eyes, lust skirmishing through them. *The Instructor*, 2.288.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: You may even go against wealth. Say, "Certainly Christ does not debar me from property. The Lord does not envy." But do you see yourself overcome and overthrown by it? Leave it, throw it away, hate, renounce, flee. "Even if your right eye offends you," quickly "cut it out." Better is the kingdom of God to a man with one eye, than the fire to one who is unmutilated. Whether hand, or foot, or soul, hate it. For if it is destroyed here for Christ's sake, it will be restored to life yonder. Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?, 2.598.

TERTULLIAN: If we threaten Gehenna, which is a reservoir of secret fire under the earth for purposes of punishment, we have in the same way derision heaped on us. *On Idolatry*, 3.52.

Tertullian: Consider in your heart the hell [Gehenna] . . . and imagine first the magnitude of the penalty, that you may not hesitate about the adoption of the remedy. What do we esteem that treasure-house of eternal fire to be, when small vent-holes of it rouse such blasts of flames that neighboring cities either are already no more, or are in daily expectation of the same fate? The haughtiest mountains start asunder in the birth-throes of their inwardly gendered fire; and —which proves to us the perpetuity of the judgment—though they start asunder, though they be devoured, yet they never come to an end. *On Repentance*, 3.665.

ORIGEN: Now as we found that Gehenna was mentioned in the Gospel as a place of punishment, we searched to see whether it is mentioned anywhere in the ancient Scriptures, and especially because the Jews too use the word. And we ascertained that where the valley of the son of Hinnom was named in Scripture in the Hebrew, instead of "valley," with fundamentally the same meaning, it was termed both the valley of Hinnom and also Geenna. And continuing our researches, we find that what was termed "Geenna," or "the valley of Hinnom," was included in the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, in which Jerusalem also was situated. And seeking to ascertain what might be the inference from the heavenly

²¹ Rev 20:14

²² Cf. Jer 7:30-34; 19:1-14

Jerusalem belonging to the lot of Benjamin and the valley of Hinnom, we find a certain confirmation of what is said regarding the place of punishment, intended for the purification of such souls as are to be purified by torments, agreeably to the saying: "The Lord comes like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and of gold."²³

It is in the precincts of Jerusalem, then, that punishments will be inflicted upon those who undergo the process of purification, who have received into the substance of their soul the elements of wickedness, which in a certain place is figuratively termed "lead," and on that account iniquity is represented in Zechariah as sitting upon a "talent of lead." But the remarks which might be made on this topic are neither to be made to all, nor to be uttered on the present occasion; for it is not unattended with danger to commit to writing the explanation of such subjects, seeing the multitude need no further instruction than that which relates to the punishment of sinners; while to ascend beyond this is not expedient, for the sake of those who are with difficulty restrained, even by fear of eternal punishment, from plunging into any degree of wickedness, and into the flood of evils which result from sin. *Against Celsus*, *4.584-585*.

ORIGEN: And it is possible to apply these words also to our nearest kinsfolk, who are our members, as it were; being considered to be our members, because of the close relationship; whether by birth, or from any habitual friendship, so to speak; whom we must not spare if they are injuring our soul. For let us cut off from ourselves as a hand or a foot or an eye, a father or mother who wishes us to do that which is contrary to piety, and a son or daughter who, as far as in them lies, would have us revolt from the church of Christ and the love of Him. But even if the wife of our bosom, or a friend who is kindred in soul, become stumblingblocks to us, let us not spare them, but let us cut them out from ourselves, and cast them outside of our soul, as not being truly our kindred but enemies of our salvation; for "whoever does not hate his father, and mother," 25 and the others subjoined, when it is the fitting season to hate them as enemies and assailants, that he may be able to win Christ, this man is not worthy of the Son of God. And in respect of these we may say, that from a critical position any lame one, so to speak, is saved, when he has lost a foot—say a brother—and alone obtains the inheritance of the kingdom of God; and a maimed one is saved, when his father is not saved, but they perish, while he is separated from them, that he alone may obtain the benedictions. And so also any one is saved with one eye, who has cut out the eye of his own house, his wife, if she commit fornication, lest having two eyes he may go away into the hell of fire [Gehenna]. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.489.

ORIGEN: We cannot take literally the passage in the Gospel in which the right eye is said to cause one to stumble. For even granting the possibility of sight making

²³ Mal 3:2-3

²⁴ Zech 5:7

²⁵ Lk 14:26

any one to stumble, why, when the two eyes see, should we put the blame on the right eye. Would any man when he condemns himself for looking on a woman to lust after her, put the blame on the right eye only, and cast it from him? *The Philocalia of Origen*.²⁶

CYPRIAN: Believe Him who will call down on them that do not believe, eternal punishments in the fires of Gehenna. . . . An ever-burning Gehenna will burn up the condemned, and a punishment devouring with living flames; nor will there be any source from there at any time that they may have either respite or end to their torments. Souls with their bodies will be reserved in infinite tortures for suffering. Thus the man will be for ever seen by us who here gazed upon us for a season; and the short joy of those cruel eyes in the persecutions that they made for us will be compensated by a perpetual spectacle, according to the truth of Holy Scripture, which says, "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be for a vision to all flesh" 27 The pain of punishment will then be without the fruit of penitence; weeping will be useless, and prayer ineffectual. Too late they will believe in eternal punishment who would not believe in eternal life. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.464-465.

TREATISE ON THE GLORY OF MARTYRDOM: A horrible place, of which the name is Gehenna, with an awful murmuring and groaning of souls bewailing, and with flames belching forth through the horrid darkness of thick night, is always breathing out the raging fires of a smoking furnace, while the confined mass of flames is restrained or relaxed for the various purposes of punishment. Then there are very many degrees of its violence, as it gathers into itself whatever tortures the consuming fire of the emitted heat can supply. Those by whom the voice of the Lord has been rejected, and His control contemned, it punishes with different dooms; and in proportion to the different degree of deserving of the forfeited salvation it applies its power, while a portion assigns its due distinction to crime. ²⁸ 5.585.

Origen, The Philocalia of Origen, English Translation (1911), 1.19. Transcribed by Roger Pearse, (Ipswich, UK, 2003).

²⁷ Isa 66:24

²⁸ See also Lk 12:47-48

Marriage, Divorce and Adultery Matthew 5:31-32

[31] It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: DEUT 24:1-4; MAL 2:16

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. MT 19:3-12; LK 16:18; ROM 7:1-4; 1 COR 7:10-39

SUMMARY: Moses, a faithful servant of God, allowed the Israelites to divorce their wives for the hardness of their hearts (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), but God's institution of marriage was one man and one woman from the beginning (IRENAEUS, TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN). The early Christians differed in their understandings of the exception clause in Matthew 5:32. Some early Christians believed that a man was permitted to put away his wife for fornication (HERMAS. THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH, ORIGEN, NOVATIAN, LACTANTIUS), or adultery (TATIAN, TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN) not out of malice or bitterness, but rather with the intention of not having concord with sin, and to discipline the erring spouse in hope of leading them to repentance. Some also applied "fornication" with reference to unlawful marriages, i.e., incestuous marriage (Tertullian) or a marriage contracted after divorce from the first living spouse (IRENAEUS, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). Some did not even mention the exception clause when discussing divorce and remarriage (JUSTIN MARTYR, ATHENAGORAS, MARK MINUCIUS FELIX). Elsewhere Jesus affirmed the one-flesh union (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; cf. Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11) and the adulterous state of remarriage while the original spouse is alive (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; cf. Romans 7:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Therefore, all of the early Christian writers

forbid remarriage after divorce.

5:31ff IRENAEUS: The Lord also showed that certain precepts were enacted for them by Moses, on account of their hardness of heart, and because of their unwillingness to be obedient, when, on their saying to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to send away a wife?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he permitted these things to you; but from the beginning it was not so;" thus justifying Moses as a faithful servant, but acknowledging one God, who from the beginning made male and female, and reproving them as hard-hearted and disobedient. And therefore it was that they received from Moses this law of divorcement, adapted to their hard nature.

But why do I say these things concerning the Old Testament? For in the New Testament also are the apostles found doing this very thing, on the ground which has been mentioned, Paul plainly declaring, "But these things I say, not the Lord."² And again: "But this I speak by permission, not by commandment."³ And again: "Now, as concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." But further, in another place he says: "That Satan not tempt you for your lack of self-restraint." If, therefore, even in the New Testament, the apostles are found granting certain precepts in consideration of human infirmity, because of the lack of self-restraint of some, lest such persons, having grown obstinate, and despairing altogether of their salvation, should become apostates from God,—it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Ten Commandments, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart. Against Heresies, 1,480.

TATIAN: It was said that he that puts away his wife should give her a writing of divorce: but I say to you, that everyone that puts away his wife, except for the cause of adultery, has caused her to commit adultery: and whosoever takes one that is put away commits adultery. The Diatessaron, 9.57.

TERTULLIAN: Christ prohibits divorce, saying, "Whoever puts away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her that is put away

¹ Mt 19:8; Mk 10:14

² 1 Cor 7:12

³ 1 Cor 7:6

^{4 1} Cor 7:25

⁵ 1 Cor 7:5

from her husband, also commits adultery." In order to forbid divorce, He makes it unlawful to marry a woman that has been put away. Moses, however, permitted repudiation in Deuteronomy: "When a man has taken a wife, and has lived with her, and it come to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found unchastity in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement and put it in her hand, and send her away out of his house." You see, therefore, that there is a difference between the law and the Gospel—between Moses and Christ? To be sure there is!

But then you have rejected that other gospel which witnesses to the same verity and the same Christ. There, while prohibiting divorce, He has given us a solution of this special question respecting it: "Moses," He says, "because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to give a bill of divorcement; but from the beginning it was not so"9—for this reason, indeed, because He who had "made them male and female" had likewise said, "The two shall become one flesh; what therefore God has joined together, do not let man separate." Now, by this answer of His to the Pharisees, He both sanctioned the provision of Moses, who was His own servant, and restored to its primitive purpose the institution of the Creator, whose Christ He was. Since, however, you are to be refuted out of the Scriptures which you have received, I will meet you on your own ground, as if your Christ were mine.

When, therefore, when He prohibited divorce, and yet at the same time represented the Father, even Him who united male and female, must He not have rather absolved than abolished the enactment of Moses? But, observe, if this Christ be yours when he teaches contrary to Moses and the Creator, on the same principle must He be mine if I can show that His teaching is not contrary to them. I maintain, then, that there was a condition in the prohibition which He now made of divorce; the case supposed being, that a man put away his wife for the express purpose of marrying another. His words are: "Whoever puts away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her that is put away from her husband, also commits adultery,"11-"put away," that is, for the reason a woman ought not to be dismissed, that another wife may be obtained. For he who marries a woman who is unlawfully put away is as much of an adulterer as the man who marries one who is not divorced. Permanent is the marriage which is not rightly dissolved. Therefore, to marry while matrimony is undissolved is to commit adultery. Since, therefore, His prohibition of divorce was a conditional one, He did not prohibit absolutely; and what He did not absolutely forbid, that He permitted on some occasions, when there is an absence of the cause why He gave His prohibition. Indeed His teaching is not contrary to Moses, whose precept He partially defends, I will not

⁶ Lk 16:18

⁷ Deut 24:1

⁸ The gospel of Matthew

⁹ Mt 19:8

¹⁰ Mt 19:4.6

¹¹ Lk 16:18

say confirms.

If, however, you deny that divorce is in any way permitted by Christ, how is it that you on your side destroy marriage, not uniting man and woman, nor admitting to the sacrament of baptism and of the eucharist those who have been united in marriage anywhere else, unless they should agree together to repudiate the fruit of their marriage, and so the very Creator Himself? Well, then, what is a husband to do in your sect, if his wife commit adultery? Shall he keep her? But your own apostle, you know, does not permit "the members of Christ to be joined to a harlot." Therefore, when justly deserved, divorce has even in Christ a defender. So that Moses for the future must be considered as being confirmed by Him, since he prohibits divorce in the same sense as Christ does, if any unchastity should occur in the wife.

In the Gospel of Matthew he says, "Whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery." He also is deemed equally guilty of adultery, who marries a woman put away by her husband. The Creator, however, except on account of adultery, does not put asunder what He Himself joined together, the same Moses in another passage enacting that he who had married after violence to a damsel, should thereafter not have it in his power to put away his wife. 13 Now, if a compulsory marriage contracted after violence shall be permanent, how much rather shall a voluntary one, the result of agreement! This has the sanction of the prophet: "Do not forsake the wife of your youth."¹⁴ Thus you have Christ following spontaneously the tracks of the Creator everywhere, both in permitting divorce and in forbidding it. You also find Him protecting marriage, in whatever direction you try to escape. He prohibits divorce when He will have the marriage inviolable; He permits divorce when the marriage is spotted with unfaithfulness. You should blush when you refuse to unite those whom even your Christ has united; and repeat the blush when you disunite them without the good reason why your Christ would have them separated. I have now to show from where the Lord derived this decision of His, and to what end He directed it.

It will thus become more fully evident that His object was not the abolition of the Mosaic ordinance by any suddenly devised proposal of divorce; because it was not suddenly proposed, but had its root in the previously mentioned John the Baptist. For John reproved Herod, because he had illegally married the wife of his deceased brother, 15 who had a daughter by her (a union which the law

^{12 1} Cor 6:15

¹³ Deut 22:28-29

¹⁴ Mal 2:15

However, according to both the Jewish historian Josephus and the Church historian Eusebius, Herod's brother Philip was *not deceased*. Josephus recorded, "About this time Aretas [the king of Arabia Petres] and Herod had a quarrel on the account following: Herod the tetrarch had, married the daughter of Aretas, and had lived with her a great while; but when he was once at Rome, he lodged with Herod, 15 who was his brother indeed, but not by the same mother; for this Herod was the son of the high priest Sireoh's daughter. However, he fell in love with Herodias, this last Herod's wife, who was the

permitted only on the one occasion of the brother dying childless, when it even prescribed such a marriage, in order that by his own brother, and from his own wife, seed might be reckoned to the deceased husband), ¹⁶ and was in consequence cast into prison, and finally, by the same Herod, was even put to death. The Lord having therefore made mention of John, and of course of the occurrence of his death, hurled His censure against Herod in the form of unlawful marriages and of adultery, pronouncing as an adulterer even the man who married a woman that had been put away from her husband. This he said in order the more severely to load Herod with guilt, who had taken his brother's wife, after she had been loosed from her husband not less by death than by divorce; who had been impelled by his lust, not by the prescription of the (Levirate) law—for, as his brother had left a daughter, the marriage with the widow could not be lawful on that very account; and who, when the prophet asserted against him the law, had therefore put him to death. *Against Marcion*, *3.404-406*.

TERTULLIAN: We must now encounter the subject of marriage, which Marcion [a heretic], more continent than the apostle, prohibits.¹⁷ For the apostle Paul, although preferring the grace of self-restraint, ¹⁸ yet permits the contraction of marriage and the enjoyment of it, ¹⁹ and advises the continuance therein rather than the dissolution thereof.²⁰ Christ plainly forbids divorce, Moses unquestionably permits it. Now, when Marcion wholly prohibits all carnal

daughter of Aristobulus their brother, and the sister of Agrippa the Great. This man ventured to talk to her about a marriage between them; which address, when she admitted, an agreement was made for her to change her habitation, and come to him as soon as he should return from Rome: one article of this marriage also was this, that he should divorce Aretas's daughter. So Antipas, when he had made this agreement, sailed to Rome; . . . But Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, tr. William Whiston [1737], emphasis mine).

Eusebius recorded, "Not long after this John the Baptist was beheaded by the younger Herod, as is stated in the Gospels [cf. Mk 6:14-29]. Josephus also records the same fact, making mention of Herodias by name, and stating that, although she was the wife of his brother, Herod made her his own wife after divorcing his former lawful wife, who was the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra, and separating Herodias from her husband while he was still alive." (Eusebius, The History of the Church, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890], 1.11:1, emphasis mine).

¹⁶ Deut 25:5-6

¹⁷ The Marcionites forbid to marry (1 Tim 4:1-3). See Appendix B: Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies.

^{18 1} Cor 7:7-8

^{19 1} Cor 7:9-14

^{20 1} Cor 7:27

intercourse to the faithful (for we will say nothing about his catechumens), and when he prescribes repudiation of all engagements before marriage, whose teaching does he follow, that of Moses or of Christ? Even Christ, however, when He here commands "the wife not to depart from her husband, or if she depart, to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband," both permitted divorce, which indeed He never absolutely prohibited, and confirmed the sanctity of marriage, by first forbidding its dissolution; and, if separation had taken place, by wishing the nuptial bond to be resumed by reconciliation. *Against Marcion*, 3.443.

ORIGEN: But perhaps some Jewish man of those who dare to oppose the teaching of our Savior will say, that when Jesus said, "Whoever shall put away his own wife, except for the cause of fornication, makes her an adulteress,"22 He also gave permission to put away a wife like as well as Moses did, who was said by Him to have given laws for the hardness of heart of the people, and will hold that the saying, "Because he found in her an unseemly thing," is to be reckoned as the same as fornication on account of which with good cause a wife could be cast away from her husband. But to him it must be said that, if she who committed adultery was according to the law to be stoned, clearly it is not in this sense that the unseemly thing is to be understood. For it is not necessary for adultery or any such great indecency to write a bill of divorcement and give it into the hands of the wife; but indeed perhaps Moses called every sin an unseemly thing, on the discovery of which by the husband in the wife, as not finding favor in the eyes of her husband, the bill of divorcement is written, and the wife is sent away from the house of her husband; "but from the beginning it has not been so."24 9.510-511.

5:32 EDITOR'S NOTE: Without exception, remarriage after divorce from an original spouse was regarded by all of the early Christians as adultery. All remarriage after divorce is adultery (HERMAS). All who, by human law, are twice married, are sinners in the eye of our Lord (JUSTIN MARTYR). A second marriage is only a deceptive adultery (ATHENAGORAS). The Scriptures allow no release from the marital union (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). After divorce, marriage will not be lawful (TERTULLIAN). Thus, the exception clause was not understood by the early Christians to make any allowance for remarriage after divorce. The parallel passage, Matthew 19:9, has often been cited as biblical grounds for remarriage after divorce for fornication: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." But textual variation occurs in Matthew 19:9, with respect to the exception clause. Within the early Christian writings, one textual variant is prominent: "whoever divorces

²¹ 1 Cor 7:10-11

²² Mt 19:9

²³ Deut 24:1

²⁴ Mt 19:8

his wife, except for the matter of fornication, makes her commit adultery."²⁵ This variant reading of Matthew 19:9 agrees with Matthew 5:32. The issue at stake in this textual variation is whether the man *commits adultery* by marrying another woman after divorcing an unfaithful wife, or whether the man is to be *blamed* for the adultery of his former wife who married another man after divorce. According to the variant reading, the only way for the man not to be held responsible for causing his former wife to commit adultery is if she was unchaste. But his remarriage is adultery and so is the remarriage of his former wife. This is the reading of Matthew 19:9 in Tatian, Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The textual variant agrees with the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:32. Not a single early Christian quoted or interpreted Matthew 19:9 as an exception for *remarriage* after divorce.

HERMAS: And I said to him, "Sir, if any one has a wife who trusts in the Lord, and if he detect her in adultery, does the man sin if he continues to live with her?"

And he said to me, "As long as he remains ignorant of her sin, the husband commits no transgression in living with her. But if the husband knows that his wife has gone astray, and if the woman does not repent, but persists in her fornication, and yet the husband continues to live with her, he also is guilty of her crime, and a sharer in her adultery."

And I said to him, "What then, sir, is the husband to do, if his wife continue in her foul practices?"

And he said, "The husband should put her away, and remain by himself. But if he put his wife away and marry another, he also commits adultery."

And I said to him, "What if the woman put away should repent, and wish to return to her husband: shall she not be taken back by her husband?"

And he said to me, "Assuredly. If the husband does not take her back, he sins, and brings a great sin upon himself; for he ought to take back the sinner who has repented. But not frequently. For there is but one repentance to the servants of God. In case, therefore, that the divorced wife may repent, the husband ought not to marry another, when his wife has been put away. In this matter man and woman are to be treated exactly in the same way. Moreover, adultery is committed not only by those who pollute their flesh, but by those who imitate the heathen in their actions. Therefore if anyone persists in such deeds, and does not repent, withdraw from him, and cease to live with him, otherwise you are a sharer in his sin. Therefore the injunction has been laid on you, that you should remain by yourselves, both man and woman, for in such persons repentance can take place. But I do not," he said, "give opportunity for the doing of these deeds, but that he who has sinned may sin no more. But with regard to his previous transgressions, there is One who is able to provide a cure; for it is He, indeed, who has power over all." *The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.21-22*.

See also Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 56-57; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 183.

HERMAS: And again I asked him, saying, "Sir, since you have been so patient in listening to me, will you show me this also?"

"Speak," he said.

And I said, "If a wife or husband die, and the widower or widow marry, does he or she commit sin?"

"There is no sin in marrying again," he said, "but if they remain unmarried, they gain greater honor and glory with the Lord; but if they marry, they do not sin. Guard, therefore, your chastity and purity, and you will live to God. What commandments I now give you, and what I am to give, keep from now on, yes, from the very day when you were entrusted to me, and I will dwell in your house. And your former sins will be forgiven, if you keep my commandments. And all shall be forgiven who keep my commandments, and walk in this chastity." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.22.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And the voice of the Gospel teaches still more urgently concerning chastity, saying: . . . "Whoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband, commits adultery."27 And, "There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but all cannot receive this saying."28 So that all who, by human law, are twice married, 29 are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her. For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God. And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I boast that I could produce such from every race of men. For what shall I say, too, of the countless multitude of those who have reformed intemperate habits, and learned these things? For Christ did not call the just nor the chaste to repentance, but the ungodly, and the licentious, and the unjust; His words being, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." For the heavenly Father desires rather the repentance than the punishment of the sinner.31 First Apology, 1.167.

JUSTIN MARTYR: But whether we marry, it is only that we may bring up children; or whether we decline marriage, we live continently. *First Apology, 1.172*.

²⁶ 1 Cor 7:8-9, 27-28, 39; Rom 7:3

²⁷ Lk 16:18

²⁸ Mt 19:12

There are three kinds of double marriages (i.e. "twice married"): first, marriage with a second spouse after the death of the first spouse; second, marriage with a second spouse after divorce from a former living spouse; and third, bigamy.

³⁰ Mt 9:13

³¹ Cf. 2 Pet 3:9

Justin Martyr: A certain woman lived with an intemperate husband; she herself, too, having formerly been intemperate. But when she came to the knowledge of the teachings of Christ she became sober-minded, and endeavored to persuade her husband likewise to be temperate, citing the teaching of Christ, and assuring him that there shall be punishment in eternal fire inflicted upon those who do not live temperately and conformably to right reason. But he, continuing in the same excesses, alienated his wife from him by his actions. For she, considering it wicked to live any longer as a wife with a husband who sought in every way means of indulging in pleasure contrary to the law of nature, and in violation of what is right, wished to be divorced from him. And when she was persuaded by her friends, who advised her still to continue with him, in the idea that some time or other her husband might give hope of amendment, she did violence to her own feeling and remained with him.

But when her husband had gone into Alexandria, and was reported to be conducting himself worse than ever, she—that she might not, by continuing in matrimonial connection with him, and by sharing his table and his bed, become a partaker also in his wickednesses and impieties—gave him what you call a bill of divorce, and was separated from him. But this noble husband of hers.—while he ought to have been rejoicing that those actions which formerly she unhesitatingly committed with the servants and hirelings, when she delighted in drunkenness and every vice, she had now given up, and desired that he too should give up the same,—when she had gone from him without his desire, brought an accusation against her, affirming that she was a Christian. And she presented a paper to you, the Emperor, requesting that first she be permitted to arrange her affairs, and afterwards to make her defense against the accusation, when her affairs were set in order. And this you granted. And her former husband, since he was now no longer able to prosecute her, directed his assaults against a man, Ptolemaeus, whom Urbicus punished, and who had been her teacher in the Christian doctrines. Second Apology, 1.188-189.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And Joseph, the spouse of Mary, who wished at first to put away his betrothed Mary, supposing her to be pregnant by intercourse with a man, i.e., from fornication, was commanded in a vision not to put away his wife; and the angel who appeared to him told him that what is in her womb is of the Holy Ghost. Then he was afraid, and did not put her away. *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.238*.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH: And Adam having been cast out of Paradise, in this condition knew Eve his wife, whom God had formed into a wife for him out of his rib. And this He did, not as if He were unable to make his wife separately, but God foreknew that man would call upon a number of gods. And having this foreknowledge, and knowing that through the serpent error would introduce a number of gods which had no existence,—for there being but one God, even then error was striving to disseminate a multitude of gods, saying, "You shall be

as gods;"³²—in case, then, it would be supposed that one God made the man and another the woman, therefore He made them both; and God made the woman together with the man, not only that thus the mystery of God's sole government might be exhibited, but also that their mutual affection might be greater. Therefore said Adam to Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."³³ And besides, he prophesied, saying, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh;"³⁴ which also itself has its fulfillment in ourselves. For who that marries lawfully does not despise mother and father, and his whole family connection, and all his household, cleaving to and becoming one with his own wife, fondly preferring her? So that often, for the sake of their wives, some submit even to death. *To Autolycus*, *2.105*.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH: "And he that marries," says the Gospel, "her that is divorced from her husband, commits adultery; and whosoever puts away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery." Because Solomon says: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goes in to a married woman shall not be innocent." To Autolycus, 2.115.

ATHENAGORAS: Therefore, having the hope of eternal life, we despise the things of this life, even to the pleasures of the soul, each of us reckoning her his wife whom he has married according to the laws laid down by us, and that only for the purpose of having children. For as the husbandman throwing the seed into the ground awaits the harvest, not sowing more upon it, so to us the procreation of children is the measure of our indulgence in appetite. Rather, you would find many among us, both men and women, growing old unmarried, in hope of living in closer communion with God. But if the remaining in virginity and in the state of an eunuch brings nearer to God, while the indulgence of carnal thought and desire leads away from Him, in those cases in which we shun the thoughts, much more do we reject the deeds. For we bestow our attention, not on the study of words, but on the exhibition and teaching of actions,—that a person should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a deceptive adultery. "For whosoever puts away his wife," says He, "and marries another, commits adultery;" ³⁶ not permitting a man to send her away whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again. For he who deprives himself of his first wife, even though she be dead, 37 is a cloaked

³² Gen 3:5

³³ Gen 2:23

³⁴ Gen 2:24; Mt 19:5; Eph 5:31

³⁵ Prov 6:27-29

³⁶ Cf. Mt 19:9: Mk 10:11: Lk 16:18

³⁷ See Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39. It may be that Athenagoras opposed any form of remarriage, even after the death of a spouse. However, it is not certain how a man would "deprive himself of his first wife" if she was dead. It is also possible that Athenagoras is only

adulterer, resisting the hand of God, because in the beginning God made one man and one woman, and dissolving the strictest union of flesh with flesh, formed for the intercourse of the race. A Plea For The Christians, 2.146-147.

IRENAEUS: That erring Samaritan woman did not remain with one husband, but committed fornication by contracting many marriages.³⁸ *Against Heresies*, 1.445.

TATIAN: And he arose from there, and came to the borders of Judaea beyond Jordan: and great multitudes went to him from there, and he healed them; and he taught them also, according to his custom. And the Pharisees came to him, tempting him, and asking him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?"

He said, "What did Moses command you?"

They said, "Moses made it allowable for us, saying, 'Whosoever will, let him write a writing of divorcement, and put away his wife." ³⁹

Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you not read, 'He that made them from the beginning made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason shall the man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they both shall be one body?' So then they are not two, but one body; the thing, then, which God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

And those Pharisees said to him, "Why did Moses consent that a man should give a writing of divorcement and put her away?"

Jesus said to them, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts gave you permission to divorce your wives; but in the beginning it was not so. I say to you, Whoever puts away his wife without fornication, and marries another, has exposed her to adultery." ⁴⁰

And his disciples, when he entered the house, asked him again about that. And he said to them, "Every one who puts away his wife, and marries another, has exposed her to adultery. And any woman that leaves her husband, and becomes another's, has committed adultery. And whoever marries her that is divorced has committed adultery."

And his disciples said to him, "If there be between the man and the woman such a case as this, it is not good for a man to marry."

He said to them, "Not every man can endure this saying, except him to whom it is given. There are eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs which through men became eunuchs; and there are eunuchs which made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He that is able to be content, let him be content." The Diatessaron, 9.82-83.

condemning remarriage after divorce, even if the previous spouse is deceased. Indeed, divorce and remarriage is the context of the statement.

³⁸ cf. Jn 4:17-18

³⁹ Mk 10:1-4

⁴⁰ Mt 19:4-9

⁴¹ Mk 10:10-12

⁴² Mt 19:9-12

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now that the Scripture counsels marriage, and allows no release from the union, is expressly contained in the law, "**Do not put away your wife, except for the cause of fornication**," and it regards as fornication, the marriage of those separated while the other is alive.

Not to deck and adorn herself beyond what is becoming, renders a wife free of suspicion, while she devotes herself diligently to prayers and supplications; avoiding frequent departures from the house, and shutting herself up as far as possible from the view of all not related to her, and deeming care of the home as more valuable than gossiping.

"He that takes a woman that has been put away," it is said, "commits adultery; and if one puts away his wife, he makes her an adulteress," that is, compels her to commit adultery. And not only is he who puts her away guilty of this, but he who takes her, by giving to the woman the opportunity of sinning; for had he not taken her, she would return to her husband. *The Stromata*, 2.379.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Our view is that we welcome as blessed the state of abstinence from marriage in those to whom this has been granted by God. We admire monogamy and the high standing of single marriage, holding that we ought to share suffering with another and "bear one another's burdens," lest anyone who thinks he stands securely should himself fall. It is of second marriage that the apostle says, "If you burn, marry." On Marriage.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Is it not possible to remain continent even in the married state and not to seek to "put asunder what God has joined together." For such is the teaching of those who divide the yoke of marriage, by reason of whom the Christian name is blasphemed. If it is the view of these people who themselves owe their existence to sexual relations that such relations are impure, must not they be impure? But I hold that even the seed of the sanctified is holy.

In us it is not only the spirit which ought to be sanctified, but also our behavior, manner of life, and our body. What does the apostle Paul mean when he says that the wife is sanctified by the husband and the husband by the wife? 48 And what is the meaning of the Lord's words to those who asked concerning divorce whether it is lawful to put away one's wife as Moses commanded? "Because of the hardness of your hearts," he says, "Moses wrote this; but have

⁴³ Cf. Mt 19:9

⁴⁴ Gal 6:2

^{45 1} Cor 7:8-9

Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.1:4. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 42. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁴⁷ Mt 19:6; Mk 10:9

^{48 1} Cor 7:14

you not read that God said to the first man, You two shall be one flesh? Therefore he who divorces his wife except for fornication makes her an adulteress." 49 On Marriage. 50

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Concerning the words, "Not all can receive this saying. There are some eunuchs who were born so, and some who were made eunuchs by men, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; let him receive it who can receive it," they do not realize the context. After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to woman, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted." What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man's wife has been condemned for fornication, it is allowable for him to marry another. . . .

Therefore there is nothing meritorious about abstinence from marriage unless it arises from love to God. At any rate the blessed Paul says of those who revile marriage: "In the last times some shall depart from the faith, turning to spirits of error and doctrines inspired by demons, forbidding to marry and commanding abstinence from food." And again he says: "Let no one disqualify you by demanding self-imposed ascetic practices and severe treatment of the body." And the same writer has this also: "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be separated from her? Are you free from any wife? Do not seek to find one." And again: "Let every man have his own wife lest Satan tempt you." On Marriage.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But it is the same man and Lord who makes the old new, by no longer allowing several marriages (for at that time God required it when men had to increase and multiply), 58 and by teaching single marriage for

⁴⁹ Mt 19:7-9

⁵⁰ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.6.46-47. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 61-62. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁵¹ Mt 19:11-12

⁵² Mt 19:11

⁵³ 1 Tim 4:1, 3

⁵⁴ Col 2:18

^{55 1} Cor 7:27

⁵⁶ 1 Cor 7:2, 5

⁵⁷ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.6:50-51. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 63-64. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁵⁸ Gen 1:28

the sake of begetting children and looking after domestic affairs, for which purpose woman was given as a "helpmeet." And if from sympathy the apostle allows a man a second marriage because he cannot control himself and burns with passion, he also does not commit any sin according to the Old Testament (for it was not forbidden by the law), but he does not fulfill the heightened perfection of the gospel ethic. But he gains heavenly glory for himself if he remains as he is, and keeps undefiled the marriage yoke broken by death, and willingly accepts God's purpose for him, by which he has become free from distraction for the service of the Lord. . . .

How then can marriage be a state only intended for ancient times and an invention of the law, and marriage on Christian principles of a different nature, if we hold that the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the same God? "For what God has joined together no man may ever put asunder" for any good reason; if the Father commanded this, so much the more also will the Son keep it. *On Marriage*. ⁶¹

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But to put to shame and to discourage those inclined to contract a second marriage the apostle appropriately uses strong language and says at once: "Every other sin is external to the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body." 62

But if anyone dares to call marriage fornication, he again falls into blasphemy against the law and the Lord. For as covetousness is called fornication because it is opposed to contentment with what one possesses, and as idolatry is an abandonment of the one God to embrace many gods, so fornication is apostasy from single marriage to several. *On Marriage*. 63

TERTULLIAN: Now, if any limitation is set to marrying—such as the spiritual rule, which prescribes but one marriage under the Christian obedience, maintained by the authority of the Paraclete⁶⁴—it will be His prerogative to fix the limit Who had once been diffuse in His permission; His to gather, Who once scattered; His to cut down the tree, Who planted it; His to reap the harvest, Who sowed the

⁵⁹ Gen 2:18

⁶⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 7:9

⁶¹ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.12:82-83. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 78-79. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

^{62 1} Cor 6:18

⁶³ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.12.88-89. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 88-89. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

The early church identified the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit.

seed; His to declare, "It remains that they who have wives be as though they had none," Who once said, "Be fruitful, and multiply;" His the end to Whom belonged the beginning. Nevertheless, the tree is not cut down as if it deserved blame; nor is the corn reaped, as if it were to be condemned,—but simply because their time is come. So likewise the state of matrimony does not require the hook and scythe of sanctity, as if it were evil; but as being ripe for its discharge, and in readiness for that sanctity which will in the long run bring it a plenteous crop by its reaping. For this leads me to remark of Marcion's god, that in reproaching marriage as an evil and unchaste thing, he is really prejudicing the cause of that very sanctity which he seems to serve. Against Marcion, 3.294.

TERTULLIAN: The same who brings us into the world must of necessity take us out of it too. Therefore when, through the will of God, the husband is deceased, the marriage likewise, by the will of God, deceases. Why should you restore what God has put an end to? Why do you, by repeating the servitude of matrimony, spurn the liberty which is offered you? "You have been bound to a wife,"67 says the apostle; "do not seek loosing. You have been loosed from a wife; do not seek binding."68 For even if you do not "sin" in re-marrying [after death], he still says "pressure of the flesh ensues." Therefore, so far as we can, let us love the opportunity of self-restraint; as soon as it offers itself, let us resolve to accept it, that what we have not had strength (to follow) in matrimony we may follow in widowhood. The occasion must be embraced which puts an end to that which necessity commanded. How detrimental to faith, how obstructive to holiness, second marriages are, the discipline of the Church and the prescription of the apostle declare, when he does not sanction twice married men to preside (over a Church),70 when he would not grant a widow admittance into the order unless she had been "the wife of one man;" for it behooves God's altar to be set forth pure. 72 To His Wife, 4.43.

TERTULLIAN: One reason which imposed the law of "the beginning,"⁷³ and moved the will of God to prohibit divorce is the fact that he who has dismissed his wife, except on the ground of fornication, makes her commit adultery; and he who has married a woman dismissed by her husband, of course commits

^{65 1} Cor 7:29

⁶⁶ Gen 1:28

^{67 1} Cor 7:27

^{68 1} Cor 7:27

^{69 1} Cor 7:28

⁷⁰ 1 Tim 2:2; Tit 1:6

⁷¹ 1 Tim 5:9-10

For extended discussion, see Tertullian's On An Exhortation to Modesty (ANF, 4.50-58), written to a widower, explaining that remarriage after death is inadvisable as a matter of prudence, and wrong in principle. In his Montanist work On Monogamy (ANF, 4.59-72), Tertullian argued that remarriage after death was sin.

⁷³ Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6

adultery. A divorced woman cannot even marry legitimately; and if she commit any such act without the name of marriage, does it not fall under the category of adultery, in that adultery is crime in the way of marriage? . . . And the reason why He has abolished divorce, which "was not from the beginning," is, that He may strengthen that which "was from the beginning"—the permanent conjunction, namely, of "two into one flesh:"⁷⁴ for fear that necessity or opportunity for a third union of flesh may make an irruption into His dominion; permitting divorce to no cause but one—if, that is, the evil against which precaution is taken chance to have occurred beforehand. So true, moreover, is it that divorce "was not from the beginning," that among the Romans it is not till after the six hundredth year from the building of the city that this kind of "hardheartedness" is set down as having been committed. But they indulge in promiscuous adulteries, even without divorcing their partners: to us, even if we do divorce them, marriage will not be lawful. *On Monogamy*, *4.66*. ⁷⁶

TERTULLIAN: She must necessarily persevere in that peace with him whom she will no longer have the power to divorce; not that she would, even if she had been able to divorce him, have been marriageable. *On Monogamy, 4.67.* 77

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following quotation from Tertullian was written during his Montanist phase. The Montanists prohibited second marriages after the death of a spouse, thus going beyond the Scriptures (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, 39). However, Tertullian made an exception for remarriage after death *only* if the death of the first wife occurred prior the husband's believing.

TERTULLIAN: "You have been bound to a wife, do not seek loosing; you have been loosed from a wife, do not seek a wife." "But if you shall have taken to yourself a wife, you have not sinned;" because to one who, before believing, had been "loosed from a wife," she will not be counted a second wife who, subsequently to believing, is the first: for it is from the time of our believing that our life itself dates its origin. *On Monogamy*, 4.68.80

MARK MINUCIUS FELIX: But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all. *The Octavius of Minucius Felix*, 4.192.

ORIGEN: After this it is written that "there came to Him the Pharisees tempting

⁷⁴ Mt 19:5-6; Mk 10:8

⁷⁵ Mt 19:8; Mk 10:5

⁷⁶ Montanist work.

⁷⁷ Montanist work.

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 7:27

⁷⁹ 1 Cor 7:28

⁸⁰ Montanist work.

Him and saying, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?'"⁸¹ Mark, also, has written to the like effect. ⁸² Accordingly, of those who came to Jesus and inquired of Him, there were some who put questions to tempt Him; and if our Savior so transcendent was tempted, which of His disciples who is ordained to teach need be vexed, when he is tempted by some who inquire, not from the love of learning, but from the wish to tempt? And you might find many passages, if you brought them together, in which the Pharisees tempted our Jesus, and others, different from them, as a certain lawyer, ⁸³ and perhaps also a scribe, ⁸⁴ that by bringing together what is said about those who tempted Him, you might find by investigation what is useful for this kind of inquiries. Only, the Savior, in response to those who tempted Him, laid down dogmas; for they said, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his own wife for every cause?"

And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female?"85 etc. And I think that the Pharisees put forward this word for this reason, that they might attack Him whatever He might say; as, for example, if He had said, "It is lawful," they would have accused Him of dissolving marriages for trifles; but, if He had said, "It is not lawful," they would have accused Him of permitting a man to dwell with a woman, even with sins; so, likewise, in the case of the tribute money, 86 if He had told them to give, they would have accused Him of making the people subject to the Romans, and not to the law of God, but if He had told them not to give, they would have accused Him of creating war and sedition, and of stirring up those who were not able to stand against so powerful an army. But they did not perceive in what way He answered blamelessly and wisely, in the first place, rejecting the opinion that a wife was to be put away for every cause, and, in the second place, giving answer to the question about the bill of divorce; for He saw that not every cause is a reasonable ground for the dissolution of marriage, and that the husband must dwell with the wife as the weaker vessel, giving honor, 87 and bearing her burdens in sins;88 and by what is written in Genesis, He puts to shame the Pharisees who boasted in the Scriptures of Moses, by saying, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female," etc., and, subjoining to these words, because of the saying, "And the two shall become one flesh," teaching in harmony with one flesh, namely, "So that they are no more two, but one flesh."89 And, as tending to convince them that they should not put away their wife for every cause, it is said, "What God

⁸¹ Mt 19:3

⁸² Mk 10:2

⁸³ Mt 22:35

⁸⁴ Mk 12:28

⁸⁵ Mt 19:4

⁸⁶ Mt 22:17

^{87 1} Pet 3:7

⁸⁸ Gal 6:2

⁸⁹ Mt 19:4-6

has joined together, let not man put asunder."90 . . .

And it is God who has joined together the two in one so that they are no more two, from the time that the woman is married to the man. And, since God has joined them together, on this account in the case of those who are joined together by God, there is a "gift;" and Paul knowing this, that marriage according to the Word of God was a "gift," like as holy celibacy was a gift, says, "But I would that all men were like myself; howbeit, each man has his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that."91 And those who are joined together by God both mind and keep the precept, "Husbands love your wives, as Christ also the church."92 The Savior then commanded, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder,"93 but man wishes to put asunder what God has joined together, when, "falling away from the sound faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron, forbidding," not only to commit fornication, but "to marry," he dissolves even those who had been before joined together by the providence of God. Let these things then be said, keeping in view what is expressly said concerning the male and the female, and the man and the woman, as the Savior taught in the answer to the Pharisees. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.505-506.

ORIGEN: Some of the laws [in the Old Testament] were written not as excellent, but as by way of accommodation to the weakness of those to whom the law was given; for something of this kind is indicated in the words, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives;" but that which is preeminent and superior to the law, which was written for their hardness of heart, is indicated in this, "But from the beginning it hath not been so." He because of heart suffered you to put away your wives; "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives; for example, because of our hardness of heart, it has been written on account of our weakness, "But because of fornications, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband;" and this, "Let the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise also the wife to the husband." To these sayings it is accordingly subjoined, "But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment." But this also, "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband lives, but if her husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she

⁹⁰ Mt 19:6

^{91 1} Cor 7:7

⁹² Eph 5:25

⁹³ Mt 19:6

⁹⁴ 1 Tim 4:1-3

⁹⁵ Mt 19:8

⁹⁶ Mt. 19:8

^{97 1} Cor 7:2

^{98 1} Cor 7:3

^{99 1} Cor 7:6

will, only in the Lord,"¹⁰⁰ was said by Paul in view of our hardness of heart and weakness, to those who do not wish to desire earnestly the greater gifts¹⁰¹ and become more blessed. But now contrary to what was written, some even of the rulers of the church have permitted a woman to marry, even when her husband was living, doing contrary to what was written, where it is said, "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband lives,"¹⁰² and, "So then if while her husband lives, she shall be joined to another man she shall be called an adulteress."¹⁰³ *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.510*.

ORIGEN: Our Savior says, not at all permitting the dissolution of marriages for any other sin than fornication alone, when detected in the wife, "Whoever shall put away his own wife, except for the cause of fornication, makes her an adulteress." But it might be a subject for inquiry if on this account He hinders any one putting away a wife, unless she be caught in fornication, for any other reason, as for example for poisoning, or for the destruction during the absence of her husband from home of an infant born to them, or for any form of murder whatsoever. And further, if she were found despoiling and pillaging the house of her husband, though she was not guilty of fornication, one might ask if he would with reason cast away such an one, seeing that the Savior forbids any one to put away his own wife except for the cause of fornication.

In either case there appears to be something monstrous, whether it be really monstrous, I do not know; for to endure sins of such heinousness which seem to be worse than adultery or fornication, will appear to be irrational; but again on the other hand to act contrary to the design of the teaching of the Savior, every one would acknowledge to be impious. I wonder therefore why He did not say, "Let no one put away his own wife except for the cause of fornication," but says, "Whoever shall put away his own wife, except for the cause of fornication, makes her an adulteress." For confessedly he who puts away his wife when she is not a fornicator, makes her an adulteress, so far as it lies with him, for if, "when the husband is living she shall be called an adulteress if she be joined to another man;" and when by putting her away, he gives to her the excuse of a second marriage, very plainly in this way he makes her an adulteress.

But as to whether her being caught in the act of poisoning or committing murder, furnishes any defense of his dismissal of her, you can inquire yourselves; for the husband can also in other ways than by putting her away cause his own wife to commit adultery; as, for example, allowing her to do what she wishes beyond what is fitting, and stooping to friendship with what men she wishes, for often from the simplicity of husbands such false steps happen to

^{100 1} Cor 7:39

^{101 1} Cor 12:31

^{102 1} Cor 7:39

¹⁰³ Rom 7:3

¹⁰⁴ Mt 19:9

¹⁰⁵ Mt 19:9

¹⁰⁶ Rom 7:3

wives; but whether there is a ground of defense or not for such husbands in the case of such false steps, you will inquire carefully, and deliver your opinion also in regard to the difficult questions raised by us on the passage. And even he who withholds himself from his wife makes her oftentimes to be an adulteress when he does not satisfy her desires, even though he does so under the appearance of greater gravity and self-control. And perhaps this man is more deserving of blame who, so far as it rests with him, makes her an adulteress when he does not satisfy her desires than he who, for other reason than fornication, has sent her away,—for poisoning or murder or any of the most grievous sins. But as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seem to be married to a man, while the former husband is still living, so also the man who seems to marry her who has been put away, does not so much marry her as commit adultery with her according to the declaration of our Savior.

Now after these things, having considered how many possible accidents may arise in marriages, which it was necessary for the man to endure and in this way suffer very great hardships, or if he did not endure, to transgress the word of Christ, the disciples say to him, taking refuge in celibacy as easier, and more expedient than marriage, though the latter appears to be expedient, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." 107 And to this the Savior said, teaching us that absolute chastity is a gift given by God, and not merely the fruit of training, but given by God with prayer, "All men cannot receive the saying, but they to whom it is given." Then seeing that some make a sophistical attack on the saying, "To whom it is given," as if those who wished to remain pure in celibacy, but were mastered by their desires, had an excuse, we must say that, if we believe the Scriptures, why at all do we lay hold of the saying, "But they to whom it is given," but no longer attend to this, "Ask and it shall be given you,"109 and to that which is added to it, "For every one that asks receives"?¹¹⁰ For if they "to whom it is given" can receive this saying about absolute purity, let him who wills ask, obeying and believing Him who said, "Ask and it will be given to you," and not doubting about the saying, "Every one that asks receives." But when you will inquire who it is that asks, for no one of those who do not receive has asked, even though he seems to have done so, since it is not lawful to say that the saying, "Every one that asks receives," is a lie. Who then is he that asks, but he who has obeyed Jesus when He says, "If you stand praying, believe that you receive, and you will receive?"111 But he that asks must do everything in his power that he may pray "with the spirit" and pray also "with the understanding," and pray "without ceasing," keeping in mind also the saying, "And He spoke a parable to them to the end that they ought

¹⁰⁷ Mt 19:10

¹⁰⁸ Mt 19:11

¹⁰⁹ Mt 7:7

¹¹⁰ Mt 7:8

¹¹¹ Mk 11:24-25

^{112 1} Cor 14:15

^{113 1} Thess 5:17

always to pray, and not to faint, saying, There was in a city a judge,"¹¹⁴ etc. And it is useful to know what it is to ask, and what it is to receive, and what is meant by "Every one that asks, receives," and by "I say to you though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needs."¹¹⁵ It is therefore added, "And I say to you, 'Ask, and it shall be given you," and so on. Further, let the saying, "All men cannot receive the saying but they to whom it is given,"¹¹⁶ be a stimulus to us to ask worthily of receiving; and this, "What son is there of you who shall ask his father for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent,"¹¹⁷ etc. God therefore will give the good gift, perfect purity in celibacy and chastity, to those who ask Him with the whole soul, and with faith, and in prayers without ceasing. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.511-512.

CYPRIAN: Hold fast, O virgins! Hold fast what you have begun to be; hold fast what you shall be. A great reward awaits you, a great recompense of virtue, the immense advantage of chastity. Do you wish to know what problems the virtue of self-restraint avoids, what good it possesses? "I will multiply," says God to the woman, "your sorrows and your groanings; and in sorrow you shall bring forth children; and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you."118 You are free from this sentence. You do not fear the sorrows and the groans of women. You have no fear of child-bearing; nor is your husband lord over you; but your Lord and Head is Christ, after the likeness and in the place of the man; with that of men your lot and your condition is equal. It is the word of the Lord which says, "The children of this world beget and are begotten; but they who are counted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither shall they die any more: for they are equal to the angels of God, being the children of the resurrection." 119 That which we shall be, you have already begun to be. You already possess in this world the glory of the resurrection. You pass through the world without the disease of the world; in that you continue chaste and virgins, you are equal to the angels of God. Only let your virginity remain and endure substantial and uninjured; and as it began bravely, let it persevere continuously, and not seek the ornaments of necklaces nor garments, but of conduct. Let it look towards God and heaven, and not lower to the lust of the flesh and of the world, the eyes uplifted to things above, or set them upon earthly things.

The first decree commanded to increase and to multiply; the second enjoined continency. While the world is still rough and void, we are propagated by the fruitful begetting of numbers, and we increase to the enlargement of the human race. Now, when the world is filled and the earth supplied, they who can

¹¹⁴ Lk 18:1-2

¹¹⁵ Lk 11:8

¹¹⁶ Mt 19:11

¹¹⁷ Lk 11:11

¹¹⁸ Gen 3:16

¹¹⁹ Lk 20:35-36

receive continency, living after the manner of eunuchs, are made eunuchs unto the kingdom. ¹²⁰ Nor does the Lord command this, but He exhorts it; nor does He impose the yoke of necessity, since the free choice of the will is left. . . . As we have borne the image of him who is earthy, let us also bear the image of Him who is heavenly. ^{"121} Virginity bears this image, integrity bears it, holiness bears it, and truth. Disciplines which are mindful of God bear it, retaining righteousness with religion, stedfast in faith, humble in fear, brave to all suffering, meek to sustain wrong, easy to show mercy, of one mind and one heart in fraternal peace. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.436.

CYPRIAN: Marriage is not to be contracted with Gentiles. 122 In Tobias: "Take a wife from the seed of your parents, and do not take a strange woman who is not of the tribe of your parents."123 Also in Genesis, Abraham sends his servant to take from his seed Rebecca, for his son Isaac. 124 Also in Ezra, it was not sufficient for God when the Jews were laid waste, unless they forsook their foreign wives, with the children also whom they had begotten of them. 125 Also in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: "The woman is bound so long as her husband lives; but if he dies, she is freed to marry whom she will, only in the Lord. But she will be happier if she abide thus." ¹²⁶ And again: "Don't you know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? Far be it from me. Or don't you know that he who is joined together with an harlot is one body? For two shall be in one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." ¹²⁷ Also in the second to the Corinthians: "Do not be joined together with unbelievers. For what participation is there between righteousness and unrighteousness? Or what communication does light have with darkness?" Also concerning Solomon in the third book of Kings: "And foreign wives turned away his heart after their gods."129 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.550-551.

CYPRIAN: A wife must not depart from her husband; or if she should depart, she must remain unmarried. In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: "But to them that are married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not be separated from her husband; but if she should depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and that the husband should not put

¹²⁰ Mt 19:12

^{121 1} Cor 15:47

¹²² That is, unbelievers.

¹²³ Tob 4:12

¹²⁴ Gen 24

¹²⁵ Ezra 9-10

^{126 1} Cor 7:39-40

^{127 1} Cor 6:15-17

^{128 2} Cor 6:14

^{129 1} Kings 11:4

away his wife." 130 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.553.

NOVATIAN: 131 The precepts of chastity, brethren, are ancient. For what reason do I say ancient? Because they were ordained at the same time as men themselves. For both her own husband belongs to the woman, for the reason that besides him she may know no other; and the woman is given to the man for the purpose that, when that which had been his own had been yielded to him, he should seek for nothing belonging to another. And in such manner it is said, "Two shall be in one flesh,"132 that what had been made one should return together, that a separation without return should not afford any occasion to a stranger. Consequently the apostle declares that the man is the head of the woman, 133 that he might commend chastity in the conjunction of the two. For as the head cannot be suited to the limbs of another, so also one's limbs cannot be suited to the head of another: for one's head matches one's limbs, and one's limbs one's head; and both of them are associated by a natural link in mutual concord, lest, by any discord arising from the separation of the members, the compact of the divine covenant should be broken. Yet he adds, and says: "Because he who loves his wife, loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ the Church." ¹³⁴ From this passage there is great authority for charity with chastity, if wives are to be loved by their husbands even as Christ loved the Church and wives ought so to love their husbands also as the Church loves Christ.

Christ gave this judgment when, being inquired of, He said that a wife must not be put away, except for the cause of fornication; such honor did He put upon chastity. Hence arose the decree: "Do not allow an adulteresses to live." Hence the apostle says: "This is the will of God, that you abstain from fornication." Hence also he says the same thing: "That the members of Christ must not be joined with the members of an harlot." Hence the man is delivered over unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, who, treading under foot the law of chastity, practices the vices of the flesh. Hence with reason adulterers do not attain the kingdom of heaven. Hence it is that every sin is without the body, but that the adulterer alone sins against his own body. Hence other authoritative utterances of the instructor, all of which it is not necessary at this time to collect, especially among you, who for the most part know and do them; and you cannot find cause for complaint concerning these things, even though they are not described. For the adulterer has no excuse, nor could he, because he might take a

^{130 1} Cor 7:10-11

¹³¹ Formerly attributed to Cyprian.

¹³² Mt 19:5

^{133 1} Cor 11:3

¹³⁴ Eph 5:28-29

¹³⁵ Lev 20:10

^{136 1} Thess 4:3

¹³⁷ 1 Cor 6:15

¹³⁸ 1 Cor 6:9

EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

wife....

Laws are prescribed to married women, who are so bound that they cannot as a consequence be separated. *Treatises Attributed to Cyprian, 5.589*

LACTANTIUS: Lest anyone think that he can circumscribe the divine precepts, there are added those that take away all calumny and occasion of fraud; he is an adulterer who marries a divorced spouse, and he who dismisses his wife commits adultery for God is unwilling to dissociate the body. *The Divine Institutes*. ¹³⁹

LACTANTIUS: Therefore let it be observed in all the duties of life, let it be observed in marriage. For it is not sufficient if you abstain from another's bed, or from the brothel. Let him who has a wife seek nothing further, but, content with her alone, let him guard the mysteries of the marriage-bed chaste and undefiled. For he is equally an adulterer in the sight of God and impure, who, having thrown off the yoke, behaves promiscuously in strange pleasure either with a free woman or a slave. But as a woman is bound by the bonds of chastity not to desire any other man, so let the husband be bound by the same law, since God has joined together the husband and the wife in the union of one body. On this account He has commanded that the wife shall not be put away unless convicted of adultery, and that the bond of the conjugal compact shall never be dissolved, unless unfaithfulness have broken it. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 7.250-251.

¹³⁹ The Teachings of the Church Fathers, ed. John R. Willis, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2002), 443. www.ignatius.com. Used with permission. This quotation is found only in Latin in ANF, 7.190.

¹⁴⁰ cf. Heb 13:5

Jesus Forbids Oaths Matthew 5:33-37

Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: LEV 19:12; NUM 30:2-16; DEUT 23:21-23; PS 50:14; 76:11; 132:2; ECCLES 5:4-6; NAH 1:15

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: MT 23:16-22; EPH 4:25; JAS 5:12

 $^{[35]}$ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. PS $^{48:2}$

^[36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. JAS 5:12

Summary: While the Law demanded fulfilling vows and forbid swearing falsely (Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2-16; Deuteronomy 23:21-23), Christians must not swear at all (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian) and always speak the truth (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hermas). This precept is to be literally observed (Origen). Prior to martyrdom, Polycarp was urged to "swear by the fortune of Caesar." The great King is the one King and Lord, the Father of all (Irenaeus). Those who color their hair do profane the word of the Lord, "You cannot make one hair white or black" (Tertullian, Cyprian). Light is light; and darkness, darkness; yes is yes; and no, no (Tertullian). Let an oath be absent in everything (Clement of Alexandria). He will everywhere guard the truth (Lactantius).

5:33ff IRENAEUS: Jesus enjoined Christians not only not to swear falsely, but not

even to swear at all. Against Heresies, 1.408.

IRENAEUS: And, "It has been said, 'Do not forswear yourself.' But I say to you, do not swear at all; but let your conversation be, 'Yes, yes,' and 'No, no." Against Heresies, 1.477.

TATIAN: "You have heard also that it was said to the ancients, 'Do not lie, but perform your oaths to God:' but I say to you, 'Do not swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is a footstool under his feet; nor yet by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither swear by your head, for you can not make in it one lock of hair black or white.' But your word shall be either 'Yes' or 'No,' and what is in excess of this is of the evil one." *The Diatessaron*, 9.57.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The man of proved character in such piety is far from being apt to lie and to swear. For an oath is a decisive affirmation, with the taking of the divine name. For how can he, that is once faithful, show himself unfaithful, so as to require an oath; and so that his life may not be a sure and decisive oath? He lives, and walks, and shows the trustworthiness of his affirmation in an unwavering and sure life and speech. And if the wrong lies in the judgment of one who does and says something, and not in the suffering of one who has been wronged, he will neither lie nor commit perjury so as to wrong the Deity, knowing that it by nature is incapable of being harmed. Nor yet will he lie or commit any transgression, for the sake of the neighbor whom he has learned to love, though he is not on terms of intimacy. Much more, consequently, will he not lie or perjure himself on his own account, since he never with his will can be found doing wrong to himself.

But he does not even swear, preferring to make confirmation, in affirmation by "yes," and in denial by "no." For it is an oath to swear, or to produce anything from the mind in the way of confirmation in the shape of an oath. It suffices, then, with him, to add to an affirmation or denial the expression "I say truly," for confirmation to those who do not perceive the certainty of his answer. For he ought, I think, to maintain a life calculated to inspire confidence towards those without, so that an oath may not even be asked; and towards himself and those with whom he associates good feeling, which is voluntary righteousness.

The Christian swears truly, but is not apt to swear, having rarely recourse to an oath, just as we have said. And his speaking truth on oath arises from his accord with the truth. This speaking truth on oath, then, is found to be the result of correctness in duties. Where, then, is the necessity for an oath to him who lives in accordance with the extreme of truth? He, then, that does not even swear will be far from perjuring himself. And he who does not transgress in what is ratified by compacts, will never swear; since the ratification of the violation and

Cf. Jas 5:12

of the fulfillment is by actions; as certainly lying and perjury in affirming and swearing are contrary to duty. But he who lives justly, transgressing in none of his duties, when the judgment of truth is scrutinized, swears truth by his acts. Accordingly, testimony by the tongue is in his case superfluous.

Therefore, persuaded always that God is everywhere, and fearing not to speak the truth, and knowing that it is unworthy of him to lie, he is satisfied with the divine consciousness and his own alone. And so he does not lie, nor does anything at all contrary to his compacts. And so he swears not even when asked for his oath; nor does he ever deny, so as to speak falsehood, though he should die by tortures. *The Stromata*, 2.537-538.

CYPRIAN: We must not swear. In Solomon: "A man that swears much shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall not depart from his house; and if he swears vainly, he shall not be justified." Of this same matter, according to Matthew: "Again, you have heard that it was said to them of old, 'Do not swear falsely, but perform your oaths to the Lord.' I say to you, 'Do not swear at all: neither by heaven, because it is God's throne; nor by the earth, because it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King; neither swear by your head, because you can't make one hair white or black.' But let your discourse be, 'Yes, yes;' 'No, no:' for whatever is fuller than these is of evil." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.536-537.

5:34ff The Didache: You shall not forswear yourself, you shall not bear false witness,³ you shall not speak evil, you shall not bear a grudge. *7.377*.

POLYCARP: Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice.

And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, the proconsul sought to persuade him to deny Christ, saying, "Have respect to your old age," and other similar things, according to their custom, such as, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, 'Away with the Atheists."

But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." ⁴

Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty, reproach Christ."

Polycarp declared, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

² Sir 23:11

³ Exod 20:16

⁴ Referring the words to the heathen, and not to the Christians, as was desired.

The proconsul yet again pressed him, and said, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar."

Polycarp answered, "Since you are vainly urgent that, as you say, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and do not pretend to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and you shall hear them."

The proconsul replied, "Persuade the people."

But Polycarp said, "To you I have thought it right to offer an account of my faith; for we are taught to give all due honor (which entails no injury upon ourselves) to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God.⁵ But as for these, I do not deem them worthy of receiving any account from me." *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 1.41.

HERMAS: Again he said to me, "Love the truth, and let nothing but truth proceed from your mouth, 6 that the spirit which God has placed in your flesh may be found truthful before all men; and the Lord, who dwells in you, will be glorified, because the Lord is truthful in every word, and in Him is no falsehood. They therefore who lie deny the Lord, and rob Him, not giving back to Him the deposit which they have received. For they received from Him a spirit free from falsehood. If they give him back this spirit untruthful, they pollute the commandment of the Lord, and become robbers." On hearing these words, I wept most violently. When he saw me weeping, he said to me, "Why do you weep?"

And I said, "Because, sir, I do not know if I can be saved." "Why?" he said.

And I said, "Because, sir, I never spoke a true word in my life, but have ever spoken cunningly to all, and have affirmed a lie for the truth to all; and no one ever contradicted me, but credit was given to my word. How then can I live, since I have acted thus?"

And he said to me, "Your feelings are indeed right and sound, for you ought as a servant of God to have walked in truth, and not to have joined an evil conscience with the spirit of truth, nor to have caused sadness to the holy and true Spirit."

And I said to him, "Never, sir, did I listen to these words with so much attention."

And he said to me, "Now you hear them, and keep them, that even the falsehoods which you formerly told in your transactions may come to be believed through the truthfulness of your present statements. For even they can become worthy of credit. If you keep these precepts, and from this time forward you speak nothing but the truth, it will be possible for you to obtain life. And whosoever shall hear this commandment, and depart from that great wickedness falsehood, shall live to God." 2.21.

⁵ Cf. Rom 13:1-7; Tit 3:1

⁶ Eph 4:25, 29

⁷ 1 Jn 3:19-21; 4:6; Eph 4:30

Justin Martyr: And with regard to our not swearing at all, and always speaking the truth, He enjoined as follows: "Do not swear at all; but let your yes be yes, and your no no; for whatsoever is more than these comes of evil." The First Apology, 1.168.

IRENAEUS: No doubt, if anyone is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power to reject it, but it is not expedient. For it is in man's power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but such conduct brings no small amount of injury and mischief. And on this account Paul says, "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient" referring both to the liberty of man, in which respect "all things are lawful," God exercising no compulsion in regard to him; and by the expression "not expedient" pointing out that we "should not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness" for this is not expedient. And again he says, "Every man speak truth with his neighbor." 10 And, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor vulgarity, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks." And, "For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk honestly as children of the light, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in anger and jealousy. 12 And such were some of you; but you have been washed, but you have been sanctified in the name of our Lord."13 If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others? But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God. Against Heresies, 1.519.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Whoever sells or buys anything should not name two prices for what he buys or sells; but stating the net price, and studying to speak the truth, if he does not get his price, he gets the truth, and is rich in the possession of righteousness. But, above all, let an oath on account of what is sold be far from you; and let swearing, too, on account of other things be banished. *The Instructor*, 2.290.

TERTULLIAN: Of false swearing I am silent, since even swearing is not lawful. ¹⁴ *On Idolatry, 3.67.*

⁸ 1 Cor 6:12

⁹ 1 Pet 2:16

¹⁰ Eph 4:25

¹¹ Eph 4:29

¹² Rom 13:13

¹³ 1 Cor 6:11

¹⁴ Cf. Jas 5:12

TERTULLIAN: [Hypothetically speaking:] Let us grant that it is possible for any one to succeed in moving, in whatsoever public office, under the mere name of the office, neither sacrificing nor lending his authority to sacrifices; not farming out victims; not assigning to others the care of temples; not looking after their tributes; not giving spectacles at his own or the public charge, or presiding over the giving them; making proclamation or edict for no solemnity; not even taking oaths: moreover what comes under the head of power, neither sitting in judgment on any one's life or character, for you might bear with his judging about money; neither condemning nor fore-condemning; binding no one, imprisoning or torturing no one—if it is credible that all this is possible. *On Idolatry, 3.72*.

TERTULLIAN: Christ prescribes that there is to be no swearing. On Idolatry, 3.75.

ORIGEN: And with respect to the precepts enjoined in the Gospels, no doubt can be entertained that very many of these are to be literally observed, as, for example, when our Lord says, "But I say to you, do not swear at all." De Principiis, 4.368.

ORIGEN: When this oath is required of us, let us remember him who taught us: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." Exhortation to Martyrdom. ¹⁵

CYPRIAN: You are constrained to curse, which the divine law forbids; you are compelled to swear, which is not lawful. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.470.

5:35 IRENAEUS: Concerning Jerusalem and the Lord, they venture to assert that, if it had been "**the city of the great King**," it would not have been deserted. ¹⁶ This is just as if any one should say, that if straw were a creation of God, it would never part company with the wheat; and that the vine twigs, if made by God, never would be lopped away and deprived of the clusters. But as these vine twigs have not been originally made for their own sake, but for that of the fruit growing upon them, which being come to maturity and taken away, they are left behind, and those which do not conduce to fructification are lopped off altogether; so also it was with Jerusalem, which had in herself borne the yoke of bondage (under which man was reduced, who in former times was not subject to God when death was reigning, and being subdued, became a fit subject for liberty), when the fruit of liberty had come, and reached maturity, and been reaped and stored in the barn, and when those which had the power to produce fruit had been carried away from Jerusalem, and scattered throughout all the

Origen, Exhortation to Martyrdom 7. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 397. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

¹⁶ Jer 7:4

world. Even as Isaiah says, "The children of Jacob shall strike root, and Israel shall flourish, and the whole world shall be filled with his fruit." The fruit, therefore, having been sown throughout all the world, Jerusalem was deservedly forsaken, and those things which had formerly brought forth fruit abundantly were taken away; for from these, according to the flesh, were Christ and the apostles enabled to bring forth fruit. But now these are no longer useful for bringing forth fruit. For all things which have a beginning in time must of course have an end in time also. *Against Heresies*, 1.465-466.

IRENAEUS: Listen to Him when He says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who made a marriage for his son, and he sent forth his servants to call them who were bidden to the marriage." And when they would not obey, He goes on to say, "Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Come, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and all the fatlings are killed, and everything is ready; come to the wedding. But they made light of it, and went their way, some to their farm, and others to their merchandise; but the remnant took his servants, and some they treated despitefully, while others they slew. But when the king heard this, he was angry, and sent his armies and destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city, and said to his servants, 'The wedding is indeed ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go out therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, gather in to the marriage.' So the servants went out, and collected together as many as they found, bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man not having on a wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here, not having on a wedding garment?' But he was speechless. Then the king said to his servants, 'Take him away, hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."18

Now, by these words of His, does the Lord clearly show that there is one King and Lord, the Father of all, of whom He had previously said, "**Do not swear by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King**;" and that He had from the beginning prepared the marriage for His Son, and used, with the utmost kindness, to call, by the instrumentality of His servants, the men of the former dispensation to the wedding feast; and when they would not obey, He still invited them by sending out other servants, yet that even then they did not obey Him, but even stoned and slew those who brought them the message of invitation. He accordingly sent forth His armies and destroyed them, and burned down their city; but He called together from all the highways, that is, from all nations, guests to the marriage feast of His Son. *Against Heresies*, 1.516-517.

5:36 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The more, then, a man endures to the end, the more truly venerable is he, having God alone as his senior, since He is the

¹⁷ Isa 27:6

¹⁸ Mt 22:1-14

eternal aged One, He who is older than all things. Prophecy has called him the "Ancient of days; and the hair of His head was as pure wool," says the prophet. "And none other," says the Lord, "can make the hair white or black." *The Instructor.* 2.275.

TERTULLIAN: I see some women turn the color of their hair with saffron. They are ashamed even of their own nation, ashamed that their procreation did not assign them to Germany and to Gaul: thus, as it is, they transfer their hair there! Ill, yes, most ill, do they herald for themselves with their flame-colored head, and think that graceful which in fact they are polluting! No, moreover, the force of the cosmetics burns ruin into the hair; and the constant application of even any undrugged moisture, lays up a store of harm for the head; while the sun's warmth, too, so desirable for imparting to the hair at once growth and dryness, is hurtful. What "grace" is compatible with "injury?" What "beauty" with "impurities?" Shall a Christian woman heap saffron on her head, as upon an altar? . . . But, God says, "Which of you can make a white hair black, or out of a black a white?" And so they refute the Lord! On the Apparel of Women, 4.21.

CYPRIAN: Are sincerity and truth preserved, when what is sincere is polluted by adulterous colors, and what is true is changed into a lie by deceitful dyes? Your Lord says, "You cannot make one hair white or black;" and you, in order to overcome the word of your Lord, will be more mighty than He, and stain your hair with a daring endeavor and with profane contempt. With evil foreshadow of the future, you make a beginning to yourself already of flame-colored hair; and sin (oh, wickedness!) with your head—that is, with the nobler part of your body! And although it is written of the Lord, "His head and His hair were white like wool or snow," you curse that whiteness and hate that hoariness which is like the Lord's head. *The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.434*.

5:37 TERTULLIAN: It is incredible that the apostles could have been such men as to bring in some other rule of faith [as the heretics teach], differing from and contrary to that which they were proclaiming through the catholic churches, ²¹ as if they spoke of one God in the Church, and another at home, and described one substance of Christ, publicly, and another secretly, and announced one hope of the resurrection before all men, and another before the few; although they themselves, in their epistles, besought men that they would all speak one and the same thing, and that there should be no divisions and dissensions in the church, ²² seeing that they, whether Paul or others, preached the same things. Moreover, they remembered the words: "Let your communication be yes, yes; no, no; for whatever is more than this comes of evil;" so that they were not to handle the

¹⁹ Dan 7:9

²⁰ Rev 1:14

That is, "universal" or including all Christians (not to be confused with Roman Catholic).

²² 1 Cor 1:10

gospel in a diversity of treatment. The Prescription Against Heretics, 3.255-256.

TERTULLIAN: Light is light; and darkness, darkness; yes is yes; and no, no; "whatever is more than these comes of evil." *On the Flesh of Christ, 3.541.*

TERTULLIAN: Always bear in mind that this is the rule of faith which I profess; by it I testify that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and so you will know in what sense this is said. Now, observe, my assertion is that the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one, and that They are distinct from Each Other. This statement is taken in a wrong sense by every uneducated as well as every perversely disposed person, as if it predicated a diversity, in such a sense as to imply a separation among the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit. I am, moreover, obliged to say this, when (extolling the Monarchy at the expense of the Economy) they contend for the identity of the Father and Son and Spirit, that it is not by way of diversity that the Son differs from the Father, but by distribution: it is not by division that He is different, but by distinction; because the Father is not the same as the Son, since they differ one from the other in the mode of their being. For the Father is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole, as He Himself acknowledges: "My Father is greater than I."23 In the Psalm His inferiority is described as being "a little lower than the angels." Thus the Father is distinct from the Son, being greater than the Son, inasmuch as He who begets is one, and He who is begotten is another; He, too, who sends is one, and He who is sent is another; and He, again, who makes is one, and He through whom the thing is made is another. Happily the Lord Himself employs this expression of the person of the Paraclete, so as to signify not a division or severance, but a disposition (of mutual relations in the Godhead); for He says, "I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth,"25 thus making the Paraclete distinct from Himself, even as we say that the Son is also distinct from the Father; so that He showed a third degree in the Paraclete, as we believe the second degree is in the Son, by reason of the order observed in the Economy. Besides, does not the very fact that they have the distinct names of Father and Son amount to a declaration that they are distinct in personality? For, of course, all things will be what their names represent them to be; and what they are and ever will be, that will they be called; and the distinction indicated by the names does not at all admit of any confusion, because there is none in the things which they designate. "Yes is yes, and no is no; for what is more than these, comes of evil." Against Praxeas, 3.603-604.26

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Again, with the Lord's saying, "Let your yes be yes, and your no be no," may be compared the following: "But to admit a

²³ Jn 14:28

²⁴ Ps 8:5

²⁵ Jn 14:16

²⁶ Montanist work.

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falsehood, and destroy a truth, is in nowise lawful." With the prohibition, also, against swearing agrees the saying in the tenth book of the Laws of Plato: "Let praise and an oath in everything be absent." *The Stromata*, 2.468.

CYPRIAN: It is not fitting for the dignity of priests to be blamed for the levity of a changeable and inconstant mind, when the Lord teaches and says, "Let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no." *The Epistles of Clement*, 5.344.

LACTANTIUS: It is a part of the same law not to utter false witness, and this also itself has a wider meaning. For if false witness by falsehood is injurious to him against whom it is spoken, and deceives him in whose presence it is spoken, we must therefore never speak falsely, because falsehood always deceives or injures. Therefore he is not a just man who, even without inflicting injury, speaks in idle discourse. Nor indeed is it lawful for him to flatter, for flattery is pernicious and deceitful; but he will everywhere guard the truth. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 7.249.

Nonresistance

Matthew 5:38-42

[38] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: EXOD 21:24; LEV 24:20; DEUT 19:15-21

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. LAM 3:30; PROV 25:21-22; LK 6:29-30; ROM 12:17-21; 1 THES 5:15; JAS 5:6; 1 PET 2:20-23; 3:9

 $^{[40]}$ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. LK 6:29; 1 COR 6:1-7

[41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

 $^{\text{[42]}}$ Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. $^{LK\,6:30,\,34}$

Summary: No longer shall the Law say, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) to him who counts no man his enemy, but all men his neighbors (Irenaeus). Christians observe the new law, the old law being obliterated (Tertullian). "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,"—that is the expression of justice, but non-resistance is the expression of goodness (Archelaus) and patience (Tertullian). If one gives you a blow upon your right cheek, turn to him the other also; and you shall be perfect (The Didache). Nonresistance also includes not going to law with those who plunder and rob us (Irenaeus, Athenagoras), being patient concerning injuries (Justin Martyr), not correcting with violence the delinquencies of sins (Clement of Alexandria), not fighting in self-defense (Tertullian), not hitting the other person (Origen), not returning force (Commodianus), not injuring anyone at any time (Irenaeus, Theonas Of Alexandria, Lactantius), and not

making any resistance when apprehended (CYPRIAN). Both the provoker and provoked are blamed of hurting a man in the eyes of the Lord (TERTULLIAN). He who returns an injury, desires to imitate that very person by whom he has been injured (Lactantius). It is in our own power to observe what is commanded (ORIGEN). Do not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give (Barnabas, The Didache, Hermas). Alms are to be denied to none (Cyprian). But woe to those who have and who take under false pretenses, or who are able to help themselves and want to take from others (Hermas, The Didache, Clement of Alexandria).

5:38ff POLYCARP: Let us then continually persevere in our hope, and the pledge of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, "who bore our sins in His own body on the tree" "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," but endured all things for us, that we might live in Him. Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. For He has set us this example in Himself, and we have believed that such is the case. *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.35*.

IRENAEUS: For no longer shall the law say, ... "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," to him who counts no man his enemy, but all men his neighbors, and therefore cannot stretch out his hand at all for vengeance. The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching.

ATHENAGORAS: For when they know that we cannot endure even to see a man put to death, though justly; who of them can accuse us of murder or cannibalism? Who does not reckon among the things of greatest interest the contests of gladiators and wild beasts, especially those which are given by you? But we, deeming that to see a man put to death is much the same as killing him, have renounced such spectacles. How, then, when we do not even look on, lest we should contract guilt and pollution, can we put people to death? *A Plea for the Christians*, 2.147.

TATIAN: You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth:' but I say to you, do not stand in opposition to the evil; but whoever smites you on your right cheek, turn to him also the other. And he that would sue you, and take your tunic, leave to him also your wrapper. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. And he that asks you, give to

¹ 1 Pet 2:24

² 1 Pet 2:22

³ Cf. 1 Jn 4:9

⁴ Cf. Acts 5:41; 1 Pet 4:16

⁵ 1 Pet 2:21

⁶ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

⁷ Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, tr. Armitage Robinson, D.D. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 147-148.

him: and he that would borrow of you, do not prevent him.⁸ And do not prosecute him that takes your substance. And as you desire that men should do to you, so do also to them.⁹ *The Diatessaron*, 9.57.

TERTULLIAN: Who else, therefore, are understood but we, who, fully taught by the new law, observe these practices,—the old law being obliterated, the coming of whose abolition the action itself of beating swords into plows demonstrates?¹⁰ For the custom of the old law was to avenge itself by the vengeance of the sword, and to pluck out "eye for eye," and to inflict retaliatory revenge for injury. But the new law's custom was to point to clemency, and to convert to tranquillity the pristine ferocity of "swords" and "lances," and to remodel the pristine execution of "war" upon the rivals and foes of the law into the pacific actions of "plowing" and "tilling" the land. *An Answer to the Jews, 3.154*.

TERTULLIAN: Christ plainly teaches a new kind of patience, when He actually prohibits the reprisals which the Creator permitted in requiring "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,"11 and bids us, on the contrary, "to him who strikes us on the one cheek, to offer the other also, and to give up our coat to him that takes away our cloak." No doubt these are supplementary additions by Christ, but they are quite in keeping with the teaching of the Creator. And therefore this question must at once be determined: Whether the discipline of patience be enjoined by the Creator? When by Zechariah He commanded, "Let none of you imagine evil against his brother," 12 He did not expressly include his neighbor; but then in another passage He says, "Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor."13 He who counseled that an injury should be forgotten, was still more likely to counsel the patient endurance of it. But then, when He said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," 14 He thereby teaches that patience calmly waits for the infliction of vengeance. Therefore, inasmuch as it is incredible that the same God should seem to require "a tooth for a tooth and an eve for an eye," in return for an injury, who forbids not only all reprisals, but even a revengeful thought or recollection of an injury, in so far does it become plain to us in what sense He required "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,"—not, indeed, for the purpose of permitting the repetition of the injury by retaliating it, which it virtually prohibited when it forbade vengeance; but for the purpose of restraining the injury in the first instance, which it had forbidden on pain of retaliation or reciprocity; so that every man, in view of the permission to inflict a second (or retaliatory) injury, might abstain from the commission of the first (or provocative) wrong. For He knows how much more easy it is to

⁸ Cf. Lk 6:30

⁹ Lk 6:31

¹⁰ Isa 2:2-4; Mic 4:1-3

¹¹ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

¹² Zech 7:10

¹³ Zech 8:17

¹⁴ Deut 32:35; cf. Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30

repress violence by the prospect of retaliation, than by the promise of indefinite vengeance. Both results, however, it was necessary to provide, in consideration of the nature and the faith of men, that the man who believed in God might expect vengeance from God, while he who had no faith (in order to restrain him) might fear the laws which prescribed retaliation. This purpose of the law, which it was difficult to understand, Christ, as the Lord of the Sabbath and of the law, and of all the dispensations of the Father, both revealed and made intelligible, when He commanded that "the other cheek should be offered (to the smiter)," in order that He might the more effectually extinguish all reprisals of an injury, which the law had wished to prevent by the method of retaliation, and which most certainly revelation had manifestly restricted, both by prohibiting the memory of the wrong, and referring the vengeance thereof to God. *Against Marcion*, 3.370.

TERTULLIAN: For men were of old accustomed to require "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth"¹⁵ and to repay with usury "evil with evil;" for, as yet, patience was not on earth, because faith was not either. *Of Patience*, 3.711.

TERTULLIAN: So, too, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth," has now grown old, ever since "Let none render evil for evil" grew young. *On Exhortation to Chastity, 4.54.*

ORIGEN: Celsus [a pagan critic] extracts from the Gospel the precept, "To him who strikes thee once, offer yourself to be struck again," although without giving any passage from the Old Testament which he considers opposed to it. On the one hand, we know that "it was said to them in old time, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;"18 and on the other, we have read, "I say unto you, 'Whoever shall smite you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also." But as there is reason to believe that Celsus produces the objections which he has heard from those who wish to make a difference between the God of the Gospel and the God of the law, we must say in reply, that this precept, "Whoever shall strike you on the one cheek, turn to him the other," is not unknown in the older Scriptures. For thus, in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, it is said, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth: he sits alone, and keeps silence, because he has borne it upon him. He gives his cheek to him that smites him; he is filled full with reproach." There is no discrepancy, then, between the God of the Gospel and the God of the law, even when we take literally the precept regarding the blow on the face. So, then, we infer that neither "Jesus nor Moses has taught falsely." The Father in sending Jesus did not "forget the commands which He had given to Moses." He did not "change His

¹⁵ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

¹⁶ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

¹⁷ Rom 12:17; 1 Pet 3:9; 1 Thess 5:15

¹⁸ Ex 21:24: Lev 24:20: Deut 19:21

¹⁹ Lam 3:27-30

mind, condemn His own laws, and send by His messenger counter instructions." *Against Celsus*, 4.620-621.

ARCHELAUS: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,"—that is the expression of justice. And as to His injunction, that a man, when struck on the one cheek, should offer the other also, that is the expression of goodness. Well, then, are justice and goodness opposed to each other? Far from it! There has only been an advance from simple justice to positive goodness. Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6.216.

5:39ff The Didache: If one gives you a blow upon your right cheek, turn to him the other also; and you shall be perfect. If one compel you for one mile, go with him two. If one takes away your cloak, give him also your coat. If one take from you what is your own, do not ask for it back, ²⁰ for indeed you are not able. Give to every one that asks you, and do not ask for it back; ²¹ for the Father wills that to all should be given of our own blessings (free gifts). Happy is he that gives according to the commandment; for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receives; for if one having need receive, he is guiltless; but he that receives not having need, shall pay the penalty, why he received and for what, and, coming into straits (confinement), he shall be examined concerning the things which he has done, and he shall not escape from there until he pays back the last farthing. ²² But also now concerning this, it has been said, "Let your alms sweat in your hands, until you know to whom you should give." *7.377*.

SECOND CLEMENT: Brethren, leaving willingly our sojourn in this present world, let us do the will of Him that called us, and not fear to depart out of this world. For the Lord says, "Be as lambs in the midst of wolves." And Peter answered and said to Him, "What, then, if the wolves shall tear in pieces the lambs?" Jesus said to Peter, "The lambs have no cause after they are dead to fear the wolves; and in like manner, do not fear them that kill you, and can do nothing more to you; but fear Him who, after you are dead, has power over both soul and body to cast them into hell-fire." And consider, brethren, that the sojourning in the flesh in this world is but brief and transient, but the promise of Christ is great and wonderful, even the rest of the kingdom to come, and of life everlasting. By what course of conduct, then, shall we attain these things, but by leading a holy and righteous life, and by deeming these worldly things as not belonging to us, and not fixing our desires upon them? For if we desire to possess them, we fall away from the path of righteousness. *9.252*.

ARISTIDES: Christians appeal to those who injure them, and try to win them as

²⁰ Lk 6:30

²¹ Lk 6:30

²² Mt 5:26

²³ Mt 10:16

²⁴ Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4-5

friends; they are eager to do good to their enemies. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 9.276-277.

POLYCARP: But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; "not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing," or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching. *Epistle to the Philippians*, 1.33.

JUSTIN MARTYR: For we will not require that you punish our accusers; they being sufficiently punished by their present wickedness and ignorance of what is right. *The First Apology, 1.165.*

JUSTIN MARTYR: And concerning our being patient of injuries, and ready to serve all, and free from anger, this is what He said: "To him that smites you on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that takes away your cloak or coat, do not forbid. And whoever shall be angry, is in danger of the fire. And every one that compels you to go with him a mile, follow him two. And let your good works shine before men, that they, seeing them, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." For we ought not to strive; neither has He desired us to be imitators of wicked men, but He has exhorted us to lead all men, by patience and gentleness, from shame and the love of evil. And this indeed is proved in the case of many who once were of your way of thinking, but have changed their violent and tyrannical disposition, being overcome either by the constancy which they have witnessed in their [Christian] neighbors' lives, or by the extraordinary forbearance they have observed in their fellow-travelers when defrauded, or by the honesty of those with whom they have transacted business. The First Apology, 1.168.

IRENAEUS: Jesus commanded His disciples . . . not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek to those that maltreated them; and not only not to refuse to give up the property of others, but even if their own were taken away, not to demand it back again from those that took it; and not only not to injure their neighbors, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those that injured them, and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others. *Against Heresies*, 1.408.

IRENAEUS: [The Gnostics] maintain that He suffered only in appearance. For if He did not truly suffer, no thanks to Him, since there was no suffering at all; and

²⁵ 1 Pet 3:9

²⁶ Cf. Mt 5:16, 22; Lk 6:29

when we shall actually begin to suffer, He will seem as leading us astray, exhorting us to endure buffeting, and to turn the other cheek, if He did not Himself before us in reality suffer the same; and as He misled them by seeming to them what He was not, so does He also mislead us, by exhorting us to endure what He did not endure Himself. In that case, we shall be even above the Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured. But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of man. For He fought and conquered; for He was man contending for the fathers, and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man,²⁷ and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin. For He is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race. *Against Heresies*, 1.447-448.

IRENAEUS: The law of liberty, that is, the word of God, preached by the apostles who went forth from Jerusalem throughout all the earth, caused such a change in the state of things, that these nations did form the swords and war-lances into plowshares, and changed them into pruning-hooks for reaping the corn, that is, into instruments used for peaceful purposes, and that they are now unaccustomed to fighting, but when smitten, offer also the other cheek.²⁸ *Against Heresies*, 1.512.

ATHENAGORAS: We have learned, not only not to return blow for blow, nor to go to law with those who plunder and rob us, but to those who smite us on one side of the face to offer the other side also, and to those who take away our coat to give likewise our cloak. But, when we have surrendered our property, they plot against our very bodies and souls, pouring upon us wholesale charges of crimes of which we are guiltless even in thought, but which belong to these idle praters themselves, and to the whole tribe of those who are like them. A Plea for the Christians, 2.129-130.

ATHENAGORAS: But among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves. A Plea for the Christians, 2.134.

ATHENAGORAS: But though such is our character (Oh! why should I speak of things unfit to be uttered?), the things said of us are an example of the proverb, "The harlot reproves the chaste." For those who have set up a market for

²⁷ Mt 12:29

²⁸ Cf. Isa 2:3-4; Mic 4:2-3

fornication and established infamous resorts for the young for every kind of vile pleasure,—who do not abstain even from males, males with males committing shocking abominations, outraging all the noblest and comeliest bodies in all sorts of ways, so dishonoring the fair workmanship of God (for beauty on earth is not self-made, but sent here by the hand and will of God),—these men, I say, revile us for the very things which they are conscious of themselves, and ascribe to their own gods, boasting of them as noble deeds, and worthy of the gods. These adulterers and homosexuals defame the eunuchs and the oncemarried, . . . so that not even the governors of the provinces sent by you suffice for the hearing of the complaints against those, to whom it even is not lawful, when they are struck, not to offer themselves for more blows, nor when defamed not to bless: for it is not enough to be just (and justice is to return like for like), but it is incumbent on us to be good and patient of evil. *A Plea for the Christians*, 2.147.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Manliness is to be assumed in order to produce confidence and forbearance, so as "to him that strikes on the one cheek, to give to him the other; and to him that takes away the cloak, to yield to him the coat also," strongly, restraining anger. For we do not train our women like Amazons to manliness in war; since we wish the men even to be peaceable. I hear that the Sarmatian women practice war no less than the men. *The Stromata*, 2.420.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Above all, Christians are not allowed to correct with violence the delinquencies of sins. For it is not those that abstain from wickedness from compulsion, but those that abstain from choice, that God crowns. It is impossible for a man to be steadily good except by his own choice. For he that is made good by compulsion of another is not good; for he is not what he is by his own choice. For it is the freedom of each one that makes true goodness and reveals real wickedness. And so through these dispositions God contrived to make His own disposition manifest. *Fragments*, 2.581.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The expression that rich men shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom²⁹ is to be apprehended in a scholarly way, not awkwardly, or rustically, or carnally. For if the expression is used thus, salvation does not depend on external things, whether they be many or few, small or great, or illustrious or obscure, or esteemed or disesteemed; but on the virtue of the soul, on faith, and hope, and love, and brotherliness, and knowledge, and meekness, and humility, and truth, the reward of which is salvation. For it is not on account of comeliness of body that any one shall live, or, on the other hand, perish. But he who uses the body given to him chastely and according to God, shall live; and he that destroys the temple of God shall be destroyed.³⁰ An ugly man can be

²⁹ Mt 19:23; Mk 10:23-24; Lk 18:24

^{30 1} Cor 3:17

profligate, and a good-looking man temperate. Neither strength and great size of body makes alive, nor does any of the members destroy. But the soul which uses them provides the cause for each. Bear then, it is said, when struck on the face; which a man strong and in good health can obey. And again, a man who is feeble may transgress from refractoriness of temper. So also a poor and destitute man may be found intoxicated with lusts; and a man rich in worldly goods temperate, poor in indulgences, trustworthy, intelligent, pure, chastened. Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?, 2.596.

TERTULLIAN: Hippias [a pagan] is put to death laying plots against the state: no Christian ever attempted such a thing in behalf of his brethren, even when persecution was scattering them abroad with every atrocity. But it will be said that some of us, too, depart from the rules of our discipline. In that case, however, we count them no longer Christians. *The Apology*, 3.51.

TERTULLIAN: As for the Christians, however, in what does their case resemble this? No one is ashamed; no one is sorry, except for his former sins. If he is pointed at for his religion, he glories in it; if dragged to trial, he does not resist; if accused, he makes no defense. When questioned, he confesses; when condemned, he rejoices. What sort of evil is this, in which the nature of evil comes to a standstill? *Ad Nationes*, 3.109-110.

TERTULLIAN: Hear what is predicted in Zechariah: "The Lord of hosts shall protect them; and they shall devour them, and subdue them with sling-stones; and they shall drink their blood like wine, and they shall fill the bowls as it were of the altar. And the Lord shall save them in that day, even His people, like sheep; because as sacred stones they roll," etc. And that you may not suppose that these predictions refer to such sufferings as await them from so many wars with strangers, consider the nature (of the sufferings). In a prophecy of wars which were to be waged with legitimate arms, no one would think of enumerating stones as weapons, which are better known in popular crowds and unarmed tumults. Nobody measures the copious streams of blood which flow in war by bowlfuls, nor limits it to what is shed upon a single altar. No one gives the name of sheep to those who fall in battle with arms in hand, and while repelling force with force, but only to those who are slain, yielding themselves up in their own place of duty and with patience, rather than fighting in self-defense. *Against Marcion*, 3.415.

TERTULLIAN: If one attempt to provoke you by manual violence, the monition of the Lord is at hand: "To him," He says, "who smites you on the face, turn the other cheek likewise." Let outrageousness be wearied out by your patience. Whatever that blow may be, conjoined with pain and insulting treatment, it shall receive a heavier one from the Lord. You wound that outrageous one more by

³¹ Zech 9:15-16 LXX

enduring: for he will be beaten by Him for whose sake you endure. If the tongue's bitterness break out in malediction or reproach, look back at the saying, "When they curse you, rejoice." The Lord Himself was "cursed" in the eye of the law; and yet He is the only Blessed One. Let us servants, therefore, follow our Lord closely; and be cursed patiently, that we may be able to be blessed. *Of Patience*, 3.712.

TERTULLIAN: What difference is there between provoker and provoked, except that the former is detected as prior in evil-doing, but the latter as posterior? Yet each stands blamed of hurting a man in the eye of the Lord, who both prohibits and condemns every wickedness. In evil doing there is no account taken of order, nor does place separate what similarity combines. And the precept is absolute, that evil is not to be repaid with evil. *Of Patience*, 3.713.

COMMODIANUS: Many are the martyrdoms which are made without shedding of blood. Not to desire other men's goods; to wish to have the benefit of martyrdom; to bridle the tongue, you ought to make yourself humble; not willingly to use force, nor to return force used against you, be a patient mind, understand that you are a martyr. *The Instructions of Commodianus*, 4.212.

ORIGEN: The Savior said, "I say to you, do not resist evil;" . . . and in issuing certain other commands, conveys no other meaning than this, that it is in our own power to observe what is commanded. And therefore we are rightly rendered liable to condemnation if we transgress those commandments which we are able to keep. *De Principiis*, 4.305.

ORIGEN: Neither Celsus [a pagan critic] nor they who think with him are able to point out any act on the part of Christians which savors of rebellion. And yet, if a revolt had led to the formation of the Christian commonwealth, so that it derived its existence in this way from that of the Jews, who were permitted to take up arms in defense of the members of their families, and to slay their enemies, the Christian Lawgiver would not have altogether forbidden the putting of men to death; and yet He nowhere teaches that it is right for His own disciples to offer violence to any one, however wicked. For He did not deem it in keeping with such laws as His, which were derived from a divine source, to allow the killing of any individual whatever. Nor would the Christians, had they owed their origin to a rebellion, have adopted laws of so exceedingly mild a character as not to allow them, when it was their fate to be slain as sheep, on any occasion to resist their persecutors. . . .

Because Christians were taught not to avenge themselves upon their enemies (and have thus observed laws of a mild and philanthropic character); and because they would not, although able, have made war even if they had

³² Cf. Mt 5:11; Lk 6:22-23

³³ Cf. Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13

received authority to do so, they have obtained this reward from God, that He has always warred in their behalf, and on certain occasions has restrained those who rose up against them and desired to destroy them. For in order to remind others, that by seeing a few engaged in a struggle for their religion, they also might be better fitted to despise death, some, on special occasions, and these individuals who can be easily numbered, have endured death for the sake of Christianity, God not permitting the whole nation to be exterminated, but desiring that it should continue, and that the whole world should be filled with this health-giving and religious doctrine. *Against Celsus*, 4.467-468.

ORIGEN: "Christians also have," says he [Clesus, a pagan critic], "a precept to this effect, that we ought not to avenge ourselves on one who injures us," or, as Christ expresses it, 'Whosoever shall strike you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.'

"This is an ancient saying, which had been admirably expressed long before, and which they have only reported in a coarser way. For Plato introduces Socrates conversing with Crito as follows: 'Must we never do injustice to any?'

"'Certainly not.'

"And since we must never do injustice, must we not return injustice for an injustice that has been done to us, as most people think?"

"'It seems to me that we should not.'

"But tell me, Crito, may we do evil to any one or not?"

"'Certainly not, O Socrates.'

"Well, is it just, as is commonly said, for one who has suffered wrong to do wrong in return, or is it unjust?"

"It is unjust. Yes; for to do harm to a man is the same as to do him injustice."

"You speak truly. We must then not do injustice in return for injustice, nor must we do evil to any one, whatever evil we may have suffered from him.' Thus Plato speaks; and he adds, 'Consider, then, whether you are at one with me, and whether, starting from this principle, we may not come to the conclusion that it is never right to do injustice, even in return for an injustice which has been received; or whether, on the other hand, you differ from me, and do not admit the principle from which we started. That has always been my opinion, and is so still.' Such are the sentiments of Plato, and indeed they were held by divine men before his time."...

From these remarks it is evident, that when Jesus said "coarsely," as Celsus terms it, "To him who shall strike you on the one cheek, turn the other also; and if any man be minded to sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also," He expressed Himself in such a way as to make the precept have more practical effect than the words of Plato in the Crito; for the latter is so far from being intelligible to ordinary persons, that even those have a difficulty in understanding him, who have been brought up in the schools of learning, and have been initiated into the famous philosophy of Greece. It may also be observed, that the precept enjoining patience under injuries is in no

way corrupted or degraded by the plain and simple language which our Lord employs. *Against Celsus*, 4.634-635.

ORIGEN: Jesus' words regarding turning the other cheek concern more than simply long-suffering. For it is against nature to be so arrogant as to hit the other person. *Fragment* 108.

ORIGEN: "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for in doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." Indeed the Lord also commands these things in the Gospels. . . . To the same extent that we not only do not retaliate against enemies and those who injure, but even offer good, to that same extent we heap up their punishments at the judgment of God–for their condemnation is truly just if they are convicted before the Lord for having inflicted evils upon those from whom they have received good things. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 36

CYPRIAN: Christians cannot be conquered, but they can die; and by this very fact they are invincible, that they do not fear death; that they do not in turn assail their assailants, since it is not lawful for the innocent even to kill the guilty; but that they readily deliver up both their lives and their blood; that since such malice and cruelty rages in the world, they may the more quickly withdraw from the evil and cruel. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.351.

CYPRIAN: Believe in Christ, whom the Father has sent to quicken and restore us. Cease to hurt the servants of God and of Christ with your persecutions, since when they are injured the divine vengeance defends them.

None of us [Christians], when he is apprehended, makes resistance, nor avenges himself against your unrighteous violence, although our people are numerous and plentiful. Our certainty of a vengeance to follow makes us patient. The innocent give place to the guilty; the harmless acquiesce in punishments and tortures, sure and confident that whatsoever we suffer will not remain unavenged, and that in proportion to the greatness of the injustice of our persecution so will be the justice and the severity of the vengeance exacted for those persecutions. Nor does the wickedness of the impious ever rise up against the name we bear, without immediate vengeance from above attending it. *The*

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:60. Taken from Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 5134-5139. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

³⁵ Rom 12:20; Prov 25:21-22

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 220. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

Treatises of Cyprian, 5.462.

CYPRIAN: And because we may not hate, and we please God more by rendering no return for wrong, we exhort you while you have the power, while there yet remains to you something of life, to make satisfaction to God, and to emerge from the abyss of darkling superstition into the bright light of true religion. We do not envy your comforts, nor do we conceal the divine benefits. We repay kindness for your hatred; and for the torments and penalties which are inflicted on us, we point out to you the ways of salvation. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.465.

CYPRIAN: In the Epistle of Paul to the Romans: "Rendering to no man evil for evil." Also in the same place: "Not to be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Of this same thing in the Apocalypse: "And He said to me, 'Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book; because now the time is at hand. And let those who persist in hurting, hurt: and let him who is filthy, be filthy still: but let the righteous do still more righteousness: and in like manner, let him that is holy do still more holiness. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his deeds." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.541.

THEONAS OF ALEXANDRIA: Do no one an injury at any time, and provoke no one to anger. If an injury is done to you, look to Jesus Christ; and even as you desire that He may remit your transgressions, also forgive them theirs. ⁴⁰ The Epistle of Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria, to Lucianus, the Chief Chamberlain, 6.161.

LACTANTIUS: For religion is to be defended, not by putting to death, but by dying; not by cruelty, but by patient endurance; not by guilt, but by good faith: for the former belong to evils, but the latter to goods; and it is necessary for that which is good to have place in religion, and not that which is evil. For if you wish to defend religion by bloodshed, and by tortures, and by guilt, it will no longer be defended, but will be polluted and profaned. For nothing is so much a matter of free will as religion; in which, if the mind of the worshipper is disinclined to it, religion is at once taken away, and ceases to exist. The right method therefore is, that you defend religion by patient endurance or by death; in which the preservation of the faith is both pleasing to God Himself, and adds authority to religion. For if he who in this earthly warfare preserves his faith to his king in some illustrious action, if he shall continue to live, because more beloved and acceptable, and if he shall fall, obtains the highest glory, because he has undergone death for his leader; how much more is faith to be kept towards God, the Ruler of all, who is able to pay the reward of virtue, not only to the

³⁷ Rom 12:17

³⁸ Rom 12:21

³⁹ Rev 22:10-12

⁴⁰ Mt 6:14-15

living, but also to the dead! Therefore the worship of God, since it belongs to heavenly warfare, requires the greatest devotedness and fidelity. . . .

But we, on the contrary, do not require that any one should be compelled, whether he is willing or unwilling, to worship our God, who is the God of all men; nor are we angry if any one does not worship Him. For we trust in the majesty of Him who has power to avenge contempt shown towards Himself, as also He has power to avenge the calamities and injuries inflicted on His servants. And therefore, when we suffer such impious things, we do not resist even in word; but we remit vengeance to God, not as they act who would have it appear that they are defenders of their gods, and rage without restraint against those who do not worship them. *The Divine Institutes, 7.157-158*.

LACTANTIUS: Since, therefore, the Christian does injury to none, nor desires the property of others, and does not even defend his own if it is taken from him by violence, since he knows how even to bear with moderation an injury inflicted upon him, because he is endued with virtue; it is necessary that the just man should be subject to the unjust, and that the wise should be insulted by the foolish, that the one may sin because he is unjust, and the other may have virtue in himself because he is just. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.160.

LACTANTIUS: Constancy is a virtue; not that we resist those who injure us, for we must yield to these. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.182.

LACTANTIUS: Cicero says in those same books respecting Offices: "But if any one should wish to unravel this indistinct conception of his soul, let him at once teach himself that he is a good man who profits those whom he can, and injures no one unless provoked by injury."

Oh how he marred a simple and true sentiment by the addition of two words! For what need was there of adding these words, "unless provoked by injury?" that he might append vice as a most disgraceful tail to a good man and might represent him as without patience, which is the greatest of all the virtues. He said that a good man would inflict injuries if he were provoked: now he must necessarily lose the name of a good man from this very circumstance, if he shall inflict injury. For it is not less the part of a bad man to return an injury than to inflict it. For from what source do contests, from what source do fightings and contentions, arise among men, except that impatience opposed to injustice often excites great tempests? But if you meet injustice with patience, than which virtue nothing can be found more true, nothing more worthy of a man, it will immediately be extinguished, as though you should pour water upon a fire. But if that injustice which provokes opposition has met with impatience equal to itself, as though overspread with oil, it will excite so great an extreme fire, that no stream can extinguish it, but only the shedding of blood. Great, therefore, is the advantage of patience, of which the wise man has deprived the good man. For this alone causes that no evil happens; and if it should be given to all, there will be no wickedness and no fraud in the affairs of men. What, therefore, can be

so calamitous to a good man, so opposed to his character, as to let loose the reins to anger, which deprives him not only of the title of a good man, but even of a man; since to injure another, as he himself most truly says, is not in accordance with the nature of man? For if you provoke cattle or horses, they turn against you either with their hoof or their horn; and serpents and wild beasts, unless you pursue them that you may kill them, give no trouble.

And to return to examples of men, even the inexperienced and the foolish, if at any time they receive an injury, are led by a blind and irrational fury, and endeavor to retaliate upon those who injure them. In what respect, then, does the wise and good man differ from the evil and foolish, except that he has invincible patience, of which the foolish are destitute; except that he knows how to govern himself, and to mitigate his anger, which those, because they are without virtue, are unable to curb? But this circumstance manifestly deceived him, because, when inquiry is made respecting virtue, he thought that it is the part of virtue to conquer in every kind of contention. Nor was he able in any way to see, that a man who gives way to grief and anger, and who indulges these affections, against which he ought rather to struggle, and who rushes wherever injustice shall have called him, does not fulfill the duty of virtue. For he who endeavors to return an injury, desires to imitate that very person by whom he has been injured. Thus he who imitates a bad man can by no means be good.

Therefore by two words he has taken away from the good and wise man two of the greatest virtues, innocence and patience. . . . Therefore patience is to be regarded as a very great virtue; and that the just man might obtain this, God willed, as has been before said, that he should be despised as sluggish. For unless he shall have been insulted, it will not be known what fortitude he has in restraining himself. Now if, when provoked by injury, he has begun to follow up his assailant with violence, he is overcome. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.184-185.

LACTANTIUS: It is not befitting that those who strive to keep to the path of justice should be companions and sharers in this public homicide. For when God forbids us to kill, He not only prohibits us from open violence, which is not even allowed by the public laws, but He warns us against the commission of those things which are esteemed lawful among men. Thus it will be neither lawful for a just man to engage in warfare, since his warfare is justice itself, nor to accuse any one of a capital charge, because it makes no difference whether you put a man to death by word, or rather by the sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited. Therefore, with regard to this precept of God, there ought to be no exception at all; but that it is always unlawful to put to death a man, whom God willed to be a sacred creature. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.187.

5:40ff IRENAEUS: For "to him that takes away your coat," He says, "give to him your cloak also; and from him that takes away your goods, do not ask for them again; and as you would that men should do to you, do likewise to

them;"⁴¹ so that we may not grieve as those who are unwilling to be defrauded, but may rejoice as those who have given willingly, and as rather conferring a favor upon our neighbors than yielding to necessity. "And if any one," He says, "shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two;" so that you may not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing yourself in all things kindly disposed and useful to your neighbor, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing your kind offices, assimilating yourself to the Father, "who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and unjust." Against Heresies, 1.477.

TERTULLIAN: Patience in losses is an exercise in bestowing and communicating. He who does not fear to lose, does not find it difficult to give. Else how will one, when he has two coats, give the one of them to the naked, 42 unless he be a man likewise to offer to one who takes away his coat his cloak as well?⁴³ How shall we fashion to us friends from mammon, 44 if we love it so much as not to put up with its loss? We shall perish together with the lost mammon. Why do we find here, where it is our business to lose?⁴⁵ To exhibit impatience at all losses is the Gentiles' business, who give money the precedence perhaps over their soul; for so they do, when, in their greed of money, they encounter the gainful perils of commerce on the sea; when, for money's sake, even in the forum, there is nothing which damnation itself would fear which they hesitate to try; when they hire themselves for sport and the camp; when, after the manner of wild beasts, they play the bandit along the highway. But us, according to the diversity by which we are distinguished from them, it becomes to lay down not our soul for money, but money for our soul, whether spontaneously in bestowing or patiently in losing. Of Patience, 3.712.

5:42 BARNABAS: Do not be ready to stretch forth your hands to take, while you contract them to give. . . . Do not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give. "Give to every one that asks you," and you will know who is the good Recompenser of the reward. 46 1.148.

THE DIDACHE: Do not be a stretcher forth of the hands to receive and a drawer of them back to give. If you have anything at all, through your hands you will give ransom for your sins. Do not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give; for you will know who is the good repayer of the hire. Do not turn away from him that is in need, but share all things with your brother, and do not say that they are your own; for if you are partakers in that which is immortal, how much more in things which are mortal? 7.378.

⁴¹ Lk 6:29-31

⁴² Lk 3:11

⁴³ Cf. Lk 6:29

⁴⁴ Lk 16:9

⁴⁵ Cf. Mt 10:39

⁴⁶ Cf. Lk 6:30

HERMAS: Practice goodness; and from the rewards of your labors, which God gives you, give to all the needy in simplicity, ⁴⁷ not hesitating as to whom you are to give or not to give. Give to all, for God wishes His gifts to be shared amongst all. They who receive, will render an account to God why and for what they have received. For the afflicted who receive will not be condemned, but they who receive on false pretenses will suffer punishment. He, then, who gives is guiltless. For as he received from the Lord, so has he accomplished his service in simplicity, not hesitating as to whom he should give and to whom he should not give. This service, then, if accomplished in simplicity, is glorious with God. He, therefore, who thus ministers in simplicity, will live to God. Keep therefore these commandments, as I have given them to you, that your repentance and the repentance of your house may be found in simplicity, and your heart may be pure and stainless. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, *2.20*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Alms are to be given, but with judgment, and to the deserving, that we may obtain a recompense from the Most High. But woe to those who have and who take under false pretenses, or who are able to help themselves and want to take from others. For he who has, and, to carry out false pretenses or out of laziness, takes, shall be condemned. *Fragments*, 2.578.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;" showing that by nature all property which a man possesses in his own power is not his own. And from this unrighteousness it is permitted to work a righteous and saving thing, to refresh some one of those who have an everlasting habitation with the Father.

See then, first, that He has not commanded you to be solicited or to wait to be importuned, but yourself to seek those who are to be benefited and are worthy disciples of the Savior. Excellent, accordingly, also is the apostle's saying, "For the Lord loves a cheerful giver;" who delights in giving, and does not spare, sowing so that he may also thus reap, without murmuring, and disputing, and regret, and communicating, which is pure beneficence. But better than this is the saying spoken by the Lord in another place, "Give to every one that asks you." For truly such is God's delight in giving. And this saying is above all divinity, not to wait to be asked, but to inquire oneself who deserves to receive kindness. . . .

How then does man give these things? For I will give not only to friends, but to the friends of friends. And who is it that is the friend of God? Don't judge who is worthy or who is unworthy. For it is possible you may be mistaken in your opinion. As in the uncertainty of ignorance it is better to do good to the

⁴⁷ Cf. Rom 12:8

⁴⁸ Lk 16:9

⁴⁹ 2 Cor 9:7

⁵⁰ Lk 6:30

undeserving for the sake of the deserving, than by guarding against those that are less good to fail to meet in with the good. For though sparing, and aiming at testing, who will receive meritoriously or not, it is possible for you to neglect some that are loved by God; the penalty for which is the punishment of eternal fire.⁵¹ But by offering to all in turn that need, you must of necessity by all means find some one of those who have power with God to save. "Do not judge, then, that you will not be judged. With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again; good measure, pressed and shaken, and running over, shall be given to you." Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved? 2.600-601.

CYPRIAN: That alms are to be denied to none, also in the same place: "Give to every one that asks you; and from him who would wish to borrow, do not turn away." Also in the same place: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.'

"He says, 'Which?'

"Jesus said to him, 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother: and, love your neighbor as yourself.'

"The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have observed: what do I yet lack?'

"Jesus said to him, 'If you will be perfect, go and sell all what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.532.

⁵¹ Cf. Mt 25:44-46

⁵² Mt 7:1-2: Lk 6:37-38

⁵³ Mt 19:17-21

Love Your Enemies Matthew 5:43-48

[43] Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. EXOD 23:4-5; LEV 19:18; DEUT 23:6; PROV 25:21-22

[44] But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; MT 26:52; LK 6:27-28, 34-35; JN 18:36; ROM 12:14, 20-21; 1 COR 4:12; 2 COR 10:3-4

for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. LK 6:35; EPH 5:1

 $^{[46]}$ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? $^{\rm LK~6:32}$

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? LK 6:32

[48] Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. LK 6:40; 2 COR 13:11; PHIL 3:15; 2 TIM 3:17; HEB 6:1; JAS 1:4; 1 JN 4:17

SUMMARY: The commandment of the Law was to love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18), but the Lord commanded to love your enemy. Christians can not slay their enemies, or condemn them to be burned or stoned. The Lord took from the Jews the right of making war upon their enemies, of fighting for their country, of putting to death or otherwise punishing adulterers, murderers, or others who were guilty of similar crimes (ORIGEN). The early Christians such as JUSTIN MARTYR, IRENAEUS, TERTULLIAN, and ORIGEN understood the New Covenant commandment to "love your enemies" to be a fulfillment of the prophecies, "neither shall they learn war any more," in Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3. Based

upon this command to "love your enemies," the early Christians were without exception opposed to participation in warfare. Christians refrain from making war upon our enemies (JUSTIN MARTYR). It is not in war, but in peace, that Christians are trained (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). Soldiers of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded (HIPPOLYTUS). After the name of Christ was heard in the world, wars diminished (ARNOBIUS). Unlike those who strive to be serviceable to their country, a just man does not injure, hate, despoil, or put to death (LACTANTIUS). Yet the early Christians also mention the existence of Christian soldiers. The quotations below from Tertullian (3.100) and HIPPOLYTUS (Apostolic Tradition, 16)

There is the example of the "Thundering Legion." Tertullian wrote, "[We] bring before you one who was their protector, as you will see by examining the letters of Marcus Aurelius, that most grave of emperors, in which he bears his testimony that that Germanic drought was removed by the rains obtained through the prayers of the Christians who chanced to be fighting under him" (*Apology*, chapter 5 [ANF, 3.22]); "Marcus Aurelius also, in his expedition to Germany, by the prayers his Christian soldiers offered to God, got rain in that well-known thirst. When, indeed, have not droughts been put away by our kneelings and our fastings?" (*To Scapula*, chapter 4 [ANF, 3.107]).

Tertullian is quoted by Eusebius who also cites Apollinaris of Hierapolis, a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, as an authority for the alleged miracle. He wrote: "It is reported that Marcus Aurelius Cæsar, brother of Antoninus, being about to engage in battle with the Germans and Sarmatians, was in great trouble on account of his army suffering from thirst. But the soldiers of the so-called Melitene legion, through the faith which has given strength from that time to the present, when they were drawn up before the enemy, kneeled on the ground, as is our custom in prayer, and engaged in supplications to God.

"This was indeed a strange sight to the enemy, but it is reported that a stranger thing immediately followed. The lightning drove the enemy to flight and destruction, but a shower refreshed the army of those who had called on God, all of whom had been on the point of perishing with thirst.

"This story is related by non-Christian writers who have been pleased to treat the times referred to, and it has also been recorded by our own people. By those historians who were strangers to the faith, the marvel is mentioned, but it is not acknowledged as an answer to our prayers. But by our own people, as friends of the truth, the occurrence is related in a simple and artless manner.

"Among these is Apolinarius, who says that from that time the legion through whose prayers the wonder took place received from the emperor a title appropriate to the event, being called in the language of the Romans the Thundering Legion.

"Tertullian is a trustworthy witness of these things. In the Apology for the Faith, which he addressed to the Roman Senate, and which work we have already mentioned, he confirms the history with greater and stronger proofs.

"He writes that there are still extant letters of the most intelligent Emperor Marcus in which he testifies that his army, being on the point of perishing with thirst in Germany, was saved by the prayers of the Christians. And he says also that this emperor threatened death to those who brought accusation against us" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, tr. Arthur Cushman McGiffert [1890], 5.5:1-5).

The epistle (generally appended to Justin's First Apology) which Marcus Aurelius is said to have written to the Senate, concerning the miraculous thunderstorm, and in which he is

explain the seeming contradiction. As Christians evangelized the Roman Empire, many pagan Roman soldiers were converted. Once baptized, those who were already in the military could not simply resign because leaving the Roman army was punishable by death. Although joining the military was disallowed by the early Church, they permitted converted soldiers to remain in the army after baptism so long as they did not use the sword, swear oaths, or participate in idolatrous practices.

Even the Nicene Council forbid military service and set a penance for those who violated their former repentance. The First Council of Nicaea (325) declared.

As many as were called by grace, and displayed the first zeal, having cast aside their military girdles, but afterwards returned, like dogs, to their own vomit, (so that some spent money and by means of gifts regained their military stations); let these, after they have passed the space of three years as hearers, be for ten years prostrators. But in all these cases it is necessary to examine well into their purpose and what their repentance appears to be like. For as many as give evidence of their conversions by deeds, and not pretense, with fear, and tears, and perseverance, and good works, when they have fulfilled their appointed time as hearers, may properly communicate in prayers; and after that the bishop may determine yet more favorably concerning them. But those who take [the matter] with indifference, and who think the form of [not] entering the Church is sufficient for their conversion, must fulfill the whole time.²

Though people's commitment to Christianity changed dramatically during the reign of Emperor Constantine, the Council of Nicaea is nonetheless representative of the dominant orthodox views of the broader church at the time. If they were disciplining disciples who failed to maintain their repentance necessary to enter the church, then how can an argument possibly be made that the post-apostolic church had no problem with military service?

Jesus commanded His disciples not only not to hate men, but also to love their enemies (IRENAEUS). Christians love all men, and are persecuted by all (MATHETES). Loving one's enemies does not mean loving wickedness, or impiety, or adultery, or theft; but the thief, the impious, and the adulterer

said to have forbidden the further persecution of the Christians, is either a forgery or it was interpolated Worthy of note, the letter says, "Wherefore, they began the battle not by preparing weapons, nor arms, nor bugles; for such preparation is hateful to them, on account of the God they bear about in their conscience" (ANF 1.187).

Tertullian also wrote, "But we are called to account as harm-doers on another ground, and are accused of being useless in the affairs of life. . . . We sail with you, and fight with you, and till the ground with you; and in like manner we unite with you in your traffickings—even in the various arts we make public property of our works for your benefit. How it is we seem useless in your ordinary business, living with you and by you as we do, I am not able to understand" (*Apology*, chapter 42 [ANF 3.49]).

² First Council of Nicaea, Canon XII (NPNF, 2-14.27).

(CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). Pray for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that you may be perfect in Him (POLYCARP). If we are enjoined, then, to love our enemies, whom have we to hate? (TERTULLIAN). The Lord proclaims the Father to be good (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, ORIGEN, TERTULLIAN). Disciples are called to imitate God as His children (MATHETES, ORIGEN, CYPRIAN). The Lord was giving precepts for salvation and instructing His disciples to perfection (CYPRIAN). The Father wishes us to be perfect by aiming at sinlessness and living blamelessly, according to the obedience of the Gospel (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA).

5:43ff TATIAN: You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy:' but I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those that curse you, and deal well with those that hate you, and pray for those who take you with violence and persecute you; that you may be sons of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil, and sends down his rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? For the tax-collectors and sinners also love those that love them.³ And if you do a kindness to those who treat you well, where is your superiority? For sinners also do likewise. 4 And if you lend to him of whom you hope for a reward, where is your superiority? For the sinners also lend to sinners, seeking recompense from them.⁵ But love your enemies, and do good to them, and lend, and do not cut off the hope of any man; that your reward may be great, and you may be the children of the Highest: for he is lenient towards the wicked and the ungrateful. Be merciful, even as your Father also is merciful. And if you inquire for the good of your brethren only, what more have you done than others? Is not this the conduct of the publicans also? Be now perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. The Diatessaron, 9.57-58.

ORIGEN: [Celsus, a pagan critic, asks:] "How could he command them through Moses to gather wealth, to extend their dominion, to fill the earth, to put their enemies of every age to the sword, and to destroy them utterly, which indeed he himself did—as Moses says—threatening them, moreover, that if they did not obey his commands, he would treat them as his avowed enemies; while, on the other hand, his Son, the man of Nazareth, promulgated laws quite opposed to these, declaring that no one can come to the Father who loves power, or riches, or glory; that men ought not to be more careful in providing food than the ravens; that they were to be less concerned about their raiment than the lilies; that to him who has given them one blow, they should offer to receive another? Whether is it Moses or Jesus who teaches falsely? Did the Father, when he sent

³ Lk 6:32

⁴ Lk 6:33

⁵ Lk 6:34

⁶ Lk 6:35

⁷ Lk 6:35

Jesus, forget the commands which he had given to Moses? Or did he change his mind, condemn his own laws, and send forth a messenger with counter instructions?"...

[Origen's response:] However, if we must refer briefly to the difference between the constitution which was given to the Jews of old by Moses, and that which the Christians, under the direction of Christ's teaching, wish now to establish, we would observe that it must be impossible for the legislation of Moses, taken literally, to harmonize with the calling of the Gentiles, and with their subjection to the Roman government; and on the other hand, it would be impossible for the Jews to preserve their civil economy unchanged, supposing that they should embrace the Gospel. For Christians could not slay their enemies, or condemn to be burned or stoned, as Moses commands, those who had broken the law, and were therefore condemned as deserving of these punishments; since the Jews themselves, however desirous of carrying out their law, are not able to inflict these punishments.

But in the case of the ancient Jews, who had a land and a form of government of their own, to take from them the right of making war upon their enemies, of fighting for their country, of putting to death or otherwise punishing adulterers, murderers, or others who were guilty of similar crimes, would be to subject them to sudden and utter destruction whenever the enemy fell upon them; for their very laws would in that case restrain them, and prevent them from resisting the enemy. And that same providence which of old gave the law, and has now given the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not wishing the Jewish state to continue longer, has destroyed their city and their temple: it has abolished the worship which was offered to God in that temple by the sacrifice of victims, and other ceremonies which He had prescribed. And as it has destroyed these things, not wishing that they should longer continue, in like manner it has extended day by day the Christian religion, so that it is now preached everywhere with boldness, and that in spite of the numerous obstacles which oppose the spread of Christ's teaching in the world. But since it was the purpose of God that the nations should receive the benefits of Christ's teaching, all the devices of men against Christians have been brought to nothing; for the more that kings, and rulers, and peoples have persecuted them everywhere, the more have they increased in number and grown in strength. Against Celsus, 4.617-621.

TERTULLIAN: God certainly forbids us to hate even with a reason for our hating; for He commands us to love our enemies. God forbids us to curse, though there be some ground for doing so, in commanding that those who curse us we are to bless. *The Shows*, 3.86.

TERTULLIAN: For our religion commands us to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us, aiming at a perfection all its own, and seeking in its disciples something of a higher type than the commonplace goodness of the world. For all love those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians alone to love those that hate them. *To Scapula*, 3.105.

CYPRIAN: And that we may more fully understand, beloved brethren, that patience is a thing of God, and that whoever is gentle, and patient, and meek, is an imitator of God the Father; when the Lord in His Gospel was giving precepts for salvation, and, bringing forth divine warnings, was instructing His disciples to perfection, He laid it down, and said, "You have heard that it is said, 'Love your neighbor, and have your enemy in hatred.' But I say to you, 'Love your enemies, and pray for them which persecute you;' that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who makes His sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and rains upon the just and on the unjust. For if you love them which love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you shall salute your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the heathens the same thing? Be therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He said that the children of God would thus become perfect. He showed that they were thus completed, and taught that they were restored by a heavenly birth, if the patience of God our Father dwell in us—if the divine likeness, which Adam had lost by sin, be manifested and shine in our actions. What a glory is it to become like to God! what and how great a felicity, to possess among our virtues, that which may be placed on the level of divine praises! Treatises of Cyprian, 5.485.

CYPRIAN: For this is to change what you had been, and to begin to be what you were not, that the divine birth might shine forth in you, that the godly discipline might respond to God, the Father, that in the honor and praise of living, God may be glorified in man; as He Himself exhorts, and warns, and promises to those who glorify Him a reward in their turn, saying, "Them that glorify me I will glorify, and he who despises me shall be despised."8 For which glorification the Lord, forming and preparing us, and the Son of God instilling the likeness of God the Father, says in His Gospel: "You have heard that it has been said, 'Love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love your enemies, and pray for them which persecute you;' that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who makes His sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sends rain upon the just and on the unjust." If it is a source of joy and glory to men to have children like to themselves—and it is more agreeable to have begotten an offspring then when the remaining descendant responds to the parent with like characteristics—how much greater is the gladness in God the Father, when any one is so spiritually born that in his acts and praises the divine eminence of race⁹ is announced! What a palm of righteousness is it, what a crown to be such a one as that the Lord should not say of you, "I have begotten and brought up children, but they have despised me!" 10 Let Christ rather applaud you, and invite you to the reward, saying, "Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which is prepared for you from the

^{8 1} Sam 2:30

^{9 &}quot;Generositas."

¹⁰ Isa 1:2

beginning of the world." Treatises of Cyprian, 5.495.

LACTANTIUS: For how can a man be just who injures, who hates, who despoils, who puts to death? And they who strive to be serviceable to their country do all these things. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.169.

5:44ff Editor's Note: A textual variant for Matthew 5:44 is "pray for those persecuting you" as opposed to the longer reading, "bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you." The shorter reading is supported by earlier Greek manuscripts, and the citations from early Christians such as Tertullian, Origen, Theophilus of Antioch and Cyprian. But the longer reading is found in early witnesses such as The Didache, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria. The additional words must have been borrowed from Luke's account of the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:27-28). Otherwise, there is no good reason why the words would have been dropped from Matthew 5:44.

IGNATIUS: And pray without ceasing in behalf of other men. ¹³ For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting: to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be stedfast in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, *1.53-54*.

POLYCARP: Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, and potentates, and princes, ¹⁴ and for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that you may be perfect in Him. *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.36*.

THE DIDACHE: The teaching is this: Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for them that persecute you.¹⁵ For what thank is there, if you love them that love you? Do not also the Gentiles do the same? But love them that hate you; and you shall not have an enemy.¹⁶ 7.377.

JUSTIN MARTYR: We who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since

¹¹ Mt 25:34

See also Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 12-13; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 42.

^{13 1} Thess 5:17

¹⁴ Cf. 1 Tim 2:2

The last clause is added, and is of unknown origin. It does not occur in the Apostolic Constitutions, (see ANF, 7.465).

¹⁶ Cf. 1 Pet 3:13

the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all. . . .

And of our love to all, He taught thus: "If you love them that love you, what new thing do you do? For even fornicators do this. But I say to you, 'Pray for your enemies, and love them that hate you, and bless them that curse vou, and pray for them that despitefully use vou." And that we should share with the needy, and do nothing for glory, He said, "Give to him that asks, and from him that would borrow do not turn away; for if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what new thing do you do? Even the publicans do this. 18 Do not lay up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and where robbers break through; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust **corrupts**. ¹⁹ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?²⁰ Lay up treasure, therefore, in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts."21 And, "Be kind and merciful, as your Father also is kind and merciful, and makes His sun to rise on sinners, and the righteous, and the wicked. 1.167-168

JUSTIN MARTYR: And when the Spirit of prophecy speaks as predicting things that are to come to pass, He speaks in this way: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."22 And that it did so come to pass, we can convince you. For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number, and these illiterate, of no ability in speaking: but by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach all the word of God; and we who formerly used to murder one another do not only now refrain from making war upon our enemies, but also, that we may not lie nor deceive our examiners, willingly die confessing Christ. . . . But if the soldiers enrolled by you, and who have taken the military oath, prefer their allegiance to their own life, and parents, and country, and all kindred, though you can offer them nothing incorruptible, it were verily ridiculous if we, who earnestly long for incorruption, should not endure all things, in order to obtain what we desire from Him who is able to grant it. The First Apology, 1.175-176.

¹⁷ Cf. Lk 6:28-32

¹⁸ Mt 5:46

¹⁹ Mt 6:19-20

²⁰ Mt 16:26

²¹ Cf. Mt 6:19-20; 16:26; Lk 6:30

²² Mic 4:2-3

JUSTIN MARTYR: But they who were brought up licentiously in wicked customs, and are prejudiced in their own opinions, should kill and hate us; whom we not only do not hate, but, as is proved, pity and endeavor to lead to repentance. *The First Apology, 1.182*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: Jesus commanded us to love even our enemies, as was predicted by Isaiah in many passages, in which also is contained the mystery of our own regeneration, as well, in fact, as the regeneration of all who expect that Christ will appear in Jerusalem, and by their works endeavor earnestly to please Him. *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew, 1.242*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: But that the Gentiles would repent of the evil in which they led erring lives, when they heard the doctrine preached by His apostles from Jerusalem, and which they learned through them, allow me to show you by quoting a short statement from the prophecy of Micah, one of the twelve minor prophets. This is as follows: "And in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the top of the mountains; it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go, and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and they shall enlighten us in His way, and we shall walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' And He shall judge among many peoples, and shall rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into sickles: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And each man shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and there shall be none to terrify: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken it. For all people will walk in the name of their gods; but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will assemble her that is afflicted, and gather her that is driven out, and whom I had plagued; and I shall make her that is afflicted a remnant, and her that is oppressed a strong nation. And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from that time on, and even for ever."23 . . .

Now I am aware that your [Jewish] teachers, sirs, admit the whole of the words of this passage to refer to Christ; and I am likewise aware that they maintain He has not yet come; or if they say that He has come, they assert that it is not known who He is; but when He shall become manifest and glorious, then it shall be known who He is. And then, they say, the events mentioned in this passage shall happen, just as if there was no fruit as yet from the words of the prophecy. O unreasoning men! You do not understand what has been proved by all these passages, that two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of

²³ Mic 4:1-7

apostasy,²⁴ who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians, who, having learned the true worship of God from the law, and the word which went forth from Jerusalem by means of the apostles of Jesus, have fled for safety to the God of Jacob and God of Israel; and we who were filled with war, and mutual slaughter, and every wickedness, have each through the whole earth changed our warlike weapons,—our swords into plowshares, and our spears into implements of tillage,—and we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope. *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew, 1.253-254*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: For verily your [the Jews] hand is high to commit evil, because you slew the Christ, and do not repent of it; but so far from that, you hate and murder us who have believed through Him in the God and Father of all, as often as you can; and you curse Him without ceasing, as well as those who side with Him; while all of us pray for you, and for all men, as our Christ and Lord taught us to do, when He enjoined us to pray even for our enemies, and to love them that hate us, and to bless them that curse us. *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew, 1.266.*

ATHENAGORAS: If I go minutely into the particulars of our doctrine, let it not surprise you. It is that you may not be carried away by the popular and irrational opinion, but may have the truth clearly before you. For presenting the opinions themselves to which we adhere, as being not human but uttered and taught by God, we shall be able to persuade you not to think of us as atheists. ²⁵ What, then, are those teachings in which we are brought up? "I say to you, 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them that persecute you;' that you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." A Plea for the Christians, 2.134.

MATHETES: Christians love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; ²⁶ they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; ²⁷ they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.

To sum up all in one word—what the soul is in the body, that are Christians

²⁴ 2 Thess 2:3

²⁵ Because the Christians did not believe in the traditional Roman and Greek gods, they were called "atheists."

²⁶ 2 Cor 4:12

²⁷ Cf. Acts 16:23-24

in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world.²⁸ The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it²⁹ though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians, though in no way injured, because they renounce pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and also loves the members; Christians likewise love those that hate them. The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body; and Christians are confined in the world as in a prison, and yet they are the preservers of the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible bodies, looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the heavens. The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better; in like manner, the Christians, though subjected day by day to punishment, increase the more in number. God has assigned them this illustrious position, which it were unlawful for them to forsake. Epistle to Diognetus, 1.27.

IRENAEUS: Jesus commanded His disciples not only not to hate men, but also to love their enemies; and enjoined them not only not to swear falsely, but not even to swear at all; and not only not to speak evil of their neighbors, but not even to style any one "Raca" and "fool;" declaring that otherwise they were in danger of hell-fire; and not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek to those that maltreated them; and not only not to refuse to give up the property of others, but even if their own were taken away, not to demand it back again from those that took it; and not only not to injure their neighbors, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those that injured them, and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others. *Against Heresies*, 1.408.

IRENAEUS: The long-suffering, patience, compassion, and goodness of Christ are exhibited, since He both suffered, and did Himself forgive those who had maltreated Him. For the Word of God, who said to us, "Love your enemies, and pray for those that hate you," Himself did this very thing upon the cross; loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death.³⁰ Against Heresies, 1.447.

IRENAEUS: The new covenant which brings back peace, and the law which gives life, has gone forth over the whole earth, as the prophets said: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall

²⁸ Jn 17:11, 14, 16

²⁹ Cf. Gal 5:17; 1 Pet 2:11

³⁰ Lk 23:34

rebuke many people; and they shall break down their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and they shall no longer learn to fight."31 If therefore another law and word, going forth from Jerusalem, brought in such a reign of peace among the Gentiles which received it (the word), and convinced, through them, many a nation of its folly, then only it appears that the prophets spoke of some other person. But if the law of liberty, that is, the word of God, preached by the apostles (who went forth from Jerusalem) throughout all the earth, caused such a change in the state of things, that these nations did form the swords and war-lances into plowshares, and changed them into pruning-hooks for reaping the corn, that is, into instruments used for peaceful purposes, and that they are now unaccustomed to fighting, but when smitten, offer also the other cheek, then the prophets have not spoken these things of any other person, but of Him who effected them. This person is our Lord, and in Him is that declaration borne out; since it is He Himself who has made the plow, and introduced the pruning-hook, that is, the first sowing of seed of man, which was the creation exhibited in Adam, and the gathering in of the produce in the last times by the Word; and, for this reason, since He joined the beginning to the end, and is the Lord of both, He has finally displayed the plow, in that the wood has been joined on to the iron, and has thus cleansed His land; because the Word, having been firmly united to flesh, and in its mechanism fixed with pins, has reclaimed the savage earth. In the beginning, He figured forth the pruning-hook by means of Abel, pointing out that there should be a gathering in of a righteous race of men. He says, "For behold how the just man perishes, and no man considers it; and righteous men are taken away, and no man lays it to heart."32 These things were acted beforehand in Abel, were also previously declared by the prophets, but were accomplished in the Lord's person; and the same is still true with regard to us, the body following the example of the Head. 33 Against Heresies, 1.512.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH: And that We should be kindly disposed, not only towards those of our own stock, as some suppose, Isaiah the prophet said: "Say to those that hate you, and that cast you out, 'You are our brethren,' that the name of the LORD may be glorified, and be apparent in their joy." And the Gospel says: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you. For if you love them who love you, what reward do you have? This the robbers and the publicans also do." Theophilus to Autolycus, 2.115.

TATIAN: I do not wish to be a king;³⁵ I am not anxious to be rich; I decline military command. *Address to the Greeks*, 2.69.

³¹ Isa 2:3-4; Mic 4:2-3

³² Isa 57:1

³³ Col 1:18

³⁴ Isa 66:5

³⁵ Cf. Jn 6:15

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Revenge is retribution for evil, imposed for the advantage of him who takes the revenge. He will not desire us to take revenge, who teaches us "to pray for those that despitefully use us." *The Instructor*, 2.227.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For it is not in war, but in peace, that we are trained. War needs great preparation, and luxury craves profusion; but peace and love, simple and quiet sisters, require no arms nor excessive preparation. *The Instructor*, 2.234.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: In their wars, therefore, the Etruscans use the trumpet, the Arcadians the pipe, the Sicilians the pectides, the Cretans the lyre, the Lacedaemonians the flute, the Thracians the horn, the Egyptians the drum, and the Arabians the cymbal. The one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God, is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute, which those expert in war and scorners of the fear of God were accustomed to make use of also in the choruses at their festive assemblies; that by such strains they might raise their dejected minds. But let our genial feeling in drinking be twofold, in accordance with the law. For "if you love the Lord your God," and then "your neighbor," let its first manifestation be towards God in thanksgiving and psalmody, and the second toward our neighbor in proper fellowship. For the apostle says, "Let the Word of the Lord dwell in you richly." And this Word suits and conforms Himself to seasons, to persons, to places. *The Instructor*, 2.249.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship sailing before the wind, or a musical lyre, which Polycrates used, or a ship's anchor, which Seleucus got engraved as a device; and if there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle, and the children drawn out of the water. For we are not to delineate the faces of idols, we who are prohibited to cleave to them; nor a sword, nor a bow, following as we do, peace; nor drinking-cups, being temperate. *The Instructor*, 2.285-286.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The ingenuous among the philosophers will then with propriety be taken up in a friendly exposure both of their life and of the discovery of new dogmas, not in the way of our avenging ourselves on our detractors (for that is far from being the case with those who have learned to bless those who curse, even though they needlessly discharge on us words of blasphemy), but with a view to their conversion; if by any means these masters in wisdom may feel ashamed, being brought to their senses by barbarian demonstration; so as to be able, although late, to see clearly of what sort are the intellectual acquisitions for which they make pilgrimages over the seas. *The*

³⁶ Mt 22:37-39

³⁷ Col 3:16

Stromata, 2.347.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And an enemy must be aided, that he may not continue an enemy. For by help good feeling is compacted, and enmity dissolved. *The Stromata*, 2.370.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: How great also is kindness! "Love your enemies," it is said, "bless them who curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you," and the like; to which it is added, "that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven," in allusion to resemblance to God. . . . The perfect man ought therefore to practice love, and as a consequence to be quick to the divine friendship, fulfilling the commandments from love. And loving one's enemies does not mean loving wickedness, or impiety, or adultery, or theft; but the thief, the impious, the adulterer, not as far as he sins, and in respect of the actions by which he stains the name of man, but as he is a man, and the work of God. Assuredly sin is an activity, not an existence: and therefore it is not a work of God. Now sinners are called enemies of God—enemies, that is, of the commands which they do not obey, as those who obey become friends, the one named so from their fellowship, the others from their estrangement, which is the result of free choice; for there is neither enmity nor sin without the enemy and the sinner. The Stromata, 2.426.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Let these things, then, be so. And such being the attitude of the Christian towards the body and the soul—towards his neighbors, whether it be a domestic, or a lawful enemy, or whosoever—he is found equal and like. For he does not "despise his brother," who, according to the divine law, is of the same father and mother. Certainly he relieves the afflicted, helping him with consolations, encouragements, and the necessaries of life; giving to all that need, though not similarly, but justly, according to a person's worthiness; furthermore, to him who persecutes and hates, even if he need it; caring little for those who say to him that he has given out of fear, if it is not out of fear that he does so, but to give help. For how much more are those, who towards their enemies are devoid of love of money, and are haters of evil, animated with love to those who belong to them? *The Stromata*, 2.542.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For Paul does not merely cite the Christian as characterized by suffering wrong rather than do wrong; but he teaches that he is not mindful of injuries, and does not allow him even to pray against the man who has done him wrong. For he knows that the Lord expressly enjoined "to pray for enemies." To say, then, that the man who has been injured goes to law before the unrighteous, is nothing else than to say that he shows a wish to retaliate, and a desire to injure the second in return, which is also to do wrong likewise himself. And his saying, that he wishes "some to go to law before the

saints,"³⁸ points out those who ask by prayer that those who have done wrong should suffer retaliation for their injustice, and intimates that the second are better than the former; but they are not yet obedient, if they do not, having become entirely free of resentment, pray even for their enemies.

It is well, then, for them to receive right dispositions from repentance, which results in faith. For if the truth seems to get enemies who entertain bad feeling, yet it is not hostile to any one. "For God makes His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust," and sent the Lord Himself to the just and the unjust. And he that earnestly strives to be assimilated to God, in the exercise of great absence of resentment, forgives seventy times seven times, ³⁹ as it were all his life through, and in all his course in this world (that being indicated by the enumeration of sevens) shows clemency to each and any one; if any during the whole time of his life in the flesh do the Christian wrong. For he not only deems it right that the good man should resign his property alone to others, being of the number of those who have done him wrong; but also wishes that the righteous man should ask of those judges forgiveness for the offenses of those who have done him wrong. And with reason, if indeed it is only in that which is external and concerns the body, though it go to the extent of death even, that those who attempt to wrong him take advantage of him; none of which truly belong to the Christian.

And how shall one "judge" the apostate "angels," who has become himself an apostate from that forgetfulness of injuries, which is according to the Gospel? "Why do you not rather suffer wrong?" he says; "why are you not rather defrauded? Yes, you do wrong and defraud," manifestly by praying against those who transgress in ignorance, and deprive of the philanthropy and goodness of God, as far as in you lies, those against whom you pray, "and these your brethren,"—not meaning those in the faith only, but also the proselytes. For whether he who now is hostile shall afterwards believe, we do not know yet. From which the conclusion follows clearly, if all are not yet brethren to us, they ought to be regarded in that light. And now it is only the man of knowledge who recognizes all men to be the work of one God, and invested with one image in one nature, although some may be more turbid than others; and in the creatures he recognizes the operation, by which again he adores the will of God.

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" He acts unrighteously who retaliates, whether by deed or word, or by the conception of a wish, which, after the training of the law, the Gospel rejects. "And such were some of you"—such manifestly as those still are whom you do not forgive; "but you are washed," not simply as the rest, but with knowledge; you have cast off the passions of the soul, in order to become assimilated, as far

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 6:7-8

³⁹ Mt 18:22

^{40 1} Cor 6:3

⁴¹ 1 Cor 6:7-8

^{42 1} Cor 6:9

^{43 1} Cor 6:11

as possible, to the goodness of God's providence by long-suffering, and by forgiveness "towards the just and the unjust," casting on them the gleam of kindness in word and deeds, as the sun.

The Christian will achieve this either by greatness of mind, or by imitation of what is better. And that is a third cause. "Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you," the commandment, as it were, compelling to salvation through superabundance of goodness. *The Stromata*, *2.548*.

HIPPOLYTUS: [Concerning persons coming to baptism:] A soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded, and to refuse to take an oath; if he is unwilling to comply, he must be rejected. A military commander or civic magistrate that wears the purple must resign or be rejected. If a catechumen or a believer seeks to become a soldier, they must be rejected, for they have despised God. *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus.*⁴⁵

Tertullian: Do you, then, who think that we care nothing for the welfare of Caesar, look into God's revelations, examine our sacred books, which we do not keep in hiding, and which many accidents put into the hands of those who are not of us. Learn from them that a large benevolence is enjoined upon us, even so far as to supplicate God for our enemies, and to beseech blessings on our persecutors. Who, then, are greater enemies and persecutors of Christians, than the very parties with treason against whom we are charged? Nay, even in terms, and most clearly, the Scripture says, "Pray for kings, and rulers, and powers, that all may be at peace with you." **He Apology, 3.42.

TERTULLIAN: If we are enjoined, then, to love our enemies, as I have remarked above, whom have we to hate? If injured, we are forbidden to retaliate, lest we become as bad ourselves: who can suffer injury at our hands? In regard to this, recall your own experiences. How often you inflict gross cruelties on Christians, partly because it is your own inclination, and partly in obedience to the laws! How often, too, the hostile mob, paying no regard to you, takes the law into its own hand, and assails us with stones and flames! With the very frenzy of the Bacchanals, they do not even spare the Christian dead, but tear them, now sadly changed, no longer entire, from the rest of the tomb, from the asylum we might say of death, cutting them in pieces, rending them asunder. Yet, banded together as we are, ever so ready to sacrifice our lives, what single case of revenge for injury are you able to point to, though, if it were held right among us to repay evil by evil, a single night with a torch or two could achieve an ample vengeance?

But away with the idea of a sect divine avenging itself by human fires, or

⁴⁴ Lk 6:37

⁴⁵ The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (2.16), tr. Burton Scott Easton (Cambridge University Press, 1934), 42. Used with permission.

⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Tim 2:2

shrinking from the sufferings in which it is tried. If we desired, indeed, to act the part of open enemies, not merely of secret avengers, would there be any lacking in strength, whether of numbers or resources? The Moors, the Marcomanni, the Parthians themselves, or any single people, however great, inhabiting a distinct territory, and confined within its own boundaries, surpasses, indeed, in numbers, one spread over all the world! We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, marketplaces, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum,—we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods.

For what wars should we not be fit, not eager, even with unequal forces, we who so willingly yield ourselves to the sword, if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay? Without arms even, and raising no insurrectionary banner, but simply in enmity to you, we could carry on the contest with you by an ill-willed severance alone. For if such multitudes of men were to break away from you, and go to some remote corner of the world, why, the very loss of so many citizens, whatever sort they were, would cover the empire with shame; no, in the very forsaking, vengeance would be inflicted. Why, you would be horror-struck at the solitude in which you would find yourselves, at such an all-prevailing silence, and that stupor as of a dead world. You would have to seek subjects to govern. You would have more enemies than citizens remaining. For now it is the immense number of Christians which makes your enemies so few,—almost all the inhabitants of your various cities being followers of Christ. Yet you choose to call us enemies of the human race, rather than of human error. Rather, who would deliver you from those secret foes, ever busy both destroying your souls and ruining your health? Who would save you, I mean, from the attacks of those spirits of evil, which without reward or hire we exorcise? This alone would be revenge enough for us, that you were henceforth left free to the possession of unclean spirits. But instead of taking into account what is due to us for the important protection we afford you, and though we are not merely no trouble to you, but in fact necessary to your wellbeing, you prefer to hold us enemies, as indeed we are, yet not of man, but rather of his error. The Apology, 3.45.

TERTULLIAN: The Christian does no harm even to his foe. *The Apology*, 3.51.

TERTULLIAN: Inquiry is made about this point, whether a believer may turn himself to military service, and whether the military may be admitted to the faith, even the rank and file, or each inferior grade, to whom there is no necessity for taking part in sacrifices or capital punishments. There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament [a military oath], the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot be due to two masters—God and Caesar. And yet Moses carried a rod, and Aaron wore a buckle, and John the Baptist is girt with leather and Joshua the son of Nun leads a line of march; and the People warred: if it pleases you to sport with the subject. But how will a Christian man war,

rather, how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away?⁴⁷ For albeit soldiers had come to John, and had received the formula of their rule;⁴⁸ albeit, likewise, a centurion had believed;⁴⁹ still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, disarmed every soldier.⁵⁰ No dress is lawful among us, if assigned to any unlawful action. *On Idolatry, 3.73*.

TERTULLIAN: To begin with the real ground of the military crown, I think we must first inquire whether warfare is proper at all for Christians. What sense is there in discussing the merely incidental, when that on which it rests is to be condemned? Do we believe it lawful for a human oath to be added to one divine,⁵¹ for a man to come under promise to another master after Christ, and to renounce father, mother, and all nearest kinsfolk, whom even the law has commanded us to honor and love next to God Himself, to whom the Gospel, too, holding them only of less account than Christ, has in like manner rendered honor? Shall it be held lawful to make an occupation of the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword?⁵² And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to sue at law?⁵³ And shall he apply the chain, and the prison, and the torture, and the punishment, who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs?⁵⁴ Shall he, indeed, either keep watch-service for others more than for Christ, or shall he do it on the Lord's day, when he does not even do it for Christ Himself? And shall he keep guard before the temples which he has renounced? And shall he take a meal where the apostle has forbidden him?⁵⁵ And shall he diligently protect by night those whom in the day-time he has put to flight by his exorcisms, leaning and resting on the spear with which Christ's side was pierced?⁵⁶ Shall he carry a flag, too, hostile to Christ? And shall he ask a watchword from the emperor who has already received one from God? Shall he be disturbed in death by the trumpet of the trumpeter, who expects to be aroused by the angel's trump? And shall the Christian be burned according to camp rule, when he was not permitted to burn incense to an idol, when to him Christ remitted the punishment of fire? Then how many other offenses there are involved in the performances of camp offices, which we must hold to involve a transgression of God's law, you may see by a slight survey. The very carrying of the name over from the camp of light to the camp of darkness is a violation of it.

Of course, if faith comes later, and finds any preoccupied with military

⁴⁷ Mt 26:52; 2 Cor 10:4; Jn 18:36

⁴⁸ Lk 3:12-14

⁴⁹ Mt 8:5f; Lk 7:1f

⁵⁰ Mt 26:52

⁵¹ Mt 5:34; Jas 5:12

⁵² Mt 26:52

^{53 1} Cor 6:1-8

⁵⁴ Cf. Rom 12:19

^{55 1} Cor 8:10

⁵⁶ In 19:34

service, their case is different, as in the instance of those whom John used to receive for baptism, and of those most faithful centurions, I mean the centurion whom Christ approves.⁵⁷ and the centurion whom Peter instructs [i.e., Cornelius];⁵⁸ yet, at the same time, when a man has become a believer, and faith has been sealed, there must be either an immediate abandonment of it, which has been the course with many; or all sorts of quibbling will have to be resorted to in order to avoid offending God, and that is not allowed even outside of military service; or, last of all, for God the fate must be endured which a citizen-faith has been no less ready to accept. Neither does military service hold out escape from punishment of sins, or exemption from martyrdom. Nowhere does the Christian change his character. There is one gospel, and the same Jesus, who will one day deny every one who denies, 59 and acknowledge every one who acknowledges God,—who will save, too, the life which has been lost for His sake; but, on the other hand, destroy that which for gain has been saved to His dishonor. 60 With Him the faithful citizen is a soldier, just as the faithful soldier is a citizen. A state of faith admits no plea of necessity; they are under no necessity to sin, whose one necessity is, that they do not sin. For if one is pressed to the offering of sacrifice and the sheer denial of Christ by the necessity of torture or of punishment, yet discipline does not connive even at that necessity; because there is a higher necessity to dread denying and to undergo martyrdom, than to escape from suffering, and to render the homage required. In fact, an excuse of this sort overturns the entire essence of our sacrament, removing even the obstacle to voluntary sins; for it will be possible also to maintain that inclination is a necessity, as involving in it, indeed, a sort of compulsion. I have, in fact, disposed of this very allegation of necessity with reference to the pleas by which crowns connected with official position are vindicated, in support of which it is in common use, since for this very reason offices must be either refused, that we may not fall into acts of sin, or martyrdoms endured that we may get quit of offices. Touching this primary aspect of the question, as to the unlawfulness even of a military life itself, I shall not add more, that the secondary question may be restored to its place. Indeed, if, putting my strength to the question, I banish from us the military life. The Chaplet, 3.99-100.

TERTULLIAN: Our religion commands us to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us, aiming at a perfection all its own, and seeking in its disciples something of a higher type than the commonplace goodness of the world. For all love those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians alone to love those that hate them. *To Scapula*, 3.105.

TERTULLIAN: The coming procession of a new law out of this "house of the God of Jacob" Isaiah in the ensuing words announces, saying, "For from Zion shall

⁵⁷ Mt 8:5-10: Lk 7:1-9

⁵⁸ Acts 10

⁵⁹ Mt 10:33: 2 Tim 2:12

⁶⁰ Mt 10:32, 33, 39

go out a law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem, and shall judge among the nations,"—that is, among us, who have been called out of the nations,—"and they shall join to beat their swords into plows, and their spears into sickles; and nations shall not take up sword against nation, and they shall no more learn to fight."61 Who else, therefore, are understood but we, who, fully taught by the new law, observe these practices,—the old law being obliterated, the coming of whose abolition the action itself [i.e., of beating swords into plows, etc.] demonstrates? For the way of the old law was to avenge itself by the vengeance of the sword, and to pluck out "eye for eye," and to inflict retaliatory revenge for injury. But the new law's way was to point to clemency, and to convert to tranquillity the pristine ferocity of "swords" and "spears," and to remodel the pristine execution of "war" upon the rivals and foes of the law into the pacific actions of "plowing" and "tilling" the land. Therefore as we have shown above that the coming cessation of the old law and of the carnal circumcision was declared, so, too, the observance of the new law and the spiritual circumcision has shone out into the voluntary obediences of peace. 62 An Answer to the Jews, 3 154

TERTULLIAN: Isaiah says: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord," that is, God's eminence, "and the house of God," that is, Christ, the catholic⁶³ temple of God, in which God is worshipped, "shall be established upon the mountains," over all the eminences of virtues and powers; "and all nations shall come to it; and many people shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His way, and we will walk in it: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."64 The gospel will be this "way," of the new law and the new word in Christ, no longer in Moses. "And He shall judge among the nations," even concerning their error. "And these shall rebuke a large nation," that of the Jews themselves and their proselytes. "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;"65 in other words, they shall change into pursuits of moderation and peace the dispositions of injurious minds, and hostile tongues, and all kinds of evil, and blasphemy. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation," shall not stir up discord. "Neither shall they learn war any more," 66 that is, the provocation of hostilities; so that you here learn that Christ is promised not as powerful in war, but pursuing peace. Now you must deny either that these things were predicted, although they are plainly seen, or that they have been accomplished, although you read of them. Against Marcion, 3.339-340.

⁶¹ Isa 2:3-4

⁶² Rom 2:29; Phil 3:3

That is, "universal" or including all Christians (not to be confused with Roman Catholic).

⁶⁴ Isa 2:2-3

⁶⁵ Isa 2:4

⁶⁶ Isa 2:4

TERTULLIAN: In days gone by, prayer was used to call down plagues, scatter the armies of foes, and withhold the wholesome influences of the showers. Now, however, the prayer of righteousness averts all God's anger, keeps bivouac⁶⁷ on behalf of personal enemies, makes supplication on behalf of persecutors. *On Prayer*, 3.691.

TERTULLIAN: For men were of old desirous to require "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" and to repay with usury "evil with evil;" for, as yet, patience was not on earth, because faith was not either. Of course, meantime, impatience used to enjoy the opportunities which the law gave. That was easy, while the Lord and Master of patience was absent. But after He has supervened, and has united the grace of faith with patience, now it is no longer lawful to assail even with word, nor to say "fool" even, without "danger of the judgment." Anger has been prohibited, our spirits retained, the temper of the hand checked, the poison of the tongue extracted. The law has found more than it has lost, while Christ says, "Love your enemies, and bless your cursers, and pray for your persecutors, that you may be sons of your heavenly Father." Of Patience, 3.711.

ORIGEN: I cannot understand how, with all your exercise in investigating and meditating on the Scriptures, you have not noticed that the prophets continually quote each other almost word for word. For who of all believers does not know the words in Isaiah? "And in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of the Lord on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall come to it. And many people shall go and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His way, and we will walk in it:' for out of Zion shall go forth a law, and a word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." "

But in Micah we find a parallel passage, which is almost word for word: "And in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall hasten to it. And many nations shall come, and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and they will teach us His way, and we will walk in His paths:' for a law shall go forth from Zion, and a word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation,

⁶⁷ A temporary camp without tents or cover, used especially by soldiers.

⁶⁸ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21; cf. Mt 5:38

⁶⁹ Mt 5:22

⁷⁰ Isa 2:2-4

neither shall they learn war any more."71 Against Celsus, 4.392.

ORIGEN: Now the existence of many kingdoms would have been a hindrance to the spread of the doctrine of Jesus throughout the entire world . . . on account of the necessity of men everywhere engaging in war, and fighting on behalf of their native country, which was the case before the times of Augustus, and in periods still more remote, when necessity arose, as when the Peloponnesians and Athenians warred against each other, and other nations in like manner. How, then, was it possible for the Gospel doctrine of peace, which does not permit men to take vengeance even upon enemies, to prevail throughout the world, unless at the advent of Jesus a milder spirit had been everywhere introduced into the conduct of things? *Against Celsus*, 4.444.

ORIGEN: Each one of us, then, is come "in the last days," when one Jesus has visited us, to the "visible mountain of the Lord," the Word that is above every word, and to the "house of God," which is "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." And we notice how it is built upon "the tops of the mountains," i.e., the predictions of all the prophets, which are its foundations. And this house is exalted above the hills, i.e., those individuals among men who make a profession of superior attainments in wisdom and truth; and all the nations come to it, and the "many nations" go forth, and say to one another, turning to the religion which in the last days has shone forth through Jesus Christ: "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in them."⁷⁴ For the law came forth from the dwellers in Zion, and settled among us as a spiritual law. Moreover, the word of the Lord came forth from that very Jerusalem, that it might be disseminated through all places, and might judge in the midst of the heathen, selecting those whom it sees to be submissive, and rejecting the disobedient, who are many in number. And to those who inquire of us from where we come, or who is our founder, we reply that we are come, agreeably to the counsels of Jesus, to "cut down our hostile and insolent 'wordy' swords into plowshares, and to convert into pruning-hooks the spears formerly employed in war."⁷⁵ For we no longer take up "sword against nation," nor do we "learn war any more," having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader, instead of those whom our fathers followed, among whom we were "strangers to the covenant," and having received a law, for which we give thanks to Him that rescued us from the error (of our ways), saying, "Our fathers honored lying idols, and there is not among them one that causes it to rain."⁷⁶ Against Celsus, 4.557-558.

⁷¹ Mic 4:1-3

⁷² Cf. Heb 1:2

⁷³ Cf. 1 Tim 3:15

⁷⁴ Isa 2:3

⁷⁵ Cf. Isa 2:4

⁷⁶ Cf. Jer 16:19; 14:22

ORIGEN: And I am not yet speaking of those whose characters have been formed by the teaching of Jesus, and who have heard the words, "Love your enemies, and pray for them which despitefully use you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." And in the prophetical writings the righteous man says, "O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have returned evil to those who have done evil to me, let me fall helpless under my enemies: let my enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yes, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Against Celsus, 4.652.

ORIGEN: We revile no one, for we believe that "revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God."⁷⁸ And we read, "Bless them that curse you; bless, and do not curse;"⁷⁹ also, "Being reviled, we bless."⁸⁰ *Against Celsus, 4.654.*

ORIGEN: The statement [of Celsus, a pagan critic] is false . . . "that in the days of Jesus others who were Jews rebelled against the Jewish state, and became His followers;" for neither Celsus nor they who think with him are able to point out any act on the part of Christians which savors of rebellion. And yet, if a revolt had led to the formation of the Christian commonwealth, so that it derived its existence in this way from that of the Jews, who were permitted to take up arms in defense of the members of their families, and to slay their enemies, the Christian Lawgiver would not have altogether forbidden the putting of men to death; and yet He nowhere teaches that it is right for His own disciples to offer violence to any one, however wicked. For He did not deem it in keeping with such laws as His, which were derived from a divine source, to allow the killing of any individual whatever. Nor would the Christians, had they owed their origin to a rebellion, have adopted laws of so exceedingly mild a character as not to allow them, when it was their fate to be slain as sheep, on any occasion to resist their persecutors. *Against Celsus*, *4.467*.

ORIGEN: The Christians, because they were taught not to avenge themselves upon their enemies (and have thus observed laws of a mild and philanthropic character); and because they would not, although able, have made war even if they had received authority to do so,—they have obtained this reward from God, that He has always warred in their behalf, and on certain occasions has restrained those who rose up against them and desired to destroy them. For in order to remind others, that by seeing a few engaged in a struggle for their religion, they also might be better fitted to despise death, some, on special occasions, and these individuals who can be easily numbered, have endured

⁷⁷ Ps 7:3-5

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 6:10

⁷⁹ Rom 12:14

^{80 1} Cor 4:12

death for the sake of Christianity,—God not permitting the whole nation to be exterminated, but desiring that it should continue, and that the whole world should be filled with this salutary and religious doctrine. *Against Celsus*, 4.467-468.

ORIGEN: To those who inquire of us from what source we come, or who is our founder, we reply that we are come, agreeably to the counsels of Jesus, to "cut down our hostile and insolent 'wordy' swords into plowshares, and to convert into pruning-hooks the spears formerly employed in war."⁸¹ For we no longer take up "sword against nation," nor do we "learn war any more,"⁸² having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader. *Against Celsus*, 4.558.

ORIGEN: If all the Romans . . . embrace the Christian faith, they will, when they pray, overcome their enemies; or rather, they will not war at all, being guarded by that divine power which promised to save five entire cities for the sake of fifty just persons. 83 Against Celsus, 4.666.

ORIGEN: In the next place, Celsus [a pagan critic] urges us "to help the king with all our might, and to labor with him in the maintenance of justice, to fight for him; and if he requires it, to fight under him, or lead an army along with him."

To this our answer is, that we do, when occasion requires, give help to kings, and that, so to say, a divine help, "putting on the whole armor of God."84 And this we do in obedience to the injunction of the apostle, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority;"85 and the more any one excels in piety, the more effective help does he render to kings, even more than is given by soldiers, who go forth to fight and slay as many of the enemy as they can. And to those enemies of our faith who require us to bear arms for the commonwealth, and to slay men, we can reply: "Do not those who are priests at certain shrines, and those who attend on certain gods, as you account them, keep their hands free from blood, that they may with hands unstained and free from human blood offer the appointed sacrifices to your gods; and even when war is upon you, you never enlist the priests in the army. If that, then, is a laudable custom, how much more so, that while others are engaged in battle, these too should engage as the priests and ministers of God, keeping their hands pure, and wrestling in prayers to God on behalf of those who are fighting in a righteous cause, and for the king who reigns righteously, that whatever is opposed to those who act righteously may be destroyed!" And as we by our prayers vanquish all demons who stir up war, and lead to the violation of oaths, and disturb the peace,

⁸¹ Isa 2:4

⁸² Mic 4:3

⁸³ Gen 18:24-26

⁸⁴ Eph 6:11

^{85 1} Tim 2:1-2

we in this way are much more helpful to the kings than those who go into the field to fight for them. And we do take our part in public affairs, when along with righteous prayers we join self-denying exercises and meditations, which teach us to despise pleasures, and not to be led away by them. And none fight better for the king than we do. We do not indeed fight under him, although he require it; but we fight on his behalf, forming a special army—an army of piety—by offering our prayers to God.

And if Celsus would have us to lead armies in defense of our country, let him know that we do this too, and that not for the purpose of being seen by men, or of vainglory. For "in secret," and in our own hearts, there are prayers which ascend as from priests in behalf of our fellow-citizens. And Christians are benefactors of their country more than others. For they train up citizens, and teach piety to the Supreme Being; and they promote those whose lives in the smallest cities have been good and worthy, to a divine and heavenly city, to whom it may be said, "You have been faithful in the smallest city, come into a great one," Where "God stands in the assembly of the gods, and judges the gods in the midst;" and He reckons you among them, if you no more "die as a man, or fall as one of the princes."

Celsus also urges us to "take office in the government of the country, if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion." But we recognize in each state the existence of another national organization, founded by the Word of God, and we exhort those who are mighty in word and of blameless life to rule over Churches.⁸⁸ Those who are ambitious of ruling we reject; but we constrain those who, through excess of modesty, are not easily induced to take a public charge in the Church of God. And those who rule over us well are under the constraining influence of the great King, whom we believe to be the Son of God, God the Word. And if those who govern in the Church, and are called rulers of the divine nation—that is, the Church—rule well, they rule in accordance with the divine commands, and never allow themselves to be led astray by worldly policy. And it is not for the purpose of escaping public duties that Christians decline public offices, but that they may reserve themselves for a diviner and more necessary service in the Church of God-for the salvation of men. And this service is at once necessary and right. They take charge of all—of those that are within, that they may day by day lead better lives, and of those that are without, that they may come to abound in holy words and in deeds of piety; and that, while thus worshipping God truly, and training up as many as they can in the same way, they may be filled with the word of God and the law of God, and thus be united with the Supreme God through His Son the Word, Wisdom, Truth, and Righteousness, who unites to God all who are resolved to conform their lives in all things to the law of God. Against Celsus, 4.667-668.

⁸⁶ Lk 19:17

⁸⁷ Ps 82:1, 7

⁸⁸ Tit 1:5-6

CYPRIAN: Jesus subjoined, that there was nothing wonderful in our cherishing our own people only with the needed attentions of love, but that he might become perfect who would do something more than the publican or the heathen, who, overcoming evil with good, and practicing a clemency which was like the divine clemency, loved even his enemies, who would pray for the salvation of those that persecute him, as the Lord admonishes and exhorts. God continually makes His sun to rise, and from time to time gives showers to nourish the seed, exhibiting all these kindnesses not only to His people, but to aliens also. And if a man professes to be a son of God, why does he not imitate the example of his Father? "It becomes us," he said, "to answer to our birth; and it is not fitting that those who are evidently born of God should be degenerate, but rather that the propagation of a good Father should be proved in His offspring by the emulation of His goodness." *The Life and Passion of Cyprian, 5.270.*

CYPRIAN: Consider the wars scattered all over the earth with the bloody horror of camps. The whole world is wet with mutual blood; and murder, which in the case of an individual is admitted to be a crime, is called a virtue when it is committed wholesale. Impunity is claimed for the wicked deeds, not on the plea that they are guiltless, but because the cruelty is perpetrated on a grand scale. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.277.

CYPRIAN: And it may be thus understood, beloved brethren, that since the Lord commands and admonishes us even to love our enemies, and to pray even for those who persecute us, we should ask, moreover, for those who are still earth, and have not yet begun to be heavenly, that even in respect of these God's will should be done, which Christ accomplished in preserving and renewing humanity. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.452.

CYPRIAN: We always ask for the repulse of enemies, and for obtaining showers, and either for the removal or the moderating of adversity; and we pour forth our prayers, and, propitiating and appearing God, we entreat constantly and urgently, day and night, for your peace and salvation. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.463.

CYPRIAN: Charity is the bond of brotherhood, the foundation of peace, the holdfast and security of unity, which is greater than both hope and faith, which excels both good works and martyrdoms, which will abide with us always, eternal with God in the kingdom of heaven.⁸⁹ Take from it patience; and deprived of it, it does not endure. Take from it the substance of bearing and of enduring, and it continues with no roots nor strength. The apostle, finally, when he would speak of charity, joined to it endurance and patience. "Charity," he says, "is large-souled; charity is kind; charity does not envy, is not puffed up, is not provoked, does not think evil; loves all things, believes all things, hopes all

^{89 1} Cor 13:3, 13

things, bears all things."⁹⁰ Thus he shows that it can tenaciously persevere, because it knows how to endure all things. And in another place: "Forbearing one another," he says, "in love, using every effort to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."⁹¹ He proved that neither unity nor peace could be kept unless brethren should cherish one another with mutual toleration, and should keep the bond of concord by the intervention of patience.

What beyond;—that you should not swear nor curse; that you should not seek again your goods when taken from you; 92 that, when you receive a strike, you should give your other cheek to the smiter; 93 that you should forgive a brother who sins against you, not only seven times, but seventy times seven times, ⁹⁴ but, moreover, all his sins altogether; that you should love your enemies; that you should offer prayer for your adversaries and persecutors? Can you accomplish these things unless you maintain the steadfastness of patience and endurance? And this we see done in the case of Stephen, who, when he was slain by the Jews with violence and stoning, did not ask for vengeance for himself, but for pardon for his murderers, saying, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge."95 It behooved the first martyr of Christ thus to be, who, fore-running the martyrs that should follow him in a glorious death, was not only the preacher of the Lord's passion, but also the imitator of His most patient gentleness. What shall I say of anger, of discord, of strife, which things ought not to be found in a Christian?⁹⁶ Let there be patience in the breast, and these things cannot have place there; or should they try to enter, they are quickly excluded and depart, that a peaceful abode may continue in the heart, where it delights the God of peace to dwell. Finally, the apostle warns us, and teaches, saying: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, and clamor, and blasphemy, be put away from you."97 For if the Christian have departed from rage and carnal contention as if from the hurricanes of the sea, and have already begun to be tranquil and meek in the harbor of Christ, he ought to admit neither anger nor discord within his breast, since he must neither return evil for evil, 98 nor bear hatred. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.488.

CYPRIAN: Even our enemies must be loved. In the Gospel according to Luke: "If you love those who love you, what thank do you have? For even sinners love those who love them." Also according to Matthew: "Love your enemies, and

^{90 1} Cor 13:4-7

⁹¹ Eph 4:3

⁹² Lk 6:30

⁹³ Mt 5:39

⁹⁴ Mt 18:22

⁹⁵ Acts 7:60

⁹⁶ Eph 4:31

⁹⁷ Eph 4:30-31

⁹⁸ Rom 12:17; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9

⁹⁹ Lk 6:32

pray for those who persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who makes His sun to rise upon the good and the evil, and gives rain upon the righteous and the unrighteous." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.546.

ARCHELAUS: Those soldiers were filled with wonder and admiration at the grandeur of the man's piety and munificence, ¹⁰⁰ and were struck with amazement, and felt the force of this example of pity; so that very many of them were added to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and threw off the belt of military service. *Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, *6.179*.

LACTANTIUS: The just man is neither at enmity with any human being, nor desires anything at all which is the property of another. For why should he take a voyage, or what should he seek from another land, when his own is sufficient for him? Or why should he carry on war, and mix himself with the passions of others, when his mind is engaged in perpetual peace with men? Doubtless he will be delighted with foreign merchandise or with human blood, who does not know how to seek gain, who is satisfied with his mode of living, and considers it unlawful not only himself to commit slaughter, but to be present with those who do it, and to behold it! *The Divine Institutes*, 7.153.

LACTANTIUS: It is not virtue, therefore, either to be the enemy of the bad or the defender of the good, because virtue cannot be subject to uncertain chances. "Moreover, to reckon the interests of our country as in the first place." When the agreement of men is taken away, virtue has no existence at all; for what are the interests of our country, but the inconveniences of another state or nation?—that is, to extend the boundaries which are violently taken from others, to increase the power of the state, to improve the revenues,—all which things are not virtues, but the overthrowing of virtues: for, in the first place, the union of human society is taken away, innocence is taken away, the abstaining from the property of another is taken away; lastly, justice itself is taken away, which is unable to bear the tearing apart of the human race, and wherever arms have glittered, must be banished and exterminated. . . .

Whoever, then, has gained for his country these goods—as they themselves call them—that is, who by the overthrow of cities and the destruction of nations has filled the treasury with money, has taken lands and enriched his countrymen—he is extolled with praises to the heaven: in him there is said to be the greatest and perfect virtue. And this is the error not only of the people and the ignorant, but also of philosophers, who even give precepts for injustice, lest folly and wickedness should be wanting in discipline and authority. Therefore, when they are speaking of the duties relating to warfare, all that discourse is accommodated neither to justice nor to true virtue, but to this life and to civil institutions; and that this is not justice the matter itself declares. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.169.

¹⁰⁰ Mk 15:39; Lk 23:47

LACTANTIUS: If we all derive our origin from one man, whom God created, we are plainly of one blood; and therefore it must be considered the greatest wickedness to hate a man, even though guilty. On which account God has enjoined that enmities are never to be contracted by us, but that they are always to be removed, so that we soothe those who are our enemies, by reminding them of their relationship. Likewise, if we are all inspired and animated by one God, what else are we than brothers? And, indeed, the more closely united, because we are united in soul rather than in body. Accordingly Lucretius [a Roman poet and philosopher] does not err when he says: "In short, we are all sprung from a heavenly seed; all have that same father." Therefore they are to be accounted as savage beasts who injure man; who, in opposition to every law and right of human nature, plunder, torture, slay, and banish.

On account of this relationship of brotherhood, God teaches us never to do evil, but always good. And He also prescribes in what this doing good consists: in affording aid to those who are oppressed and in difficulty, and in bestowing food on those who are destitute.¹⁰¹ *The Divine Institutes*, 7.172-173.

LACTANTIUS: What else is this preservation of humanity than the loving a man because he is a man, and the same as ourselves? . . . If it is contrary to nature to injure a man, it must be in accordance with nature to benefit a man; and he who does not do this deprives himself of the title of a man, because it is the duty of humanity to support the necessity and peril of a man. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.174.

LACTANTIUS: But the just man will not omit any opportunity of doing anything mercifully: nor will he pollute himself with gain of this kind; but he will so act that without any loss to himself, that which he lends may be reckoned among his good works. He must not receive a gift from a poor man; so that if he himself has afforded anything, it may be good, inasmuch as it is gratuitous. If any one reviles, he must answer him with a blessing; ¹⁰² he himself must never revile, that no evil word may proceed out of the mouth of a man who reverences the good Word. ¹⁰³ Moreover, he must also diligently take care, lest by any fault of his he should at any time make an enemy; and if any one should be so shameless as to inflict injury on a good and just man, he must bear it with calmness and moderation, and not take upon himself his revenge, but reserve it for the judgment of God. ¹⁰⁴ *The Divine Institutes, 7.183*.

LACTANTIUS: Closely connected with harmlessness is pity. For the former does not inflict injury, the latter works good; the former begins justice, the latter completes it. For since the nature of men is more feeble than that of the other

¹⁰¹ Cf. Lk 10:30-37

¹⁰² Cf. Lk 6:28; Rom 12:14

¹⁰³ Jas 3:9-10

¹⁰⁴ Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30

animals, which God has provided with means of inflicting violence, and with defenses for repelling it, He has given to us the affection of pity, that we might place the whole protection of our life in mutual aid. For if we are created by one God, and descended from one man, . . . we ought on this account to love every man; and therefore we are bound not only to abstain from the infliction of injury, but not even to avenge it when inflicted on us, that there may be in us complete harmlessness. ¹⁰⁵ And on this account God commands us to pray always even for our enemies. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 7.250.

ARNOBIUS: Although you allege that those wars which you speak of were excited through hatred of our religion, it would not be difficult to prove, that after the name of Christ was heard in the world, not only were they not increased, but they were even in great measure diminished by the restraining of furious passions. For since we, a numerous band of men as we are, have learned from His teaching and His laws that evil ought not to be returned with evil, 106 that it is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it, 107 that we should rather shed our own blood than stain our hands and our conscience with that of another, an ungrateful world is now for a long period enjoying a benefit from Christ, inasmuch as by His means the rage of savage ferocity has been softened, and has begun to withhold hostile hands from the blood of a fellow-creature. But if all without exception, who feel that they are men not in form of body but in power of reason, would lend an ear for a little to His salutary and peaceful rules, and would not, in the pride and arrogance of enlightenment, trust to their own senses rather than to His admonitions, the whole world, having turned the use of steel into more peaceful occupations, 108 would now be living in the most placid tranquillity, and would unite in blessed harmony, maintaining inviolate the sanctity of treaties. Against the Heathen, 6.415.

5:45ff SECOND CLEMENT: For when they hear from us that God says, ¹⁰⁹ "There is no thank to you, if you love them that love you; but there is thank to you, if you love your enemies and them that hate you;"¹¹⁰ when they hear these things, they marvel at the excellency of the goodness; but when they see that we not only do not love them that hate us, but not even them that love us, they laugh us to scorn, and the Name is blasphemed. *7.521*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: For the statement in the law, "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree," confirms our hope which depends on the crucified Christ, not because He who has been crucified is cursed by God, but because God foretold that

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Mt 10:16; Phil 2:15; Heb 7:26

¹⁰⁶ Rom 12:17; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9

¹⁰⁷ 1 Cor 6:7; 1 Pet 2:19

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Isa 2:1-4; Mic 4:1-3

¹⁰⁹ A significant testimony to the early belief of the divine inspiration of the Gospels.

¹¹⁰ Lk 6:27, 32 combined; cf. Mt 5:44, 46

¹¹¹ Deut 21:23

which would be done by you all, and by those like to you [Jews], who do not know that this is He who existed before all, who is the eternal Priest of God, and King, and Christ. And you clearly see that this has come to pass. For you curse in your synagogues all those who are called from Him Christians; and other nations effectively carry out the curse, putting to death those who simply confess themselves to be Christians; to all of whom we say, "You are our brethren; rather recognize the truth of God." And while neither they nor you are persuaded by us, but strive earnestly to cause us to deny the name of Christ, we choose rather and submit to death, in the full assurance that all the good which God has promised through Christ He will reward us with. And in addition to all this we pray for you, that Christ may have mercy upon you. For He taught us to pray for our enemies also, saying, "Love your enemies; be kind and merciful, as your heavenly Father is."112 For we see that the Almighty God is kind and merciful, causing His sun to rise on the unthankful and on the righteous, and sending rain on the holy and on the wicked; all of whom He has taught us He will judge. Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, 1.247.

MATHETES: If you also desire to possess this faith, you likewise shall receive first of all the knowledge of the Father. For God has loved mankind, on whose account He made the world, to whom He rendered subject all the things that are in it, to whom He gave reason and understanding, to whom alone He imparted the privilege of looking upwards to Himself, whom He formed after His own image, to whom He sent His only-begotten Son, to whom He has promised a kingdom in heaven, and will give it to those who have loved Him. And when you have attained this knowledge, with what joy do you think you will be filled? Or, how will you love Him who has first so loved you?

And if you love Him, you will be an imitator of His kindness. And do not wonder that a man may become an imitator of God. He can, if he is willing. For it is not by ruling over his neighbors, or by seeking to hold the supremacy over those that are weaker, or by being rich, and showing violence towards those that are inferior, that happiness is found; nor can any one by these things become an imitator of God. But these things do not at all constitute His majesty. On the contrary he who takes upon himself the burden of his neighbor; he who, in whatsoever respect he may be superior, is ready to benefit another who is deficient; he who, whatsoever things he has received from God, by distributing these to the needy, becomes a god to those who receive his benefits: he is an imitator of God.

Then you will see, while still on earth, that God in the heavens rules over the universe; then you shall begin to speak the mysteries of God; then you shall both love and admire those that suffer punishment because they will not deny God; then you shall condemn the deceit and error of the world when you shall know what it is to live truly in heaven, when you shall despise that which is here esteemed to be death, when you shall fear what is truly death, which is reserved

¹¹² Cf. Lk 6:35

for those who shall be condemned to the eternal fire, which shall afflict those even to the end that are committed to it. Then you shall admire those who for righteousness' sake endure the fire that is but for a moment, and shall count them happy when you shall know the nature of that fire. *Epistle to Diognetus*, 1.29.

IRENAEUS: That, then, was called the day of retribution on which the Lord will render to every one according to his works—that is, the judgment. The acceptable year of the Lord, again, is this present time, in which those who believe Him are called by Him, and become acceptable to God—that is, the whole time from His advent onwards to the consummation of all things, during which He acquires to Himself as fruits of the scheme of mercy those who are saved. . . . The day of retribution has not yet come; but He still "makes His sun to rise upon the good and upon the evil, and sends rain upon the just and unjust." Against Heresies, 1.390.

IRENAEUS: The God, therefore, who does benevolently cause His sun to rise upon all, and sends rain upon the just and unjust, shall judge those who, enjoying His equally distributed kindness, have led lives not corresponding to the dignity of His bounty; but who have spent their days in wantonness and luxury, in opposition to His benevolence, and have, moreover, even blasphemed Him who has conferred so great benefits upon them. *Against Heresies*, 1.459.

IRENAEUS: He also makes it manifest, that we ought, after our calling, to be also adorned with works of righteousness, so that the Spirit of God may rest upon us; for this is the wedding garment, of which also the apostle speaks, "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by immortality." But those who have indeed been called to God's supper, yet have not received the Holy Spirit, because of their wicked conduct "shall be," He declares, "cast into outer darkness." He thus clearly shows that the very same King who gathered from all quarters the faithful to the marriage of His Son, and who grants them the incorruptible banquet, also orders that man to be cast into outer darkness who has not on a wedding garment, that is, one who despises it. For as in the former covenant, "with many of them was He not well pleased;" so also is it the case here, that "many are called, but few chosen." 117

For he who is good, and righteous, and pure, and spotless, will endure nothing evil, nor unjust, nor detestable in His wedding chamber. This is the Father of our Lord, by whose providence all things consist, and all are administered by His command; and He confers His free gifts upon those who

¹¹³ Mt 16:27

^{114 2} Cor 5:4

¹¹⁵ Mt 22:13

¹¹⁶ 1 Cor 10:5

¹¹⁷ Mt 22:14

should receive them; but the most righteous Retributor metes out punishment according to their works, most deservedly, to the ungrateful and to those that are insensible of His kindness; and therefore does He say, "He sent His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." He says here, "His armies," because all men are the property of God. For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and all that dwell therein."

Therefore the Apostle Paul also says in the Epistle to the Romans, "For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resists the power, resists the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not for a terror to a good work, but to an evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him that does evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause you pay tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." ¹²⁰ Both the Lord, then, and the apostles announce as the one only God the Father, Him who gave the law, who sent the prophets, who made all things; and therefore does He say, "He sent His armies," because every man, inasmuch as he is a man, is His workmanship, although he may be ignorant of his God. For He gives existence to all; He, "who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and unjust." Against Heresies, 1.517

IRENAEUS: He Himself grants the creation to us, for He causes His sun to rise, and sends rain when He wills. *Against Heresies*, 1.528.

IRENAEUS: If the Father, then, does not exercise judgment, it follows that judgment does not belong to Him, or that He consents to all those actions which take place; and if He does not judge, all persons will be equal, and accounted in the same condition. The advent of Christ will therefore be without an object, yes, absurd, inasmuch as (in that case) He exercises no judicial power. For "He came to divide a man against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law;" and when two are in one bed, to take the one, and to leave the other; and of two women grinding at the mill, to take one and leave the other: ¹²² also at the time of the end, to order the reapers to collect first the tares together, and bind them in bundles, and burn them with unquenchable fire, but to gather up the wheat into the barn; ¹²³ and to call the lambs into the kingdom prepared for them, but to send the goats into everlasting

¹¹⁸ Mt 22:7

¹¹⁹ Ps 24:1

¹²⁰ Rom 13:1-7

¹²¹ Mt 10:25

¹²² Lk 17:34

¹²³ Mt 13:30

fire, which has been prepared by His Father for the devil and his angels. ¹²⁴ And why is this? Has the Word come for the ruin and for the resurrection of many? For the ruin, certainly, of those who do not believe Him, to whom also He has threatened a greater damnation in the judgment-day than that of Sodom and Gomorrah; ¹²⁵ but for the resurrection of believers, and those who do the will of His Father in heaven. If then the advent of the Son comes indeed alike to all, but is for the purpose of judging, and separating the believing from the unbelieving, since, as those who believe do His will agreeably to their own choice, and as, also agreeably to their own choice, the disobedient do not consent to His doctrine; it is manifest that His Father has made all in a like condition, each person having a choice of his own, and a free understanding; and that He has regard to all things, and exercises a providence over all, "making His sun to rise upon the evil and on the good, and sending rain upon the just and unjust." *Against Heresies, 1.556.*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is good, the Word Himself will again affirm: "For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil;" and further, when He says, "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." Still further also He plainly says, "None is good, but My Father, who is in heaven." In addition to these, again He says, "My Father makes His sun to shine on all." Here it is to be noted that He proclaims His Father to be good, and to be the Creator. And that the Creator is just, is not disputed. And again he says, "My Father sends rain on the just, and on the unjust." In respect of His sending rain, He is the Creator of the waters, and of the clouds. And in respect of His doing so on all, He holds an even balance justly and rightly. And as being good, He does so on just and unjust alike. *The Instructor*; 2.227.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "For God makes His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust," and sent the Lord Himself to the just and the unjust. *The Stromata*, 2.548.

TERTULLIAN: Who is this good God? There is, He says, "none but one." ¹²⁹ It is not as if He had shown us that one of two gods was the supremely good; but He expressly asserts that there is one only good God, who is the only good, because He is the only God. Now, undoubtedly, He is the good God who "sends rain on the just and on the unjust, and makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good;" sustaining and nourishing and assisting even Marcionites [heretics] themselves! *Against Marcion*, *3.410*.

¹²⁴ Mt 25:33

¹²⁵ Lk 10:12

¹²⁶ Lk 6:35

¹²⁷ Lk 6:35-36

¹²⁸ Mt 14:17

¹²⁹ Lk 18:19

TERTULLIAN: In Isaiah, "You shall eat the good of the land," 130 the expression means the blessings which await the flesh when in the kingdom of God it shall be renewed, and made like the angels, 131 and waiting to obtain the things "which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man." 132 Otherwise, how vain that God should invite men to obedience by the fruits of the field and the elements of this life, when He dispenses these to even irreligious men and blasphemers; on a general condition once for all made to man, "sending rain on the good and on the evil, and making His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust!" On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 3.564.

ORIGEN: The injunction also of the Savior, when exhorting His disciples to the exercise of kindness, "Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect; for He commands His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust," most evidently suggests even to a person of feeble understanding, that He is proposing to the imitation of His disciples no other God than the maker of heaven and the bestower of the rain. De Principiis, 4.275.

ORIGEN: How can we assert that "God, leaving the regions of heaven, and the whole world, and despising this great earth, takes up His abode amongst us only," when we have found that all thoughtful persons must say in their prayers, that "the earth is full of the mercy of the LORD," 133 and that "the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh"; 134 and that God, being good, "makes His sun to arise upon the evil and the good, and sends His rain upon the just and the unjust;" and that He encourages us to a similar course of action, in order that we may become His sons, and teaches us to extend the benefits which we enjoy, so far as in our power, to all men? For He Himself is said to be the Savior of all men, especially of them that believe; 135 and His Christ to be the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 136 . . . "God commends His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;"137 and although "scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." ¹³⁸ But now is Jesus declared to have come for the sake of sinners in all parts of the world (that they may forsake their sin, and entrust themselves to God), being called also, agreeably to an ancient custom of these Scriptures, the "Christ of God." Against

¹³⁰ Isa 1:19

¹³¹ Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25

^{132 1} Cor 2:9

¹³³ Ps 33:5

¹³⁴ Sir 18:13

^{135 1} Tim 4:10

¹³⁶ 1 Jn 2:2

¹³⁷ Rom 5:8

¹³⁸ Rom 5:7

Celsus, 4.508-509.

CYPRIAN: Let us consider, beloved brethren, what the congregation of believers did in the time of the apostles, when at the first beginnings the mind flourished with greater virtues, when the faith of believers burned with a warmth of faith as yet new. Then they sold houses and farms, and gladly and liberally presented to the apostles the proceeds to be dispensed to the poor; 139 selling and alienating their earthly estate, they transferred their lands toward where they might receive the fruits of an eternal possession, and there prepared homes where they might begin an eternal habitation. 140 Such, then, was the abundance in labors, as was the agreement in love, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And the multitude of them that believed acted with one heart and one soul; neither was there any distinction among them, nor did they esteem anything their own of the goods which belonged to them, but they had all things common."141 This is truly to become sons of God by spiritual birth; 142 this is to imitate by the heavenly law the equity of God the Father. For whatever is of God is common in our use; nor is any one excluded from His benefits and His gifts, so as to prevent the whole human race from enjoying equally the divine goodness and liberality. Thus the day equally enlightens, the sun gives radiance, the rain moistens, the wind blows, and the sleep is one to those that sleep, and the splendor of the stars and of the moon is common. In which example of equality, he who, as a possessor in the earth, shares his returns and his fruits with the fraternity, while he is common and just in his gratuitous bounties, is an imitator of God the Father. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.483.

ALEXANDER OF ALEXANDRIA: The only begotten Son of the Father, indeed, possesses an indefectible Sonship; but the adoption of rational sons belongs to them not by nature, but is prepared for them by the integrity of their life, and by the free gift of God. *Epistle on the Arian Heresy and the Disposition of Arius*, 6.294

5:46 ATHENAGORAS: The life for which we look is far better than can be described in words, provided we arrive at it pure from all wrong-doing; who, moreover, carry our benevolence to such an extent, that we not only love our friends ("for if you love them," He says, "that love you, and lend to them that lend to you, what reward will you have?"), 143—shall we, I say, when such is our character, and when we live such a life as this, that we may escape condemnation at last, not be accounted pious? *A Plea for the Christians*, 2.136.

5:48 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Only let us preserve free-will and love: "troubled

¹³⁹ Acts 4:32-37

¹⁴⁰ Lk 16:9

¹⁴¹ Acts 4:32

¹⁴² In 3:3-6

¹⁴³ cf. Lk 6:32, 34

on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."¹⁴⁴ For those who strive after perfection, according to the same apostle, must "give no offense in anything, but in everything approve themselves not to men, but to God."¹⁴⁵ *The Stromata*, 2.433.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For sanctity, as I conceive it, is perfect pureness of mind, and deeds, and thoughts, and words too, and in its last degree sinlessness in dreams. *The Stromata*, 2.435.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But him, who from this has trained himself to the summit of knowledge and the elevated height of the perfect man, all things relating to time and place help on, now that he has made it his choice to live infallibly, and subjects himself to training in order to the attainment of the stability of knowledge on each side. . . . Not without, but through the exercise of will, and by the force of reason, and knowledge, and Providence, is it brought to become incapable of being lost. Through care it becomes incapable of being lost. He will employ caution so as to avoid sinning, and consideration to prevent the loss of virtue. *The Stromata*, 2.436.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Abstinence from sins, are not sufficient for perfection, unless he assume in addition the work of righteousness—activity in doing good.

Then our dexterous man and Christian is revealed in righteousness already even here, as Moses, glorified in the face of the soul, ¹⁴⁶ as we have formerly said, the body bears the stamp of the righteous soul. For as the mordant of the dyeing process, remaining in the wool, produces in it a certain quality and diversity from other wool; so also in the soul the pain is gone, but the good remains; and the sweet is left, but the base is wiped away. For these are two qualities characteristic of each soul, by which is known that which is glorified, and that which is condemned.

And as in the case of Moses, from his righteous conduct, and from his uninterrupted intercourse with God, who spoke to him, a kind of glorified hue settled on his face; so also a divine power of goodness clinging to the righteous soul in contemplation and in prophecy, and in the exercise of the function of governing, impresses on it something, as it were, of intellectual radiance, like the solar ray, as a visible sign of righteousness, uniting the soul with light, through unbroken love, which is God-bearing and God-borne. Consequently, assimilation to God the Savior arises to the Christian, as far as permitted to human nature, he being made perfect "as the Father who is in heaven." *The Stromata*, 2.504.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He who holds converse with God must have his soul

^{144 2} Cor 4:8-9

¹⁴⁵ 2 Cor 6:3-7

¹⁴⁶ Exod 34:29

immaculate and stainlessly pure, it being essential to have made himself perfectly good. *The Stromata*, 2.537.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "**Be perfect as your father, perfectly**," by forgiving sins, and forgetting injuries, and living in the habit of passionlessness. For as we call a physician perfect, and a philosopher perfect, so also, in my view, do we call a Christian perfect. But not one of those points, although of the greatest importance, is assumed in order to the likeness of God. For we do not say, as the Stoics do most impiously, that virtue in man and God is the same. Ought we not then to be perfect, as the Father wills? For it is utterly impossible for any one to become perfect as God is. Now the Father wishes us to be perfect by living blamelessly, according to the obedience of the Gospel. *The Stromata*, *2.549*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For it is thus that one truly follows the Savior, by aiming at sinlessness and at His perfection. *The Stromata*, 2.597.

TERTULLIAN: But as God is eternal and rational, so, I think, He is perfect in all things. "Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." *Against Marcion*, 3.289.

TERTULLIAN: Handmaids of the living God, my fellow-servants and sisters, the right which I enjoy with you—I, the most meanest in that right of fellowservantship and brotherhood—emboldens me to address to you a discourse, not, of course, of affection, but paving the way for affection in the cause of your salvation. That salvation—and not the salvation of women only, but likewise of men—consists in the exhibition of modesty. . . . If any modesty can be believed to exist in Gentiles, it is plain that it must be imperfect and undisciplined to such a degree that, although it be actively tenacious of itself in the mind up to a certain point, it yet allows itself to relax into licentious extravagances of attire; just in accordance with Gentile perversity, in craving after that of which it carefully shuns the effect. How many a one, in short, is there who does not earnestly desire even to look pleasing to strangers? Who does not on that very account take care to have herself painted out, and denies that she has ever been an object of carnal appetite? And yet, granting that even this is a practice familiar to Gentile modesty—namely, not actually to commit the sin, but still to be willing to do so; or even not to be willing, yet still not quite to refuse—what wonder? For all things which are not God's are perverse. Let those women therefore look to it, who, by not holding fast the whole good, easily mingle with evil even what they do hold fast. Necessary it is that you turn aside from them, as in all other things, so also in your manner of walking; since you ought to be "perfect, as is your Father who is in the heavens." On the Apparel of Women, 4 18-19

ORIGEN: If any one, indeed, venture to ascribe essential corruption to Him who was made after the image and likeness of God, then, in my opinion, this impious

charge extends even to the Son of God Himself, for He is called in Scripture the image of God. 147 Or he who holds this opinion would certainly impugn the authority of Scripture, which says that man was made in the image of God; and in him are manifestly to be discovered traces of the divine image, not by any appearance of the bodily frame, which is corruptible, but by mental wisdom, by justice, moderation, virtue, wisdom, discipline; in conclusion, by the whole band of virtues, which are innate in the essence of God, and which may enter into man by diligence and imitation of God; as the Lord also intimates in the Gospel, when He says, "Be therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful;" 148 and, "Be perfect, even as your Father also is perfect." From which it is clearly shown that all these virtues are perpetually in God, and that they can never approach to or depart from Him, whereas by men they are acquired only slowly, and one by one. *De Principiis*, *4.381*.

ORIGEN: Apart from the help of the word, and that too the word of perfection, it is impossible for a man to become free from sin. *Against Celsus*, 4.492.

ORIGEN: And we know that in this way the angels are superior to men; so that men, when made perfect, become like the angels. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but the righteous are as the angels in heaven,"149 and also become "equal to the angels."150 We know, too, that in the arrangement of the universe there are certain beings termed "thrones," and others "dominions," and others "powers," and others "principalities;" and we see that we men, who are far inferior to these, may entertain the hope that by a virtuous life, and by acting in all things agreeably to reason, we may rise to a likeness with all these. And, lastly, because "it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like God, and shall see Him as He is."151 And if any one were to maintain what is asserted by some (either by those who possess intelligence or who do not, but have misconceived sound reason), that "God exists, and we are next to Him," I would interpret the word "we," by using in its stead, "We who act according to reason," or rather, "We virtuous, who act according to reason." For, in our opinion, the same virtue belongs to all the blessed, so that the virtue of man and of God is identical. And therefore we are taught to become "perfect," as our Father in heaven is perfect. No good and virtuous man, then, is a "worm rolling in filth," nor is a pious man an "ant," nor a righteous man a "frog;" nor could one whose soul is enlightened with the bright light of truth be reasonably likened to a "bird of the night." Against Celsus, 4.509.

ORIGEN: A man becomes "perfect," as "our Father in heaven is perfect," and

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4

¹⁴⁸ Lk 6:36

¹⁴⁹ Mt 22:30

¹⁵⁰ Lk 20:36

¹⁵¹ Cf. 1 Jn 3:2

hears the command, "Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy," ¹⁵² and learning the precept, "Be followers of God," ¹⁵³ receives into his virtuous soul the traits of God's image. The body, moreover, of him who possesses such a soul is a temple of God; and in the soul God dwells, because it has been made after His image. *Against Celsus*, *4.602*.

ORIGEN: Christ led them up along with Himself to the divine citizenship which is above the law, which contains, as for the imperfect and such as are still sinners, sacrifices for the remission of sins. He then who is without sin, and stands no longer in need of legal sacrifices, perhaps when he has become perfect has passed beyond even the spiritual law, and comes to the Word beyond it, who became flesh to those who live in the flesh, but to those who no longer at all war after the flesh, He is perceived as being the Word, as He was God in the beginning with God, and reveals the Father. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 9.452.

ORIGEN: I am persuaded that every action of the perfect man is a testimony to Christ Jesus, and that abstinence from every sin is a denial of self, leading him after Christ. And such an one is crucified with Christ, taking up his own cross and follows Him who for our sakes bears His own cross. ¹⁵⁴ Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.464.

ARNOBIUS: For since we are prone to err, and to yield to various lusts and appetites through the fault of our innate weakness, He allows Himself at all times to be comprehended in our thoughts, that while we entreat Him and strive to merit His bounties, we may receive a desire for purity, and may free ourselves from every stain by the removal of all our shortcomings. *Against the Heathen*, 6.419.

¹⁵² Lev 11:44

¹⁵³ Eph 5:1

¹⁵⁴ Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23

Giving Alms

Matthew 6:1-4

- ^[1] Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. MT 23:5; JN 12:43
- ¹²¹ Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. LK 11:41; 12:33; ACTS 9:36; 10:2-4
- But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:
- 14] That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. PROV 19:17; TOB 12:8-9; ACTS 10:4

SUMMARY: When you can do good, do not defer it (POLYCARP), because alms deliver from death (POLYCARP, CYPRIAN). Fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving is better than both (SECOND CLEMENT). If you do alms, let no one know it (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). If we do alms before men, to appear philanthropic, and to be honored because of philanthropy, we receive the reward from men (ORIGEN). Everyone who is instructed into the hope of the heavenly kingdom is commanded to give alms (CYPRIAN). By almsgiving and faith sins are purged (CYPRIAN, LACTANTIUS). Neither hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give (THE DIDACHE). Those that do good are taught not to boast, lest they become men-pleasers (THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH). God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a reward of His own good things (IRENAEUS).

6:1ff POLYCARP: When you can do good, do not defer it, because "alms delivers from death." *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.35*

SECOND CLEMENT: Almsgiving therefore is a good thing, as repentance from sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving than both;² "but love covers a multitude of sins."³ But prayer out of a good conscience delivers from death. Blessed is every one that is found full of these; for alms-giving lightens the burden of sin.⁴ 7.522.

THE DIDACHE: But your prayers and alms and all your deeds so do, as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord. 7.381.

HERMAS: Give ear unto me, O Sons: I have brought you up in much simplicity, and trust, and chastity, on account of the mercy of the Lord, who has dropped His righteousness down upon you, that you may be made righteous and holy from all your iniquity and depravity; but you do not wish to rest from your iniquity. Now, therefore, listen to me, and be at peace one with another, and visit each other, and bear each other's burdens, and do not partake of God's creatures alone, but give abundantly of them to the needy. For some through the abundance of their food produce weakness in their flesh, and thus corrupt their flesh; while the flesh of others who have no food is corrupted, because they have not sufficient nourishment. And on this account their bodies waste away. This intemperance in eating is thus injurious to you who have abundance and do not distribute among those who are needy. Give heed to the judgment that is to come. Therefore, you who are high in position, seek out the hungry as long as the tower is not yet finished; for after the tower is finished, you will wish to do good, but will find no opportunity. Give heed, therefore, you who glory in your wealth, lest those who are needy should groan, and their groans should ascend to the Lord,⁵ and you be shut out with all your goods beyond the gate of the tower. The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.16

TATIAN: Consider your alms; do not do them before men to let them see you: and if it be not so, you have no reward before your Father which is in the heavens. When you give an alms now, do not sound a trumpet before you, as do the people of hypocrisy, in the synagogues and the marketplaces, that men may praise them. And verily I say to you, they have received their reward. But you, when you do alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does; that your alms may be concealed: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. The Diatessaron, 9.58.

Tob 4:10, 12:9

² Cf. Tob 12:8-9

³ 1 Pet 4:8; cf. Prov 10:12; Jas 5:20

⁴ Cf. Sir 3:30

⁵ Jas 5:1-4

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "If you do alms," it is said, "let no one know it; and if you fast, anoint yourself, that God alone may know," and not a single human being. *The Stromata*, 2.434.

ARISTIDES: The Christians do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude the kind deeds they do, but are careful that no one should notice them; and they conceal their giving just as he who finds a treasure and conceals it. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 9.278.

TERTULLIAN: At any rate, you [Romans] say, the temple revenues are every day falling off: how few now throw in a contribution! In truth, we are not able to give alms both to your human and your heavenly beggars; nor do we think that we are required to give any but to those who ask for it. Let Jupiter then hold out his hand and get, for our compassion spends more in the streets than yours does in the temples. *The Apology, 3.49*.

TERTULLIAN: Scripture commands each of two things—namely, that we work for the Lord without the acquaintance of any second person, and without pressure upon ourselves. *To His Wife, 4.46*.

ORIGEN: Accordingly, if we do alms before men, having in our thoughts the design of appearing to men philanthropic, and of being honored because of philanthropy, we receive the reward from men; and, universally, everything that is done with the consciousness in the doer that he will be glorified by men, has no reward from Him who beholds in secret, and renders the reward to those who are pure, in secret. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.444*.

ORIGEN: It is sowing to the flesh when one does alms, with trumpeting before him, in synagogues and streets to be glorified by men, or likes to pray standing in synagogues and at broadway corners to appear to men and thought a pious and a holy person among the onlookers. Indeed every wayfarer along the broad and spacious way leading to destruction without rightness or straightness but crooked and cornered throughout, (for the straight line is broken in it to the utmost), is standing no less than he who prays at broadway corners, not in one but through his love of pleasure in a number of streets in which beings who as men are perishing because they have fallen away from their divinity, are to be found glorifying and pronouncing blessed those whom they have thought to act piously. *On Prayer.*⁶

ORIGEN: Just as water always conflicts with fire and fire with water and such things can never dwell together simultaneously, so likewise egotism and virtue are opposed to each other and can never easily coexist in one and the same soul.

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xii.

Therefore egotism is to be expelled from our souls, and we must abide in Christ's commandments. *Fragment 114.*⁷

ORIGEN: Wherefore the law of nature will be of no help whatsoever for knowing God's righteousness, thought it appears to understand something about human righteousness. For the law is indeed able to perceive what is just among men, as, for example, that what someone does not want to suffer himself, he should not do to his neighbor. But is it able to perceive naturally that righteousness which says, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men," and, "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"? These and just things of a similar nature are things which the law of nature cannot declare, and therefore the Apostle says, "But now, apart from the law," sc. "of nature," the righteousness of God has been disclosed," having the attestation of the law of Moses and of the prophets, in whom the Holy Spirit had recorded many things about God's righteousness through figures and enigmas. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans."

ORIGEN: The zeal of the Jews was not according to knowledge.¹² That is why, since they were ignorant of God's righteousness, they were trying to fulfill their own, i.e., the righteousness that was seen by men, though assuredly they should have instead obeyed the righteousness of God, who is Christ.¹³ *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*¹⁴

CYPRIAN: He gave a law to the sound man and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should befall the sinner. We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence. Nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource, unless the divine mercy, coming once more in aid, should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:61. Taken from *Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 5344-5346. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

⁸ Cf. Rom 3:21-24

⁹ Cf. Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31

¹⁰ Rom 3:21

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 211. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

¹² Rom 10:2

¹³ Cf. Rom 10:3; 1 Cor 1:30

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 133. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract. . . .

The Holy Spirit speaks in the sacred Scriptures, and says, "By almsgiving and faith sins are purged."15 Not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, for those are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. Moreover, He says again, "As water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving quenches sin." Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the layer of saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued. And because in baptism remission of sins is granted once for all, constant and ceaseless labor, following the likeness of baptism, once again bestows the mercy of God. The Lord teaches this also in the Gospel. For when the disciples were pointed out, as eating and not first washing their hands, He replied and said, "He that made that which is within, made also that which is without. But give alms, and behold all things are clean to you;"17 teaching hereby and showing, that not the hands are to be washed, but the heart, and that the foulness from inside is to be done away rather than that from outside; but that he who shall have cleansed what is within has cleansed also that which is without; and that if the mind is cleansed, a man has begun to be clean also in skin and body. Further, admonishing, and showing how we may be clean and purged, He added that alms must be given. He who is pitiful teaches and warns us that pity must be shown; and because He seeks to save those whom at a great cost He has redeemed, He teaches that those who, after the grace of baptism, have become foul, may once more be cleansed. . . .

The divine admonition in the Scriptures, as well old as new, has never failed, has never been silent in urging God's people always and everywhere to works of mercy; and in the strain and exhortation of the Holy Spirit, everyone who is instructed into the hope of the heavenly kingdom is commanded to give alms. . . .

The remedies for propitiating God are given in the words of God Himself; the divine instructions have taught what sinners ought to do, that by works of righteousness God is satisfied, that with the deserts of mercy sins are cleansed. And in Solomon we read, "Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and these shall intercede for you from all evil." And again: "Whoever closes his ears that he may not hear the weak, he also shall call upon God, and there will be none to hear him." Remembering which precepts, Daniel, when king Nebuchadnezzar was in anxiety, being frightened by an adverse dream, gave him, for the turning away of evils, a remedy to obtain the divine help, saying, "Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you; and redeem your sins by almsgiving, and your unrighteousness by mercies to the poor, and God will

¹⁵ Cf. Prov 16:6

¹⁶ Sir 3:30

¹⁷ Lk 11:41

¹⁸ Sir 29:12

¹⁹ Prov 21:13

be patient to your sins."²⁰ And as the king did not obey him, he underwent the misfortunes and mischiefs which he had seen, and which he might have escaped and avoided had he redeemed his sins by almsgiving. Raphael the angel also witnesses the like, and exhorts that alms should be freely and liberally bestowed, saying, "Prayer is good, with fasting and alms; because alms deliver from death, and it purges away sins."²¹ He shows that our prayers and fasting are of less avail, unless they are aided by almsgiving; that entreaties alone are of little force to obtain what they seek, unless they be made sufficient by the addition of deeds and good works. The angel reveals, and manifests, and certifies that our petitions become efficacious by almsgiving, that life is redeemed from dangers by almsgiving, that souls are delivered from death by almsgiving. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.476-478.

LACTANTIUS: This is the chief and truest advantage of riches; not to use wealth for the particular pleasure of an individual, but for the welfare of many; not for one's own immediate enjoyment, but for justice, which alone does not perish. We must therefore by all means keep in mind, that the hope of receiving in return must be altogether absent from the duty of showing mercy: for the reward of this work and duty must be expected from God alone; for if you should expect it from man, then that will not be kindness, but the lending of a benefit at interest; nor can he seem to have deserved well who affords that which he does, not to another, but to himself. And yet the matter comes to this, that whatever a man has bestowed upon another, hoping for no advantage from him, he really bestows upon himself, for he will receive a reward from God. God has also enjoined, that if at any time we make a feast, we should invite those who cannot invite us in return,²² and thus make us a recompense, so that no action of our life should be without the exercise of mercy. Nor, however, let any one think that he is debarred from dealings with his friends or kindness with his neighbors. But God has made known to us what is our true and just work: we ought thus to live with our neighbors, provided that we know that the one manner of living relates to man, the other to God. The Divine Institutes, 7.176.

LACTANTIUS: As often, therefore, as you are asked for aid, believe that you are tried by God, that it may be seen whether you are worthy of being heard. Examine your own conscience, and, as far as you are able, heal your wounds. However, because offenses are removed by almsgiving, think that a license is given you for sinning. For they are done away with, if you are bountiful to God because you have sinned; for if you sin through reliance on your almsgiving, they are not done away with. For God especially desires that men shall be cleansed from their sins, and therefore He commands them to repent. But to repent is nothing else than to profess and to affirm that one will sin no more.²³

²⁰ Dan 4:27

²¹ Tob 12:8-9

²² Lk 14:13-14

²³ Jn 8:11

Therefore they are pardoned who unaware and incautiously glide into sin; he who sins willfully has no pardon.²⁴ Nor, however, if any one shall have been purified from all stain of sin, let him think that he may abstain from the work of almsgiving because he has no faults to blot out. No, in truth, he is then more bound to exercise justice when he is become just, so that that which he had before done for the healing of his wounds he may afterwards do for the praise and glory of virtue.

To this is added, that no one can be without fault as long as he is burdened with a covering of flesh, the infirmity of which is subject to the dominion of sin in a threefold manner—in deeds, in words, and thoughts. By these steps justice advances to the greatest height. The first step of virtue is to abstain from evil works; the second, to abstain also from evil words; the third, to abstain even from the thoughts of evil things. He who ascends the first step is sufficiently just; he who ascends the second is now of perfect virtue, since he offends neither in deeds nor in conversation;²⁵ he who ascends the third appears truly to have attained the likeness of God. For it is almost beyond the measure of man not even to admit to the thought that which is either bad in action or improper in speech. Therefore even just men, who can refrain from every unjust work, are sometimes, however, overcome by frailty itself, so that they either speak evil in anger, or, at the sight of delightful things, they desire them with silent thought. But if the condition of mortality does not allow a man to be pure from every stain, the faults of the flesh ought therefore to be done away with by continual almsgiving. The Divine Institutes, 7.178-179.

LACTANTIUS: God admonishes us that the doer of justice ought not to be boastful, lest he should appear to have discharged the duties of benevolence, not so much from a desire of obeying the divine commands, as of pleasing men, and should already have the reward of glory which he has aimed at, and should not receive the recompense of that heavenly and divine reward. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.183.

6:2ff THE DIDACHE: Do not be a stretcher forth of the hands to receive and a drawer of them back to give. ²⁶ If you have anything at all, through your hands you will give ransom for your sins. ²⁷ Do not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give; ²⁸ for you will know who is the good repayer of the hire. Do not turn away from him that is in want, but share all things with your brother, and do not say that they are your own; for if you are partakers in that which is immortal, how much more in things which are mortal? ²⁹ 7.378.

TERTULLIAN: As they veil their head in presence of heathens, let them at all

²⁴ Heb 10:26-27

²⁵ Jas 3:2

²⁶ Sir 4:31

²⁷ Prov 16:6

^{28 2} Cor 9:7

²⁹ Cf. Acts 4:32; Rom 15:27

events in the church conceal their virginity, which they do veil outside the church.³⁰ They fear strangers: let them stand in awe of the brethren too; or else let them have the consistent boldness to appear as virgins in the streets as well, as they have the boldness to do in the churches. . . . To what purpose, then, do they thrust their glory out of sight abroad, but expose it in the church? I demand a reason. Is it to please the brethren, or God Himself? If God Himself, He is as capable of beholding whatever is done in secret, as He is just to remunerate what is done for His sole honor. In conclusion, He enjoins us not to trumpet forth any one of those things which will merit reward in His sight, nor get compensation for them from men. *On the Veiling of Virgins*, 4.36.

CYPRIAN: Be earnest in righteous works, whereby sins may be purged; frequently apply yourself to almsgiving, whereby souls are freed from death. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.447.

CYPRIAN: We must not labor noisily nor boastfully. In the Gospel according to Matthew: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father, which sees in secret, shall render to you." Also in the same place: "When you give an alms, do not sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the streets and in the synagogues, that they may be glorified of men. Truly I say to you, they have fulfilled their reward." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.545.

6:3ff Theophilus of Antioch: And those that do good it teaches not to boast, lest they become men-pleasers. For it says: "**Do not let your left hand know what your right hand does**." *Theophilus to Autolycus*, *2.115*.

IRENAEUS: Because He knew that we would make a good use of our substance which we should possess by receiving it from another, He says, "He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none; and he that has meat, let him do likewise." And, "For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was naked and you clothed Me." And, "When you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." And we are proved to be righteous by whatsoever else we do well, redeeming, as it were, our property from strange hands. But thus do I say, "from strange hands," not as if the world were not God's possession, but that we have gifts of this sort, and receive them from others, in the same way as these men [the Israelites] had them from the Egyptians who didn't know God; and by means of these same do we erect in ourselves the tabernacle of God: for God dwells in those who act uprightly, as the Lord says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they, when you shall be put to flight, may

³⁰ 1 Cor 11:1-16

³¹ Lk 3:11

³² Mt 25:35-36

receive you into eternal tabernacles."³³ For whatsoever we acquired from unrighteousness when we were heathen, we are proved righteous, when we have become believers, by applying it to the Lord's advantage. *Against Heresies*, 1.504.

6:4 HERMAS: The rich man has much wealth, but in the things of the Lord he is poor, being distracted about his riches, and his confession and intercession with the Lord is very scanty; and even that which he gives is small and weak and has not power above. But when the rich man refreshes the poor, and assists him in his necessities, believing that what he does to the poor man will be able to find its reward with God-because the poor man is rich in intercession and confession, and his intercession has great power with God—then the rich man helps the poor in all things without hesitation; and the poor man, being helped by the rich, intercedes for him, giving thanks to God for him who bestows gifts upon him. And he still continues to interest himself zealously for the poor man, that his wants may be constantly supplied. For he knows that the intercession of the poor man is acceptable and influential with God. Both, accordingly, accomplish their work. The poor man makes intercession; a work in which he is rich, which he received from the Lord, and with which he recompenses the master who helps him. And the rich man, in like manner, unhesitatingly bestows upon the poor man the riches which he received from the Lord. And this is a great work, and acceptable before God, because he understands the object of his wealth, and has given to the poor of the gifts of the Lord, and rightly discharged his service to Him. Among men, however, the elm appears not to produce fruit, and they do not know nor understand that if a drought come, the elm, which contains water, nourishes the vine; and the vine, having an unfailing supply of water, yields double fruit both for itself and for the elm. So also poor men interceding with the Lord on behalf of the rich, increase their riches; and the rich, again, aiding the poor in their necessities, satisfy their souls. Both, therefore, are partners in the righteous work. He who does these things shall not be deserted by God, but shall be enrolled in the books of the living. Blessed are they who have riches, and who understand that they are from the Lord. The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.32.

IRENAEUS: Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created. For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God; as Solomon says: "He that has pity upon the poor, lends to the Lord." For God, who stands in need of nothing, takes our good works to Himself for this purpose, that He may grant us a reward of His own good things, as our Lord says: "Come, you blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry, and you gave Me food to eat: I was thirsty,

³³ Lk 16:9

³⁴ Prov 19:17

and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you clothed Me; sick, and you visited Me; in prison, and you came to Me."³⁵ Against Heresies, 1.486.

CYPRIAN: "Alms do deliver from death," and not, assuredly, from that death which once the blood of Christ extinguished, and from which the saving grace of baptism and of our Redeemer has delivered us, but from that which subsequently creeps in through sins. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.332.

CYPRIAN: Those who pray should not come to God with fruitless or naked prayers. . . . Holy Scripture instructs us, saying, "Prayer is good with fasting and almsgiving." For He who will give us in the day of judgment a reward for our labors and alms, is even in this life a merciful hearer of one who comes to Him in prayer associated with good works. Thus, for instance, Cornelius the centurion, when he prayed, had a claim to be heard. For he was in the habit of doing many alms-deeds towards the people, and of ever praying to God. To this man, when he prayed about the ninth hour, appeared an angel bearing testimony to his labors, and saying, "Cornelius, your prayers and your alms are gone up in remembrance before God." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.456.

LACTANTIUS: If a man were seized by some beast, and were to implore the aid of an armed man, whether they think that he ought to be helped or not? They are not so shameless as to deny that that ought to be done which humanity demands and requires. Also, if anyone were surrounded by fire, crushed by the downfall of a building, plunged in the sea, or carried away by a river, would they think it the duty of a man not to assist him? They themselves are not men if they think so; for no one can fail to be liable to dangers of this kind. Yes, truly, they will say that it is the part of a human being, and of a brave man too, to preserve one who was on the point of perishing. If, therefore, in casualties of this nature which imperil the life of man, they allow that it is the part of humanity to give aid, what reason is there why they should think that aid is to be withheld if a man should suffer from hunger, thirst, or cold? But though these things are naturally on an equality with those accidental circumstances, and need one and the same humanity, yet they make a distinction between these things, because they measure all things not by the truth itself, but by present utility. For they hope that those whom they rescue from peril will make a return of the favor to them. But because they do not hope for this in the case of the needy, they think that whatever they bestow on men of this kind is thrown away. . . .

However, we must exercise bounty in giving: nor is this kind of liberality altogether to be rejected; and we must give from our property to suitable persons when they are in need of assistance." What is the meaning of "suitable?"

³⁵ Mt 25:34

³⁶ Tob 4:10

³⁷ Tob 12:8

³⁸ Acts 10:2-4

GIVING ALMS -- MATTHEW 6:1-4

Assuredly those who are able to restore and give back the favor. . . . For we must not bestow our bounty on suitable objects, but as much as possible on unsuitable objects. For that will be done with justice, piety, and humanity, which you shall do without the hope of any return! *The Divine Institutes*, 7.174-175.

Prayer

Matthew 6:5-8

for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. EPH 6:18; 1 THESS 5:17; 1 TIM 2:8

^[6] But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. MK 13:33-35; 1 THES 5:17

^[7] But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

^[8] Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

SUMMARY: Do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded (THE DIDACHE). The Christian prays in thought during every hour, being by love allied to God (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). To explain the meaning of praying as the hypocrites, both Tertullian and Cyprian pointed to the story of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:1-10). Let all the faithful pray to God early in the morning when they awake from sleep (HIPPOLYTUS, CYPRIAN). God is the hearer of the heart, not of the voice (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN, CYPRIAN). Those who pray for the sake of human glory have received their reward (ORIGEN). The Lord has bidden us to pray in secret, which is best suited to faith, that we may know that God is everywhere present (TERTULLIAN, CYPRIAN). We ought not to make our prayers like heathen babbling or wordiness (ORIGEN).

In some quotations below, the early Christians make mention of the third,

sixth, and ninth hours (Tertullian, Cyprian), which were regarded sacred to the three persons of the Trinity (Tertullian, Cyprian). Also they were considered as the hours of the beginning, middle, and close of our Lord's passion (cf. Matthew 27:45-46; Mark 15:25, 33-34: Luke 23:44; John 19:14). Praying three times a day was also in accordance with Jewish tradition (cf. Daniel 6:10; Psalms 55:17; Acts 3:1; 10:9). Clearly these specified times of prayer are not commanded in Scripture, but these traditions are observed very early in Christian history. Tertullian acknowledged that nothing at all had been prescribed concerning the times of prayer, except "to pray at every time and every place" (cf. Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:8).

6:5ff CLEMENT OF ROME: Let us then also pray for those who have fallen into any sin, that meekness and humility may be given to them, so that they may submit, not to us, but to the will of God. For in this way they will secure a fruitful and perfect remembrance from us, with sympathy for them, both in our prayers to God, and our mention of them to the saints. *Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1.20.

Anonymous: So when he heard that his pursuers had come, he went down and spoke with them. And as those that were present marveled at his age and constancy, some of them said. "Was so much effort made to capture such a venerable man?" Immediately then, in that very hour, he ordered that something to eat and drink should be set before them, as much indeed as they cared for, while he besought them to allow him an hour to pray without disturbance. And on their giving him leave, he stood and prayed, being full of the grace of God, so that he could not cease for two full hours, to the astonishment of them that heard him, insomuch that many began to repent that they had come forth against so godly and venerable an old man. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.40*.

THE DIDACHE: Neither pray as the hypocrites; but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel. 7.379.

THE DIDACHE: But your prayers and alms and all your deeds so do, as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord. 7.381.

BARNABAS: You should not go to prayer with an evil conscience. *Epistle of Barnabas*, 1.149.

ARISTIDES: And to me there is no doubt but that the earth abides through the prayers of the Christians. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 9.278.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP: He [Polycarp] departed, therefore, to a country house not far distant from the city. There he stayed with a few [friends], engaged in nothing else night and day than praying for all men, and for the Churches throughout the world, according to his usual custom. *1.40*.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP: Polycarp besought them to allow him an hour to pray without disturbance. And on their giving him leave, he stood and prayed, being full of the grace of God, so that he could not cease for two full hours, to the astonishment of them that heard him, insomuch that many began to repent that they had come forth against so godly and venerable an old man. *1.40*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: For who of you does not know that the prayer of one who accompanies it with lamentation and tears, with the body prostrate, or with bended knees, propitiates God most of all? *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, 1.244*.

TATIAN: And whenever you pray, do not be as the hypocrites, who love to stand in the synagogues and in the corners of the marketplaces for prayers, that men may behold them. And verily I say to you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and fasten your door, and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. And whenever you pray, do not be babblers, as the heathen; for they think that by the abundance of their words they shall be heard. Then be not now like them: for your Father knows your request before you ask him. *The Diatessaron*, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: As it is befitting, before partaking of food, that we should bless the Creator of all; so also in drinking it is suitable to praise Him on partaking of His creatures.¹ . . . Finally, before partaking of sleep, it is a sacred duty to give thanks to God, having enjoyed His grace and love, and so go straight to sleep. *The Instructor*, *2.249*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Christian prays in thought during every hour, being by love allied to God. And first he will ask forgiveness of sins; and after, that he may sin no more; and further, the power of well-doing and of comprehending the whole creation and administration by the Lord, that, becoming pure in heart through the knowledge, which is by the Son of God, he may be initiated into the blessed vision face to face, having heard the Scripture which says, "Fasting with prayer is a good thing." The Stromata, 2.503.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And giving thanks always for all things to God,³ by righteous hearing and divine reading, by true investigation, by holy offering, by blessed prayer; lauding, hymning, blessing, praising, such a soul is never at any time separated from God. *The Stromata*, 2.506.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now we are commanded to reverence and to honor the same one, being persuaded that He is Word, Savior, and Leader, and by Him,

¹ 1 Tim 4:3-4

² Tob 12:8

³ Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18

the Father, not on special days, as some others, but doing this continually in our whole life, and in every way. Certainly the elect race justified by the precept says, "Seven times a day have I praised You." It is not in a specified place, or selected temple, or at certain festivals and on appointed days, but during his whole life, the Christian in every place, even if he be alone by himself, and wherever he has any of those who have exercised the like faith, honors God, that is, acknowledges his gratitude for the knowledge of the way to live. *The Stromata*, 2.532-533.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Prayer is, then, to speak more boldly, converse with God. Though whispering, consequently, and not opening the lips, we speak in silence, yet we cry inwardly. For God hears continually all the inward converse. So also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven, and set the feet in motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of the spirit directed towards the intellectual essence; and endeavoring to abstract the body from the earth, along with the discourse, raising the soul aloft, winged with longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the region of holiness, magnanimously despising the chain of the flesh. . . .

Now, if some assign definite hours for prayer—as, for example, the third, and sixth, and ninth—yet the Christian prays throughout his whole life, endeavoring by prayer to have fellowship with God. And, briefly, having reached to this, he leaves behind him all that is of no service, as having now received the perfection of the man that acts by love. But the distribution of the hours into a threefold division, honored with as many prayers, those are acquainted with, who know the blessed triad of the holy abodes. *The Stromata*, 2.534.

HIPPOLYTUS: Let all the faithful, whether men or women, when early in the morning they rise from their sleep and before they undertake any tasks, wash their hands and pray to God; and so they may go to their duties. *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus.*⁵

TERTULLIAN: Not merely from anger, but altogether from all mental disturbances, ought the exercise of prayer to be free, uttered from a spirit such as the Spirit to whom it is sent. For a defiled spirit cannot be acknowledged by a holy Spirit, nor a sad by a joyful, nor a fettered by a free. No one grants reception to his adversary: no one grants admittance except to his peer. But what reason is there in going to prayer with hands indeed washed, but the spirit foul? *On Prayer*, 3.685.

Tertullian: But we more commend our prayers to God when we pray with modesty and humility, with not even our hands too loftily elevated, but elevated

⁴ Ps 119:164

⁵ The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (4.35), tr. Burton Scott Easton (Cambridge University Press, 1934), 54. Used with permission.

temperately and becomingly; and not even our countenance over-boldly uplifted. For that publican who prayed with humility and dejection not merely in his supplication, but in his countenance too, went his way "more justified" than the shameless Pharisee. The sounds of our voice, likewise, should be subdued; else, if we are to be heard for our noise, how large windpipes should we need! But God is the hearer not of the voice, but of the heart. . . .

Do the ears of God wait for sound? How, then, could Jonah's prayer find way out to heaven from the depth of the whale's belly, through the entrails of so huge a beast; from the very abysses, through so huge a mass of sea? What superior advantage will they who pray too loudly gain, except that they annoy their neighbors? Nay, by making their petitions audible, what less error do they commit than if they were to pray in public? *On Prayer*, 3.686.

TERTULLIAN: In the matter of kneeling also prayer is subject to diversity of observance, through the act of some few who abstain from kneeling on the Sabbath [i.e., Saturday]; and since this dissension is particularly on its trial before the churches, the Lord will give His grace that the dissentients may either yield, or else indulge their opinion without offense to others. We, however (just as we have received), only on the day of the Lord's Resurrection ought to guard not only against kneeling, but every posture and office of solicitude; deferring even our businesses lest we give any place to the devil. Similarly, too, in the period of Pentecost; which period we distinguish by the same solemnity of exultation. But who would hesitate every day to prostrate himself before God, at least in the first prayer with which we enter on the daylight? At fasts, moreover, and stations, no prayer should be made without kneeling, and the remaining customary marks of humility; for then we are not only praying, but deprecating, and making satisfaction to God our Lord. Touching times of prayer nothing at all has been prescribed, except clearly "to pray at every time and every place."

But how "in every place," since we are prohibited from praying in public? In every place, he means, which opportunity or even necessity, may have rendered suitable: for that which was done by the apostles (who, in jail, in the audience of the prisoners, "began praying and singing to God")¹⁰ is not considered to have been done contrary to the precept; nor yet that which was done by Paul, who in the ship, in presence of all, "made thanksgiving to God."¹¹

Touching the time, however, the extrinsic observance of certain hours will not be unprofitable—those common hours, I mean, which mark the intervals of the day—the third, the sixth, the ninth—which we may find in the Scriptures to have been more solemn than the rest. The first infusion of the Holy Spirit into

⁶ Lk 18:9

⁷ Eph 4:27

⁸ Fasting on certain days was known as "stations."

⁹ Cf. Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Tim 2:8

¹⁰ Acts 16:25

¹¹ Acts 27:35

the congregated disciples took place at "the third hour." 12

Peter, on the day on which he experienced the vision of Universal Community (exhibited) in that small vessel, had ascended into the more lofty parts of the house, for prayer's sake "at the sixth hour." ¹³ The same apostle was going into the temple, with John, "at the ninth hour," when he restored the paralytic to his health. Albeit these practices stand simply without any precept for their observance, still it may be granted a good thing to establish some definite presumption, which may both add stringency to the admonition to pray, and may, as it were by a law, tear us out from our businesses unto such a duty; so that—what we read to have been observed by Daniel also, 15 in accordance, of course, with Israel's discipline—we pray at least not less than three times in the day, debtors as we are to Three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: of course, in addition to our regular prayers which are due, without any admonition, on the entrance of light and of night. But, in addition, it becomes believers not to take food, and not to go to the bath, before interposing a prayer; for the refreshments and nourishments of the spirit are to be held prior to those of the flesh, and things heavenly prior to things earthly. On Prayer, 3.689-690.

TERTULLIAN: In the commentary of Luke the third hour is demonstrated as an hour of prayer, about which hour it was that they who had received the initiatory gift of the Holy Spirit were held for drunkards; ¹⁶ and the sixth, at which Peter went up on the roof; and the ninth, at which they entered the temple: why should we not understand that, with absolutely perfect indifference, we must pray always, ¹⁷ and everywhere, and at every time; yet still that these three hours, as being more marked in things human—hours which divide the day, which distinguish businesses, which re-echo in the public ear—have likewise ever been of special solemnity in divine prayers? A persuasion which is sanctioned also by the corroborative fact of Daniel praying thrice in the day; ¹⁸ of course, through exception of certain stated hours, no other, moreover, than the more marked and subsequently apostolic hours—the third, the sixth, the ninth. And hence, accordingly, I shall affirm that Peter too had been led rather by ancient usage to the observance of the ninth hour, praying at the third specific interval, (the interval) of final prayer. *On Fasting, 4.108-109.* ¹⁹

ORIGEN: Of those who for human glory seem to do good to their neighbor, or pray in synagogues and at broadway corners, he says, "Truly I tell you, they have received their reward." For as the rich man according to Luke had good

¹² Acts 2:1-4, 14, 15

¹³ Acts 10:9

¹⁴ Acts 3:1

¹⁵ Dan 6:10; Ps 55:17

¹⁶ Acts 2:1-4, 13, 15

¹⁷ Eph 6:18; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17; Lk 18:1

¹⁸ Dan 6:10

¹⁹ Montanist work.

things in his human life,²⁰ being no longer capable of obtaining them after the present life because he had had them, so he that has his reward, as having sown not "unto the spirit" but "unto the flesh" shall "reap corruption" but shall not "reap eternal life" in his giving or in his prayers.²¹ . . .

There are always many who are rather pleasure-loving than God-loving in their seeming prayer who debauch prayer amid banqueting and carousing, standing in truth at the broadway corners and praying. For everyone who has made pleasure his rule of life has in his passion for the spacious fallen out of the narrow straitened way of Jesus Christ that is without a single bend and has no corner at all. *On Prayer*.²²

CYPRIAN: But let our speech and petition when we pray be under discipline, observing quietness and modesty. Let us consider that we are standing in God's sight. We must please the divine eyes both with the habit of body and with the measure of voice. For as it is characteristic of a shameless man to be noisy with his cries, so, on the other hand, it is fitting to the modest man to pray with moderated petitions. Moreover, in His teaching the Lord has bidden us to pray in secret—in hidden and remote places, in our very bed-chambers—which is best suited to faith, that we may know that God is everywhere present, and hears and sees all, and in the plenitude of His majesty penetrates even into hidden and secret places, as it is written, "I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off. If a man will hide himself in secret places, will I not then see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?"23 And again: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."24 And when we meet together with the brethren in one place, and celebrate divine sacrifices with God's priest, we ought to be mindful of modesty and discipline—not to throw abroad our prayers indiscriminately, with unsubdued voices, nor to cast to God with tumultuous wordiness a petition that ought to be commended to God by modesty; for God is the hearer, not of the voice, but of the heart. Nor need He be clamorously reminded, since He sees men's thoughts, as the Lord proves to us when He says, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" 25 And in another place: "And all the churches shall know that I am He that searches the hearts and minds."26

And this Hannah in the first book of Kings, who was a type of the Church, maintains and observes, in that she prayed to God not with clamorous petition, but silently and modestly, within the very recesses of her heart. She spoke with hidden prayer, but with manifest faith. She spoke not with her voice, but with her heart, because she knew that thus God hears; and she effectually obtained

²⁰ Lk 16:25

²¹ Gal 6:8

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xii.

²³ Jer 23:23-24

²⁴ Prov 15:3

²⁵ Mt 9:4

²⁶ Rev 2:23

what she sought, because she asked it with belief. Divine Scripture asserts this, when it says, "She spoke in her heart, and her lips moved, and her voice was not heard; and God did hear her." We read also in the Psalms, "Speak in your hearts, and in your beds, and be pierced." The Holy Spirit, moreover, suggests these same things by Jeremiah, and teaches, saying, "But in the heart ought God to be adored by you." ²⁹

And don't let the worshipper, beloved brethren, be ignorant in what manner the publican prayed with the Pharisee in the temple. Not with eyes lifted up boldly to heaven, nor with hands proudly raised; but beating his breast, and testifying to the sins shut up within, he implored the help of the divine mercy. And while the Pharisee was pleased with himself, this man who thus asked, the rather deserved to be sanctified, since he placed the hope of salvation not in the confidence of his innocence, because there is none who is innocent; but confessing his sinfulness he humbly prayed, and He who pardons the humble heard the petitioner. And these things the Lord records in His Gospel, saying, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, unjust, extortioners, adulterers, even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.'

"But the publican stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but beat upon his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and whosoever humbles himself shall be exalted." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.448-449.

CYPRIAN: And in discharging the duties of prayer, we find that the three children with Daniel, being strong in faith and victorious in captivity, observed the third, sixth, and ninth hour, as it were, for a sacrament of the Trinity, which in the last times had to be manifested. For both the first hour in its progress to the third shows forth the consummated number of the Trinity, and also the fourth proceeding to the sixth declares another Trinity; and when from the seventh the ninth is completed, the perfect Trinity is numbered every three hours, which spaces of hours the worshippers of God in time past having spiritually decided on, made use of for determined and lawful times for prayer. And subsequently the thing was manifested, that these things were of old Sacraments, in that anciently righteous men prayed in this manner. For upon the disciples at the third hour the Holy Spirit descended, who fulfilled the grace of the Lord's promise. Moreover, at the sixth hour, Peter, going up unto the housetop, was instructed as well by the sign as by the word of God admonishing him to receive all to the grace of salvation, whereas he was previously doubtful of the receiving of the Gentiles to baptism. And from the sixth hour to the ninth, the Lord, being

²⁷ 1 Sam 1:13

²⁸ Ps 4:4

²⁹ Bar 6:6

³⁰ Lk 18:10

crucified, washed away our sins by His blood; and that He might redeem and quicken us, He then accomplished His victory by His passion.

But for us, beloved brethren, besides the hours of prayer observed of old, both the times and the sacraments have now increased in number. For we must also pray in the morning, that the Lord's resurrection may be celebrated by morning prayer. And this formerly the Holy Spirit pointed out in the Psalms, saying, "My King, and my God, because unto You will I cry; O Lord, in the morning will You hear my voice; in the morning will I stand before You, and will look up to You."³¹ And again, the Lord speaks by the mouth of the prophet: "Early in the morning shall they watch for me, saying, 'Let us go, and return to the Lord our God."³² Also at the sunsetting and at the decline of day, of necessity we must pray again. For since Christ is the true sun and the true day, as the worldly sun and worldly day depart, when we pray and ask that light may return to us again, we pray for the advent of Christ, which shall give us the grace of everlasting light. Moreover, the Holy Spirit in the Psalms manifests that Christ is called the day. "The stone," He says, "which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; let us walk and rejoice in it."33 Also the prophet Malachi testifies that He is called the Sun, when he says, "But to you that fear the name of the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and there is healing in His wings."34 But if in the Holy Scriptures the true sun and the true day is Christ, there is no hour excepted for Christians wherein God ought not frequently and always to be worshipped; so that we who are in Christ —that is, in the true Sun and the true Day—should be ready throughout the entire day in petitions, and should pray; and when, by the law of the world, the revolving night, recurring in its alternate changes, succeeds, there can be no harm arising from the darkness of night to those who pray, because the children of light have the day even in the night. For when is he without light who has light in his heart? Or when has not he the sun and the day, whose Sun and Day is Christ?

Let us not, then, who are in Christ—that is, always in the light—cease from praying even during night. *The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.456-457*.

6:6ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And if "**you pray in the closet**," as the Lord taught, "to worship in spirit," your management will no longer be solely occupied about the house, but also about the soul, what must be bestowed on it, and how, and how much; and what must be laid aside and treasured up in it; and when it ought to be produced, and to whom. *The Stromata*, 2.307

TERTULLIAN: And so, blessed brethren, let us consider His heavenly wisdom:

³¹ Ps 5:2

³² Hos 6:1

³³ Ps 118:22-24

³⁴ Mal 4:2

³⁵ Jn 4:23

first, touching the precept of praying secretly, whereby He exacted man's faith, that he should be confident that the sight and hearing of Almighty God are present beneath roofs, and extend even into the secret place; and required modesty in faith, that it should offer its religious homage to Him alone, whom it is believed to see and to hear everywhere. Further, since wisdom succeeded in the following precept, let it in like manner appertain to faith, and the modesty of faith, that we do not think that the Lord must be approached with a train of words, who, we are certain, takes unsolicited foresight for His own. And yet that very brevity—and let this make for the third grade of wisdom—is supported on the substance of a great and blessed interpretation, and is as diffuse in meaning as it is compressed in words. For it has embraced not only the special duties of prayer, be it veneration of God or petition for man, but almost every discourse of the Lord, every record of His Discipline; so that, in fact, in the Lord's Prayer is comprised an epitome of the whole Gospel. *On Prayer*, 3.681.

6:7ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Universally, God knows those who are and those who are not worthy of good things; thus He gives to each what is suitable. Therefore to those that are unworthy, though they ask often, He will not give; but He will give to those who are worthy. ³⁶ *The Stromata*, 2.534.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: God does not wait for talkative tongues, as interpreters among men, but knows absolutely the thoughts of all; and what the voice intimates to us, that our thought, which even before the creation He knew would come into our mind, speaks to God. Prayer, then, may be uttered without the voice, by concentrating the whole spiritual nature within on expression by the mind, in undistracted turning towards God. *The Stromata*, 2.535.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: A Christian does not use wordy prayer by his mouth; having learned to ask of the Lord what is requisite. In every place, therefore, but not ostensibly and visibly to the multitude, he will pray. But while engaged in walking, in conversation while in silence, while engaged in reading and in works according to reason, he in every mood prays. If he but form the thought in the secret chamber of his soul, and call on the Father "with unspoken groaning," He is near, and is at his side, while yet speaking. Inasmuch as there are but three ends of all action, he does everything for its excellence and utility; but doing anything for the sake of pleasure, he leaves to those who pursue the common life. *The Stromata*. 2.537.

ORIGEN: When we pray let us not babble but use godly speech. We babble when, without scrutiny of ourselves or of the devotional words we are sending up, we speak of the corrupt in deed or word or thought, things which are mean and reprehensible and alien to the incorruptibility of the Lord. He, then, that babbles

³⁶ Cf. Jas 4:3

³⁷ Rom 8:26

in prayer is in a synagogic disposition worse than any yet described and in a harder way than those who are at broadway corners, preserving not as much as a vestige even of acting in goodness.

For according to the passage in the Gospel only heathen babble, being quite insensible of great or heavenly petitions and therefore sending up every prayer for the material and the external. To a babbling heathen, then, is he like who asks for things below from the Lord who dwells in heaven and above the heights of the heavens.

He who is wordy also seems to be a babbler and he who babbles to be wordy. . . .

Therefore no one shall escape sin as the result of wordiness, and no one who thinks to be heard as the result of wordiness can be heard. For this reason we ought not to make our prayers like heathen babbling or wordiness or other practice after the likeness of the serpent, for the God of saints, being a Father, knows of what things His children have need, since such things are worthy of Fatherly knowledge.

He who does not know God does not know the things of God either—does not know the things of which he has need, for the things of which he thinks he has need are mistaken. But he who has contemplated the better and diviner things of which he is in need shall obtain the objects of his contemplation which are known by God and which have been known by the Father even before asking. After these remarks upon the preface to the prayer in the Gospel according to Matthew, let us now proceed to consider what the prayer sets forth. *On Prayer*.³⁸

6:8 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: God is not, then, possessed of human form, so as to hear; nor does He need senses, as the Stoics have decided, "especially hearing and sight; for He could never otherwise apprehend." But the susceptibility of the air, and the intensely keen perception of the angels, and the power which reaches the soul's consciousness, by ineffable power and without sensible hearing, know all things at the moment of thought. *The Stromata*, 2.533.

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xii.

The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:9-13

^[9] After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ^{LK 11:2}

SUMMARY: In the Lord's prayer is comprised an epitome of the whole Gospel (Tertullian). The Lord teaches us of the Father who is in heaven (Irenaeus). It is indisputable then that the Lord is the Son of the Creator (Clement of Alexandria). The Father is always the Father, since the Son is always with Him, on account of whom He is called the Father (Alexander of Alexandria). The Father is above all (Hippolytus). We are not permitted to pray to any other (Origen). When we call God Father, we ought to act as God's children (Cyprian). What, moreover, does God will, but that we should walk according to His discipline? (Tertullian). He who prays for the coming of the kingdom of God prays for rising and fruit bearing and perfecting of God's kingdom within him (Origen). We ask that the kingdom of God may be set forth to us, even as we also ask that His name may be sanctified in us (Cyprian). Give us today our daily "needful bread" (The Didache) or "the food of today" (Tatian). We are enjoined to ask what is sufficient for the preservation of the substance of the body: not luxury (Hippolytus). Tertullian, Origen and Cyprian also believed

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. LK 11:2

^[11] Give us this day our daily bread. LK 11:3

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. LK 11:4

 $^{^{[13]}}$ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. LK $^{11:4}$

Christ is the "daily bread" for Christians. It was not only in words, but in deeds also, that the Lord taught us to pray (CYPRIAN). He has taught us to say in prayer, "And forgive us our debts;" since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments (IRENAEUS). A Christian never remembers those who have sinned against him, but forgives them (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). The Lord knew Himself to be the only guiltless One, and so He teaches that we beg "to have our debts remitted us" (TERTULLIAN). Let us pray for nothing else but pardon for our sins, even though we have none (LACTANTIUS). "Lead us not into temptation:" that is, do not allow us to be led into it, by him who tempts; but far be the thought that the Lord should seem to tempt (Tertullian). We ought therefore to pray, not that we be not tempted that is impossible—but that we would not be encompassed by temptation (ORIGEN). It is shown that the adversary can do nothing against us except God shall have previously permitted it (CYPRIAN). And when we say, "Deliver us from evil," there remains nothing further which ought to be asked (CYPRIAN). Three times in a day thus pray (THE DIDACHE). For extended discussion, see ORIGEN (On Prayer, xii-xix), TERTULLIAN (3.681-684), and CYPRIAN (5.447-457).

6:9ff The Didache: Thus pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily (needful) bread, and forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (or, evil); for Yours is the power and the glory for ever." Three times in the day thus pray. 7.379.

IRENAEUS: That God is the Creator of the world is accepted even by those very persons who in many ways speak against Him, and yet acknowledge Him, styling Him the Creator, and an angel, not to mention that all the Scriptures call out to the same effect, and the Lord teaches us of this Father who is in heaven, and no other. *Against Heresies*, 1.369.

TATIAN: Now pray after this manner: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us the food of today. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgave those that trespassed against us. And do not bring us into temptations, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. The Diatessaron, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: And the Lord says in His prayer, "Our Father in heaven." And the heavens belong to Him, who created the world. It is indisputable, then, that the Lord is the Son of the Creator. *The Instructor*, 2.228.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "But sanctify the Lord Christ," he says, "in your

hearts." For so you have in the Lord's prayer, "Hallowed be Your name." *Fragments*, 2.572.

TERTULLIAN: The Father willed that the Son should be regarded as on earth, and Himself in heaven; to which the Son also Himself looked up, and prayed, and made supplication of the Father; to whom also He taught us to raise ourselves, and pray, "Our Father in heaven," etc.,—although, indeed, He is everywhere present. This heaven the Father willed to be His own throne; while He made the Son to be "a little lower than the angels," by sending Him down to the earth, but meaning at the same time to "crown Him with glory and honor," even by taking Him back to heaven. *Against Praxeas*, 3.619.

TERTULLIAN: In the Lord's Prayer is comprised an epitome of the whole Gospel....

The prayer begins with a testimony to God, and with the reward of faith, when we say, "Our Father in the heavens;" for (in so saying), we at once pray to God, and commend faith, whose reward this appellation is. It is written, "To them who believed on Him He gave power to be called sons of God." However, our Lord very frequently proclaimed God as a Father to us; more than that, even gave a precept "that we call no one on earth father, but the Father whom we have in the heavens:" and so, in thus praying, we are likewise obeying the precept. Happy are they who recognize their Father! This is the reproach that is brought against Israel, to which the Spirit attests heaven and earth, saying, "I have begotten sons, and they have not recognized me." Moreover, in saying "Father," we also call Him "God." That appellation is one both of filial duty and of power. Again, in the Father the Son is invoked; "for I," He says, "and the Father are One." . . .

When we say, "Hallowed be Your name," we pray this; that it may be hallowed in us who are in Him, as well in all others for whom the grace of God is still waiting; that we may obey this precept, too, in "praying for all", 8 even for our personal enemies. 9 And therefore with suspended utterance, not saying, "Hallowed be it in us," we say,—"in all." *On Prayer, 3.681-682*.

HIPPOLYTUS: I shall not indeed speak of two Gods, but of one; of two Persons however, and of a third economy (disposition), namely, the grace of the Holy Ghost. For the Father indeed is One, but there are two Persons, because there is

¹ Cf. 1 Pet 3:15

² Ps 8:5

³ Ps 8:5

⁴ Jn 1:12

⁵ Mt 23:9

⁶ Isa 1:2

⁷ In 10:30

^{8 1} Tim 2:1

⁹ Mt 5:44

also the Son; and then there is the third, the Holy Spirit. The Father decrees, the Word executes, and the Son is manifested, through whom the Father is believed on. The economy of harmony is led back to one God; for God is One. It is the Father who commands, and the Son who obeys, and the Holy Spirit who gives understanding: the Father who is above all, and the Son who is through all, and the Holy Spirit who is in all. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit. *Fragments*, *5.228*.

ORIGEN: Having thus learned to call these beings "angels" from their employments, we find that because they are divine they are sometimes termed "god" in the sacred Scriptures, 10 but not so that we are commanded to honor and worship in place of God those who minister to us, and bear to us His blessings. For every prayer, and supplication, and intercession, and thanksgiving, is to be sent up to the Supreme God through the High Priest, who is above all the angels, the living Word and God. And to the Word Himself shall we also pray and make intercessions, and offer thanksgivings and supplications to Him, if we have the capacity of distinguishing between the proper use and abuse of prayer.

For to invoke angels without having obtained a knowledge of their nature greater than is possessed by men, would be contrary to reason. But, conformably to our hypothesis, let this knowledge of them, which is something wonderful and mysterious, be obtained. Then this knowledge, making known to us their nature, and the offices to which they are individually appointed, will not permit us to pray with confidence to any other than to the Supreme God, who is sufficient for all things, and that through our Savior the Son of God. *Against Celsus*, 4.544-545.

ORIGEN: Pray to the Word of God (who is able to heal), and still more to His Father. *Against Celsus*, 4.548.

ORIGEN: Celsus [a pagan critic] forgets that he is addressing Christians, who pray to God alone through Jesus. *Against Celsus*, 4.653.

ORIGEN: Yet if we offer thanksgiving to men who are saints, how much more should we give thanks to Christ, who has under the Father's will conferred so many benefactions upon us? Yes and intercede with Him as did Stephen when he said, "Lord, set not this sin against them." In imitation of the father of the lunatic we shall say, "I request, Lord, have mercy" either on my son, or myself, or as the case may be. But if we accept prayer in its full meaning, we may not ever pray to any begotten being, not even to Christ himself, but only to the God and Father of All to whom our Savior both prayed himself, as we have already instanced, and teaches us to pray.

¹⁰ Ps 86:8; 96:4; 136:2

¹¹ Acts 7:60

¹² Mt 17:15

For when He has heard one say. "Teach you us to pray," He does not teach men to pray to Himself but to the Father saying, "**Our Father in heaven**," and so on. For if, as is shown elsewhere, the Son is other than the Father in being and essence, prayer is to be made either to the Son and not the Father or to both or to the Father alone.

That prayer to the Son and not the Father is most out of place and only to be suggested in defiance of manifest truth, one and all will admit. In prayer to both it is plain that we should have to offer our claims in plural form, and in our prayers say, "Grant you both, Bless you both, Supply you both, Save you both," or the like, which is self-evidently wrong and also incapable of being shown by anyone to stand in the scriptures as spoken by any.

It remains, accordingly, to pray to God alone, the Father of All, not however apart from the High Priest who has been appointed by the Father with swearing of an oath, according to the words He has sworn and shall not repent, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." In thanksgiving to God, therefore, during their prayers, saints acknowledge His favors through Christ Jesus.

Just as the man who is scrupulous about prayer ought not to pray to one who himself prays but to the Father upon whom our Lord Jesus has taught us to call in our prayers, so we are not to offer any prayer to the Father apart from Him. He clearly sets this forth himself when He says, "Verily, verily, I tell you, whatsoever you may ask of my Father He shall give you in my house. Until but now you have not asked aught in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled." 15 On Prayer. 16

ORIGEN: "Our Father in Heaven." It deserves a somewhat careful observation of the so-called Old Testament to discover whether it is possible to find anywhere in it a prayer of one who addresses God as Father. For though I have made examination to the best of my ability, I have up to the present failed to find one. I do not say that God is not spoken of as Father or that accounted believers in God are not called sons of God, but that I have not yet found in prayer that confidence in calling God Father which the Savior has proclaimed.

That God is spoken of as Father and those who have waited on God's word as sons, may be seen in many places, as in Deuteronomy, "You have forsaken God your parent and forgotten God your nourisher," and again, "Is He not your Father himself that got you and made you and created you?" and again, "Sons who have not faith in them." And in Isaiah, "I have nourished and brought up

¹³ Lk 11:1

¹⁴ Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 7:17

¹⁵ Jn 14:13-14

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), x.

¹⁷ Cf. Deut 32:18

¹⁸ Deut 32:6

children, and they have rebelled against me;"¹⁹ and in Malachi, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear?"²⁰So then, even though God is termed Father and their sons who have been begotten by reason of their faith in Him, yet sure and unchangeable sonship is not to be seen in the ancient people.

The very passages I have cited since the subjection of those so-called sons, since according to the apostle "the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." But the fullness of time is in the sojourn of our Lord Jesus Christ, when they who desire receive adoption as sons, as Paul teaches in the words, "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery unto fear, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, wherein we cry 'Abba Father;" and as it is in the Gospel according to John, "To as many as received Him He gave authority to become children of God if believers on His name; and it is by reason of this Spirit of adoption as sons, we learn in the catholic Epistle of John regarding the begotten of God, that "Everyone that is begotten of God does no sin because His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God."

And yet if we think of the meaning of the words which are written in Luke, "When you pray say: 'Father,'"²⁶ . . . we shall hesitate to address this expression to Him unless we have become genuine sons in case, in addition to our other sins, we should also become liable to a charge of impiety. My meaning is as follows. In the first Epistle to Corinthians Paul says, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' save in a holy spirit, and no one that speaks in God's spirit says 'cursed be Jesus' calling the same thing a holy spirit and God's spirit."²⁷ What is meant by speaking in a holy spirit of Jesus as Lord is not quite clear, as countless actors and numbers of heterodox people, and at times even demons conquered by the power in the name, utter the expression.²⁸

No one therefore will venture to declare that anyone of these calls Jesus 'Lord' in a holy spirit. For the same reason, indeed, they could not be shown to call Jesus Lord at all, since they alone call Jesus Lord who express it from inward disposition in service to the word of God and in proclaiming no other Lord than Him in all their conduct. And if it be such who say Jesus is Lord, it may be that everyone who sins, in that he curses the divine Word through his transgression, has through his actions called out, "Cursed be Jesus."

¹⁹ Isa 1:2

²⁰ Mal 1:6

²¹ Gal 4:1-2

²² Rom 8:15

²³ In 1:12.

²⁴ That is, "universal" or including all Christians (not to be confused with Roman Catholic).

²⁵ 1 Jn 3:9

²⁶ Lk 11:2

²⁷ 1 Cor 12:3

²⁸ Mt 7:22

And accordingly, as the one type of man says "Jesus is Lord," and the man of opposite disposition "Cursed be Jesus," "so everyone that has been begotten of God and does not sin" because he is partaker of God's seed which turns him from all sin, says through his conduct "Our Father in Heaven," the spirit himself witnessing with their spirit that they are children of God and heirs to Him and joint heirs with Christ, since as suffering with Him they reasonably hope with Him also to be glorified. But in order that theirs may be no one-sided utterance of the words "Our Father," in addition to their actions they have a heart—a fountain and source of good actions—believing unto righteousness, in harmony with which their mouth makes acknowledgment unto salvation. . . .

Let us, therefore, not think that it is words we are taught to say in any appointed season of prayer. On the contrary, if we understand our former consideration of prayer without ceasing, let our whole life of prayer without ceasing speak the words "Our Father in the Heavens," having its commonwealth in no wise on earth but in every way in heaven, which is God's throne because of the foundation of the kingdom of God in all who wear the image of the Heavenly One and therefore become heavenly. When the Father of saints is said to be in the heavens, we are not to suppose that He is circumscribed by material form and dwells in heaven. *On Prayer*.³¹

ORIGEN: "Hallowed be Your name." Although this may represent either that the object of prayer has not yet come to pass, or after its attainment, that it is not permanent in which case the request is for its retention; the language in this instance makes it plain that it is with the implication that the name of the Father has not yet been hallowed, that we are bidden—according to Matthew and Luke, that is—to say "Hallowed be Your Name." Then how, one might say, should a man request the hallowing of God's name as though not hallowed? Let us understand what the Father's name, and what the hallowing of it, means. A name is a summary designation descriptive of the peculiar character of the thing named.

Thus the Apostle Paul has a certain peculiar character, partly of soul which is accordingly of a certain kind, partly of intellect which is accordingly contemplative of certain things, and partly of body which is accordingly of a certain kind. It is the peculiar in these characteristics, the unique combination—for there is not another being identical with Paul—that is indicated by means of the appellation Paul. In the case of men, however, whose peculiar characteristics are changed, their names also by a sound usage are changed according to scripture.

When the character of Abram was transformed, he was called Abraham; when that of Simon he was named Peter, and when that of Saul the persecutor of Jesus, he was designated Paul. But in the case of God, inasmuch as He is himself

²⁹ 1 Jn 3:9

³⁰ Rom 8:16-18

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xiii.

ever unchangeable and unalterable, the proper name which even He may be said to bear is ever one, that mentioned in Exodus, "He that is," or the like. Since therefore, though we all have some notion of God, conceiving of Him in various ways, but not all of what He is, for few and, be it said, fewer than few are they who comprehend His complete holiness—we are with good reason taught to attain to a holy conception of Him in order that we may see His holiness as creator, provider, judge, elector, abandoner, acceptor, rejector, rewarder and punisher of each according to his desert. 33

For it is in such and similar terms that God's peculiar character may be said to be sketched which I take to be the meaning of the expression, God's name according to the scriptures in Exodus: "Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;" in Deuteronomy: "Be my utterance awaited as rain: as dew let my words descend, as showers upon herbage and as moisture upon grass: for I have called on the Lord's name;" and in Psalms: "They shall remember your name in every generation." On Prayer. They shall remember your name in every generation."

CYPRIAN: Let each one of us pray to God not only for himself, but for all the brethren, even as the Lord has taught us to pray, when He bids to each one, not private prayer, but enjoined them, when they prayed, to pray for all in common prayer and concordant supplication. If the Lord shall behold us humble and peaceable; if He will see us joined one with another; if He will see us fearful concerning His anger; if corrected and amended by the present tribulation, He will maintain us safe from the disturbances of the enemy. Discipline has preceded; pardon also will follow.

Let us only, without ceasing to ask, and with full faith that we will receive, in simplicity and unanimity beseech the Lord, entreating not only with groaning but with tears. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.287.

CYPRIAN: He, among the rest of His salutary admonitions and divine precepts wherewith He counsels His people for their salvation, Himself also gave a form of praying—Himself advised and instructed us what we should pray for. He who made us to live, also taught us to pray, with that same kindness, that is to say, wherewith He has condescended to give and confer all things else; in order that while we speak to the Father in that prayer and supplication which the Son has taught us, we may be the more easily heard. Already He had foretold that the hour was coming "when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth;" and He thus fulfilled what He before promised, so that we who

³² Cf. Exod 3:14

³³ That is, merit.

³⁴ Exod 20:7

³⁵ Deut 32:2

³⁶ Ps 45:17

Origen, *On Prayer*, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xiv.

³⁸ In 4:23

by His sanctification have received the Spirit and truth, may also by His teaching worship truly and spiritually. For what can be a more spiritual prayer than that which was given to us by Christ, by whom also the Holy Spirit was given to us? What praying to the Father can be more truthful than that which was delivered to us by the Son who is the Truth, out of His own mouth? So that to pray otherwise than He taught is not ignorance alone, but also sin; since He Himself has established, and said, "You reject the commandments of God, that you may keep your own traditions." ³⁹

Let us therefore, brethren beloved, pray as God our Teacher has taught us. It is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ. Let the Father acknowledge the words of His Son when we make our prayer, and let Him also who dwells within in our breast Himself dwell in our voice. And since we have Him as an Advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when as sinners we petition on behalf of our sins, put forward the words of our Advocate. For since He says, that "whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name, He will give us," how much more effectually do we obtain what we ask in Christ's name, if we ask for it in His own prayer! . . .

Before all things, the Teacher of peace and the Master of unity would not have prayer to be made singly and individually, as for one who prays to pray for himself alone. For we do not say, "My Father in heaven," nor, "Give me this day my daily bread;" nor does each one ask that only his own debt should be forgiven him; nor does he request for himself alone that he may not be led into temptation, and delivered from evil. Our prayer is public and common; and when we pray, we do not pray for one, but for the whole people, because we the whole people are one. The God of peace and the Teacher of concord, who taught unity, willed that one should thus pray for all, even as He Himself bore us all in one. . . .

"After this manner," He says, "pray: Our Father in heaven." The new man, born again and restored to his God by His grace, says "Father," in the first place because he has now begun to be a son. "He came," He says, "to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name." The man, therefore, who has believed in His name, and has become God's son, ought from this point to begin both to give thanks and to profess himself God's son, by declaring that God is his Father in heaven; and also to bear witness, among the very first words of his new birth, that he has renounced an earthly and carnal father, and that he has begun to know as well as to have as a father only Him who is in heaven, as it is written: "They who say to their father and their mother, I have not known you, and who have not acknowledged their own children; these have observed Your precepts and have kept Your

³⁹ Mk 7:9

⁴⁰ Jn 16:23

⁴¹ Jn 1:11-12

covenant."⁴² Also the Lord in His Gospel has bidden us to call "no man our father upon earth, because there is to us one Father, who is in heaven."⁴³ And to the disciple who had made mention of his dead father, He replied, "Let the dead bury their dead;"⁴⁴ for he had said that his father was dead, while the Father of believers is living.

Nor ought we, beloved brethren, only to observe and understand that we should call Him Father who is in heaven; but we add to it, and say our Father, that is, the Father of those who believe—of those who, being sanctified by Him, and restored by the nativity of spiritual grace, have begun to be sons of God. A word this, moreover, which rebukes and condemns the Jews, who not only unbelievingly despised Christ, who had been announced to them by the prophets, and sent first to them, but also cruelly put Him to death; and these cannot now call God their Father, since the Lord confounds and confutes them, saying, "You are born of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. For he was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him."45 And by Isaiah the prophet God cries in wrath, "I have begotten and brought up children; but they have despised me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel has not known me, and my people have not understood me. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with sins, a wicked seed, corrupt children! You have forsaken the Lord; you have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger."46 In repudiation of these, we Christians, when we pray, say "Our Father;" because He has begun to be ours, and has ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have forsaken Him. Nor can a sinful people be a son; but the name of sons is attributed to those to whom remission of sins is granted, and to them immortality is promised anew, in the words of our Lord Himself: "Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant does not abide in the house forever, but the son abides forever."47

But how great is the Lord's indulgence! How great His condescension and plenteousness of goodness towards us, seeing that He has wished us to pray in the sight of God in such a way as to call God Father, and to call ourselves sons of God, even as Christ is the Son of God,—a name which none of us would dare to venture on in prayer, unless He Himself had allowed us thus to pray! We ought then, beloved brethren, to remember and to know, that when we call God Father, we ought to act as God's children; so that in the measure in which we find pleasure in considering God as a Father, He might also be able to find pleasure in us. . . .

After this we say, "Hallowed be Your name;" not that we wish for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beseech of Him that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself

⁴² Deut 39:9

⁴³ Mk 23:9

⁴⁴ Mt 8:22

⁴⁵ In 8:44

⁴⁶ Isa 1:2-4

⁴⁷ In 8:34-35

sanctifies? Well, because He says, "Be holy, even as I am holy," 48 we ask and entreat, that we who were sanctified in baptism may continue in that which we have begun to be. And this we daily pray for; for we have need of daily sanctification, that we who daily fall away may wash out our sins by continual sanctification. And what the sanctification is which is conferred upon us by the condescension of God, the apostle declares, when he says, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor deceivers, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such indeed were you; but you are washed; but you are justified; but you are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God."49 He says that we are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God. 50 We pray that this sanctification may abide in us and because our Lord and Judge warns the man that was healed and quickened by Him, to sin no more lest a worse thing happen to him, 51 we make this supplication in our constant prayers, we ask this day and night, that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.448-450.

CYPRIAN: It was not only in words, but in deeds also, that the Lord taught us to pray, Himself praying frequently and beseeching, and thus showing us, by the testimony of His example, what it behoved us to do, as it is written, "But Himself departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." And again: "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." But if He prayed who was without sin, how much more ought sinners to pray; and if He prayed continually, watching through the whole night in uninterrupted petitions, how much more ought we to watch nightly in constantly repeated prayer!

But the Lord prayed and besought not for Himself—for why should He who was guiltless pray on His own behalf?—but for our sins, as He Himself declared, when He said to Peter, "Behold, Satan has desired that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith does not fail." And subsequently He beseeches the Father for all, saying, "Neither do I pray for these alone, but for them also which will believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us." The Lord's loving-kindness, no less than His mercy, is great in respect of our salvation, in that, not content to redeem us with His blood, He in

⁴⁸ Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:15-17

⁴⁹ 1 Cor 6:9

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 6:11

⁵¹ Jn 5:14

⁵² Mk 1:35; Lk 6:16

⁵³ Lk 6:12

⁵⁴ Lk 22:31-32

⁵⁵ Jn 17:20-21

addition also prayed for us. Behold now what was the desire of His petition, that like as the Father and Son are one, so also we should abide in absolute unity; so that from this it may be understood how greatly he sins who divides unity and peace, since for this same thing even the Lord besought, desirous doubtless that His people should thus be saved and live in peace, since He knew that discord cannot come into the kingdom of God. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.455.

ARCHELAUS: The Lord Jesus taught men to pray: "When you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven;" and again, "Pray to your Father which is in secret." *The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, 6.194.

ALEXANDER OF ALEXANDRIA: The Father is always the Father. But He is the Father, since the Son is always with Him, on account of whom He is called the Father. Therefore, since the Son is always with Him, the Father is always perfect, being destitute of nothing as regards good; who, not in time, nor after an interval, nor from things which are not, has begotten His only begotten Son. Epistles on the Arian Heresy and the Deposition of Arius, 6.293

6:10ff Anonymous: Polycarp's pursuers then, along with horsemen, and taking the youth with them, went forth at supper-time on the day of the preparation ⁵⁶ with their usual weapons, as if going out against a robber. ⁵⁷ And being come about evening to the place where he was, they found him lying down in the upper room of a certain little house, from which he might have escaped into another place; but he refused, saying, "The will of God be done." *The Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.40*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The earthly Church is the image of the heavenly, as we pray also "that the will of God may be done upon the earth as in heaven." "Putting on, therefore, bowels of mercy, gentleness, humbleness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if one have a quarrel against any man; as also Christ has forgiven us, so also let us. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are called in one body; and be thankful." The Stromata, 2.421.

TERTULLIAN: According to this model, we subjoin, "Your will be done in the heavens and on the earth;" not that there is some power withstanding to prevent God's will being done, and we pray for Him the successful achievement of His will; but we pray for His will to be done in all. . . . What, moreover, does God will, but that we should walk according to His Discipline?⁵⁹ We make petition, then, that He supply us with the substance of His will, and the capacity

⁵⁶ Friday

⁵⁷ Cf. Mt 26:55

⁵⁸ Col 3:12-15

⁵⁹ 1 Pet 2:15

to do it, that we may be saved both in the heavens and on earth; because the sum of His will is the salvation of them whom He has adopted. 10 . . . The Lord also, when He had wished to demonstrate to us, even in His own flesh, the flesh's infirmity, by the reality of suffering, said, "Father, remove Your cup;" and remembering Himself, added, "not my will, but Your will be done. 16 Himself was the Will and the Power of the Father: and yet, for the demonstration of the patience which was due, He gave Himself up to the Father's Will.

"Your kingdom come" has also reference to that whereto "Your will be done" refers—in us, that is. For when does God not reign, in whose hand is the heart of all kings?⁶² But whatever we wish for ourselves we predict for Him, and to Him we attribute what from Him we expect. And so, if the manifestation of the Lord's kingdom pertains to the will of God and to our anxious expectation, how do some pray for some prolonging of the age, when the kingdom of God, which we pray may arrive, tends to the consummation of the age? Our wish is, that our reign be hastened, not our servitude protracted. Even if it had not been prescribed in the Lord's Prayer that we should ask for the advent of the kingdom, we should, unbidden, have sent forth that cry, hastening toward the realization of our hope. The souls of the martyrs beneath the altar cry in jealousy to the Lord, "How long, Lord, do You not avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?"63 for, of course, their avenging is regulated by the end of the age. Nay, Lord, Your kingdom come with all speed,—the prayer of Christians, the confusion of the heathen, the exultation of angels, for the sake of which we suffer, rather, for the sake of which we pray! On Prayer, 3.682-683.

ORIGEN: "Your Kingdom Come." According to the word of our Lord and Savior, the Kingdom of God does not come observably, nor shall men say, "Lo it is here," or "Lo is it there," but the Kingdom of God is within us;⁶⁴ for the utterance is exceedingly near in our mouth and in our heart.⁶⁵ It is therefore plain that he who prays for the coming of the kingdom of God prays with good reason for rising and fruit bearing and perfecting of God's kingdom within him.

For every saint is ruled over by God and obeys the spiritual laws of God, and conducts himself like a well-ordered city; and the Father is present with him, and Christ rules together with the Father in the perfected soul, according to the saying that I mentioned shortly before: "We will come unto him and make abode with him." God's kingdom I understand the blessed condition of the mind and the settled order of wise reflection; by Christ's kingdom the issue of words of salvation to their hearers and the practice of acts of righteousness and the other excellences; for the son of God is word and righteousness. . . .

⁶⁰ Jn 6:39

⁶¹ Lk 22:42

⁶² Ps 21:1

⁶³ Rev 6:10

⁶⁴ Lk 17:20-21

⁶⁵ Rom 10:6-9

⁶⁶ Jn 14:23

We are wayfaring toward perfection if we forget the things behind, pressing on toward those before us. ⁶⁷ The kingdom of God within us will therefore be consummated in us as we advance without ceasing, when, the saying in the Apostle is fulfilled, that Christ, His enemies all made subject to Him, shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father that God may be All in All. ⁶⁸ For this reason let us pray without ceasing with a disposition made divine by the Word, and say to our Father in heaven: **Hallowed Be Your Name: Your Kingdom Come**. Of the kingdom of God it is further to be said by way of distinction that as righteousness has no partnership with lawlessness and light no community with darkness and Christ no argument with Belial, ⁶⁹ so a kingdom of sin is incompatible with the Kingdom of God.

If, accordingly we would be ruled over by God, by no means let sin rule in our mortal body nor let us obey its commands when it calls our soul forth to the works of the flesh that are alien to God, ⁷⁰ but let us mortify our members that are on earth ⁷¹ and bear the fruits of the Spirit that the Lord may walk in us as in a spiritual garden, ruling alone over us with His Christ seated within us on the right of the Spiritual power that we pray to receive, sitting until all His enemies within us become a footstool for His feet and every rule and authority and power be undone from us.

These things may come to pass in the case of each of us, and death the last energy be undone, so that Christ may say within us also, "O death, where is your sting? O grave! Where is your victory?" Even now, therefore, let our corruptible put on the holiness and incorruptibility that consists in chastity and purity, and our mortal, death undone, wrap itself in the paternal immortality, so that, being ruled over by God, we may even now live amid the blessings of regeneration and resurrection. *On Prayer*.73

ORIGEN: "Your will be done on earth also as in heaven." After the clause "Your Kingdom come," Luke has passed over these words in silence and placed the clause "Give us daily our needful bread."⁷⁴ Let us therefore examine next in succession the words I have placed first as set down in Matthew alone. As suppliants who are still on earth, believing that the will of God is done in heaven among all the household of the heavens, let us pray that the will of God may be done by us also who are on earth in like manner with them, as will come to pass when we do nothing contrary to His will.

And when the will of God as it is in heaven has been accomplished by us

⁶⁷ Phil 3:13

^{68 1} Cor 15:28

⁶⁹ 2 Cor 6:14-15

⁷⁰ Cf. Rom 6:12

⁷¹ Col 3:5

⁷² 1 Cor 15:55

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xv.

⁷⁴ Lk 11:3

also who are on earth, we shall inherit a kingdom of heaven as having, alike with them, worn the image of the Heavenly One, while those who come after us on earth are praying to become in turn like us who have come to be in heaven....

Everyone in the church ought to pray to receive the paternal will in such wise as Christ has done, who came to do the will of His Father and accomplished it completely. For it is possible by being joined to Him to become one spirit with Him and therefore receptive of the will to the end that, as it has been accomplished in heaven, so it may be accomplished on earth also; for he that is joined to the Lord, according to Paul, is one spirit.⁷⁵ . . .

For he that sins, wherever he may be, is earth, and will turn into the like somehow, unless he repents, whereas he that does the will of God and does not disobey the spiritual laws of salvation is heaven. Whether therefore we are still earth because of sin, let us pray that the will of God may extend restoration to us also as it has already reached those who have become or are heaven before us: or if we are already accounted not earth but heaven by God, let our request be that, in like manner with heaven, on earth also, in inferior things I mean, the will of God may be fulfilled unto what I may term earth's heaven-making, so that there shall be no longer earth but all things become heaven. *On Prayer*. 76

ORIGEN: We are taught to say in the Lord's prayer, "Your kingdom come!" as if it has not yet come. And the Lord himself, when he began to preach, does not say: The kingdom of heaven has come, but: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." The present time, however, I would say seems not so much a time of reigning as of war, since the dominion of death is now broken in part and 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." Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

CYPRIAN: There follows in the prayer, "Your kingdom come." We ask that the kingdom of God may be set forth to us, even as we also ask that His name may be sanctified in us. For when does God not reign, or when does that begin with Him which both always has been, and never ceases to be? We pray that our kingdom, which has been promised us by God, may come, which was acquired by the blood and passion of Christ; that we who first are His subjects in the world, may hereafter reign with Christ when He reigns, as He Himself promises

⁷⁵ 1 Cor 6:17

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xvi.

⁷⁷ Mt 4:17

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 15:25

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 338-339. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

and says, "Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world." 80

Christ Himself, dearest brethren, however, may be the kingdom of God, whom we day by day desire to come, whose advent we crave to be quickly manifested to us. For since He is Himself the Resurrection, since in Him we rise again, so also the kingdom of God may be understood to be Himself, since in Him we shall reign. But we do well in seeking the kingdom of God, that is, the heavenly kingdom, because there is also an earthly kingdom. But he who has already renounced the world, is moreover greater than its honors and its kingdom. And therefore he who dedicates himself to God and Christ, desires not earthly, but heavenly kingdoms. But there is need of continual prayer and supplication, that we do not fall away from the heavenly kingdom, as the Jews, to whom this promise had first been given, fell away; even as the Lord sets forth and proves: "Many," He says, "will come from the east and from the west, and will recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."81 He shows that the Jews were previously children of the kingdom, so long as they continued also to be children of God; but after the name of Father ceased to be recognized among them, the kingdom also ceased; and therefore we Christians, who in our prayer begin to call God our Father, also pray that God's kingdom may come to us.

We add, also, and say, "Your will be done, as in heaven so in earth;" not that God should do what He wills, but that we may be able to do what God wills. For who resists God, that He may not do what He wills? But since we are hindered by the devil from obeying with our thought and deed God's will in all things, we pray and ask that God's will may be done in us; and that it may be done in us we have need of God's good will, that is, of His help and protection, since no one is strong in his own strength, but he is safe by the grace and mercy of God. And further, the Lord, setting forth the infirmity of the humanity which He bore, says, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and affording an example to His disciples that they should not do their own will, but God's, He went on to say, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will."82 And in another place He says, "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me."83 Now if the Son was obedient to do His Father's will, how much more should the servant be obedient to do his Master's will! As in his epistle John also exhorts and instructs us to do the will of God, saying, "Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the ambition of life, which is not of the Father, but of the lust of the world. And the world will pass away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever, even as God also

⁸⁰ Mt 25:34

⁸¹ Mt 8:11-12

⁸² Mt 26:39

⁸³ In 6:38

abides forever."84 We who desire to abide forever should do the will of God, who is everlasting.

Now that is the will of God which Christ both did and taught. Humility in conversation; steadfastness in faith; modesty in words; justice in deeds; mercifulness in works; discipline in morals; to be unable to do a wrong, and to be able to bear a wrong when done; to keep peace with the brethren; to love God with all one's heart; to love Him in that He is a Father; to fear Him in that He is God; to prefer nothing whatever to Christ, because He did not prefer anything to us; to adhere inseparably to His love; to stand by His cross bravely and faithfully; when there is any contest on behalf of His name and honor, to exhibit in discourse that constancy wherewith we make confession; in torture, that confidence wherewith we do battle; in death, that patience whereby we are crowned;—this is to desire to be fellow-heirs with Christ; this is to do the commandment of God; this is to fulfill the will of the Father. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.450-451.

CYPRIAN: In the Gospel according to John: "I did not come down from heaven to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Of this same matter, according to Matthew: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." Also in the daily prayer: "Your will be done, as in heaven, so in earth." Also according to Matthew: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father which is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Also according to Luke: "But that servant which knows his Lord's will, and did not obey His will, shall be beaten with many stripes." In the Epistle of John: "But he that does the will of God abides forever, even as He Himself also abides forever." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.539.

6:11ff Editor's Note: The expression "our daily bread" has given ancient translators and commentators difficulty because the Greek word *epiousios*, here translated "daily," only occurs here and in Luke 11:3: "Give us day by day our daily bread." The meaning of the word is sought from its origin. ⁸⁹ Origen says "our needful bread," or that which is necessary for existence. Likewise The DIDACHE says, "our daily (needful) bread" (See above).

HIPPOLYTUS: For this reason⁹⁰ we are enjoined to ask what is sufficient for the

^{84 1} Jn 2:15-17

⁸⁵ Jn 6:38

⁸⁶ Mt 26:39

⁸⁷ Lk 12:47

^{88 1} Jn 2:17

⁸⁹ See Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 15.

⁹⁰ The opening contextual material for this statement is not included in the fragment.

preservation of the substance of the body: not luxury, but food, which restores what the body loses, and prevents death by hunger; not tables to inflame and drive on to pleasures, nor such things as make the body wax wanton against the soul; but bread, and that, too, not for a great number of years, but what is sufficient for us today. *Fragment on Matthew, 5.194*.

TERTULLIAN: But how gracefully has the Divine Wisdom arranged the order of the prayer; so that after things heavenly—that is, after the "Name" of God, the "Will" of God, and the "Kingdom" of God—it should give earthly necessities also room for a petition! For the Lord had additionally issued His edict, "Seek first the kingdom, and then even these shall be added:" albeit we may rather understand, "Give us this day our daily bread," spiritually. For Christ is our Bread; because Christ is Life, and bread is life. "I am," He says, "the Bread of Life;"91 and, a little above, "The Bread is the Word of the living God, who came down from the heavens."92 Then we find, too, that His body is reckoned in bread: "This is my body." And so, in petitioning for "daily bread," we ask for perpetuity in Christ, and indivisibility from His body. But, because that word is admissible in a carnal sense too, it cannot be so used without the religious remembrance of spiritual discipline; for (the Lord) commands that bread be prayed for, which is the only food necessary for believers; for "all other things the nations seek after." The like lesson He both teaches by examples, and repeatedly handles in parables, when He says, "Does a father take away bread from his children, and hand it to dogs?"94 and again, "Does a father give his son a stone when he asks for bread?" For He thus shows what it is that sons expect from their father. Nay, even that nocturnal knocker knocked for "bread."95 Moreover, He justly added, "Give us this day," seeing He had previously said, "Take no careful thought about the morrow, what you are to eat." To which subject He also adapted the parable of the man who pondered on an enlargement of his barns for his forthcoming fruits, and on seasons of prolonged security; but that very night he dies. 96 On Prayer, 3.683.

TERTULLIAN: How unworthy, also, is the way in which you interpret to the favor of your own lust the fact that the Lord "ate and drank" promiscuously! But I think that He must have likewise "fasted" inasmuch as He has pronounced, not "the full," but "**the hungry and thirsty, blessed**:" He who was accustomed to profess "food" to be, not that which His disciples had supposed, but "the thorough doing of the Father's work;" teaching "to labor for the food which is

⁹¹ Jn 6:35

⁹² Jn 6:33

⁹³ Mt 26:26

⁹⁴ Cf. Mt 15:26; Mk 7:27

⁹⁵ Lk 11:5-11

⁹⁶ Lk 12:16-20

⁹⁷ Cf. Lk 6:21, 25; Mt 5:6

⁹⁸ In 4:31-34

permanent unto life eternal;"99 in our ordinary prayer likewise commanding us to request "**bread**," not wealth. *On Fasting*, 4.112.100

ORIGEN: "Give us today our needful bread," or as Luke has it, "Give us daily our needful bread." Seeing that some suppose that it is meant that we should pray for material bread, their erroneous opinion deserves to be done away with and the truth about the needful bread set forth, in the following manner. We may put the question to them—how can it be that He, who says that heavenly and great things ought to be asked for as if, on their view, He has forgotten His teaching now enjoins the offering of intercession to the Father for an earthly and little thing, since neither is the bread which is assimilated into our flesh a heavenly thing nor is it asking a great thing to request it?

For my part I shall follow the Teacher's own teaching as to the bread and cite the passages in detail. To men who have come to Capernaum to seek Him He says, in the Gospel according to John, "Verily, verily, I tell you you seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate of the loaves of bread and were filled" 102 . . . for he that has eaten and been filled with the loaves of bread which have been blessed by Jesus seeks the more to grasp the Son of God more closely and hastens toward Him.

Wherefore He will enjoin: "Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that abides unto life eternal which the Son of Man shall give you." And when, upon that, they who had heard inquired and said: "What are we to do that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them: "This is the work of God that you believe on him whom He has sent." As it is written in Psalms, God sent His Word and healed them, that is the diseased, had believers in that Word work the works of God which are food that abides unto life eternal.

"And my Father," He says, "gives you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." It is true bread that nourishes the true man who is made in God's image, and he that has been nourished by it also becomes in the Creator's likeness. What is more nourishing to the soul than the Word, or what more precious to the mind of him that is capable of receiving it than the Wisdom of God?

What is more congenial to the rational nature than Truth? Should it be urged in objection to this view that He would not in that case teach men to ask

⁹⁹ Jn 6:27

¹⁰⁰ Montanist work.

¹⁰¹ Lk 11:3

¹⁰² Jn 6:26

¹⁰³ Jn 6:27

¹⁰⁴ Jn 6:28

¹⁰⁵ In 6:29

¹⁰⁶ Ps 107:20

¹⁰⁷ In 6:32-33

for needful bread as if something other than Himself, it is to be noted that He also discourses in the Gospel according to John sometimes as if it were other than Himself but at other times as if He is Himself the Bread. The former in the sense of the words: "Moses has given you the bread from heaven yet not the true bread, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven."

In the latter sense, to those who had said to Him, "Ever give us this bread," He says: "I am the bread of life: he that comes unto me shall not hunger, and he that believes on me shall not thirst;" and shortly after: "I am the living bread that is come down from heaven: if anyone eat of this bread he shall live unto eternity: yes and the bread which I shall give is my flesh which I shall give for the sake of the life of the world." On Prayer: "I!!

CYPRIAN: As the prayer goes forward, we ask and say, "Give us this day our daily bread." And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in divine usefulness to our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours. And according as we say, "Our Father," because He is the Father of those who understand and believe; so also we call it "our bread," because Christ is the bread of those who are in union with His body. And we ask that this bread should be given to us daily, that we who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist for the food of salvation, may not, by the interposition of some heinous sin, by being prevented, as withheld and not communicating, from partaking of the heavenly bread, be separated from Christ's body, as He Himself predicts, and warns, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any man eat of my bread, he will live forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."112 When, therefore, He says, that whoever will eat of His bread will live forever; as it is manifest that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living, so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest anyone who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ's body should remain at a distance from salvation; as He Himself threatens, and says, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you will have no life in you."113 And therefore we ask that our bread—that is, Christ—may be given to us daily, that we who abide and live in Christ may not depart from His sanctification and body.

But it may also be thus understood, that we who have renounced the world, and have cast away its riches and pomps in the faith of spiritual grace, should only ask for ourselves food and support, since the Lord instructs us, and says,

¹⁰⁸ Jn 6:32

¹⁰⁹ Jn 6:35

¹¹⁰ Jn 6:51

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xvii.

¹¹² Jn 6:51

¹¹³ Jn 6:53

"Whosoever does not forsake all that he has, cannot be my disciple." ¹¹⁴ But he who has begun to be Christ's disciple, renouncing all things according to the word of his Master, ought to ask for his daily food, and not to extend the desires of his petition to a long period, as the Lord again prescribes, and says, "Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow itself shall take thought for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.452.

6:12ff IRENAEUS: Now this being is the Creator, who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies. And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become "the Mediator between God and men;"115 propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and canceling our disobedience by His own obedience; conferring also upon us the gift of communion with, and subjection to, our Maker. For this reason also He has taught us to say in prayer, "And forgive us our debts;" since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed His commandments. But who is this Being? Is He some unknown one, and a Father who gives no commandment to anyone? Or is He the God who is proclaimed in the Scriptures, to whom we were debtors, having transgressed His commandment? Now the commandment was given to man by the Word. For Adam, it is said, "heard the voice of the LORD God." Rightly then does His Word say to man, "Your sins are forgiven you;" He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end. Against Heresies, 1.544-545.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: A Christian never remembers those who have sinned against him, but forgives them. Therefore also he righteously prays, saying, "Forgive us; for we also forgive." For this also is one of the things which God wishes, to covet nothing, to hate no one. For all men are the work of one will. *The Stromata*, 2.546.

TERTULLIAN: The Lord knew Himself to be the only guiltless One, and so He teaches that we beg "to have our debts remitted us." A petition for pardon is a full confession; because he who begs for pardon fully admits his guilt. Thus, too, penitence is demonstrated acceptable to God who desires it rather than the death of the sinner. Moreover, debt is, in the Scriptures, a figure of guilt; because it is equally due to the sentence of judgment, and is exacted by it: nor does it evade the justice of exaction, unless the exaction be remitted, just as the lord

¹¹⁴ Lk 14:33

^{115 1} Tim 2:5

¹¹⁶ Gen 3:8

¹¹⁷ Mt 9:2; Lk 5:20

¹¹⁸ Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11

remitted to that slave in the parable of his debt;¹¹⁹ for here does the scope of the whole parable tend. For the fact in addition, that the same servant, after liberated by his lord, does not equally spare his own debtor; and, being on that account blamed before his lord, is made over to the tormentor to pay the uttermost farthing¹²⁰—that is, every guilt, however small: corresponds with our profession that "we also remit to our debtors;" indeed elsewhere, too, in conformity with this form of prayer, He says, "Remit, and it will be remitted you."¹²¹ And when Peter had put the question whether remission were to be granted to a brother seven times, "Rather," He said, "seventy-seven times;"¹²² in order to remold the law for the better; because in Genesis vengeance was assigned "seven times" in the case of Cain, but in that of Lamech "seventy-seven times."¹²³ *On Prayer*, 3 684

ORIGEN: "And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors," or as Luke has it, "And forgive us our sins, for we also ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us." Concerning debts the Apostle also says: "Pay your debts to all—to whom you owe tribute, tribute, to whom fear, fear, to whom taxes, taxes, to whom honor, honor: owe no man anything except mutual love." 125

We owe therefore in having certain duties not only in giving but also in kind speech and corresponding actions, and indeed we owe a certain disposition towards one another. Owing these things, we either pay them through discharging the commands of the divine law, or failing to pay them, in contempt of the salutary word, we remain in debt. The like reflection applies to debts toward brothers, to those who in the religious sense have been born again with us in Christ, as well as to those who have a common mother or father with us....

Remembering what as debtors we have not paid but withheld during the time which it was our duty to have done this or that for our neighbor had run by, we shall be gentler toward those who have fallen in debt to us in turn and have not paid their indebtedness, especially if we do not forget our transgressions against the Divine and the unrighteousness we have spoken against the Height either in ignorance of the truth or else in displeasure at the misfortunes that have befallen us.

But if we refuse to become gentler towards those who have fallen in debt to us, our experience will be that of him who did not remit the hundred shillings to his fellow servant and of whom, according to the parable set down in the gospel, though already pardoned, the master exacts in severity what had already

¹¹⁹ Mt 18:21-27

¹²⁰ Mt 5:26. A farthing is a quadrans (about the fourth part of an "as"); in the NT a coin equal to one half the Attic chalcus worth about 3/8 of a cent.

¹²¹ Lk 6:37

¹²² Mt 18:21-22

¹²³ Gen 4:15-24

¹²⁴ Lk 11:4

¹²⁵ Cf. Rom 13:1-8

been remitted, saying to him: "Wicked servant and slothful, was it not right for you to pity your fellow servant as I also pitied you? Cast him into prison until he pay all that is owed." And the Lord continues: "So shall the heavenly Father do to you also if you do not forgive each his brother from your hearts." ¹²⁶

It is however on profession of penitence that we are to forgive those who have sinned against us, even though our debtor often does so; for He says: "If your brother sin against you seven times a day and seven times turn and say, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." It is not we who are harsh towards the impenitent, but they who are wicked to themselves, for he that spurns instruction hates himself. Yet even in such cases we should seek in every way that healing arise within him who is so completely perverted as not even to be conscious of his own ills but to be drunken with a drunkenness more fatal than from wine, from the darkening of evil.

When Luke says, "Forgive us our sins," 129 he means the same as Matthew, since sins are constituted when we owe and do not pay, though he does not appear to lend support to him who would forgive only penitent debtors when he says that it is enacted by the Savior that we ought in prayer to add: "for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us." And it would seem that we have all authority to forgive the sins that have been committed against us as is clear from both clauses: "as we also have forgiven our debtors;" and "for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us." But it is when a man is inspired by Jesus as were the apostles, when he can be known from his fruits to have received the Spirit that is Holy and to have become spiritual through being led by the Spirit after the manner of a Son of God unto every reasonable duty, that he forgives whatsoever God has forgiven and holds those sins that are irremediable, 131 and as the prophets served God in speaking not their own message but that of the divine Will, so he too serves the God who alone has authority to forgive. *On Prayer*. 132

ORIGEN: For you will find frequently in the divine books that sins are called debts, just as the Lord himself taught us to say in prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. ¹³³

¹²⁶ Cf. Mt 18:33-35

¹²⁷ Cf. Lk 17:3-4

¹²⁸ Cf. Prov 12:1

¹²⁹ Lk 11:4

¹³⁰ Lk 11:4

¹³¹ Cf. 1 Jn 5:16

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xviii.

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 243. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

CYPRIAN: After this we also entreat for our sins, saying, "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." After the supply of food, pardon of sin is also asked for, that he who is fed by God may live in God, and that not only the present and temporal life may be provided for, but the eternal also, to which we may come if our sins are forgiven; and these the Lord calls debts, as He says in His Gospel, "I forgave you all that debt, because you desired me." And how necessarily, how providently and salutarily, are we admonished that we are sinners, since we are compelled to entreat for our sins, and while pardon is asked for from God, the soul recalls its own consciousness of sin! Lest any one should flatter himself that he is innocent, and by exalting himself should more deeply perish, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, in that he is bidden to entreat daily for his sins. Thus, moreover, John also in his epistle warns us, and says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."135 In his epistle he has combined both, that we should entreat for our sins, and that we should obtain pardon when we ask. Therefore he said that the Lord was faithful to forgive sins, keeping the faith of His promise; because He who taught us to pray for our debts and sins, has promised that His fatherly mercy and pardon shall follow. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.453.

CYPRIAN: In the Gospel, in the daily prayer: "Forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors." Also according to Mark: "And when you stand for prayer, forgive, if you have anything at all against any one; that also your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your sins." Also in the same place: "In what measure you mete, in that shall it be measured to you again." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.541.

LACTANTIUS: But that he may obtain the favor of God, and be free from every stain, let him always implore the mercy of God, and pray for nothing else but pardon for his sins, even though he has none. If he desires anything else, there is no need of expressing it in word to one who knows what we wish; if anything good shall happen to him, let him give thanks; if any evil, let him make amends, and let him confess that the evil has happened to him on account of his faults; ¹³⁷ and even in evils let him nothing less give thanks, and make amends in good things, that he may be the same at all times, and be firm, and unchangeable, and unshaken. And let him not suppose that this is to be done by him only in the temple, but at home, and even in his very bed. In short, let him always have God within himself, consecrated in his heart, inasmuch as he himself is a temple of God. But if he has served God, his Father and Lord, with this diligence, obedience, and devotion, justice is complete and perfect; and he who shall keep

¹³⁴ Mt 18:32

^{135 1} Jn 1:8

¹³⁶ Mk 11:25-26

¹³⁷ Cf. Lk 13:4-5

THE LORD'S PRAYER —MATTHEW 6:9-13

this, as we before testified, has obeyed God, and has satisfied the obligations of religion and his own duty. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.193.

ARNOBIUS: Before Him we all prostrate ourselves, according to our custom; Him we adore in joint prayers; from Him we beg things just and honorable, and worthy of His ear. Not that He needs our supplications, or loves to see the homage of so many thousands laid at His feet. This is our benefit, and has a regard to our advantage. For since we are prone to err, and to yield to various lusts and appetites through the fault of our innate weakness, He allows Himself at all times to be comprehended in our thoughts, that while we entreat Him and strive to merit His bounties, we may receive a desire for purity, and may free ourselves from every stain by the removal of all our shortcomings. *Against the Heathen*, 6.419

6:13 EDITOR'S NOTE: The testimony of the earliest extant witnesses reveals that the Lord's prayer concluded with the petition for deliverance from evil. In addition to Tertullian, Origen, and Cyprian, early Greek manuscripts omit the doxology at the end of the Lord's prayer: "For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." There are a variety of textual variations that show the continual expansion of the addition from "amen" to "because yours is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen." In the first stage of additions, it appears that scribes used "power" and/or "glory" (probably adapted from verses like 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 62:2 LXX, Daniel 2:37; 1 Peter 4:11; Jude 25), but omitted "the kingdom." This is the reading in The Didache. 138

POLYCARP: Forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; "watching in prayer," and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God "**not to lead us into temptation**," as the Lord has said: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.34-35*.

POLYCARP: I praise You for all things, I bless You, I glorify You, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, with whom, to You, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.42*.

THE DIDACHE: "And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (or, evil); for Yours is the power and the glory for ever." Three times

Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 15-16; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 47.

¹³⁹ Cf. Jude 3

^{140 1} Pet 4:7

¹⁴¹ Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38

in the day thus pray. 7.379.

The Didache: [A prayer after Communion:] But after you are filled, thus give thanks: We thank You, holy Father, for Your holy name which You caused to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. You, Master almighty, created all things for Your name's sake; You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to You; but to us You freely gave spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Your Servant. Before all things we thank You that You are mighty; to You be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom which You have prepared for it; for **Yours is the power and the glory for ever**. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If any one is holy, let him come; if any one is not so, let him repent. Maran atha. 142 Amen. 7.380.

TERTULLIAN: For the completeness of so brief a prayer He added—in order that we should supplicate not touching the remitting merely, but touching the entire averting, of acts of guilt—"Lead us not into temptation:" that is, do not allow us to be led into it, by him (of course) who tempts; but far be the thought that the Lord should seem to tempt, 143 as if He either were ignorant of the faith of any, or else were eager to overthrow it. Infirmity and malice are characteristics of the devil. For God had commanded even Abraham to make a sacrifice of his son, not for the sake of tempting, but proving, his faith; in order through him to make an example for that precept of His, whereby He was, by and by, to enjoin that he should hold no pledges of affection dearer than God. He Himself, when tempted by the devil, demonstrated who it is that presides over and is the originator of temptation. 144 This passage He confirms by subsequent ones, saying, "Pray that you are not tempted;"145 yet they were tempted, (as they showed) by deserting their Lord, because they had given way rather to sleep than prayer. The final clause, therefore, is consonant, and interprets the sense of "Do not lead us into temptation;" for this sense is, "But convey us away from the Evil One." On Repentance, 3.684.

ORIGEN: "And bring us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." In Luke the words "but deliver us from evil" are omitted. Assuming that the Savior does not command us to pray for the impossible, it appears to me to deserve consideration in what sense we are bidden to pray not to enter into temptation when all human life on earth is a test.

In that on earth we are beset by the flesh which wars against the spirit and

^{142 1} Cor 16:22: that is "Our Lord, come!"

¹⁴³ Cf. Jas 1:13

¹⁴⁴ Mt 4:10: Lk 4:8

¹⁴⁵ Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 22:40

whose intent is enmity to God as it is by no means capable of being subject to the law of God, we are in temptation. That all human life on earth is a trial we have learned from Job in the words: "Is not the life of men on earth a trial," ¹⁴⁶ and the same thing is made plain from the seventeenth psalm in the words: "In you will I be delivered from trial." ¹⁴⁷ Paul, too, writing to the Corinthians says that God does not bestow freedom from temptation but freedom from temptation beyond one's power. ¹⁴⁸ . . .

We ought therefore to pray, not that we be not tempted—that is impossible—but that we not be encompassed by temptation, the fate of those who are open to it and are overcome. Now since, outside of the Lord's Prayer, it is written, "Pray that you do not enter into temptation," 149 the force of which may perhaps be clear from what has already been said, whereas in the Lord's prayer we ought to say to God our Father, "Bring us not into temptation," it is worth seeing in what sense we ought to think of God as leading one who does not pray or is not heard into temptation. If entering into temptation means being overcome, it is manifestly out of the question to think that God leads anyone into temptation as though He delivered him to be overcome. . . .

Well, it is my belief that God rules over each rational soul, having regard to its everlasting life, in such a way that it is always in possession of free will and is itself responsible alike for being, in the better way, in progress towards the perfection of goodness, or otherwise for descending as the result of heedlessness to this or that degree of aggravation of vice. *On Prayer.*¹⁵⁰

CYPRIAN: With mutual prayers, let us by turns cherish, guard, arm one another; let us pray for the lapsed, that they may be raised up; let us pray for those who stand, that they may not be tempted to such a degree as to be destroyed; let us pray that those who are said to have fallen may acknowledge the greatness of their sin, and may perceive that it needs no momentary nor over-hasty cure; let us pray that penitence may follow also the effects of the pardon of the lapsed; that so, when they have understood their own crime, they may be willing to have patience with us for a while, and no longer disturb the fluctuating condition of the Church, lest they may seem themselves to have inflamed an internal persecution for us, and the fact of their unquietness be added to the heap of their sins. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.310.

CYPRIAN: Moreover, the Lord of necessity admonishes us to say in prayer, "And do not permit us to be led into temptation." In which words it is shown that the adversary can do nothing against us except God shall have previously permitted it; so that all our fear, and devotion, and obedience may be turned

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Job 7:1

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ps. 18:17 LXX

^{148 1} Cor 10:13

¹⁴⁹ Mt 26:41

Origen, On Prayer, tr. William A. Curtis (originally uploaded to the web by Nottingham Publishing; reformatted by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, UK, 2008), xix.

towards God, since in our temptations nothing is permitted to evil unless power is given from Him. . . .

Now power is given against us in two modes: either for punishment when we sin, or for glory when we are proved, as we see was done with respect to Job; as God Himself sets forth, saying, "Behold, all that he has I give to your hands; but be careful not to touch him." And the Lord in His Gospel says, in the time of His passion, "You could have no power against me unless it were given to you from above." But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness in that we thus ask, lest any should insolently boast himself, lest any should proudly and arrogantly assume anything to himself, lest any should take to himself the glory either of confession or of suffering as his own, when the Lord Himself, teaching humility, said, "Watch and pray, that you do not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;" so that while a humble and submissive confession comes first, and all is attributed to God, whatever is sought for suppliantly with fear and honor of God, may be granted by His own loving-kindness.

After all these things, in the conclusion of the prayer comes a brief clause, which shortly and comprehensively sums up all our petitions and our prayers. For we conclude by saying, "But deliver us from evil," comprehending all adverse things which the enemy attempts against us in this world, from which there may be a faithful and sure protection if God deliver us, if He afford His help to us who pray for and implore it. And when we say, "Deliver us from evil," there remains nothing further which ought to be asked. When we have once asked for God's protection against evil, and have obtained it, then against everything which the devil and the world work against us we stand secure and safe. For what fear is there in this life, to the man whose guardian in this life is God? The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.454-455.

¹⁵¹ Job 1:12

¹⁵² In 19:11

¹⁵³ Mk 14:38

Forgive to be Forgiven Matthew 6:14-15

[14] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: MT 18:21-35; MK 11:25; LK 6:37; 17:3-4; 23:34; JN 20:23; ACTS 7:60; EPH 4:32: COL 3:12-13

[15] But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. MT 18:21-35

SUMMARY: Forgive that you may be forgiven (CLEMENT OF ROME). If we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive (POLYCARP). Let no one cherish any grudge against his neighbor (IGNATIUS). The Lord will deliver over to death all those whom He shall find retaining a recollection of offenses (HERMAS). It is in the power of God alone to grant the forgiveness of sins, since also the Lord commands us each day to forgive the repenting brethren (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). What sort of deed is it to approach the peace of God without peace or the remission of debts while you retain them? (TERTULLIAN). We should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors (CYPRIAN). Even as you desire that He may remit your transgressions, also forgive them theirs (THEONAS OF ALEXANDRIA). See also commentary above on Matthew 6:12

6:14ff CLEMENT OF ROME: Let us therefore, brethren, be of humble mind, laying aside all haughtiness, and pride, and foolishness, and angry feelings; and let us act according to that which is written (for the Holy Spirit says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in the Lord, in

diligently seeking Him, and doing judgment and righteousness,")¹ being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching us meekness and long suffering. For He spoke: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured to you."² By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words. For the holy word says, "On whom shall I look, but on him that is meek and peaceable, and that trembles at My words?" First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1.8.

POLYCARP: If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and "we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself." Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel to us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord have alike taught us. Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offense, from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error. *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.34*.

IGNATIUS: Not that I know there is anything of this kind among you; but I put you on your guard, inasmuch as I love you greatly, and foresee the snares of the devil. Therefore, clothing yourselves with meekness, renew yourselves in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no one of you cherish any grudge against his neighbor. *Epistle to the Trallians*, 1.69.

HERMAS: If our God and Lord, who rules over all things, and has power over all His creation, does not remember evil against those who confess their sins, but is merciful, does man, who is corruptible and full of sins, remember evil against a fellow man, as if he were able to destroy or to save him? The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.51.

HERMAS: "The Lord dwells in men that love peace, because He loved peace; but from the contentious and the utterly wicked He is far distant. Restore to Him, therefore, a spirit sound as you received it. For when you have given to a fuller a new garment, and desire to receive it back entire at the end, if, then, the fuller

¹ Jer 9:23-24; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17

² Cf. Lk 6:36-38

³ Isa 66:2

⁴ 2 Cor 5:10

⁵ Lk 12:5

⁶ Mt 18:33-35

return to you a torn garment, will you take it from him, and not rather be angry, and abuse him, saying, 'I gave you a garment that was entire: why have you rent it, and made it useless, so that it can be of no use on account of the rent which you have made in it?' Would you not say all this to the fuller about the rent which you found in your garment? If, therefore, you grieve about your garment, and complain because you have not received it entire, what do you think the Lord will do to you, who gave you a sound spirit, which you have rendered altogether useless, so that it can be of no service to its possessor? For its use began to be unprofitable, seeing it was corrupted by you. Will not the Lord, therefore, because of this conduct of yours regarding His Spirit, act in the same way, and deliver you over to death? Assuredly, I say, he will do the same to all those whom He shall find retaining a recollection of offenses. Do not trample His mercy under foot, He says, but rather honor Him, because He is so patient with your sins, and is not as you are. Repent, for it is useful to you." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.54.

TATIAN: If you forgive men their wrongdoing, your Father which is in heaven will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father pardon your wrongdoing. *The Diatessaron*, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For it is in the power of God alone to grant the forgiveness of sins, and not to impute transgressions; since also the Lord commands us each day to forgive the repenting brethren. "And if we, being evil, know to give good gifts," much more is it the nature of the Father of mercies, the good Father of all consolation, much pitying, very merciful, to be long-suffering, to wait for those who have turned. And to turn is really to cease from our sins, and to look no longer behind.

Forgiveness of past sins, then, God gives; but of future, each one gives to himself.⁹ And this is to repent, to condemn the past deeds, and beg oblivion of them from the Father, who only of all is able to undo what is done, by mercy proceeding from Him, and to blot out former sins by the dew of the Spirit. "For by the state in which I find you will I judge," lalso, is what in each case the end of all cries aloud. So that even in the case of one who has done the greatest good deeds in his life, but at the end has run headlong into wickedness, all his former pains are profitless to him, since at the catastrophe of the drama he has given up his part; while it is possible for the man who formerly led a bad and dissolute life, on afterwards repenting, to overcome in the time after repentance the evil conduct of a long time. But it needs great carefulness, just as bodies that have suffered by protracted disease need regimen and special attention. Thief, do you wish to get forgiveness? Steal no more. Adulterer, burn no more. Fornicator, live for the future chastely. You who have robbed, give back, and give back more

⁷ Cf. Heb 10:29

⁸ Lk 6:13

⁹ See Prov 28:13; Rom 3:25; Heb 10:26-31; 2 Pet 1:5-9; Jas 5:14-16, 19-20; 1 Jn 1:7, 9;

Ouoted with a slight variation by Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, (ANF, 1.219).

than you took. False witness, practice truth. Perjurer, swear no more, and completely destroy the rest of the passions, wrath, lust, grief, fear; that you may be found at the end to have previously in this world been reconciled to the adversary. It is then probably impossible all at once to eradicate inbred passions; but by God's power and human intercession, and the help of brethren, and sincere repentance, and constant care, they are corrected. Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved? 2.602.

TERTULLIAN: He commands you to forgive your brother, should he trespass against you even "seven times." But that surely is a small matter; for with the Creator there is a larger grace, when He sets no limits to forgiveness, indefinitely charging you "not to bear any malice against your brother," and to give not merely to him who asks, but even to him who does not ask. For His will is not that you should forgive an offense, but forget it. *Against Marcion*, 3.407.

TERTULLIAN: For what sort of deed is it to approach the peace of God without peace? the remission of debts while you retain them? *On Prayer, 3.685*.

CYPRIAN: Thus, also, when He gave the law of prayer, He added, saying, "And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." And He calls back from the altar one who comes to the sacrifice in strife, and bids him first to agree with his brother, and then return with peace and offer his gift to God: for God did not have respect to Cain's offerings; for he could not have God at peace with him, who through envious discord did not have peace with his brother. What peace, then, do the enemies of the brethren promise to themselves? What sacrifices do those who are rivals of the priests think that they celebrate? Do they deem that they have Christ with them when they are collected together, who are gathered together outside the Church of Christ? *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.425.

CYPRIAN: He has clearly joined herewith and added the law, and has bound us by a certain condition and engagement, that we should ask that our debts be forgiven us in such a manner as we ourselves forgive our debtors, knowing that that which we seek for our sins cannot be obtained unless we ourselves have acted in a similar way in respect of our debtors. Therefore also He says in another place, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." And the servant who, after having had all his debt forgiven him by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant, is cast back into prison; because he would not forgive his fellow-servant, he lost the indulgence that had been shown to himself by his lord.¹⁴ And these things Christ still more urgently sets forth in

Lk 17:4

¹² Lev 19:18

¹³ Mk 11:25

¹⁴ Mt 18:23-35

FORGIVE TO BE FORGIVEN —MATTHEW 6:14-15

His precepts with yet greater power of His rebuke. "When you stand praying," He says, "forgive if you have anything at all against anyone, that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." There remains no ground of excuse in the day of judgment, when you will be judged according to your own sentence; and whatever you have done, that you also will suffer. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.453-454.

CYPRIAN: Love those whom you previously had hated; favor those whom you envied with unjust disparagements. Imitate good men, if you are able to follow them; but if you are not able to follow them, at least rejoice with them, and congratulate those who are better than you. Make yourself a sharer with them in united love; make yourself their associate in the alliance of charity and the bond of brotherhood. Your debts shall be remitted to you when you yourself shall have forgiven. Your sacrifices shall be received when you shall come in peace to God. Your thoughts and deeds shall be directed from above, when you consider those things which are divine and righteous, as it is written: "Let the heart of a man consider righteous things, that his steps may be directed by the Lord." ¹⁶ The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.496

THEONAS OF ALEXANDRIA: Do no one an injury at any time, and provoke no one to anger. If an injury is done to you, look to Jesus Christ; and even as you desire that He may remit your transgressions, also forgive them theirs. *The Epistle of Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria, to Lucianus, the Chief Chamberlain, 6.161.*

¹⁵ Mk 11:25-26

¹⁶ Prov 15:1 LXX

Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18

[16] Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. LK 18:12

[17] But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

[18] That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. MT 4:2; 9:14-15; MK 2:18-19; 9:29; LK 5:33-35; ACTS 10:30; 13:2-3; 14:23; 1 COR 7:5; 2 COR 6:5; 11:27

Summary: Fasting was ordained by Christ himself; Jesus said "when you fast," not "if you fast." Clearly Christians ought to fast. Though their fasting observances and traditions were extra-biblical, the early Christians had good reasons for fasting or not fasting on specific days (such as The DIDACHE, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN, VICTORINUS, and PETER OF ALEXANDRIA). Nevertheless, there is evidence from Tertullian that such appointed fasting was not obligatory. Fasting on certain days was known as "stations." These fasts were very early fixed for Wednesday and Friday (The DIDACHE, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, VICTORINUS). Monday and Thursday were the common Jewish fasting days and were considered the fasts of hypocrites in The DIDACHE.

According to Second Clement, fasting is better than prayer. The DIDACHE and JUSTIN MARTYR mention the practice of fasting for baptism. Let us persevere in fasting (POLYCARP). Fast and you will obtain from the Lord what you beg (HERMAS). The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better

(MATHETES). Christians often fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food (ARISTIDES). JUSTIN MARTYR, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN, and HERMAS exhort Christians to keep the true fast of God, as Isaiah says (Isaiah 58:1-12). HERMAS and CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA also understood that fasting signifies abstinence from all evils whatsoever, in action, in word, and in thought itself. The dead have been raised when the Church has entreated the prayer request with much fasting (IRENAEUS).

6:16-18 SECOND CLEMENT: Almsgiving therefore is a good thing, as repentance from sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving than both; "but love covers a multitude of sins." 7.522

THE DIDACHE: But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can; but you should order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

But do not let your fasts be with the hypocrites; for they fast on the second² and fifth day³ of the week; but do your fast on the fourth day⁴ and the Preparation.⁵ 7.379.

POLYCARP: Forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; "watching unto prayer," and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God "**not to lead us into temptation**," as the Lord has said: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." *Epistle to the Philippians*, *1.34*.

HERMAS: Every prayer should be accompanied with humility: fast, therefore, and you will obtain from the Lord what you beg. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.16.

HERMAS: While fasting and sitting on a certain mountain, and giving thanks to the Lord for all His dealings with me, I see the Shepherd sitting down beside me, and saying, "Why have you come here so early in the morning?"

- "Because, sir," I answered, "I have a station."
- "What is a station?" he asked.
- "I am fasting, sir," I replied.
- "What is this fasting," he continued, "which you are observing?"
- "As I have been accustomed, sir," I reply, "so I fast."
- "You do not know," he says, "how to fast unto the Lord: this useless fasting

¹ 1 Pet 4:8; cf. Prov 10:12; Jas 5:20

² Monday

³ Thursday

⁴ Wednesday

⁵ The word "Preparation" (or Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath) occurs in Matthew 27:62, etc., and for some time retained a place in Christian literature.

⁶ Cf. Jud 3

⁷ 1 Pet 4:7

which you observe to Him is of no value."

"Why, sir," I answered, "do you say this?"

"I say to you," he continued, "that the fasting which you think you observe is not a fasting. But I will teach you what is a full and acceptable fasting to the Lord. Listen," he continued: "God does not desire such an empty fasting. For fasting to God in this way you will do nothing for a righteous life; but offer to God a fasting of the following kind: Do no evil in your life, and serve the Lord with a pure heart: keep His commandments, walking in His precepts, and let no evil desire arise in your heart; and believe in God. If you do these things, and fear Him, and abstain from every evil thing, you will live to God; and if you do these things, you will keep a great fast, and one acceptable before God."

I said to him, "Sir, I do not see the meaning of these similitudes, nor am I able to comprehend them, unless you explain them to me."

"I will explain them all to you," he said, "and whatever I shall mention in the course of our conversations I will show you. Keep the commandments of the Lord, and you will be approved, and inscribed among the number of those who observe His commands. And if you do any good beyond what is commanded by God, you will gain for yourself more abundant glory, and will be more honored by God than you would otherwise be. If, therefore, in keeping the commandments of God, you do, in addition, these services, you will have joy if you observe them according to my command."

I said to him, "Sir, whatever you enjoin upon me I will observe, for I know that you are with me."

"I will be with you," he replied, "because you have such a desire for doing good; and I will be with all those," he added, "who have such a desire. This fasting," he continued, "is very good, provided the commandments of the Lord be observed. Thus, then, you shall observe the fasting which you intend to keep. First of all, be on your guard against every evil word, and every evil desire, and purify your heart from all the vanities of this world. If you guard against these things, your fasting will be perfect. And you will do also as follows. Having fulfilled what is written, in the day on which you fast you will taste nothing but bread and water; and having reckoned up the price of the dishes of that day which you intended to have eaten, you will give it to a widow, or an orphan, or to some person in want, and thus you will exhibit humility of mind, so that he who has received benefit from your humility may fill his own soul, and pray for you to the Lord. If you observe fasting, as I have commanded you, your sacrifice will be acceptable to God, and this fasting will be written down; and the service thus performed is noble, and sacred, and acceptable to the Lord. These things, therefore, shall you thus observe with your children, and all your house, and in observing them you will be blessed; and as many as hear these words and observe them shall be blessed; and whatsoever they ask of the Lord they shall receive." The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.33-35.

MATHETES: The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better; in like manner, the Christians, though subjected day by day to punishment,

increase the more in number. *Epistle to Diognetus*, 1.27.

ARISTIDES: And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 9.277.

JUSTIN MARTYR: [On baptism:] I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ. . . As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. § For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." 9 . . .

And for this rite we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed. The First Apology, 1.183.

JUSTIN MARTYR: Learn, therefore, to keep the true fast of God, as Isaiah says, that you may please God. Isaiah has cried thus: "Shout vehemently, and do not spare: lift up your voice as with a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. They seek Me from day to day,

⁸ Tit 3:5

⁹ In 3:5

¹⁰ Mt 28:19

and desire to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the judgment of God. They ask of Me now righteous judgment, and desire to draw near to God, saying, 'Why have we fasted, and You do not see? And afflicted our souls, and You have not known?' Because in the days of your fasting you find your own pleasure, and oppress all those who are subject to you. Behold, you fast for strifes and debates, and smite the humble with your fists. Why do you fast for Me, as today, so that your voice is heard aloud? This is not the fast which I have chosen, the day in which a man shall afflict his soul. And not even if you bend your neck like a ring, or clothe yourself in sackcloth and ashes, shall you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord. This is not the fast which I have chosen, says the Lord; but loose every unrighteous bond, dissolve the terms of unjust covenants, let the oppressed go free, and avoid every iniquitous contract. Deal your bread to the hungry, and lead the homeless poor under your dwelling; if you see the naked, clothe him; and do not hide yourself from your own flesh. Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your garments shall rise up quickly: and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of God shall envelope you. Then you shall cry, and the Lord shall hear you; while you are speaking, He will say, Behold, I am here. And if you take away the yoke, and the stretching out of the hand, and the word of murmuring; and give heartily your bread to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall your light arise in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday: and your God shall be with you continually, and you shall be satisfied according as your soul desires, and your bones shall become fat, and shall be as a watered garden, and as a fountain of water, or as a land where water does not fail."11 "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart,"12 as the words of God in all these passages demand. Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew, 1.202.

IRENAEUS: For they [the Gnostics] can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons—none, indeed, except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised the dead, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating the request with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints. *Against Heresies*, 1.407.

TATIAN: When you fast, do not frown, as the hypocrites; for they make their faces austere, so that they may be seen of men that they are fasting. Verily I

¹¹ Isa 58:1-12

¹² Cf. Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4

say to you, They have received their reward. But when you fast, wash your face and anoint your head; that you do not make an appearance before men of fasting, but to your Father which is in secret: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you. *The Diatessaron*, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: In regard to fasting it is said, "For what reason do you fast to me? says the Lord. Is it such a fast that I have chosen, even a day for a man to humble his soul? Do not bend your neck like a circle, and spread sackcloth and ashes under you. Do not call this an acceptable fast."

What is a fast, then? "Lo, this is the fast which I have chosen, says the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness. Dissolve the knots of oppressive contracts. Let the oppressed go free, and tear every unjust bond. Break your bread to the hungry; and lead the houseless poor into your house. If you see the naked cover him." *The Instructor*, 2.292-293.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Fasting with prayer is a good thing." ¹⁴ Now fasting signifies abstinence from all evils whatsoever, both in action and in word, and in thought itself. *The Stromata*, *2.503*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Christian knows also the enigmas of the fasting of those days—I mean the Fourth¹⁵ and the Preparation.¹⁶ . . . He fasts in his life, in respect of covetousness and voluptuousness, from which all the vices grow. For we have already often above shown the three varieties of fornication, according to the apostle—love of pleasure, love of money, idolatry. He fasts, then, according to the law, abstaining from bad deeds,¹⁷ and, according to the perfection of the Gospel, from evil thoughts. *The Stromata*, 2.544.

TERTULLIAN: We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Pascha¹⁸ to Pentecost. *The Chaplet*, 3.94.

TERTULLIAN: We kneel at other times, but on the Lord's day, and from the Paschal Feast to Pentecost we stand in prayer, nor do we count it lawful to fast on Sundays. *The Chaplet*, 3.103.

TERTULLIAN: Therefore Christ belonged to John, and John to Christ; while both belonged to the Creator, and both were of the law and the prophets, preachers

¹³ Isa 58:6-7

¹⁴ Tob 12:8

¹⁵ Wednesday

¹⁶ The word "Preparation" (or Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath) occurs in Matthew 27:62, etc., and for some time retained a place in Christian literature.

¹⁷ Isaiah 58

¹⁸ Also called Easter, the holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the Christian fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.

and masters. Else Christ would have rejected the discipline of John, as of the rival god, and would also have defended the disciples, as very properly pursuing a different walk, because consecrated to the service of another and contrary deity. But as it is, while modestly giving a reason why "the children of the bridegroom are unable to fast during the time the bridegroom is with them," but promising that "they should afterwards fast, when the bridegroom was taken away from them," He neither defended the disciples, (but rather excused them, as if they had not been blamed without some reason), nor rejected the discipline of John, but rather allowed it, referring it to the time of John, although destining it for His own time. Otherwise His purpose would have been to reject it, and to defend its opponents, if He had not Himself already belonged to it as then in force. *Against Marcion*, 3.360-361.

TERTULLIAN: Another custom has now become prevalent. Such as are fasting withhold the kiss of peace, 20 which is the seal of prayer, after prayer made with brethren. But when is peace more to be concluded with brethren than when, at the time of some religious observance such as fasting, our prayer ascends with more acceptability; that they may themselves participate in our observance, and thereby be appeased for transacting with their brother touching their own peace? What prayer is complete if divorced from the "holy kiss?" Whom does peace impede when rendering service to his Lord? What kind of sacrifice is that from which men depart without peace? Whatever our prayer be, it will not be better than the observance of the precept by which we are bidden to conceal our fasts; for now, by abstinence from the kiss, we are known to be fasting. But even if there be some reason for this practice, still, lest you offend against this precept, you may perhaps defer your "peace" at home, where it is not possible for your fast to be entirely kept secret. But wherever else you can conceal your observance, you ought to remember the precept: thus you may satisfy the requirements of discipline abroad and of custom at home. So, too, on the day of the Passover, when the religious observance of a fast is general, and as it were public, we justly forego the holy kiss, caring nothing to conceal anything which we do in common with all. Similarly, too, touching the days of Stations,²² most think that they must not be present at the sacrificial prayers, on the ground that the Station must be dissolved by reception of the Lord's Body. Does, then, the Eucharist cancel a service devoted to God, or bind it more to God? Will not your Station be more solemn if you have in addition stood at God's altar? On Prayer, 3 686-687

TERTULLIAN: At fasts, moreover, and Stations, no prayer should be made without kneeling, and the remaining customary marks of humility; for (then) we are not only praying, but deprecating, and making satisfaction to God our Lord. *On*

¹⁹ Lk 5:34-35

²⁰ See Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14.

²¹ See Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14

²² That is, special fast days.

Prayer, 3.689.

Tertullian: It is the affliction of the flesh—a victim able to appease the Lord by means of the sacrifice of humiliation—in making a libation to the Lord of sordid raiment, together with scantiness of food, content with simple diet and the pure drink of water in conjoining fasts to all this; in conditioning herself to sackcloth and ashes. This bodily patience adds a grace to our prayers for good, a strength to our prayers against evil; this opens the ears of Christ our God, dissipates severity, elicits clemency. . . . If the "spirit is willing, but the flesh," without patience, "weak," where, except in patience, is the safety of the spirit, and of the flesh itself? But when the Lord says this about the flesh, pronouncing it "weak," He shows what need there is of strengthening, it—that is by patience—to meet every preparation for subverting or punishing faith; that it may bear with all constancy stripes, fire, cross, beasts, sword; all which prophets and apostles, by enduring, conquered! *Of Patience*, *3.715-716*.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The passages below were written by TERTULLIAN to justify the extremes of Montanist fasts. Nevertheless, these quotations reveal much about the early Christians' beliefs and practices of fasting. In contrast to the early Church, the Montanists made various fasts obligatory.

TERTULLIAN: They think that fasting is to be indifferently observed, by the new discipline, of choice, not of command, according to the times and needs of each individual: that this, additionally, had been the observance of the apostles, imposing as they did no other yoke of definite fasts to be observed by all generally, nor similarly of Stations either, which have, besides, days of their own (the fourth and sixth days of the week), but yet take a wide range according to individual judgment, neither subject to the law of a given precept, nor to be protracted beyond the last hour of the day, since even prayers the ninth hour²⁴ generally concludes, after Peter's example, which is recorded in the Acts.²⁵ . . .

Meantime they huff in our teeth the fact that Isaiah has authoritatively declared, "Not such a fast has the Lord elected," that is, not abstinence from food, but the works of righteousness. ²⁶ On Fasting, 4.103. ²⁷

TERTULLIAN: They say that this duty of the stations ought to be observed of free choice, and not continued beyond the ninth hour, ²⁸—deriving their rule, of course, from their own practice. As to that which pertains to the question of injunction, I will once for all give a reply to suit all causes. Now, turning to the point which is proper to this particular cause—concerning the limit of time, I

²³ Mt 26:41

²⁴ 3:00pm

²⁵ Acts 3:1; 10:3

²⁶ Isa 58:3-7

²⁷ Montanist work.

²⁸ 3:00pm

mean—I must first demand from themselves from where they derive this prescriptive law for concluding stations at the ninth hour. If it is from the fact that we read that Peter and he who was with him entered the temple "at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer," who will prove to me that they had that day been performing a station, so as to interpret the ninth hour as the hour for the conclusion and discharge of the station? *On Fasting*, 4.108.30

TERTULLIAN: It is a customary practice for the bishops to issue mandates for fasts to the universal commonalty of the Church; I do not mean for the special purpose of collecting contributions of alms, as your beggarly fashion has it, but sometimes too from some particular cause of ecclesiastical care. *On Fasting*, 4.111.³¹

TERTULLIAN: If the Apostle has erased all devotion absolutely "of seasons, and days, and months, and years," why do we celebrate the Passover by an annual rotation in the first month? Why in the fifty ensuing days do we spend our time in all exultation? Why do we devote to stations the fourth and sixth days of the week, and to fasts the Preparation day? Anyhow, you sometimes continue your station even over the Sabbath,—a day never to be kept as a fast except at the Passover season. *On Fasting*, 4.112.37

VICTORINUS: Now is manifested the reason of the truth why the fourth day is called the Tetras, why we fast even to the ninth hour, 38 or even to the evening, or why there should be a passing over even to the next day. Therefore this world of ours is composed of four elements—fire, water, heaven, earth. These four elements, therefore, form the quaternion of times or seasons. The sun, also, and the moon constitute throughout the space of the year four seasons—of spring, summer, autumn, winter; and these seasons make a quaternion. And to proceed further still from that principle, lo, there are four living creatures before God's throne, four Gospels, four rivers flowing in paradise; four generations of people from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ the Lord, the Son of God; and four living creatures, viz., a man, a calf, a lion, an eagle; and four rivers, the Pison, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the

²⁹ Acts 3:1

³⁰ Montanist work.

³¹ Montanist work.

³² Gal 4:10

³³ Also called Pascha or Easter, the holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the Christian fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.

³⁴ Wednesday

³⁵ Friday

³⁶ The word "Preparation" (or Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath) occurs in Matthew 27:62, etc., and for some time retained a place in Christian literature.

³⁷ Montanist work.

^{38 3:00}pm

FASTING -- MATTHEW 6:16-18

Euphrates. The man Christ Jesus, the originator of these things whereof we have above spoken, was taken prisoner by wicked hands, by a quaternion of soldiers. Therefore on account of His captivity by a quaternion, on account of the majesty of His works,—that the seasons also, wholesome to humanity, joyful for the harvests, tranquil for the tempests, may roll on,—therefore we make the fourth day³⁹ a station or a supplementary fast. . . .

On this day also, the sixth day, on account of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we make either a station to God, or a fast. On the seventh day [Saturday] He rested from all His works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the *parasceve*⁴⁰ become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that "His soul hates;" which Sabbath He in His body abolished. *On the Creation of the World, 7.341-342.*

PETER OF ALEXANDRIA: No one shall find fault with us for observing the fourth day of the week, ⁴² and the Preparation, ⁴³ on which it is reasonably enjoined us to fast according to the tradition. On the fourth day, indeed, because on it the Jews took counsel for the betrayal of the Lord; and on the sixth, because on it He himself suffered for us. But the Lord's day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it He rose again, on which day we have received it for a custom not even to bow the knee. *The Canonical Epistle*, 6.278.

³⁹ Wednesday

⁴⁰ The day of preparation before the Jewish Sabbath.

⁴¹ Isa 1:13-14

⁴² Wednesday

The word "Preparation" (or Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath) occurs in Matthew 27:62, etc., and for some time retained a place in Christian literature.

Treasures in Heaven Matthew 6:19-21

[19] Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: LK 12:16-21; HEB 13:5; JAS 5:1-3

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: MT 19:21; LK 12:16-21, 33; 1 TIM 6:17-19

[21] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. LK 12:33-34

SUMMARY: Let your treasures be your good works, that you may receive the gift of God (IGNATIUS). Instead of lands, therefore, buy afflicted souls, according as each one is able, and visit widows and orphans, and do not overlook them; and spend your wealth and all your preparations, which you received from the Lord, upon such lands and houses. (HERMAS). The wealthy among us help the needy (JUSTIN MARTYR). Christians do not not acquire or possess treasures upon earth (IRENAEUS). He who has sold his worldly goods, and given them to the poor, finds the imperishable treasure, "where is neither moth nor robber" (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). There is a certain treasure on earth where the Lord forbids treasure to be stored up; there is another treasure in heaven where He commands all the faithful to lay up their wealth (ORIGEN). He sins, who, preferring himself and his children to Christ, preserves his wealth, and does not share an abundant estate with the poverty of the needy (CYPRIAN). Why do you fear to make a frail and perishable good everlasting, or to entrust your treasures to God as their preserver, in which case you do not need to fear thief and robber, nor rust, nor tyrant? (LACTANTIUS). The Lord tells us that he becomes perfect and complete who sells all his goods, and distributes them for the use of the poor, and so lays

TREASURES IN HEAVEN —MATTHEW 6:19-21

up for himself treasure in heaven (CYPRIAN). For where his treasure is, there also is the mind of a man (JUSTIN MARTYR, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). But where your heart shall be, there shall be your treasure (TERTULLIAN).

6:19ff IGNATIUS: Let your treasures be your good works, that you may receive the gift of God, as is just. *Epistle of Polycarp*, *1.100*.

HERMAS: He says to me, "You know that you who are the servants of God dwell in a strange land; for your city is far away from this one. 1 If, then," he continues, "you know your city in which you are to dwell, why do you provide lands here, and make expensive preparations, and accumulate dwellings and useless buildings? He who makes such preparations for this city cannot return again to his own. Oh foolish, and unstable, and miserable man!² Do you not understand that all these things belong to another, and are under the power of another? For the lord of this city will say, 'I do not wish for you to dwell in my city; but depart from this city, because you do not obey my laws.' You, therefore, although having fields and houses, and many other things, when cast out by him, what will you do with your land, and house, and other possessions which you have gathered to yourself? For the lord of this country justly says to you, 'Either obey my laws or depart from my dominion.' What, then, do you intend to do, having a law in your own city, on account of your lands, and the rest of your possessions? You shall altogether deny your law, and walk according to the law of this city. See lest it be to your hurt to deny your law; for if you shall desire to return to your city, you will not be received, because you have denied the law of your city, but will be excluded from it. Have a care, therefore: as one living in a foreign land, make no further preparations for yourself than such merely as may be sufficient; and be ready, when the master of this city shall come to cast you out for disobeying his law, to leave his city, and to depart to your own, and to obey your own law without being exposed to annoyance, but in great joy. Have a care, then, you who serve the Lord, and have Him in your heart, that you work the works of God, remembering His commandments and promises which He promised, and believe that He will bring them to pass if His commandments be observed. Instead of lands, therefore, buy afflicted souls, according as each one is able, and visit widows and orphans, and do not overlook them;³ and spend your wealth and all your preparations, which you received from the Lord, upon such lands and houses. For to this end did the Master make you rich, that you might perform these services to Him; and it is much better to purchase such lands, and possessions, and houses, as you will find in your own city, when you come to reside in it. This is a noble and sacred expenditure, attended neither with sorrow nor fear, but with joy. Do not practice the expenditure of the heathen, for it is injurious to you who are the servants of God; but practice an expenditure of your own, in which you can rejoice; and do not corrupt nor touch

¹ Heb 13:14; Phil 3:20

² See Luke 12:16-20

³ Cf. Jas 1:27

what is another's nor covet it, for it is an evil thing to covet the goods of other men; but work your own work, and you will be saved." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.31-32.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And that we should share with the needy, and do nothing for glory,⁴ He said, "Give to him that asks, and from him that would borrow do not turn away; for if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what new thing do you do? Even the publicans do this. Do not store up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where robbers break through; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for it?⁵ Lay up treasure, therefore, in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt." The First Apology, 1.167.

JUSTIN MARTYR: The wealthy among us help the needy. . . . And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who supports the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. *The First Apology, 1.185-186*.

IRENAEUS: "For we have been counted," says the Apostle Paul, "all the day long as sheep for the slaughter;" that is, consecrated to God, and ministering continually to our faith, and persevering in it, and abstaining from all avarice, and not acquiring or possessing treasures upon earth. Moreover, the Sabbath of God, that is, the kingdom, was, as it were, indicated by created things; in which kingdom, the man who shall have persevered in serving God shall, in a state of rest, partake of God's table. *Against Heresies*, 1.481.

TATIAN: Do not be agitated, little flock; for your Father has delighted to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give in alms; take to yourselves purses that do not wax old. Do not lay up treasure on earth, where moth and worm corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and worm do not corrupt, nor thieves break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. The Diatessaron, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The good man, being temperate and just, treasures up his wealth in heaven. He who has sold his worldly goods, and given them to the

⁴ Cf. Phil 2:3-4

⁵ Mt 16:26

⁶ Cf. Mt 16:26; Lk 6:30, 34

⁷ Rom 8:36

⁸ Lk 12:32-33

poor, finds the imperishable treasure, "where is neither moth nor robber." Blessed truly is he, "though he be insignificant, and feeble, and obscure;" and he is truly rich with the greatest of all riches. "Though a man, then, be richer than Cinyras and Midas, and is wicked," and haughty as he who was luxuriously clothed in purple and fine linen, and despised Lazarus, "he is miserable, and lives in trouble," and shall not live. Wealth seems to me to be like a serpent, which will twist round the hand and bite; unless one knows how to lay hold of it without danger by the point of the tail. And riches, wriggling either in an experienced or inexperienced grasp, are dexterous at adhering and biting; unless one, despising them, use them skilfully, so as to crush the creature by the charm of the Word, and himself escape unscathed. *The Instructor*; 2.280.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We have no country on earth, that we may despise earthly possessions. *The Instructor*, 2.281.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Do not lay up for yourselves, therefore, treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break through and steal," says the Lord, in reproach perchance of the covetous, and perchance also of those who are simply anxious and full of cares, and those too who indulge their bodies. For lovers, and diseases, and evil thoughts "break through" the mind and the whole man. But our true "treasure" is where what is allied to our mind is, since it bestows the communicative power of righteousness, showing that we must assign to the habit of our old conversation what we have acquired by it, and have recourse to God, beseeching mercy. He is, in truth, "the bag that does not wax old," the provisions of eternal life, "the treasure that does not fail in heaven." "For I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," says the Lord. And they say those things to those who wish to be poor for righteousness' sake. For they have heard in the commandment that "the broad and wide way leads to destruction, and many there are who go in by it." It is not of anything else that the assertion is made, but of extravagance, and love of women, and love of glory, and ambition, and similar passions. For so He says, "Fool, this night shall your soul be required of you; and whose shall those things be which you have prepared?"11 And the commandment is expressed in these very words, "Take heed, therefore, of covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of those things which he possesses. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"¹² The Stromata, 2.415.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Accordingly he has not forbidden us to be rich in the right way, but only a wrongful and insatiable grasping of money. For "property

⁹ Lk 12:33

¹⁰ Rom 9:15

¹¹ Lk 12:20

¹² Mt 16:26

gained unlawfully is diminished."¹³ "There are some who sow much and gain the more, and those who hoard become impoverished."¹⁴ Of them it is written: "He distributed, he gave to the poor, his righteousness endures for ever."¹⁵ For he who sows and gathers more is the man who by giving away his earthly and temporal goods has obtained a heavenly and eternal prize; the other is he who gives to no one, but vainly "**lays up treasure on earth where moth and rust corrupt**;" of him it is written: "In gathering income, he has gathered it into a condemned cell." Of his land the Lord says in the gospel that it produced plentifully; then wishing to store the fruits he built larger store-houses, saying to himself in the words dramatically put into his mouth "You have many good things laid up for many years to come, eat, drink, and be merry. You fool,"¹⁶ says the Lord, "this night your soul shall be required of you. Whose then shall be the things you have prepared?"¹⁷ *On Marriage*. ¹⁸

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For God has provided for us another life, and made the present life the way for the course which leads to it; appointing the supplies derived from what we possess merely as provisions for the way; and on our quitting this way, the wealth, consisting of the things which we possessed, journeys no farther with us. For not a single thing that we possess is properly our own: of one possession alone, that is godliness, are we properly owners. Of this, death, when it overtakes us, will not rob us; but from all else it will eject us. *Fragments*, 2.577.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Perhaps the reason of salvation appearing more difficult to the rich than to poor men, is not single but manifold. For some, merely hearing, and that in an off-hand way, the utterance of the Savior, "that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," despair of themselves as not destined to live, surrender all to the world, cling to the present life as if it alone was left to them, and so diverge more from the way to the life to come, no longer inquiring either whom the Lord and Master calls rich, or how that which is impossible to man becomes possible to God. But others rightly and adequately comprehend this, but attaching slight importance to the works which tend to salvation, do not make the requisite preparation for attaining to the objects of their hope. And I

¹³ Prov 13:11

¹⁴ Prov 11:24

¹⁵ Ps 112:9; 2 Cor 9:9

¹⁶ Lk 12:19

¹⁷ Lk 12:20

Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.6:56. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 66. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

¹⁹ Mt 19:24

affirm both of these things of the rich who have learned both the Savior's power and His glorious salvation. . . .

He indeed grants to those who beg, and teaches those who ask, and dissipates ignorance and dispels despair, by introducing again the same words about the rich, which become their own interpreters and infallible expounders. For there is nothing like listening again to the very same statements, which till now in the Gospels were distressing you, hearing them as you did without examination, and erroneously through childishness:

"And going forth into the way, one approached and kneeled, saying, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit everlasting life?'

"And Jesus said, 'Why do you call Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. You know the commandments. Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.'

"And he answering said to Him, 'All these I have observed.'

"And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him, and said, 'One thing you lack. If you would be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me.' And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he was rich, having great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and said to His disciples, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again, and said to them, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! More easily shall a camel enter through the eye of a needle than a rich man into the kingdom of God!

"And they were astonished out of measure, and said, 'Who then can be saved?'

"And He, looking upon them, said, 'What is impossible with men is possible with God. For with God all things are possible.'

"Peter began to say to Him, 'Look, we have left all and followed You.'

"And Jesus answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, Whoever leaves what is his own, parents, and brethren, and possessions, for My sake and the Gospel's, shall receive an hundred-fold now in this world, lands, and possessions, and house, and brethren, with persecutions; and in the world to come is life everlasting. But many that are first shall be last, and the last first." 20...

Jesus, accordingly, does not charge him with not having fulfilled all things out of the law, but loves him, and fondly welcomes his obedience in what he had learned; but says that he is not perfect as respects eternal life, inasmuch as he had not fulfilled what is perfect, and that he is a doer indeed of the law, but idle at the true life. Those things, indeed, are good. Who denies it? For the commandment is holy,"²¹ as far as a sort of training with fear and preparatory discipline goes, leading as it did to the culmination of legislation and to grace.²²

²⁰ Mk 10:17-31

²¹ Rom 7:12

²² Gal 3:24

But Christ is the fulfillment "of the law for righteousness to every one that believes;"²³ and not as a slave making slaves, but sons, and brethren, and fellowheirs, who perform the Father's will.

"If you will be perfect." Consequently he was not yet perfect. For nothing is more perfect than what is perfect. And divinely the expression "if you will" showed the self-determination of the soul holding converse with Him. For choice depended on the man as being free; but the gift on God as the Lord. And He gives to those who are willing and are exceedingly earnest, and ask, so that their salvation may become their own. For God does not compel (for compulsion is repugnant to God), but supplies to those who seek, and bestows on those who ask, and opens to those who knock. If you will, then, if you really will, and are not deceiving yourself, acquire what you lack. One thing is lacking to you,—the one thing which abides, the good, that which is now above the law, which the law does not give, which the law does not contain, which is the prerogative of those who live. He indeed who had fulfilled all the demands of the law from his youth, and had gloried in what was magnificent, was not able to complete the whole with this one thing which was specially required by the Savior, so as to receive the eternal life which he desired. But he departed displeased, vexed at the commandment of the life, on account of which he supplicated. For he did not truly wish life, as he asserted, but aimed at the mere reputation of the good choice. And he was capable of busying himself about many things; but the one thing, the work of life, he was powerless, and disinclined, and unable to accomplish. Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?, 2.591-594.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For if no one had anything, what room would be left among men for giving? And how can this dogma fail to be found plainly opposed to and conflicting with many other excellent teachings of the Lord? "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into the everlasting habitations."25 "Acquire treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, nor thieves break through." How could one give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and shelter the houseless, for not doing which He threatens with fire and the outer darkness, if each man first divested himself of all these things? Nay, He bids Zaccheus and Matthew, the rich tax-gathers, entertain Him hospitably. And He does not bid them part with their property, but, applying the just and removing the unjust judgment, He subjoins, "Today salvation has come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham."²⁶ He so praises the use of property as to enjoin, along with this addition, the giving a share of it, to give drink to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, to take the homeless in, and clothe the naked. But if it is not possible to supply those needs

²³ Rom 10:4

²⁴ Mt 19:21

²⁵ Lk 16:9

²⁶ Lk 19:9

without substance, and He bids people abandon their substance, what else would the Lord be doing than exhorting to give and not to give the same things, to feed and not to feed, to take in and to shut out, to share and not to share? which were the most irrational of all things. Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?, 2.594-595.

TERTULLIAN: Though we have our treasure-chest, it is not made up of purchase-money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary.²⁷ These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund. For they are not taken from there and spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another. *On Idolatry, 3.46*.

ORIGEN: In the Gospel it is said that there is a certain treasure on earth where the Lord forbids treasure to be stored up; there is another treasure in heaven where He commands all the faithful to lay up their wealth. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*²⁸

COMMODIANUS: If your brother should be weak—I speak of the poor man—do not empty-handed visit such an one as he lies ill. Do good under God; pay your obedience by your money. . . . And, similarly, if your poor sister lies upon a sickbed, let your matrons begin to carry food to her. God Himself cries out, "Break your bread to the needy." There is no need to visit with words, but with benefits. It is wicked that your brother should be sick through want of food. Do not satisfy him with words. He needs food and drink. Look upon such assuredly weakened, who are not able to act for themselves. Give to them at once. I pledge my word that fourfold shall be given you by God. *The Instructions of Commodianus in favor of Christian Discipline, Against the Gods of the Heathens*, 4.217.

CYPRIAN: Therefore in the Gospel, the Lord, the Teacher of our life and Master of eternal salvation, quickening the assembly of believers, and providing for them for ever when quickened, among His divine commands and precepts of

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 16:1-2

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 107. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

heaven, commands and prescribes nothing more frequently than that we should devote ourselves to almsgiving, and not depend on earthly possessions, but rather lay up heavenly treasures. "Sell," He says, "your goods, and give alms."²⁹ And again: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And when He wished to set forth a man perfect and complete by the observation of the law, He said, "If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."30 Moreover, in another place He says that a merchant of the heavenly grace, and a gainer of eternal salvation, ought to purchase the precious pearl—that is, eternal life—at the price of the blood of Christ, from the amount of his patrimony, parting with all his wealth for it. He says: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchantman seeking goodly pearls. And when he found a precious pearl, he went away and sold all that he had, and bought it."31 5.478.

CYPRIAN: You are wealthy and rich, and do you think that you celebrate the Lord's Supper, not at all considering the offering, who come to the Lord's Supper without a sacrifice, and yet take part of the sacrifice which the poor man has offered? Consider in the Gospel the widow that remembered the heavenly precepts, doing good even amidst the difficulties and straits of poverty, casting two mites, which were all that she had, into the treasury; whom when the Lord observed and saw, regarding her work not for its abundance, but for its intention, and considering not how much, but from how much, she had given, He answered and said, "Verily I say to you, that that widow has cast in more than they all into the offerings of God. For all these have, of that which they had in abundance, cast in to the offerings of God; but she of her poverty has cast in all the living that she had."32 Greatly blessed and glorious woman, who even before the day of judgment has merited to be praised by the voice of the Judge! Let the rich be ashamed of their barrenness and unbelief. The widow, the widow needy in means, is found rich in works. And although everything that is given is conferred upon widows and orphans, she gives, whom it behoved to receive, that we may know as a consequence what punishment, awaits the barren rich man, when by this very instance even the poor ought to labor in good works. And in order that we may understand that their labors are given to God, and that whoever performs them deserves well of the Lord, Christ calls this "the offerings of God," and intimates that the widow has cast in two farthings into the offerings of God, that it may be more abundantly evident that he who has pity on the poor lends to God.

²⁹ Lk 12:33

³⁰ Mt 19:21

³¹ Mt 13:45-46

³² Lk 21:34

But neither let the consideration, dearest brethren, restrain and recall the Christian from good and righteous works, that any one should fancy that he could be excused for the benefit of his children; since in spiritual expenditure we ought to think of Christ, who has declared that He receives them; and not prefer our fellow-servants, but the Lord, to our children, since He Himself instructs and warns us, saying, "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."33 . . . For if we love God with our whole heart, we ought not to prefer either our parents or children to God. And this also John lays down in his epistle, that the love of God is not in them whom we see unwilling to labor for the poor. "Whoever," he says, "has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels from him, how does the love of God dwell in him?" To if by almsgiving to the poor we are lending to God—and when it is given to the least it is given to Christ—there is no ground for any one preferring earthly things to heavenly, nor for considering human things before divine. . . .

So that from this it may appear how much he sins in the Church, who, preferring himself and his children to Christ, preserves his wealth, and does not share an abundant estate with the poverty of the needy. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.480-481.

LACTANTIUS: What shall I say of him [a certain pagan] who changed his possessions into money, which he threw into the sea? I doubt whether he was in his senses, or deranged. Away, he says, you evil desires, into the deep. I will cast you away, unless I myself should be cast away by you. If you have so great a contempt for money, employ it in acts of kindness and humanity, bestow it upon the poor; this, which you are about to throw away, may be a help to many others, so that they may not die through famine, or thirst, or nakedness. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.93.

LACTANTIUS: It is not virtue to seek riches. The Divine Institutes. 7.169.

LACTANTIUS: The ransoming of captives is a great and noble exercise of justice, of which the same Tullius also approved.³⁵ "And this liberality," he says, "is serviceable even to the state, that captives should be ransomed from slavery, and that those of slender resources should be provided for. And I greatly prefer this practice of liberality to lavish expenditure on shows. This is the part of great and eminent men." Therefore it is the appropriate work of the just to support the poor and to ransom captives, since among the unjust if any do these things they are called great and eminent. For it is deserving of the greatest praise for those to confer benefit from whom no one expected such conduct. For he who does good to a relative, or neighbor, or friend, either deserves no praise, or certainly no great praise, because he is bound to do it, and he would be impious and

³³ Mt 10:37

³⁴ 1 Jn 3:17

³⁵ De Officiis, ii. 18.

detestable if he did not do that which both nature itself and relationship require; and if he does it, he does it not so much for the sake of obtaining glory as of avoiding condemnation. But he who does it to a stranger and an unknown person, he truly is worthy of praise, because he was led to do it by kindness only. Justice therefore exists there, where there is no obligation of necessity for conferring a benefit. He ought not therefore to have preferred this duty of generosity to expenditure on shows; for this is the part of one making a comparison, and of two goods choosing that which is the better. For that profusion of men throwing away their property into the sea is vain and trifling, and very far removed from all justice. Therefore they are not even to be called gifts, in which no one receives but he who does not deserve to receive.

Nor is it less a great work of justice to protect and defend orphans and widows who are destitute and stand in need of assistance; and therefore that divine law prescribes this to all, since all good judges deem that it belongs to their office to favor them with natural kindness, and to strive to benefit them. But these works are especially ours, since we have received the law, and the words of God Himself giving us instructions. For they perceive that it is naturally just to protect those who need protection, but they do not perceive why it is so. For God, to whom everlasting mercy belongs, on this account commands that widows and orphans should be defended and cherished, that no one through regard and pity for his children should be prevented from undergoing death in behalf of justice and faith, but should encounter it with promptitude and boldness, since he knows that he leaves his beloved ones to the care of God, and that they will never lack protection. Also to undertake the care and support of the sick, who need some one to assist them, is the part of the greatest kindness, and of great beneficence; and he who shall do this will both gain a living sacrifice to God, and that which he has given to another for a time he will himself receive from God for eternity. The last and greatest office of piety is the burying of strangers and the poor; which subject those teachers of virtue and justice have not touched upon at all. For they were unable to see this, who measured all their duties by utility. For in the other things which have been mentioned above, although they did not keep the true path, yet, since they discovered some advantage in these things, retained as it were by a kind of inkling of the truth, they wandered to a less distance; but they abandoned this because they were unable to see any advantage in it. . . .

Some one will perhaps say: "If I shall do all these things, I shall have no possessions. For what if a great number of men shall be in need, shall suffer cold, shall be taken captive, shall die, since one who acts thus must deprive himself of his property even in a single day, shall I throw away the estate acquired by my own labor or by that of my ancestors, so that after this I myself must live by the pity of others?"

Why do you fear poverty, which even your philosophers praise, and bear witness that nothing is safer and nothing more calm than this? That which you fear is a haven against anxieties. Do you not know to how many dangers, to how many accidents, you are exposed with these evil resources? These will treat you

well if they shall pass without your bloodshed. But you walk about laden with booty, and you bear spoils which may excite the minds even of your own relatives. Why, then, do you hesitate to lay that out well which perhaps a single robbery will snatch away from you, or a denunciation suddenly arising, or the plundering of an enemy? Why do you fear to make a frail and perishable good everlasting, or to entrust your treasures to God as their preserver, in which case you need not fear thief and robber, nor rust, nor tyrant? He who is rich towards God can never be poor. If you esteem justice so highly, lay aside the burdens which press you, and follow it; free yourself from fetters and chains, that you may run to God without any impediment. It is the part of a great and lofty mind to despise and trample upon mortal affairs. But if you do not comprehend this virtue, that you may bestow your riches upon the altar of God, in order that you may provide for yourself firmer possessions than these frail ones, I will free you from fear. All these precepts are not given to you alone, but to all the people who are united in mind, and hold together as one man. If you are not adequate to the performance of great works alone, cultivate justice with all your power, in such a manner, however, that you may excel others in work as much as you excel them in riches. And do not think that you are advised to lessen or exhaust your property; but that which you would have expended on superfluities, turn to better uses. Devote to the ransoming of captives that from which you purchase beasts; maintain the poor with that from which you feed wild beasts; bury the innocent dead with that from which you provide men for the sword.³⁶ The Divine Institutes, 7.176-178.

6:20ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For he that is fired with enthusiasm and admiration for righteousness, being the lover of One who needs nothing, needs himself but little, having treasured up his bliss in nothing but himself and God, where is neither moth, robber, nor pirate, but the eternal Giver of good. *Exhortation to the Heathen*, 2.201.

ORIGEN: There is the person who is wise and rich in relation to God³⁷ and who, though he lives on earth, has his citizenship in heaven.³⁸ Everything he does is worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Such a person lays up the treasures of his riches in heaven. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*³⁹

CYPRIAN: They used to give for sale houses and estates; and that they might lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, presented to the apostles the price of

That is, gladiators purchased from a trainer for the entertainment of the people.

³⁷ Lk 12:21

³⁸ cf. Phil 3:20

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 107. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

them, to be distributed for the use of the poor. 40 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.429.

CYPRIAN: You say that you are wealthy and rich, and you think that you should use those things which God has willed you to possess. Use them, certainly, but for the things of salvation; use them, but for good purposes; use them, but for those things which God has commanded, and which the Lord has set forth. Let the poor feel that you are wealthy; let the needy feel that you are rich. Lend your estate to God; give food to Christ. Move Him by the prayers of many to grant you to carry out the glory of virginity, and to succeed in coming to the Lord's rewards. There entrust your treasures, where no thief digs through, where no insidious plunderer breaks in. Prepare for yourself possessions; but let them rather be heavenly ones, where neither rust wears out, nor hail bruises, nor sun burns, nor rain spoils your fruits constant and perennial, and free from all contact of worldly injury. For in this very matter you are sinning against God, if you think that riches were given you by Him for this purpose, to enjoy them thoroughly, without a view to salvation. For God gave man also a voice; and yet love-songs and indecent things are not on that account to be sung. And God willed iron to be for the culture of the earth, but not on that account must murders be committed. Or because God ordained incense, and wine, and fire, are we then to sacrifice to idols? Or because the flocks of cattle abound in your fields, should you sacrifice victims and offerings to the gods? Otherwise a large estate is a temptation, unless the wealth minister to good uses; so that every man, in proportion to his wealth, ought by his patrimony rather to redeem his transgressions than to increase them. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.433.

CYPRIAN: A blind love of one's own property has deceived many; nor could they be prepared for, or at ease in, departing when their wealth fettered them like a chain. Those were the chains to them that remained—those were the bonds by which both virtue was retarded, and faith burdened, and the spirit bound, and the soul hindered; so that they who were involved in earthly things might become a booty and food for the serpent, which, according to God's sentence, feeds upon earth. And therefore the Lord the teacher of good things, forewarning for the future time, says, "If you will be perfect, go, sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."41 If rich men did this, they would not perish by their riches; if they laid up treasure in heaven, they would not now have a domestic enemy and assailant. Heart and mind and feeling would be in heaven, if the treasure were in heaven; nor could he be overcome by the world who had nothing in the world whereby he could be overcome. He would follow the Lord loosed and free, as did the apostles, and many in the times of the apostles, and many who forsook both their means and their relatives, and cleaved to Christ with undivided ties.

But how can they follow Christ, who are held back by the chain of their

⁴⁰ Acts 4:32-37

⁴¹ Mt 19:21

wealth? Or how can they seek heaven, and climb to sublime and lofty heights, who are weighed down by earthly desires? They think that they possess, when they are rather possessed; as slaves of their profit, and not lords with respect to their own money, but rather the bond-slaves of their money. These times and these men are indicated by the apostle, when he says, "But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and in perdition. For the root of all evil is the love of money, which, while some have coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."42 But with what rewards does the Lord invite us to contempt of worldly wealth? With what compensations does He atone for the small and trifling losses of this present time? "There is no man," He says, "that leaves house, or land, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, but he shall receive seven fold even in this time, but in the world to come life everlasting."43 If we know these things, and have found them out from the truth of the Lord who promises, not only is not loss of this kind to be feared, but even to be desired; as the Lord Himself again announces and warns us, "Blessed are you when men shall persecute you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall cast you out, and shall speak of your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."44 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.440.

CYPRIAN: He teaches us that riches are not only to be regarded with contempt, but that they are also full of peril; that in them is the root of seducing evils, that deceive the blindness of the human mind by a hidden deception. From which also God rebukes the rich fool, who thinks of his earthly wealth, and boasts himself in the abundance of his overflowing harvests, saying, "You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; then whose shall those things be which you have provided?"45 The fool who was to die that very night was rejoicing in his stores, and he to whom life already was failing, was thinking of the abundance of his food. But, on the other hand, the Lord tells us that he becomes perfect and complete who sells all his goods, and distributes them for the use of the poor, and so lays up for himself treasure in heaven. He says that that man is able to follow Him, and to imitate the glory of the Lord's passion, who, free from hindrance, and with his loins girded, is involved in no entanglements of worldly estate, 46 but, at large and free himself, accompanies his possessions, which before have been sent to God. For which result, that every one of us may be able to prepare himself, let him thus learn to pray, and know, from the character of the prayer, what he ought to be. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.453.

^{42 1} Tim 6:9-10

⁴³ Mk 10:29

⁴⁴ Lk 6:22-23

⁴⁵ Lk 12:20

^{46 2} Tim 2:4

CYPRIAN: When one has pity on the poor, he lends to God. And he who gives to the least, gives to God. These are spiritual sacrifices to God, an odor of a sweet smell. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.456.

CYPRIAN: Break your bread to the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your dwelling. If you see the naked, clothe him; and do not despise them of your own seed in your house. Then your seasonable light shall break forth, and your garments shall quickly arise; and righteousness shall go before you: and the glory of God shall surround you. Then you shall cry out, and God will hear you; while you are yet speaking, He shall say, 'Here I am.'" 47

Concerning this same thing in Job: "I have preserved the needy from the hand of the mighty; and I have helped the orphan, to whom there was no helper. The mouth of the widow blessed me, since I was the eye of the blind; I was also the foot of the lame, and the father of the weak." 48

Of this same matter in Tobit: "And I said to Tobias, 'My son, go and bring whatever poor man you find out of our brethren, who still has God in mind with his whole heart. Bring him here, and he shall eat my dinner together with me. Behold, I attend you, my son, until you come." Also in the same place: "All the days of your life, my son, keep God in mind, and do not transgress His precepts. Do justice all the days of your life, and do not walk in the way of unrighteousness; because if you act truly, there will be respect of your works. Give alms of your substance, and do not turn your face from any poor man. So shall it come to pass that the face of God shall not be turned away from you. Even as you have, my son, so do: if you have abundant substance, give the more alms therefrom; if you have little, share even of that little. And do not fear when you give alms: you lay up for yourself a good reward against the day of need; because alms deliver from death, and does not suffer to go into darkness. Alms is a good office for all who do it in the sight of the most high God." 50

On this same subject in Solomon in Proverbs: "He that has pity on the poor lends to the Lord."⁵¹ Also in the same place: "He that gives to the poor shall never lack; but he who turns away his eye shall be in much poverty."⁵² Also in the same place: "Sins are purged away by alms-giving and faith."⁵³ Again, in the same place: "If your enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him to drink: for by doing this you will scatter live coals upon his head."⁵⁴ Again, in the same place: "As water extinguishes fire, so alms-giving extinguishes sin."⁵⁵ In the same in Proverbs: "Do not say, 'Go away, and return, tomorrow I will give;'

⁴⁷ Isa 58:1-9

⁴⁸ Job 29:12-16

¹⁹ Tob 2:2

⁵⁰ Tob 4:5-11

Prov 19:17

⁵² Prov 28:27

⁵³ Cf. Tob 12:9; Prov 16:6

⁵⁴ Prov 25:21

⁵⁵ Sir 3:30

when you can do good immediately. For you do not know what may happen on the coming day."⁵⁶ Also in the same place: "He who stops his ears so that he may not hear the weak, shall himself call upon God, and there shall be none to hear him."⁵⁷ Also in the same place: "He who has his behavior without reproach in righteousness, leaves blessed children."⁵⁸ In the same in Ecclesiasticus: "My son, if you have, do good by yourself, and present worthy offerings to God; remember that death does not delay."⁵⁹ Also in the same place: "Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and this will entreat for you from all evil."⁶⁰

Concerning this thing in the thirty-sixth Psalm, that mercy is beneficial also to one's posterity: "I have been young, and I have also grown old; and I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread. The whole day he is merciful, and lends; and his seed is in blessing." Of this same thing in the fortieth Psalm: "Blessed is he who considers over the poor and needy: in the evil day God will deliver him." Also in the 112th Psalm: "He has distributed, he has given to the poor; his righteousness shall remain from generation to generation."

Of this same thing in Hosea: "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than whole burnt-offerings." ⁶⁴

Of this same thing also in the Gospel according to Matthew: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied." Also in the same place: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Also in the same place: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not dig through and steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Also in the same place: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: and when he has found a precious pearl, he went away and sold all that he had, and bought it." That even a small work is of advantage, also in the same place: "And whoever shall give to drink to one of the least of these a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say to you, his reward shall not perish." ...

Also in the same place: "When the Son of man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then He shall sit on the throne of His glory: and all nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, even as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats: and He

⁵⁶ Prov 3:28

⁵⁷ Prov 21:13

⁵⁸ Prov 20:7

⁵⁹ Sir 14:11-12

⁶⁰ Sir 29:12

⁶¹ Ps 37:25-26

⁶² Ps 41:1

⁶³ Ps 112:9

⁶⁴ Hos 6:6

⁶⁵ Mt 13:45-46

⁶⁶ Mt 10:42

shall place the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left hand. Then the King will say to them that are on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then shall the righteous answer Him, and say, 'Lord, when did we see You a stranger, and took You in: naked, and clothed You? And when did we see You sick, and in prison, and came to You?' And the King, answering, shall say to them, 'Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then He will say to them who are on His left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father has prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink: I was a stranger, and you did not take me in: I was naked, and you did not clothe me: sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.' Then shall they also answer, and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You?' And He will answer them, 'Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these shall go away into everlasting burning: but the righteous into life eternal."67

Concerning this same matter in the Gospel according to Luke: "Sell your possessions, and give alms." Also in the same place: "He who made that which is within, made that which is without also. But give alms, and, behold, all things are pure to you." Also in the same place: "Behold, the half of my substance I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore him fourfold.' And Jesus said to Zacchaeus, 'Today salvation has been come to this house, since he is also a son of Abraham."

Of this same thing also in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Let your abundance supply their lack, that their abundance also may be the supplement of your lack, that there may be equality: as it is written, 'He who had much did not have excess; and he who had little had no lack." Also in the same place: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows in blessing will also reap of blessing. But let every one do as he has proposed in his heart: not as if sorrowfully, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver." Also in the same place: "As it is written, He has dispersed abroad; he has given to the poor: his righteousness remains forever." Likewise in the same place: "Now he who ministers seed to the sower, shall both supply bread to be eaten, and shall multiply your seed, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of your

⁶⁷ Mt 25:31-46

⁶⁸ Lk 12:33

⁶⁹ Lk 11:40-41

⁷⁰ Lk 19:8-9

⁷¹ 2 Cor 8:14-15

⁷² 2 Cor 9:6-7

⁷³ 2 Cor 9:9

righteousness: that in all things you may be made rich."⁷⁴ Also in the same place: "The administration of this service has not only supplied that which is lacking to the saints, but has abounded by much giving of thanks to God."⁷⁵

Of this same matter in the Epistle of John: "Whoever has this world's substance, and sees his brother desiring, and shuts up his bowels from him, how does the love of God dwell in him?" ⁷⁶

Of this same thing in the Gospel according to Luke: "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends, nor brethren, nor neighbors, nor the rich; lest perhaps they also invite you again, and a recompense be made for you. But when you make a banquet, call the poor, the weak, the blind, and lame: and you will be blessed; because they do not have the means of rewarding you: but you will be recompensed in the resurrection of the just." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.531-532.

LACTANTIUS: Money is to be despised, and to be transferred to heavenly treasures, where neither thief can break through, nor rust corrupt, nor tyrant take away, but it may be preserved for us under the guardianship of God to our eternal wealth. *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes, 7.250*

6:21 Justin Martyr: For where his treasure is, there also is the mind of a man. *The First Apology, 1.168.*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Christian, too, while doing the most excellent things, wishes to elude the notice of men, persuading the Lord along with himself that he is living in accordance with the commandments, preferring these things from believing them to exist. "For where any one's mind is, there also is his treasure."

He impoverishes himself, in order that he may never overlook a brother who has been brought into affliction, through the perfection that is in love, especially if he knows that he will bear want himself easier than his brother. He considers, accordingly, the other's pain his own grief; and if, by contributing from his own poverty in order to do good, he suffer any hardship, he does not fret at this, but increases his charity still more. For he possesses in its sincerity the faith which is exercised in reference to the affairs of life, and praises the Gospel in practice and contemplation. And, in truth, he wins his praise "not from men, but from God," by the performance of what the Lord has taught. *The Stromata*, 2.545.

MARK MINUCIUS FELIX: Rich men, attached to their means, have been accustomed to gaze more upon their gold than upon heaven, while our sort of

⁷⁴ 2 Cor 9:10-11

⁷⁵ 2 Cor 9:12

⁷⁶ 1 Jn 3:17

⁷⁷ Lk 14:12-14

⁷⁸ Rom 2:29

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people [i.e. Christians], though poor, have both discovered wisdom, and have delivered their teaching to others. *The Octavius of Minucius Felix, 4.181*.

TERTULLIAN: The mind compasses the whole man about, and wherever it wills it carries him. But where your heart shall be, there shall be your treasure. *Ad Martyras*, 3.694

The Light of the Body Matthew 6:22-23

[22] The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. LK 11:34-36

[23] But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! DEUT 15:9; 28:54-56; PROV 23:1-7; 28:22; MT 20:15; MK 7:22; LK 11:34-36

SUMMARY: In the Old Testament, an "evil eye" was a metaphor for being stingy or covetous (see Deuteronomy 15:9; 28:54-56; Proverbs 23:1-7; 28:22). Unfortunately there is little commentary on this passage within the ANF, apart from a fragment *On the Gospel of Matthew* which is considered a spurious writing, attributed to Gregory Thaumaturgus. "For the light of the body is the eye," says the Scripture, by which the interior illuminated by the shining light

[&]quot;The single eye is the love unfeigned; for when the body is enlightened by it, it sets forth through the medium of the outer members only things which are perfectly correspondent with the inner thoughts. But the evil eye is the pretended love, which is also called hypocrisy, by which the whole body of the man is made darkness. We have to consider that deeds meet only for darkness may be within the man, while through the outer members he may produce words that seem to be of the light: for there are those who are in reality wolves, though they may be covered with sheep's clothing. Such are they who wash only the outside of the cup and platter, and do not understand that, unless the inside of these things is cleansed, the outside itself cannot be made pure. Wherefore, in manifest confutation of such persons, the Savior says: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" That is to say, if the love which seems to thee to be light is really a work meet for darkness, by reason of some hypocrisy concealed in thee, what must be thy patent transgressions!" (ANF 6.74).

appears (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). To see God belongs to the pure heart, out of which no longer proceeds an "evil eye" (ORIGEN).

6:22ff TATIAN: The lamp of the body is the eye: if your eye is sound, your whole body also shall be light. But if your eye be evil, all your body shall be dark. And if the light which is in you is darkness, how great is your darkness! Be watchful that the light which is in you is not darkness. Because if your whole body is light, and has no part dark, it shall all be light, as the lamp gives light to you with its flame. The Diatessaron, 9.58.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Feminine motions, dissoluteness, and luxury, are to be entirely prohibited. . . . The steps of harlotry do not lean to the truth; for they do not approach the paths of life. Her tracks are dangerous, and not easily known.³ The eyes especially are to be sparingly used, since it is better to slip with the feet than with the eyes. Accordingly, the Lord very summarily cures this malady: "If your eye offends you, cut it out," He says, dragging lust up from the foundation. But languishing looks, and ogling, which is to wink with the eyes, is nothing else than to commit adultery with the eyes, lust skirmishing through them. For of the whole body, the eyes are first destroyed. "The eye contemplating beautiful objects, gladdens the heart;" that is, the eye which has learned rightly to see, gladdens. "Winking with the eye, with guile, heaps woes on men." Such they introduce the effeminate Sardanapalus, king of the Assyrians, sitting on a couch with his legs up, fumbling at his purple robe, and casting up the whites of his eyes. Women that follow such practices, by their looks offer themselves for prostitution. "For the light of the body is the eye," says the Scripture, by which the interior illuminated by the shining light appears. Fornication in a woman is in the raising of the eyes.⁵ The Instructor, 2.288.

6:23 ORIGEN: To see God belongs to the pure heart, out of which no longer proceed "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, the evil eye," or any other evil thing. Against Celsus, 4.624.

Lk 11:35-36

³ Cf. Prov 5:5-6

⁴ Prov 10:10

⁵ Sir 26:9

⁶ Cf. Mt 15:19; Mk 7:21-22

You Cannot Serve God and Riches Matthew 6:24

124] No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. MT 13:22; 19:23-24; LK 6:24; 16:1-13; 1 TIM 6:8-10, 17-18; HEB 13:5; JAS 1:10-11; 4:4; 5:1-6; 1 JN 2:15-16; REV 3:17-18

SUMMARY: If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen (POLYCARP). Do not be money-loving (THE DIDACHE). If we desire to serve both God and mammon, it will be unprofitable for us (SECOND CLEMENT). Those who are rich in this world cannot be useful to the Lord unless their riches be cut down (HERMAS). We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and share to every one in need (JUSTIN MARTYR). No man can serve two masters: and that is because it is necessary that he hate one of them and love the other, and honor one of them and despise the other. You cannot serve God and possessions (TATIAN). Mammon is a covetous man, and one who wishes to have more than he ought to have or one whose gullet is insatiable (IRENAEUS). Mammon is not simply money, but the resources arising from money bestowed on various pleasures (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). By mammon He meant money (TERTULLIAN). Luxury and the short-lived joys of the world are ruining you, from which you will be tormented in hell for all time (COMMODIANUS). We would rather despise riches than possess them (MARK MINUCIUS FELIX). The two laws, the law of God and the law of mammon, are completely opposed to each other (ORIGEN). Wealth must be avoided as an enemy (CYPRIAN). Luxury does not entertain the fear of God (NOVATIAN). They have shown themselves the servants of God, inasmuch as they have hated,

trodden under foot, and despised money (Peter of Alexandria).

6:24 POLYCARP: "But the love of money is the root of all evils." Knowing, therefore, that "as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out," let us arm ourselves with the armor of righteousness and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. . . . Be far from all slandering, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, love of money, and every kind of evil; knowing that they are the altar of God, that He clearly perceives all things, and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor any one of the secret things of the heart. *Epistle to the Philippians*, 1.34.

POLYCARP: I exhort you, therefore, that you abstain from covetousness, and that you be chaste and truthful. "Abstain from every form of evil." For if a man cannot govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.35*.

THE DIDACHE: My child, do not be a liar, since a lie leads the way to theft; neither money-loving, nor vainglorious, for out of all these thefts are engendered. 7.378.

SECOND CLEMENT: Now the Lord declares, "No servant can serve two masters." If we desire, then, to serve both God and mammon, it will be unprofitable for us. "For what will it profit if a man gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This world and the next are two enemies. The one urges to adultery and corruption, avarice and deceit; the other bids farewell to these things. We cannot, therefore, be the friends of both; and it behooves us, by renouncing the one, to make sure of the other. Let us reckon that it is better to hate the things present, since they are trifling, and transient, and corruptible; and to love those which are to come, as being good and incorruptible. For if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; otherwise, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we disobey His commandments. For thus also says the Scripture in Ezekiel, "If Noah, Job, and Daniel should rise up, they should not deliver their children in captivity."6 Now, if men so eminently righteous are not able by their righteousness to deliver their children, how can we hope to enter into the royal residence of God unless we keep our baptism holy and undefiled? Or who shall be our advocate, unless we be found possessed of works of holiness and righteousness? 9.252.

¹ 1 Tim 6:10

² 1 Tim 6:7

³ Cf. Eph 6:11

⁴ 1 Thess 5:22

⁵ Mt 16:26; Lk 16:13

⁶ Ezek 14:14, 20

HERMAS: "But who are these, Lady, that are white and round, and yet do not fit into the building of the tower?" . . .

"These are those who have faith indeed, but they have also the riches of this world. When, therefore, tribulation comes, on account of their riches and business they deny the Lord."

I answered and said to her, "When, then, will they be useful for the building, Lady?"

"When the riches that now seduce them have been circumscribed, then they will be of use to God. For as a round stone cannot become square unless portions be cut off and cast away, so also those who are rich in this world cannot be useful to the Lord unless their riches be cut down." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.15.

HERMAS: Foremost of all is the evil desire after another's wife or husband, and after extravagance, and many useless dainties and drinks, and many other foolish luxuries; for all luxury is foolish and empty in the servants of God. These, then, are the evil desires which slay the servants of God. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.28.

HERMAS: Refrain from much business, and you will never sin: for they who are occupied with much business commit also many sins, being distracted about their affairs, and not at all serving their Lord. * The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.33.

HERMAS: "He who indulges in luxury, and is deceived for one day, and who does what he wishes, is clothed with much foolishness, and does not understand the act which he does until the morrow; for he forgets what he did the day before. For luxury and deceit have no memories, on account of the folly with which they are clothed; but when punishment and torture cleave to a man for one day, he is punished and tortured for a year; for punishment and torture have powerful memories. While tortured and punished, therefore, for a whole year, he remembers at last his luxury and deceit, and knows that on their account he suffers evil. Every man, therefore, who is luxurious and deceived is thus tormented, because, although having life, they have given themselves over to death."

"What kinds of luxury, sir," I asked, "are hurtful?"

"Every act of a man which he performs with pleasure is an act of luxury; for the sharp-tempered man, when gratifying his tendency, indulges in luxury; and the adulterer, and the drunkard, and the back-biter, and the liar, and the covetous man, and the thief, and he who does things like these, gratifies his peculiar propensity, and in so doing indulges in luxury. All these acts of luxury are hurtful to the servants of God. On account of these deceits, therefore, do they suffer, who are punished and tortured. And there are also acts of luxury which

⁷ Cf. Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19

⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 7:30-35; Rom 12:11

save men; for many who do good indulge in luxury, being carried away by their own pleasure: this luxury, however, is beneficial to the servants of God, and gains life for such a man; but the injurious acts of luxury before enumerated bring tortures and punishment upon them; and if they continue in them and do not repent, they bring death upon themselves." *The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.38*.

HERMAS: These are they that are mixed up in business and do not cleave to the saints. Therefore the one half of them lives, but the other half is dead. Many, accordingly, who heard my commands repented, and those at least who repented had their dwelling in the tower. But some of them at last fell away: these, accordingly, do not have repentance, for on account of their business they blasphemed the Lord, and denied Him. They therefore lost their lives through the wickedness which they committed. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.42.

HERMAS: Some of them are wealthy and others are entangled in many business affairs. ¹⁰ The briars are the wealthy, and the thorns are they that are mixed up in various business affairs. These then, that are mixed up in many and various business affairs, do not cleave to the servants of God, but go astray, being choked by their affairs, ¹¹ but the wealthy unwillingly cleave to the servants of God, fearing lest they may be asked for something by them. Such men therefore shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God. For as it is difficult to walk on briars with bare feet, so also it is difficult for such men to enter the kingdom of God. ¹² *The Shepherd of Hermas, 2.50.*

HERMAS: Their riches had obscured and darkened them a little from the truth, although they never departed from God; nor did any evil word proceed out of their mouth, but all justice, virtue, and truth. When the Lord, therefore, saw the mind of these persons, that they were born good, and could be good, He ordered their riches to be cut down, not to be taken away forever, that they might be able to do some good with what was left them. . . .

Now this age must be cut down in these things, and in the vanities of their riches, and then they will meet in the kingdom of God; for they must of necessity enter into the kingdom of God. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.53.

JUSTIN MARTYR: We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and share to every one in need. *The First Apology, 1.167.*

TATIAN: Wealth, when not properly governed, is a stronghold of evil, about which many casting their eyes, they will never reach the kingdom of heaven, sick for the things of the world, and living proudly through luxury. But those

⁹ Cf. Mk 4:19; Lk 4:18

¹⁰ Cf. 2 Tim 2:4

¹¹ Cf. Mt 13:22: Mk 4:19

¹² Cf. Mt 19:24; Mk 10:24; Lk 18:42

who are wholehearted about salvation must settle this beforehand in their mind, "that all that we possess is given to us for use, and use for sufficiency, which one may attain to by a few things." For silly are they who, from greed, take delight in what they have hoarded up. "He that gathers wages," it is said, "gathers into a bag with holes." Such is he who gathers corn and shuts it up; and he who gives to no one, becomes poorer. 14 . . .

Love of money is found to be the stronghold of evil, which the apostle says "is the root of all evils, which, while some coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." ¹⁵ . . .

I do not wish to be a king; I am not anxious to be rich; I decline military command; I detest fornication; I am not impelled by an insatiable love of gain to go to sea; I do not contend for chaplets; 16 I am free from a mad thirst for fame; I despise death; I am superior to every kind of disease; grief does not consume my soul. Am I a slave, I endure servitude. Am I free, I do not make a vaunt of my good birth. I see that the same sun is for all, and one death for all, whether they live in pleasure or destitution. The rich man sows, and the poor man partakes of the same sowing. The wealthiest die, and beggars have the same limits to their life. The rich lack many things, and are glorious only through the estimation they are held in; but the poor man and he who has very moderate desires, seeking as he does only the things suited to his lot, more easily obtains his purpose. How is it that you are fated to be sleepless through avarice? Why are you fated to grasp at things often, and often to die? Die to the world, repudiating the madness that is in it. Live to God, and by apprehending Him lay aside your old nature. We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our freewill has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God; we ourselves have manifested wickedness; but we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it. Address to the Greeks, 2,69-70.

TATIAN: No man can serve two masters; and that is because it is necessary that he hate one of them and love the other, and honor one of them and despise the other. You cannot serve God and possessions. *The Diatessaron*, 9.59.

IRENAEUS: "You cannot serve two masters," He does Himself interpret, saying, "You cannot serve God and mammon;" acknowledging God indeed as God, but mentioning mammon, a thing also having an existence. He does not call mammon Lord when He says, "You cannot serve two masters;" but He teaches His disciples who serve God, not to be subject to mammon, nor to be ruled by it. For He says, "He that commits sin is the slave of sin." Inasmuch, then, as He

¹³ Hag 1:6

¹⁴ Cf. Lk 12:20

^{15 1} Tim 6:10

¹⁶ A garland or wreath for a person's head.

¹⁷ Jn 8:34

terms those "the slaves of sin" who serve sin, but does not certainly call sin itself God, thus also He terms those who serve mammon "the slaves of mammon," not calling mammon God. For mammon is, according to the Jewish language, which the Samaritans do also use, a covetous man, and one who wishes to have more than he ought to have. But according to the Hebrew, it is by the addition of a syllable (adjunctive) called Mamuel, and signifies *gulosum*, that is, one whose gullet is insatiable. Therefore, according to both these things which are indicated, we cannot serve God and mammon. *Against Heresies*, 1.421.

IRENAEUS: The Lord Himself exhibits Abraham as having said to the rich man, with reference to all those who were still alive: "If they do not obey Moses and the prophets, neither, if any one were to rise from the dead and go to them, will they believe him." Now, He has not merely related to us a story respecting a poor man and a rich one; but He has taught us, in the first place, that no one should lead a luxurious life, nor, living in worldly pleasures and perpetual feastings, should be the slave of his lusts, and forget God. "For there was," He says, "a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and delighted himself with splendid feasts." Of such persons, too, the Spirit has spoken by Isaiah: "They drink wine with the accompaniment of harps, and tablets, and psalteries, and flutes; but they do not regard the works of God, neither do they consider the work of His hands." Lest, therefore, we should incur the same punishment as these men, the Lord reveals to us their end. *Against Heresies*, 1.464.

IRENAEUS: For in some cases there follows us a small, and in others a large amount of property, which we have acquired from the mammon of unrighteousness. For from what source do we derive the houses in which we dwell, the garments in which we are clothed, the vessels which we use, and everything else ministering to our every-day life, unless it be from those things which, when we were Gentiles, we acquired by avarice, or received them from our heathen parents, relations, or friends who unrighteously obtained them?—not to mention that even now we acquire such things when we are in the faith. For who is there that sells, and does not wish to make a profit from him who buys? Or who purchases anything, and does not wish to obtain good value from the seller? Or who is there that carries on a trade, and does not do so that he may obtain a livelihood thereby? And as to those believing ones who are in the royal palace, do they not derive the utensils they employ from the property which belongs to Caesar; and to those who do not have, does not each one of these Christians give according to his ability? . . .

God dwells in those who act uprightly, as the Lord says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they, when you shall

¹⁸ Lk 16:31

¹⁹ Lk 16:19

²⁰ Isa 5:12

be put to flight, may receive you into eternal tabernacles."²¹ For whatsoever we acquired from unrighteousness when we were heathen, we are proved righteous, when we have become believers, by applying it to the Lord's advantage. *Against Heresies*, 1.502-504.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The bastard, who is a son of perdition, is foredoomed to be the slave of mammon. *Exhortation to the Heathen*, *2.198*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Wealth, when not properly governed, is a stronghold of evil, about which many casting their eyes, they will never reach the kingdom of heaven, 22 sick for the things of the world, and living proudly through luxury. But those who are in earnest about salvation must settle this beforehand in their mind, "that all that we possess is given to us for use, and use for sufficiency, which one may attain to by a few things." For silly are they who, from greed, take delight in what they have hoarded up. "He that gathers wages," it is said, "gathers into a bag with holes." Such is he who gathers corn and shuts it up; and he who gives to no one, becomes poorer.

It is a farce, and a thing to make one laugh outright, for men to bring in silver urinals and crystal chamber pots, as they usher in their counsellors, and for silly rich women to get gold receptacles for excrements made; so that being rich, they cannot even ease themselves except in superb way. I would that in their whole life they deemed gold fit for dung.

But now love of money is found to be the stronghold of evil, which the apostle says "is the root of all evils, which, while some coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."²⁴

But the best riches is poverty of desires; and the true generosity is not to be proud of wealth, but to despise it. Boasting about one's plate is utterly shameful. For it is plainly wrong to care much about what any one who likes may buy from the market. But wisdom is not bought with coin of earth, nor is it sold in the marketplace, but in heaven. And it is sold for true coin, the immortal Word, the regal gold. *The Instructor*, 2.248.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: What means the parable of Lazarus, by showing the image of the rich and poor?²⁵ And what the saying, "**No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon?**"—the Lord so terming the love of money. For instance, the covetous, who were invited, responded not to the invitation to the supper, not because of their possessing property, but of their inordinate affection to what they possessed.²⁶ "The foxes," then, have holes.²⁷ He called those evil

²¹ Lk 16:9

²² Cf. Mt 19:23-24; Mk 10:23-25; Lk 18:24-25; Jas 2:5

²³ Hag 1:6

²⁴ 1 Tim 6:10

²⁵ Lk 16:20-31

²⁶ Lk 14:16-24

²⁷ Mt 8:20

and earthly men who are occupied about the wealth which is mined and dug from the ground, foxes. Thus also, in reference to Herod: "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out devils, and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." For He applied the name "birds of the air" to those who were distinct from the other birds—those really pure, those that have the power of flying to the knowledge of the heavenly Word. For not riches only, but also honor, and marriage, and poverty, have ten thousand cares for him who is unfit for them. And those cares He indicated in the parable of the fourfold seed, when He said that "the seed of the word which fell among the thorns" and hedges was choked by them, and could not bring forth fruit. It is therefore necessary to learn how to make use of every occurrence, so as by a good life, according to knowledge, to be trained for the state of eternal life. *The Stromata*, 2.414.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "For no one can serve two masters, God and Mammon," it is said; meaning not simply money, but the resources arising from money bestowed on various pleasures. In reality, it is not possible for him who magnanimously and truly knows God, to serve antagonistic pleasures. *The Stromata*, 2.543.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For, as the Lord commanded, he did not wish to serve two masters, pleasure and God. It is said that Matthias [the apostle]³⁰ also taught that one should fight the flesh and abuse it,³¹ never allowing it to give way to licentious pleasure, so that the soul might grow by faith and knowledge. *On Marriage*.³²

TERTULLIAN: How many other undoubted proofs we have had in the case of persons who, by keeping company with the devil in the shows, have fallen from the Lord! For no one can serve two masters. What fellowship has light with darkness, life with death?³³ *The Shows, 3.90*.

TERTULLIAN: While the bounty of our most excellent emperors was dispensed in the camp, the soldiers, laurel-crowned, were approaching. One of them, more a soldier of God, more stedfast than the rest of his brethren, who had imagined that they could serve two masters, his head alone uncovered, the useless crown

²⁸ Lk 13:32

²⁹ Mt 13:7; Mk 4:7; Lk 8:7, 14

³⁰ Acts 1:15-16

³¹ Cf. 1 Cor 9:27

Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4.26. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 52. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

³³ Cf. 2 Cor 6:14

in his hand—already even by that peculiarity known to every one as a Christian—was nobly conspicuous. Accordingly, all began to mark him out, jeering him at a distance, gnashing on him near at hand. The murmur is wafted to the tribune, when the person had just left the ranks. The tribune at once puts the question to him, "Why are you so different in your attire?"

He declared that he had no liberty to wear the crown with the rest. Being urgently asked for his reasons, he answered, "I am a Christian."

"O soldier! boasting yourself in God." Then the case was considered and voted on; the matter was remitted to a higher tribunal; the offender was conducted to the prefects. At once he put away the heavy cloak, his disburdening commenced; he loosed from his foot the military shoe, beginning to stand upon holy ground; he gave up the sword, which was not necessary either for the protection of our Lord; from his hand likewise dropped the laurel crown; and now, purple-clad with the hope of his own blood, shod with the preparation of the gospel, gird with the sharper word of God, completely equipped in the apostles' armor, and crowned more worthily with the white crown of martyrdom, he awaits in prison the generosity of Christ. *The Chaplet, 3.93*.

TERTULLIAN: But I first say a word also about the military crown itself. This laurel one is sacred to Apollo or Bacchus—to the former as the god of archery, to the latter as the god of triumphs. In like manner Claudius teaches, when he tells us that soldiers are accustomed too to be wreathed in myrtle. For the myrtle belongs to Venus, the mother of the Aeneadae, the mistress also of the god of war, who, through Ilia and the Romuli is Roman. But I do not believe that Venus is Roman as well as Mars, because of the vexation the concubine gave her. When military service again is crowned with olive, the idolatry has respect to Minerva, who is equally the goddess of arms—but got a crown of the tree referred to, because of the peace she made with Neptune. In these respects, the superstition of the military garland will be everywhere defiled and all-defiling. And it is further defiled, I should think, also in the grounds of it. Lo the yearly public pronouncing of vows, what does that bear on its face to be? It takes place first in the part of the camp where the general's tent is, and then in the temples. In addition to the places, observe the words also: "We vow that you, O Jupiter, will then have an ox with gold-decorated horns." What does the utterance mean? Without a doubt the denial (of Christ). Albeit the Christian says nothing in these places with the mouth, he makes his response by having the crown on his head. The laurel is likewise commanded to be used at the distribution of the gifts. So you see idolatry is not without its gain, selling, as it does. Christ for pieces of gold, as Judas did for pieces of silver. Will it be "You cannot serve God and mammon" to devote your energies to mammon, and to depart from God? Will it be "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's,"34 not only not to render the human being to God, but even to take the denarius from Caesar? Is the laurel of the triumph made of leaves, or of corpses?

³⁴ Mt 22:21

Is it adorned with ribbons, or with tombs? Is it bedewed with ointments, or with the tears of wives and mothers? *To Scapula, 3.100-101*.

TERTULLIAN: The endowing of a man indeed with riches, is not an incongruity to God, for by the help of riches even rich men are comforted and assisted; moreover, by them many a work of justice and charity is carried out. But yet there are serious faults which accompany riches; and it is because of these that woes are denounced on the rich, even in the Gospel. "You have received," He says, "your consolation;" that is, of course, from their riches, in the pomps and vanities of the world which these purchase for them. *Against Marcion*, 3.368-369.

TERTULLIAN: What the two masters are who, He says, cannot be served, on the ground that while one is pleased the other must needs be displeased, He Himself makes clear, when He mentions God and mammon. Then, if you have no interpreter by you, you may learn again from Himself what He would have understood by mammon. For when advising us to provide for ourselves the help of friends in worldly affairs, after the example of that steward who, when removed from his office, relieves his lord's debtors by lessening their debts with a view to their recompensing him with their help, He said, "And I say to you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,"³⁶ that is to say, of money, even as the steward had done. Now we are all aware that money is the instigator of unrighteousness, and the lord of the whole world. Therefore, when he saw the covetousness of the Pharisees doing servile worship to it, He hurled this sentence against them, "You cannot serve God and mammon." Then the Pharisees, who were covetous of riches, derided Him, when they understood that by mammon He meant money. . . . Learn therefrom that one God was pointed out by Christ. For they were two masters whom He named, God and mammon the Creator and money. You cannot indeed serve God-Him, of course whom they seemed to serve—and mammon to whom they preferred to devote themselves. Against Marcion, 3.402-403.

TERTULLIAN: A rich man is a difficult thing to find in the house of God.³⁷ On Exhortation to Chastity, 4.48.

TERTULLIAN: Blessed therefore are the poor, because, He says, the kingdom of heaven is theirs who have the soul only treasured up.³⁸ If we cannot serve God and mammon, can we be redeemed both by God and by mammon? For who will serve mammon more than the man whom mammon has ransomed? Finally, of what example do you avail yourself to warrant your averting by money the giving of you up? When did the apostles, dealing with the matter, in any time of

³⁵ Lk 6:26

³⁶ Lk 16:9

³⁷ Mt 19:23-24; Mk 10:23-24; Lk 18:24-25; 1 Cor 1:26-27

³⁸ Cf. Mt 5:3

persecution trouble, extricate themselves by money? *De Fuga in Persecutione*, 4.123.³⁹

COMMODIANUS: Luxury and the short-lived joys of the world are ruining you, from which you will be tormented in hell for all time. The Instructions of Commodianus in favor of Christian Discipline, Against the Gods of the Heathens, 4.207.

MARK MINUCIUS FELIX: That many of us are called poor, this is not our disgrace, but our glory; for as our mind is relaxed by luxury, so it is strengthened by frugality. And yet who can be poor if he does not want, if he does not crave for the possessions of others, if he is rich towards God? He rather is poor, who, although he has much, desires more. Yet I will speak according as I feel. No one can be so poor as he is born. Birds live without any patrimony, and day by day the cattle are fed; and yet these creatures are born for us—all of which things, if we do not lust after, we possess. Therefore, as he who treads a road is the happier the lighter he walks, so happier is he in this journey of life who lifts himself along in poverty, and does not breathe heavily under the burden of riches. And yet even if we thought wealth useful to us, we should ask it of God. Assuredly He might be able to indulge us in some measure, whose is the whole; but we would rather despise riches than possess them. *The Octavius of Minucius Felix, 4.195*.

ORIGEN: "No man can serve two masters," and we "cannot serve God and mammon," whether this name be applied to one or more. Moreover, if any one "by transgressing the law dishonors the lawgiver," it seems clear to us that if the two laws, the law of God and the law of mammon, are completely opposed to each other, it is better for us by transgressing the law of mammon to dishonor mammon, that we may honor God by keeping His law, than by transgressing the law of God to dishonor God, that by obeying the law of mammon we may honor mammon. *Against Celsus*, *4.661*.

ORIGEN: The Spirit descended so manifestly on those who receive baptism, after the water had prepared the way for him in those who properly approached the rite. Simon Magus, astonished at what he saw, desired to receive from Peter this gift, but though it was a good thing he desired, he thought to attain it by the mammon of unrighteousness.⁴⁰ *Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.367*.

ORIGEN: Whoever truly, and not falsely, confesses with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in the heart⁴¹ would equally confess himself to be subjected to the lordship of wisdom, righteousness, truth, and to everything that Christ is.⁴²

³⁹ Montanist work.

⁴⁰ Cf. Acts 8:20

⁴¹ Cf. Rom 10:9

⁴² Cf. Jn 14:6; 1 Cor 1:30

He confesses mammon not to be his lord any longer, that is to say, he is no longer to be under the lordship of greed, unrighteousness, unchastity, or lying. For, having confessed once and for all that Jesus Christ is Lord, he is declaring publicly that he is not a slave of any of these things. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁴³

ORIGEN: For it does not seem possible for someone to serve both Christ and the belly simultaneously, or to be equally a lover of pleasure and of God; just as no one can serve both God and mammon at the same time. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁴⁴

CYPRIAN: Wealth must be avoided as an enemy; must be fled from as a robber; must be dreaded by its possessors as a sword and as poison. To this end only so much as remains should be of service, that by it the crime and the fault may be redeemed. Let good works be done without delay, and largely; let all your estate be laid out for the healing of your wound; let us lend of our wealth and our means to the Lord, who shall judge concerning us. Thus faith flourished in the time of the apostles; thus the first people of believers kept Christ's commands: they were prompt, they were liberal, they gave their all to be distributed by the apostles. ⁴⁵ The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.447.

CYPRIAN: You are afraid lest perchance your estate should fail, if you begin to act liberally from it; and you do not know, miserable man that you are, that while you are fearing lest your family property should fail you, life itself, and salvation, are failing; and while you are anxious lest any of your wealth should be diminished, you do not see that you yourself are being diminished, in that you are a lover of mammon more than of your own soul; and while you fear, lest for the sake of yourself, you should lose your patrimony, you yourself are perishing for the sake of your patrimony. And therefore the apostle well exclaims, and says: "We brought nothing into this world, neither indeed can we carry anything out. Therefore, having food and clothing, let us therewith be content. For they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful desires, which drown a man in perdition and in destruction. For covetousness is a root of all evils, which some desiring, have made shipwreck from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." **The Treatises of Cyprian**,

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 140. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

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⁴⁵ Acts 4:34-35

^{46 1} Tim 6:7-10

5.479.

CYPRIAN: The lust of possessing, and money, are not to be sought for. In Solomon, in Ecclesiasticus: "He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver." Also in Proverbs: "He who holds back the corn is cursed among the people; but blessing is on the head of him that shares it." 48

Also in Isaiah: "Woe to them who join house to house, and lay field to field, that they may take away something from their neighbor. Will you dwell alone upon the earth?" 49

Also in Zephaniah: "They shall build houses, and shall not dwell in them; and they shall appoint vineyards, and shall not drink the wine of them, because the day of the Lord is near." ⁵⁰

Also in the Gospel according to Luke: "For what does it profit a man to make a gain of the whole world, but that he should lose himself?" And again: "But the Lord said to him, 'You fool, this night your soul is required of you. Whose, then, will those things be which you have provided?" And again: "Remember that you have received your good things in this life, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you grieve." 53

And in the Acts of the Apostles: "But Peter said to him, 'Silver and gold indeed I have none; but what I have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' And, taking hold of his right hand, he lifted him up."⁵⁴

Also in the first to Timothy: "We brought nothing into this world, but neither can we take anything away. Therefore, having maintenance and clothing, let us with these be content. But they who will become rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many and hurtful lusts, which drown man in perdition and destruction. For the root of all evils is covetousness, which some coveting, have made shipwreck from the faith, and have plunged themselves in many sorrows." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.550.

NOVATIAN: Moderation is always found to be approximate to religion, nay, so to speak, rather related and akin to it; for luxury is hostile to holiness. For how shall religion be spared by it, when modesty is not spared? Luxury does not entertain the fear of God. . . .

But from the fact that liberty of meats is granted to us, it does not of necessity follow that luxury is allowed us; nor because the Gospel has dealt with

⁴⁷ Eccles 5:10

⁴⁸ Prov 11:26

⁴⁹ Isa 5:8

⁵⁰ Zeph 1:13-14

⁵¹ Lk 9:25

⁵² Lk 12:20

⁵³ Lk 16:25

⁵⁴ Acts 3:6

⁵⁵ 1 Tim 6:7-10

us very liberally, has it taken away self-restraint. . . . But nothing has so restrained intemperance as the Gospel; nor has any one given such strict laws against gluttony as Christ, who is said to have pronounced even the poor blessed, ⁵⁶ and the hungering and thirsting happy, ⁵⁷ the rich miserable; ⁵⁸ to whom, obeying the government of their belly and their palate, ⁵⁹ the material of their lusts could never be lacking, so that their servitude could not cease; who think it an argument of their happiness to desire as much as they can, except that they are thus able to attain less than they desire. For, moreover, preferring Lazarus in his very hunger and in his sores themselves, and with the rich man's dogs, He restrained the destroyers of salvation, the belly and the palate, by examples. ⁶⁰

The apostle also, when he said, "Having food and raiment, we are to be content," laid down the law of frugality and self-restraint; and thinking that it would be of little advantage that he had written, he also gave himself as an example of what he had written, adding not without reason, that "greed for wealth is the root of all evils;" for it follows in the footsteps of luxury. *On the Jewish Meats*, 5.648-649

PETER OF ALEXANDRIA: For they have sustained the loss and sacrifice of their goods that they might not hurt or destroy their soul, which others for the sake of filthy money have not done; and yet the Lord says, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" and again, "You cannot serve God and mammon." In these things, then, they have shown themselves the servants of God, inasmuch as they have hated, trodden under foot, and despised money, and have thus fulfilled what is written: "The ransom of a man's life are his riches." The Canonical Epistle, 6.276-277.

⁵⁶ Lk 6:20

⁵⁷ Lk 6:21

⁵⁸ Lk 6:24

⁵⁹ Cf. Phil 3:19

⁶⁰ Lk 16:19-31

^{61 1} Tim 6:8

^{62 1} Tim 6:10

⁶³ Mt 16:26

⁶⁴ Prov 13:8

Do Not Worry

Matthew 6:25-34

^[25] Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? LK 12:22-32; PHIL 4:6

l²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? MT 10:29-31; LK 12:6-7, 22-32

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? LK 12:25

 $^{[28]}$ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: LK 12:22-32; PHIL 4:6

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. LK 12:22-32

(30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? LK 12:22-32

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? LK 12:22-32

 $^{[32]}$ (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. LK 12:22-32

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. MT 5:6; LK 12:22-32; JN 6:27

^[34] Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall

take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. ^{IAS 4:13-16}

SUMMARY: We should not be anxious concerning clothing and food (MATHETES). We are not to provide for ourselves costly clothing any more than variety of food (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). "Do not think," He says, "about food;" and as an example of clothing we have the lilies (TERTULLIAN). We are not to be disturbed with anxieties about our food and clothing, but, while living in plainness, and desiring only what is needful, to put our trust in the providence of God (ORIGEN). God prohibits care to be taken about tomorrow's food and clothing, promising that He knows what is needful for each of His servants (TERTULLIAN). God feeds the birds, and daily food is afforded to the sparrows; and to creatures which have no sense of things divine there is no want of drink or food (CYPRIAN). "But seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness," for these are the great things, and the things which are small and relate to this life "shall be added to you" (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). For since all things are God's, nothing will be wanting to him who possesses God, if God Himself is not lacking to him (CYPRIAN). The nations of the world seek after luxury, voluptuousness, rich cooking, dainty feeding, and gluttony (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). He enjoins them to lay aside the cares of this life, and depend on the Father alone (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). He who has begun to be Christ's disciple, renouncing all things according to the word of his Master, ought to ask for his daily food, and not to extend the desires of his petition to a long period (CYPRIAN).

6:25ff Mathetes: Having therefore convinced us in the former time that our nature was unable to attain to life, and having now revealed the Savior who is able to save even those things which it was formerly impossible to save, by both these facts He desired to lead us to trust in His kindness, to esteem Him our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer, our Wisdom, Light, Honor, Glory, Power, and Life, so that we should not be anxious concerning clothing and food. *Epistle to Diognetus*, *1.28*.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And, ... "Take no thought what you shall eat, or what you shall put on: are you not better than the birds and the beasts? And God feeds them. Take no thought, therefore, what you shall eat, or what you shall put on; for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added to you." The First Apology, 1.168-169.

TATIAN: Do not be anxious for yourselves, what you shall eat and what you shall drink; neither for your bodies, what you shall put on. Is not the life better than the food, and the body than the raiment? Consider the birds of the heaven, which neither sow, nor reap, nor store in barns; and yet your Father which is in heaven feeds them. Are you not better than they? Who of

you when he tries is able to add to his stature one cubit? If then you are not able for a small thing, why are you anxious about the rest?¹ Consider the wild lily, how it grows, although it does not toil, nor spin; and I say to you that Solomon in the greatness of his glory was not clothed like one of them. And if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall be to you, O you of little faith! Do not be anxious, so as to say, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'With what shall we be clothed?' Neither let your minds be perplexed in this:² all these things the nations of the world seek; and your Father which is in heaven knows your need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these shall come to you as something additional for you. Do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow shall be anxious for what belongs to it. Sufficient for the day is its evil. *The Diatessaron*, 9.59.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Some men, in truth, live that they may eat, as the irrational creatures, "whose life is their belly, and nothing else." But the Instructor enjoins us to eat that we may live. For neither is food our business, nor is pleasure our aim; but both are on account of our life here, which the Word is training up to immortality. Therefore also there is discrimination to be employed in reference to food. And it is to be simple, truly plain, suiting precisely simple and artless children—as ministering to life, not to luxury. And the life to which it conduces consists of two things—health and strength; to which plainness of fare is most suitable, being conducive both to digestion and lightness of body, from which come growth, and health, and right strength, not strength that is wrong or dangerous and wretched, as is that of athletes produced by compulsory feeding. *The Instructor*, 2.237.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We are not to provide for ourselves costly clothing any more than variety of food. The Lord Himself, therefore, dividing His precepts into what relates to the body, the soul, and thirdly, external things, counsels us to provide external things on account of the body; and manages the body by the soul, and disciplines the soul, saying, "Take no thought for your life what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on; for the life is more than food, and the body more than clothing." And He adds a plain example of instruction: "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them." "Are you not better than the birds?" Thus far as to food. Similarly He enjoins with respect to clothing, which belongs to the third division, that of things external, saying, "Consider the lilies, how they do not spin, nor weave. But I say to

¹ Lk 12:26

² Lk 12:29

³ Lk 12:22-23

⁴ Lk 12:24

⁵ Lk 12:24

you, that not even Solomon was arrayed as one of these." And Solomon the king plumed himself exceedingly on his riches. What, I ask, is more graceful, more gay-colored, than flowers? What is more delightful than lilies or roses? "And if God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith!" Here the particle "what" banishes variety in food. For this is shown from the Scripture, "Take no thought what things you shall eat, or what things you shall drink." For to take thought of these things argues greed and luxury. Now eating, considered merely by itself, is the sign of necessity; repletion, as we have said, of want. Whatever is beyond that, is the sign of superfluity. And what is superfluous, Scripture declares to be of the devil. The subjoined expression makes the meaning plain. For having said, "Do not seek what you shall eat, or what you shall drink," He added, "Neither be of a doubtful (or lofty) mind." The Instructor, 2.263.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The covering ought, in my judgment, to show that which is covered to be better than itself, as the image is superior to the temple, the soul to the body, and the body to the clothes. But now, quite the contrary, the body of these ladies, if sold, would never fetch a thousand drachmas. Buying, as they do, a single dress at the price of ten thousand talents, they prove themselves to be of less use and less value than cloth. Why in the world do you seek after what is rare and costly, in preference to what is at hand and cheap? It is because you do not know what is really beautiful, what is really good, and you seek with eagerness shows instead of realities from fools who, like people out of their wits, imagine black to be white. *The Instructor*; 2.267.

TERTULLIAN: In vain do we flatter ourselves as to the necessities of human maintenance, if—after faith sealed⁹—we say, "I have no means to live?" For here I will now answer more fully that abrupt proposition. It is advanced too late. For after the comparison of that most prudent builder, ¹⁰ who first computes the costs of the work, together with his own means, lest, when he has begun, he afterwards blush to find himself spent, deliberation should have been made before. But even now you have the Lord's sayings, as examples taking away from you all excuse.

For what is it you say? "I shall be in need."

But the Lord calls the needy "happy." 11

"I shall have no food."

But "do not think," He says, "about food;" and as an example of clothing we have the lilies.

⁶ Lk 12:27

⁷ Lk 12:28

⁸ Or "Attic drachms," the basic monetary unit or silver coin of ancient Greece.

⁹ That is, in baptism.

¹⁰ See Lk 14:28-30

¹¹ Lk 6:20

"My work was my subsistence."

No, but "all things are to be sold, and divided to the needy." 12

"But provision must be made for children and posterity."

"None, putting his hand on the plow, and looking back, is fit" for work. 13

"But I was under contract."

"None can serve two lords." If you wish to be the Lord's disciple, it is necessary you "take your cross, and follow the Lord;" 14 your cross; that is, your own straits and tortures, or your body only, which is after the manner of a cross. Parents, wives, children, will have to be left behind, for God's sake. Do you hesitate about arts, and trades, and about professions likewise, for the sake of children and parents?15 Even there was it demonstrated to us, that both "dear pledges," and handicrafts, and trades, are to be quite left behind for the Lord's sake; while James and John, called by the Lord, do leave quite behind both father and ship;16 while Matthew is roused up from the toll-booth;17 while even burying a father was too tardy a business for faith. 18 None of them whom the Lord chose to Him said, "I have no means to live." Faith does not fear famine. It knows, likewise, that hunger is no less to be regarded with contempt by it for God's sake, than every kind of death. It has learned not to respect life; how much more food? You ask, "How many have fulfilled these conditions?" But what with men is difficult, with God is easy. 19 Let us, however, comfort ourselves about the gentleness and clemency of God in such wise, as not to indulge our "necessities" up to the point of affinities with idolatry, but to avoid even from afar every breath of it, as of a pestilence. On Idolatry, 3.68.

TERTULLIAN: Who would be unwilling that we should distress ourselves about sustenance for our life, or clothing for our body, but He who has provided these things already for man; and who, therefore, while distributing them to us, prohibits all anxiety respecting them as an outrage against his liberality?—who has adapted the nature of "life" itself to a condition "better than food," and has fashioned the material of "the body," so as to make it "more than clothing;" whose "ravens, too, neither sow nor reap, nor gather into storehouses, and are yet fed" by Himself; whose "lilies and grass also do not toil, nor spin, and yet are clothed" by Him; whose "Solomon, moreover, was transcendent in glory, and yet was not arrayed like" the humble flower. Desides, nothing can be more abrupt than that one God should be distributing His bounty, while the other should bid us take no thought about (so kindly a) distribution—and that,

¹² Mt 14:28; Lk 18:22

¹³ Cf. Lk 9:62

¹⁴ Cf. Mt 10:38; 16:24; Mk 8:34; 10:21; Lk 9:23

¹⁵ Cf. Mt 19:27-30; Mk 10:29-30; Lk 14:26

¹⁶ Mt 4:21-22; Mk 1:19-20; Lk 5:10-11

¹⁷ Mt 9:9; Mk 2:14; Lk 5:29

¹⁸ Lk 9:59-60

¹⁹ Mt 19:26; Lk 1:37; 18:27

²⁰ See Lk 12:24-27

too, with the intention of diminishing (from his liberality). Whether, indeed, it is as depreciating the Creator that he does not wish such trifles to be thought of, concerning which neither the crows nor the lilies labor, because, indeed, they come spontaneously to hand by reason of their very worthlessness, will appear a little further on. Meanwhile, . . . He chides them as being "of little faith?"²¹ . . . Now, when He adds, "For all these things do the nations of the world seek after,"²² even by their not believing in God as the Creator and Giver of all things, since He was unwilling that they should be like these nations, He therefore upbraided them as being defective of faith in the same God, in whom He remarked that the Gentiles were quite wanting in faith. *Against Marcion*, 3.397.

ORIGEN: "Take no thought what you will eat, or what you will drink. Behold the birds of the air, or behold the ravens: for they do not sow, neither do they reap; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. How much better are you than they! And why do you take thought for clothing? Consider the lilies of the field;"—these precepts, and those which follow, are not inconsistent with the promised blessings of the law, which teaches that the just "shall eat their bread to the full;"²³ nor with that saying of Solomon, "The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall want."²⁴ For we must consider the food promised in the law as the food of the soul, which is to satisfy not both parts of man's nature, but the soul only. And the words of the Gospel, although probably containing a deeper meaning, may yet be taken in their more simple and obvious sense, as teaching us not to be disturbed with anxieties about our food and clothing, but, while living in plainness, and desiring only what is needful, to put our trust in the providence of God. *Against Celsus*, 4.620.

6:26ff TERTULLIAN: Far be all this from believers, who have no care about maintenance, unless it be that we distrust the promises of God, and His care and providence, who clothes with such grace the lilies of the field; who, without any labor on their part, feeds the birds of the heaven; who prohibits care to be taken about tomorrow's food and clothing, promising that He knows what is needful for each of His servants—not indeed ponderous necklaces, not burdensome garments, not Gallic mules nor German bearers, which all add luster to the glory of nuptials; but "sufficiency," which is suitable to moderation and modesty. *To His Wife*, *4.41*.

CYPRIAN: Are you afraid that your patrimony perhaps may fall short, if you should begin to do liberally from it? Yet when has it ever happened that resources could fail the righteous man, since it is written, "The Lord will not

²¹ Lk 12:28

²² Lk 12:30

²³ Lev 26:5

²⁴ Prov 13:25

slay with famine the righteous soul?"²⁵ Elijah in the desert is fed by the ministry of ravens; and a meal from heaven is made ready for Daniel in the den, when shut up by the king's command for a prey to the lions; and you are afraid that food should be wanting to you, laboring and deserving well of the Lord, although He Himself in the Gospel bears witness, for the rebuke of those whose mind is doubtful and faith small, and says: "Behold the birds of heaven, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them: are you not of more value than they?" God feeds the birds, and daily food is afforded to the sparrows; and to creatures which have no sense of things divine there is no want of drink or food. Do you think that to a Christian—do you think that to a servant of the Lord—do you think that to one given up to good works—do you think that to one that is dear to his Lord, anything will be lacking? *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.479.

6:27 TERTULLIAN: Seeing, then, man's own reflections, even in spite of the sweetness of pleasure, lead him to think that people such as these should be condemned to a unfortunate lot of infamy, losing all the advantages connected with the possession of the dignities of life, how much more does the divine righteousness inflict punishment on those who give themselves to these arts! Will God have any pleasure in the charioteer who disquiets so many souls, rouses up so many furious passions, and creates so many various moods, either crowned like a priest or wearing the colors of a pimp, decked out by the devil that he may be whirled away in his chariot, as though with the object of taking off Elijah? Will He be pleased with him who applies the razor to himself, and completely changes his features; who, with no respect for his face, is not content with making it as like as possible to Saturn and Isis and Bacchus, but gives it quietly over to insulting blows, as if in mockery of our Lord? The devil makes it part of his teaching that the cheek is to be meekly offered to the smiter. In the same way, with their high shoes, he has made the tragic actors taller, because "none can add a cubit to his stature." His desire is to make Christ a liar. The Shows, 3.89.

6:30 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Then he who has lied and shown himself unfaithful, and revolted to the devil's army, in what evil do we think him to be? He belies, therefore, the Lord, or rather he is cheated of his own hope who does not believe God; and he does not believe who does not do what He has commanded.

And what? Does not he, who denies the Lord, deny himself? For does he not rob his Master of His authority, who deprives himself of his relation to Him? He, then, who denies the Savior, denies life; for "the light was life." He does not term those "**men of little faith**," but faithless and hypocrites, who have the name inscribed on them, but deny that they are really believers. But the faithful

²⁵ Prov 10:3

²⁶ Jn 1:4

is called both servant and friend. The Stromata, 2.416-417.

6:31ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Do not take thought for your life, what you shall eat; neither for your body, what you shall put on. For your life is more than food, and your body than clothing." And again, "For your Father knows that you have need of all these things." "But seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness," for these are the great things, and the things which are small and relate to this life "shall be added to you." Does He not plainly then exhort us to follow the Christian life, and enjoin us to seek the truth in word and deed? Therefore Christ, who trains the soul, reckons one rich, not by his gifts, but by his choice. It is said, therefore, that Zaccheus, or, according to some, Matthew, the chief of the publicans, on hearing that the Lord had consented to come to him, said, "Lord, and if I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore him fourfold;" on which the Savior said, "The Son of man, on coming today, has found that which was lost."²⁷ Again, on seeing the rich cast into the treasury according to their wealth, and the widow two mites, He said "that the widow had cast in more than they all," for "they had contributed of their abundance, but she of her destitution."28 The Stromata, 2.415.

CYPRIAN: For daily bread cannot be wanting to the righteous man, since it is written, "The Lord will not slay the soul of the righteous by hunger;" and again, "I have been young and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." And the Lord moreover promises and says, "Take no thought, saying, 'What will we eat, or what will we drink, or how will we be clothed?' For after all these things do the nations seek. And your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." To those who seek God's kingdom and righteousness, He promises that all things will be added. For since all things are God's, nothing will be wanting to him who possesses God, if God Himself is not lacking to him. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.453.

CYPRIAN: He calls those the children of Abraham whom He sees to be laborious in aiding and nourishing the poor. For when Zacchaeus said, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore fourfold," Jesus answered and said, "That salvation has this day come to this house, for that he also is a son of Abraham." For if Abraham believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, certainly he who gives alms according to God's precept believes in God, and he who has the truth of faith maintains the fear of God; moreover, he who maintains the fear of God

²⁷ Lk 19:8-10

²⁸ Mk 12:42-44

²⁹ Prov 10:3

³⁰ Ps 37:25

³¹ Lk 19:8-9

considers God in showing mercy to the poor. For he labors thus because he believes—because he knows that what is foretold by God's word is true, and that the Holy Scripture cannot lie—that unfruitful trees, that is, unproductive men, are cut off and cast into the fire, but that the merciful are called into the kingdom.³² He also, in another place, calls laborious and fruitful men faithful; but He denies faith to unfruitful and barren ones, saying, "If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to you that which is true? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"³³

If you dread and fear, lest, if you begin to act thus abundantly, your patrimony being exhausted with your liberal dealing, you may perchance be reduced to poverty; be of good courage in this respect, be free from care: that cannot be exhausted from which the service of Christ is supplied, from which the heavenly work is celebrated. Neither do I vouch for this on my own authority; but I promise it on the faith of the Holy Scriptures, and on the authority of the divine promise. The Holy Spirit speaks by Solomon, and says, "He that gives to the poor shall never lack, but he that turns away his eye shall be in great poverty;"³⁴ showing that the merciful and those who do good works cannot lack, but rather that the sparing and barren hereafter come to lack. . . . And the Lord in the Gospel, already considering the hearts of men of this kind, and with prophetic voice denouncing faithless and unbelieving men, bears witness, and says: "Do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or, 'What will we drink?' or, 'How shall we be clothed?' For these things the Gentiles seek. And your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." He says that all these things shall be added and given to them who seek the kingdom and righteousness of God. For the Lord says, that when the day of judgment shall come, those who have labored in His Church are admitted to receive the kingdom. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.478.

6:32ff CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now pride and luxury make men waverers (or raise them aloft) from the truth; and the voluptuousness, which indulges in excess, leads away from the truth. Therefore He says very beautifully, "And all these things do the nations of the world seek after." The nations are the dissolute and the foolish. And what are these things which He specifies? Luxury, voluptuousness, rich cooking, dainty feeding, gluttony. These are the "What?" And of bare sustenance, dry and moist, as being necessaries, He says, "Your Father knows that you need these." And if, in a word, we are naturally given to seeking, let us not destroy the faculty of seeking by directing it to luxury, but let us excite it to the discovery of truth. For He says, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and the materials of sustenance will be added to you."

³² Cf. Jn 15:4-6

³³ Lk 16:11-12

³⁴ Prov 28:27

³⁵ Cf. 1 Pet 4:3

If, then, He takes away anxious care for clothes and food, and superfluities in general, as unnecessary; what are we to imagine ought to be said of love of ornament, and dyeing of wool, and variety of colors, and fastidiousness about gems, and exquisite working of gold, and still more, of artificial hair and wreathed curls; and furthermore, of staining the eyes, and plucking out hairs, and painting with rouge and white lead, and dyeing of the hair, and the wicked arts that are employed in such deceptions? *The Instructor*, 2.264.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: But you also oppose Scripture, seeing it 6:33 expressly cries, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added to you." But if all things have been conferred on you, and all things allowed you, and "if all things are lawful, yet all things are not expedient," 36 says the apostle. God brought our race into communion by first imparting what was His own, when He gave His own Word, common to all, and made all things for all. All things therefore are common, and not for the rich to appropriate an undue share. That expression, therefore, "I possess, and possess in abundance: why then should I not enjoy?" is suitable neither to the man, nor to society. But more worthy of love is that: "I have: why should I not give to those who need?" For such an one—one who fulfills the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself"³⁷—is perfect. For this is the true luxury—the treasured wealth. But that which is squandered on foolish lusts is to be reckoned waste, not expenditure. For God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want. How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human beings, than on jewels and gold! How much more useful to acquire decent friends, than lifeless ornaments! Whom have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favors has? It remains for us, therefore, to do away with this allegation: Who, then, will have the more sumptuous things, if all select the simpler? Men, I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently. But if it be impossible for all to exercise self-restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, bidding a long farewell to these superfluities. The Instructor, 2.268.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "For," it is said, "seek what is great, and the little things shall be added."³⁸ The Stromata, 2.336.

6:34 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: To those, therefore, that have made progress in the word, He has proclaimed this utterance, bidding them dismiss anxious care of the things of this world, and exhorting them to adhere to the Father alone, in imitation of children. Therefore also in what follows He says: "**Take no anxious**

^{36 1} Cor 10:23

³⁷ Lev 19:18; Mt 19:19; 22:39; Mk 12:31, 33; Lk 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8

Not in Scripture, but probably a reference to Mt 6:33.

thought for tomorrow; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." Thus He enjoins them to lay aside the cares of this life, and depend on the Father alone. *The Instructor*, 2.213.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For He says, "Take no anxious thought for tomorrow," meaning that the man who has devoted himself to Christ ought to be sufficient to himself, and servant to himself, and moreover lead a life which provides for each day by itself. For it is not in war, but in peace, that we are trained. War needs great preparation, and luxury craves profusion; but peace and love, simple and quiet sisters, require no arms nor excessive preparation. The Word is their sustenance. *The Instructor*, 2.234.

TERTULLIAN: The Greeks also sometimes use the word "evils" for troubles and injuries. *Against Marcion*, *3.316*.

CYPRIAN: But it may also be thus understood, that we who have renounced the world, and have cast away its riches and pomps in the faith of spiritual grace, should only ask for ourselves food and support, since the Lord instructs us, and says, "Whosoever does not forsake all that he has, cannot be my disciple." But he who has begun to be Christ's disciple, renouncing all things according to the word of his Master, ought to ask for his daily food, and not to extend the desires of his petition to a long period, as the Lord again prescribes, and says, "Do not worry for tomorrow, for tomorrow itself shall take thought for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." With reason, then, does Christ's disciple ask food for himself for the day, since he is prohibited from thinking of tomorrow; because it becomes a contradiction and a repugnant thing for us to seek to live long in this world, since we ask that the kingdom of God should come quickly. Thus also the blessed apostle admonishes us, giving substance and strength to the steadfastness of our hope and faith: "We brought nothing," he says, "into this world, nor indeed can we carry anything out. Having therefore food and raiment, let us be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have made shipwreck from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."40 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.452-453.

³⁹ Lk 14:33

^{40 1} Tim 6:7

Do Not Judge Matthew 7:1-6

[1] Judge not, that ye be not judged. LK 6:37; ROM 2:1-3; 14:4; 1 COR 2:15; 4:5; 5:3, 12-13; JAS 4:11-12

 $^{[2]}$ For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. $^{MK.4:24; LK.6:38;}$ JAS 2:13

[3] And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? LK 6:41

 $^{[4]}$ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? $^{\rm LK\,6:42}$

^[5] Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. $^{\rm LK~6:42}$

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

SUMMARY: Do not judge, that you will not be not judged (POLYCARP, IRENAEUS, TATIAN, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, TERTULLIAN, CYPRIAN, ORIGEN). As you judge, so shall you be judged (CLEMENT OF ROME). Judge righteously, do not respect persons in reproving for transgressions (THE DIDACHE). The meaning is *not* that we should not find fault with sinners, nor that we should consent to those who act wickedly (IRENAEUS). We do not prejudge when the Lord is to be the judge (CYPRIAN). For with what judgment you judge, it is righteous that you be judged all the same (JUSTIN MARTYR). This passage announces a retribution proportioned to the merits (TERTULLIAN). Both IRENAEUS and HIPPOLYTUS taught

that the heretics were hypocrites with the beam in the eye. The phrase, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs" is uniquely applied to the Eucharist in The DIDACHE (7.380). The dogs and swine were untrained hearers (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA), the heathen (TERTULLIAN), the foolish (CYPRIAN), the lost (ARCHELAUS), or those who are given up to impiety and pleasures (METHODIUS).

7:1ff CLEMENT OF ROME: Let us therefore, brethren, be of humble mind, laying aside all haughtiness, and pride, and foolishness, and angry feelings; and let us act according to that which is written (for the Holy Spirit says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in the Lord, in diligently seeking Him, and doing judgment and righteousness,")¹ being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching us meekness and longsuffering. For He spoke: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done unto you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured to you."² By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words. For the holy word says, "On whom shall I look, but on him that is meek and peaceable, and that trembles at My words?" Epistle to the Corinthians, 1.8.

THE DIDACHE: Judge righteously, do not respect persons in reproving for transgressions. 47.378.

POLYCARP: Be mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: "Do not judge, that you will not be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." *Epistle to the Philippians, 1.33*.

POLYCARP: And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always "providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man;" abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting an evil report against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin. *Epistle to the Philippians*, 1.34.

¹ Jer 9:23-24; 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17

² Cf. Lk 6:36-38

³ Isa 66:2

⁴ In 7:24

⁵ Mt 6:12, 14: Lk 6:37

⁶ Mt 5:7; Lk 6:36

⁷ Cf. Mt 7:2; Lk 6:38

⁸ Rom 12:17

IRENAEUS: The Lord said: "Judge not, that you be not judged: for with what judgment you shall judge, you shall be judged." The meaning is certainly not that we should not find fault with sinners, nor that we should consent to those who act wickedly; but that we should not pronounce an unfair judgment on the dispensations of God, inasmuch as He has Himself made provision that all things shall turn out for good, in a way consistent with justice. *Against Heresies*, 1.504.

TATIAN: As for those who wish to learn our philosophy, we do not test them by their looks, nor do we judge of those who come to us by their outward appearance; for we argue that there may be strength of mind in all, though they may be weak in body. *Address to the Greeks*, 2.78.

TATIAN: "Judge not, that you be not judged: condemn not, that you be not condemned:9 forgive, and it shall be forgiven you: release, and you shall be released: give, that you may be given to; with good measure, abundant, full, they shall thrust into your bosoms.¹⁰ With what measure you measure it shall be measured to you. See to it what you hear: with what measure you measure it shall be measured to you; and you shall be given more.¹¹ I say unto those that hear, he that has shall be given unto; and he that does not have, that which he regards as his shall be taken from him."¹²

And he spoke to them a parable, "Can a blind man perhaps guide a blind man? Shall they not both fall into a hollow? ¹³ A disciple is not better than his master; every perfect man shall be as his master. Why do you look at the speck which is in the eye of your brother, but do not consider the column that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, I will take out the speck from your eye;' and the column which is in your eye you do not see? You hypocrite, first take out the column from your eye; and then you shall see to take the speck out from the eye of your brother. ¹⁴ Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them with their feet, and return and wound you." *The Diatessaron*, 9.59.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: As you do, so shall it be done to you; as you give, so shall it be given to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you show kindness, so shall kindness be shown to you: with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. *The Stromata*, 2.367.

⁹ Lk 6:37

¹⁰ Lk 6:38

¹¹ Mk 4:24

¹² Mk 4:25

¹³ Lk 6:39

¹⁴ Lk 6:40-42

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: How then does man give these things? For I will give not only to friends, but to the friends of friends. And who is it that is the friend of God? Do not you judge who is worthy or who is unworthy. For it is possible you may be mistaken in your opinion. As in the uncertainty of ignorance it is better to do good to the undeserving for the sake of the deserving, than by guarding against those that are less good to fail to meet in with the good. For though sparing, and aiming at testing, who will receive meritoriously or not, it is possible for you to neglect some that are loved by God; the penalty for which is the punishment of eternal fire. But by offering to all in turn that need, you must of necessity by all means find some one of those who have power with God to save. "Judge not, then, that you be not judged. With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again; good measure, pressed and shaken, and running over, shall be given to you."15 Open your compassion to all who are enrolled the disciples of God; not looking contemptuously to personal appearance, nor carelessly disposed to any period of life. Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?, 2.600-601.

TERTULLIAN: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, pressed down, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you measure, it shall be measured to you again." As it seems to me, this passage announces a retribution proportioned to the merits. Against Marcion, 3.373.

TERTULLIAN: Why, then, do we believe Him a Judge, if not an Avenger too? This He promises that He will be to us in return, saying, "Vengeance belongs to me, and I will avenge;" that is, "Leave patience to me, and I will reward patience." For when He says, "Judge not, lest you be judged," does He not require patience? For who will refrain from judging another, but he who shall be patient in not revenging himself? *Of Patience*, 3.713.

Anonymous: You, O Novatian,¹⁸ judge and declare that the lapsed¹⁹ have no hope of peace and mercy, nor do you incline your ear to the rebuke of the apostle, when he says, "Who are you, who judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall stand. God is mighty to establish him."²⁰ . . . The Holy Spirit, in the person of those same lapsed people, rebukes you when He says, "Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy: because if I have fallen, I shall also rise again; and if I shall walk in darkness, the Lord is my light. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him,

¹⁵ Cf. Lk 6:37-38

¹⁶ Cf. Lk 6:37-38

Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30

¹⁸ See Appendices A and B for Novatian and Novatianists

¹⁹ The "lapsed" refers to those who renounced the Christian faith.

²⁰ Rom 14:4

until He justify my cause, and execute judgment and justice, and bring me forth to the light. I shall behold His righteousness; and she that is my enemy shall see me, and shall cover herself with confusion."²¹

I beseech you, have you not read, "Do not boast, and do not speak loftily, and do not let arrogance proceed out of your mouth: for the Lord lifts the poor from the earth; He raises up the beggar from the dunghill, and makes him to sit with the mighty ones of the people?" Have you not read, that "the Lord resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble?" Have you not read, "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled?" Have you not read, that "God destroys the remembrance of the proud, and does not forsake the memory of the lowly?" Have you not read, that "with what judgment a man shall judge he must be judged?" A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop. 5.660-661.

CYPRIAN: Moreover, we do not prejudge when the Lord is to be the judge; except that if He shall find the repentance of the sinners full and sound, He will then ratify what shall have been here determined by us. If, however, any one should delude us with the pretense of repentance, God, who is not mocked, and who looks into man's heart, will judge of those things which we have imperfectly looked into, and the Lord will amend the sentence of His servants; while yet, dearest brother, we ought to remember that it is written, "A brother that helps a brother shall be exalted;" and that the apostle also has said, "Let all of you individually have regard to yourselves, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ;" also that, rebuking the haughty, and breaking down their arrogance, he says in his epistle, "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall;" and in another place he says, "Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls; yes, he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand." To Antonianus About Cornelius and Novatian. 5.331-332.

CYPRIAN: We must not rashly judge one another. In the Gospel according to Luke: "Judge not, that you shall not be judged: condemn not, that you shall not be condemned."²⁹

Of this same subject to the Romans: "Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. But he shall stand; for God

²¹ Mic 7:8-10

²² 1 Sam 2:3-8

²³ Prov 3:34; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5

²⁴ Mt 23:12

²⁵ Prov 18:19

²⁶ Gal 6:1-2

²⁷ 1 Cor 10:12

²⁸ Rom 14:4

²⁹ Lk 6:37

is able to make him stand."³⁰ And again: "Therefore you are without excuse, O every man that judges: for in that in which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you do the same things which you judge. But do you hope, who judges those who do evil, and you do the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God?"³¹ Also in the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: "And let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."³² And again: "If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows not yet in what manner he ought to know."³³ *The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.541.*

ORIGEN: What will he suffer, who at first did not hear, but required witnesses, or even refused to hear these, but was brought to the church, 34 God knows; for we do not declare it, according to the precept, "Judge not that you be not judged," "until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts."35 But, with reference to the seeming harshness in the case of those who have committed less sins, one might say that it is not possible for him who has not heard twice in succession to hear the third time, so as, on this account, no longer to be as a Gentile or a publican, or no longer to stand in need of the disapproval in presence of all the church. For we must bear in mind this, "So it is not the will of My Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."36 For if "we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad,"37 let each one with all his power do what he can so that he may not receive punishment for more evil things done in the body, even if he is going to receive back for all the wrongs which he has done; but it should be our ambition to procure the reward for a greater number of good deeds, since "with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us," and, "according to the works of our own hands shall it happen unto us."38 Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.493.

7:2 JUSTIN MARTYR: For though one should speak ten thousand words well, if there happen to be one little word displeasing to you, because not sufficiently intelligible or accurate, you make no account of the many good words, but lay hold of the little word, and are very zealous in setting it up as something impious and guilty; in order that, when you are judged with the very same judgment by God, you may have a much heavier account to render for your great audacities, whether evil actions, or bad interpretations which you obtain by falsifying the

³⁰ Rom 14:4

³¹ Rom 2:1-3

³² 1 Cor 10:12

^{33 1} Cor 8:2

³⁴ Mt 18:15-18

^{35 1} Cor 4:5

³⁶ Mt 18:14

³⁷ 2 Cor 5:10

³⁸ Isa 3:11

truth. For with what judgment you judge, it is righteous that you be judged all the same. *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew, 1.257*.

TERTULLIAN: The Lord Himself demonstrates the manner in which He threatens such as judge: "For with what judgment you judge, judgment shall be given on you."³⁹ Thus He has not prohibited judging, but taught how to do it. From which the apostle judges, and that in a case of fornication, that "such a man must be surrendered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh;" chiding them likewise because "brethren" were not "judged at the bar of the saints:" for he goes on and says, "To what purpose is it for me to judge those who are without?"⁴⁰ On Modesty, 4.76.⁴¹

7:3 HIPPOLYTUS: Since the great body of the heretics do not employ the counsel of the Lord, by having the beam in the eye, and announce that they see when in reality laboring under blindness, it seems to us expedient in no wise to be silent concerning the tenets of these. *The Refutation of all Heresies*, *5.117*.

7:5 IRENAEUS: Therefore, against men of this kind (namely, the heretics) the word of the Lord applies, which says: "You hypocrite, first cast the beam out of your eye, and then you shall see clearly to pull out the speck out of your brother's eye." Against Heresies, 1.503.

7:6 THE DIDACHE: Now concerning the Thanksgiving (Eucharist), thus give thanks. First, concerning the cup: "We thank You, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your servant, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever." And concerning the broken bread: "We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever." But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs." 7.380.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Even now I fear, as it is said, "to cast the pearls before swine, or they will tread them under foot, and turn and rend us." For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light, to swinish and untrained hearers. For scarcely could anything which they could hear be more ludicrous than these to the multitude; nor any subjects on the other hand more admirable or more inspiring to those of noble nature. *The Stromata*, 2.312-313.

³⁹ Cf. Lk 6:37

^{40 1} Cor 5:1-12: 6:1-6

⁴¹ Montanist work

TERTULLIAN: I must not omit an account of the conduct also of the heretics how frivolous it is, how worldly, how merely human, without seriousness, without authority, without discipline, as suits their creed. To begin with, it is doubtful who is a catechumen, and who a believer; they have all access alike, they hear alike, they pray alike—even heathens, if any such happen to come among them. "That which is holy they will cast to the dogs, and their pearls," although (to be sure) they are not real ones, "they will fling to the swine." . . . All are puffed up, all offer you knowledge. Their catechumens are perfect before they are full-taught. The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures—it may be even to baptize. Their ordinations, are carelessly administered, capricious, changeable. At one time they put novices in office; at another time, men who are bound to some secular employment; at another, persons who have apostatized from us, to bind them by vainglory, since they cannot by the truth. Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of rebels, where the mere fact of being there is a foremost service. And so it comes to pass that today one man is their bishop, tomorrow another; today he is a deacon who tomorrow is a reader; today he is a presbyter who tomorrow is a layman. For even on laymen do they impose the functions of priesthood. The Prescription Against Heretics, 3.263.

TERTULLIAN: But they whose office it is, know that baptism is not rashly to be administered. "Give to every one who begs you,"42 has a reference of its own, appertaining especially to almsgiving. On the contrary, this precept is rather to be looked at carefully: "Do not give the holy thing to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine;" and, "Do not lay hands easily on any; do not share other men's sins."43 If Philip so "easily" baptized the chamberlain, let us reflect that a manifest and conspicuous evidence that the Lord deemed him worthy had been interposed. 44 The Spirit had enjoined Philip to proceed to that road: the eunuch himself, too, was not found idle, nor as one who was suddenly seized with an eager desire to be baptized; but, after going up to the temple for prayer's sake, being intently engaged on the divine Scripture, was thus suitably discovered—to whom God had, unasked, sent an apostle, which one, again, the Spirit bade adjoin himself to the chamberlain's chariot. The Scripture which he was reading⁴⁵ falls in opportunely with his faith: Philip, being requested, is taken to sit beside him; the Lord is pointed out; faith does not linger; water needs no waiting for; the work is completed, and the apostle snatched away. "But Paul too was, in fact, 'speedily' baptized:" for Simon, 46 his host, speedily recognized him

⁴² Cf. Lk 6:30

⁴³ 1 Tim 5:22

⁴⁴ Cf. Acts 8:26-40

⁴⁵ Acts 8:28, 30, 32, 33; Isa 53:7-8 LXX

Tertullian seems to have confused the "Judas" with whom Saul stayed (Acts 9:11) with the "Simon" with whom Peter stayed (Acts 9:43). Moreover, it was Ananias, not Judas, to whom Paul was identified as "an appointed vessel," (Acts 9:15) and by whom he was

to be "an appointed vessel of election." . . . If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay: sound faith is secure of salvation. *On Baptism*, 3.677-678.

ORIGEN: The Savior with a knowledge of the difference of pearls, of which some are in kind goodly and others worthless, said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls;"48 for, if some of the pearls had not been worthless, it would not have been said, "to a man seeking goodly pearls." Now among the words of all kinds which profess to announce truth, and among those who report them, he seeks pearls. And let the prophets be, so to speak, the mussels which conceive the dew of heaven, and become pregnant with the word of truth from heaven, the goodly pearls which, according to the phrase here set forth, the merchantman seeks. And the leader of the pearls, on the finding of which the rest are found with it, is the very costly pearl, the Christ of God, the Word which is superior to the precious letters and thoughts in the law and the prophets, on the finding of which also all the rest are easily taken. And the Savior holds converse with all the disciples, as merchant men who are not only seeking the goodly pearls but who have found them and possess them, when He says, "Do not cast your pearls before swine." Now it is manifest that these things were said to the disciples from that which is prefixed to His words, "And seeing the multitudes He went up into the mountain, and when He had sat down His disciples came to Him;"49 for, in the course of those words, He said, "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine." Perhaps, then, he is not a disciple of Christ, who does not possess pearls or the very costly pearl, the pearls, I mean, which are goodly; not the cloudy, nor the darkened, such as the words of the heterodox, which are brought forth not at the sunrise, but at the sunset or in the north, if it is necessary to take also into the comparison those things on account of which we found a difference in the pearls which are produced in different places. And perhaps the muddy words and the heresies which are bound up with works of the flesh, are the darkened pearls, and those which are produced in the marshes, not goodly pearls. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.417-418.

CYPRIAN: I had frequently, Demetrianus, treated with contempt your railing and noisy clamor with sacrilegious mouth and impious words against the one and true God, thinking it more modest and better, silently to scorn the ignorance of a mistaken man, than by speaking to provoke the fury of a senseless one. Neither did I do this without the authority of the divine teaching, since it is written, "Do not speak in the ears of a fool, lest when he hear you he should despise the wisdom of your words;" and again, "Do not answer a fool according to his

baptized (Acts 9:18).

⁴⁷ Acts 9:15

⁴⁸ Mt 13:45

⁴⁹ Mt 5:1

⁵⁰ Prov 23:9

folly, lest you also be like him."⁵¹ And we are, moreover, bidden to keep what is holy within our own knowledge, and not expose it to be trodden down by swine and dogs, since the Lord speaks, saying, "**Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, in case they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.**" For when you often used to come to me with the desire of contradicting rather than with the wish to learn, and preferred impudently to insist on your own views, which you shouted with noisy words, to patiently listening to mine, it seemed to me foolish to contend with you; since it would be an easier and slighter thing to restrain the angry waves of a turbulent sea with shouts, than to check your madness by arguments. Assuredly it would be both a vain and ineffectual labor to offer light to a blind man, discourse to a deaf one, or wisdom to a brute; since neither can a brute apprehend, nor can a blind man admit the light, nor can a deaf man hear. *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.458.

CYPRIAN: In Solomon, in the Proverbs: "Do not say anything in the ears of a foolish man; in case, when he hears it, he may mock at your wise words." 52

Also in the Gospel according to Matthew: "Do not give that which is holy to dogs; neither cast your pearls before the swine, in case perhaps they trample them down with their feet, and turn again and crush you." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.546.

ARCHELAUS: "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid in them that are lost." You see that it is hid in them that are lost. "For it is not proper to give the holy things to dogs." And furthermore, is it only the God of the Old Testament that has blinded the minds of them who do not believe? No, has not Jesus Himself also said: "Therefore I speak to them in parables: that seeing, they may not see?" Is it then because He hated them that He desired them not to see? Or is it not on account of their unworthiness, since they closed their own eyes? For wherever wickedness is a matter self-chosen, there too there is the absence of grace. "For unto him that has shall be given, but from him that does not have shall be taken away even that which he seems to have." The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, 6.234.

METHODIUS: They insult the commandments, accomplishing the will of the spirits of evil, and cast holy things to dogs, and pearls before swine, in the same manner as those of whom the prophet says with indignation, "They read the law to those without;" for the Jews were not to read the law going forth out of the gates of Jerusalem or out of their houses; and for this reason the prophet blames

⁵¹ Prov 26:4

⁵² Prov 23:9

^{53 2} Cor 4:4

⁵⁴ Mt 13:13

⁵⁵ Mt 25:29

⁵⁶ Amos 4:5 LXX

them strongly, and cries that they were liable to condemnation, because, while they were transgressing the commandments, and acting impiously towards God, they were pretentiously reading the law, as if, indeed, they were piously observing its precepts; but they did not receive it in their souls, holding it firmly with faith, but rejected it, denying it by their works. ⁵⁷ *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, *6.324*.

METHODIUS: "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine." . . . If we must understand by pearls the glorious and divine teachings, and by swine those who are given up to impiety and pleasures, from whom are to be withheld and hidden the apostle's teachings, which stir men up to piety and faith in Christ, see how you say that no Christians can be converted from their impiety by the teachings of the apostles. For they would never cast the mysteries of Christ to those who, through lack of faith, are like swine. Either, therefore, these things were cast before all the Greeks and other unbelievers, and were preached by the disciples of Christ, and converted them from impiety to the faith of Christ, as we believers certainly confess, and then the words, "Do not cast your pearls before swine," can no longer mean what has been said; or meaning this, we must say that faith in Christ and deliverance from impiety have been accorded to none of the unbelievers, whom we compare to swine, by the apostolic instructions enlightening their souls like pearls. But this is blasphemous. Therefore the pearls in this place are not to be taken to mean the deepest doctrines, and the swine the impious; nor are we to understand the words, "Do not cast your pearls before swine," as forbidding us to cast before the impious and unbelieving the deep and sanctifying doctrines of faith in Christ; but we must take the pearls to mean virtues, with which the soul is adorned as with precious pearls; and not to cast them before swine, as meaning that we are not to cast these virtues, such as chastity, temperance, righteousness, and truth, that we are not to cast these to impure pleasures, for these are like swine, lest they, fleeing from the virtues, cause the soul to live a swinish and a vicious life. Extracts from the Work on Things Created. 6.379.

⁵⁷ Cf. Tit 1:16

Asking, Seeking and Knocking Matthew 7:7-12

171 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: LK 11:9; MT 18:19; 21:22; MK 11:24; JN 15:7; 1 JN 3:22; 5:14-15; JAS 1:5-6; 4:3

SUMMARY: They who serve Him shall obtain their requests, but they who do not serve Him shall receive nothing (Hermas). "Ask, and it shall be given to you," is said to those who are able of themselves to choose what is best; "Seek, and you shall find," holding on by the truly royal road, and not deviating (Clement of Alexandria). Our additional wants and petitions have the right after the Lord's prayer (Tertullian). We will not obtain what we ask if we do not agree in prayer (Origen, Cyprian). Who then is he that asks, but he who has obeyed Jesus when He says, "If you stand praying, believe that you receive, and you will receive?" (Origen). The Lord is here comparing the father after the flesh, and the eternal and liberal love of God the Father (Cyprian). He who loves his

^[8] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. LK 11:10

^[9] Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? LK 11:11

^[10] Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? LK 11:11

III If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? LK 11:13; JAS 1:17

^[12] Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. MT 22:39-40; MK 12:31; LK 6:31; 10:27; ROM 13:9; GAL 5:14; JAS 2:8

neighbor would pray and labor that his neighbor may be possessed of the same benefits as himself (Justin Martyr). Christians never do to others what they would not wish to happen to themselves (Aristides). We have a law which makes the measure of righteousness to consist in dealing with our neighbor as ourselves (Athenagoras). We should do that which is right, and which we love and are pleased to have done to us likewise (Bardesanes). In this command is no doubt implied its counterpart: "And as you would that men should not do to you, so should you also not do to them likewise" (The Didache, Tertullian). If one prevails in the keeping of the two commandments, he fulfills the whole Law and the prophets (Archelaus).

7:7ff HERMAS: He says to me, "Put away doubting from you and do not hesitate to ask of the Lord, saying to yourself, 'How can I ask of the Lord and receive from Him, seeing I have sinned so much against Him?' Do not thus reason with yourself, but with all your heart turn to the Lord and ask of Him without doubting, and you will know the multitude of His tender mercies; that He will never leave you, but fulfill the request of your soul. For He is not like men, who remember evils done against them; but He Himself does not remember evils, and has compassion on His own creature. Cleanse, therefore, your heart from all the vanities of this world, and from the words already mentioned, and ask of the Lord and you will receive all, and in none of your requests will you be denied which you make to the Lord without doubting.

"But if you doubt in your heart, you will receive none of your requests. For those who doubt regarding God are double-souled, and obtain not one of their requests. But those who are perfect in faith ask everything, trusting in the Lord; and they obtain, because they ask nothing doubting, and not being double-souled. For every double-souled man, even if he repent, will with difficulty be saved. Cleanse your heart, therefore, from all doubt, and put on faith, because it is strong, and trust God that you will obtain from Him all that you ask. And if at any time, after you have asked of the Lord, you are slower in obtaining your request than you expected, do not doubt because you have not soon obtained the request of your soul; for invariably it is on account of some temptation or some sin of which you are ignorant that you are slower in obtaining your request. Therefore do not cease to make the request of your soul, and you will obtain it.

"But if you grow weary and waver in your request, blame yourself, and not Him who does not give to you. Consider this doubting state of mind, for it is wicked and senseless, and turns many away entirely from the faith, even though they be very strong. For this doubting is the daughter of the devil, and acts exceedingly wickedly to the servants of God. Despise, then, doubting, and gain the mastery over it in everything; clothing yourself with faith, which is strong and powerful. For faith promises all things, perfects all things; but doubt having no thorough faith in itself, fails in every work which it undertakes. You see, then," he says, "that, faith is from above—from the Lord—and has great power;

¹ Jas 1:6-8

but doubt is an earthly spirit, coming from the devil, and has no power. Serve, then, that which has power, namely faith, and keep away from doubt, which has no power, and you will live to God. And all will live to God whose minds have been set on these things." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.26

HERMAS: "How, then," he continued, "can such a one ask and obtain anything from the Lord, if he does not serve Him? They who serve Him shall obtain their requests, but they who do not serve Him shall receive nothing. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.33.

TATIAN: Ask, and you shall be given to; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. Every one that asks receives, and he that seeks finds, and he that knocks, it shall be opened to him. What father of you, if his son asks for bread—will he give him a stone? And if he asks of him a fish, will he instead of the fish give him a serpent? And if he ask him for an egg, will he extend to him a scorpion? If you then, although being evil, know the gifts which are good, and give them to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: this is the law and the prophets. The Diatessaron, 9.59-60.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: For he whose it is to desire nothing that is not in our power, and to obtain by asking from God what he piously desires, does he not possess much, rather all, having God as his everlasting treasure? "To him that asks," it is said, "will be given, and to him that knocks it will be opened." *The Instructor*, 2.280.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The Word does not wish him who has believed to be idle. For He says, "Seek, and you shall find." But seeking ends in finding, driving out the empty trifling, and approving of the contemplation which confirms our faith. *The Stromata*, 2.312.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Ask, and it shall be given you," it is said to those who are able of themselves to choose what is best. And how we say that the powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits, sow into the sinner's soul, requires no more words from me, on adducing as a witness the apostolic Barnabas (and he was one of the seventy, and a fellow-worker of Paul), who speaks in these words: "Before we believed in God, the dwelling-place of our heart was unstable, truly a temple built with hands. For it was full of idolatry, and was a house of demons, through doing what was opposed to God." The Stromata, 2.372.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Seek, and you shall find," holding on by the truly

² Epistle of Barnabas, chapter 16 (ANF 1.147).

royal road, and not deviating. The Stromata, 2.410.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Faith must not be inert and alone, but accompanied with investigation. For I do not say that we are not to inquire at all. For "Search, and you shall find," *The Stromata*, 2.447.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The righteous man will seek the discovery that flows from love, to which if he hastens he prospers. For it is said, "**To him that knocks, it shall be opened: ask, and it shall be given to you**." "For the violent that storm the kingdom" are not so in argumentative speeches; but by continuance in a right life and unceasing prayers, are said "to take it by force," wiping away the blots left by their previous sins. *The Stromata, 2.448*.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Now thanksgiving and request for the conversion of our neighbors is the function of the Christian; as also the Lord prayed, giving thanks for the accomplishment of His ministry, praying that as many as possible might attain to knowledge; that in the saved, by salvation, through knowledge, God might be glorified, and He who is alone good and alone Savior might be acknowledged through the Son from age to age. *The Stromata*, 2.534.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: His whole life is prayer and converse with God. And if he be pure from sins, he will by all means obtain what he wishes. For God says to the righteous man, "Ask, and I will give to you; think, and I will do." If beneficial, he will receive it at once; and if injurious, he will never ask it, and therefore he will not receive it. So it shall be as he wishes. But if one say to us, that some sinners even obtain according to their requests, we should say that this rarely takes place, by reason of the righteous goodness of God. And it is granted to those who are capable of doing others good. As a consequence the gift is not made for the sake of him that asked it; but the divine dispensation, foreseeing that one would be saved by his means, renders the favor again righteous. And to those who are worthy, things which are really good are given, even without their asking.

Whenever, then, one is righteous, not from necessity or out of fear or hope, but from free choice, this is called the royal road, which the royal race travel. But the byways are slippery and precipitous. If, then, one take away fear and honor, I do not know if the illustrious among the philosophers, who use such freedom of speech, will any longer endure afflictions. *The Stromata*, 2.544.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The human ideal of self-restraint, I mean that which is set forth by Greek philosophers, teaches that one should fight desire and not be subservient to it so as to bring it to practical effect. But our ideal is not to experience desire at all. Our aim is not that while a man feels desire he should get the better of it, but that he should be continent even respecting desire itself.

³ Mt 11:12

This chastity cannot be attained in any other way except by God's grace. That was why he said "Ask and it shall be given you." This grace was received even by Moses, though clothed in his needy body, so that for forty days he felt neither thirst nor hunger. Just as it is better to be in good health than for a sick man to talk about health, so to be light is better than to discuss light, and true chastity is better than that taught by the philosophers. Where there is light there is no darkness. But where there is inward desire, even if it goes no further than desire and is inactive so far as bodily action is concerned, union takes place in thought with the object of desire, although that object is not present. On Marriage.

TERTULLIAN: I come now to the point which is urged both by our own brethren and by the heretics. Our brethren adduce it as a pretext for entering on curious inquiries, and the heretics insist on it for importing the scrupulosity (of their unbelief). It is written, they say, "Seek, and you shall find." Let us remember at what time the Lord said this. I think it was at the very outset of His teaching, when there was still a doubt felt by all whether He were the Christ, and when even Peter had not yet declared Him to be the Son of God, and John the Baptist had actually ceased to feel assurance about Him.⁶ With good reason, therefore, was it then said, "Seek, and you shall find," when inquiry was still to be made of Him who was not yet become known.

Besides, this was said in respect of the Jews. For it is to them that the whole matter of this reproof pertains, seeing that they had a revelation where they might seek Christ. "They have," He says, "Moses and Elijah," —in other words, the law and the prophets, which preach Christ; as also in another place He says plainly, "Search the Scriptures, in which you expect to find salvation; for they testify of me;" which will be the meaning of "Seek, and you shall find." For it is clear that the next words also apply to the Jews: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The Jews had formerly been in covenant with God; but being afterwards cast off on account of their sins, they began to be without God. The Gentiles, on the contrary, had never been in covenant with God; they were only as "a drop from a bucket," and "as dust from the threshing floor," and were ever outside the door. Now, how shall he who was always outside knock at the place where he never was? What door does he know of, when he has passed through none, either by entrance or ejection? Is it not rather he who is aware that he once lived within and was thrust out, that probably found the door and

⁴ Exod 34:28

⁵ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.7:57. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 66. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁶ Lk 7:18-35

⁷ Lk 16:29

⁸ Jn 5:39

⁹ Isa 40:15

knocked there?

In like manner, "Ask, and you shall receive," is suitably said to one who was aware from whom he ought to ask,—by whom also some promise had been given; that is to say, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Now, the Gentiles knew nothing either of Him, or of any of His promises. Therefore it was to Israel that he spoke when He said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."¹⁰ Not yet had He "cast to the dogs the children's bread;"¹¹ not yet did He charge them to "go into the way of the Gentiles." 12 It is only at the last that He instructs them to "go and teach all nations, and baptize them," 13 when they were so soon to receive "the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who should guide them into all the truth."14 And this, too, makes towards the same conclusion. If the apostles, who were ordained to be teachers to the Gentiles, were themselves to have the Comforter for their teacher, far more needless was it to say to us, "Seek, and you shall find," to whom was to come, without research, our instruction by the apostles, and to the apostles themselves by the Holy Ghost. All the Lord's sayings, indeed, are set forth for all men; through the ears of the Jews have they passed on to us. Still most of them were addressed to Jewish persons; they therefore did not constitute instruction properly designed for ourselves, but rather an example. The Prescription Against Heretics, 3.247.

TERTULLIAN: Since, however, the Lord, the Foreseer of human necessities, said separately, after delivering His Rule of Prayer, "Ask, and you will receive;" and since there are petitions which are made according to the circumstances of each individual; our additional wants have the right—after beginning with the legitimate and customary prayers as a foundation, as it were—of rearing an outer superstructure of petitions, yet with remembrance of the Master's precepts. *On Prayer, 3.684*.

ORIGEN: Now you will connect with the man seeking goodly pearls the saying, "Seek and you shall find," and this—"Every one that seeks finds." For what do you seek? Or what does every one that seek find? I venture to answer, pearls and the pearl which he possesses, who has given up all things, and counted them as loss; "for which," Paul says, "I have counted all things but loss that I may win Christ;" 15 by "all things" meaning the goodly pearls, "that I may win Christ," the one very precious pearl. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.418*.

ORIGEN: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them." 16 . . . But if whenever two of us agree on earth as

¹⁰ Mt 15:24

¹¹ Mt 15:26

¹² Mt 10:5

¹³ Mt 28:19

¹⁴ Jn 16:13

¹⁵ Phil 3:8

¹⁶ Mt 18:19

touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of the Father of Jesus who is in heaven, plainly when this is not done for them of the Father in heaven as touching anything that they shall ask, there the two have not been in agreement on earth; and this is the cause why we are not heard when we pray, that we do not agree with one another on earth, neither in opinions nor in life. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.494-495*.

ORIGEN: Do you, then, my lord and my son, chiefly give heed to the reading of the Divine Scriptures; do give heed. For we need great attention when we read the Divine writings, that we may not speak or form notions about them rashly. And as you give heed to reading the Divine volume with a faithful anticipation well pleasing to God, knock at its closed doors and it shall be opened to you by the porter, of whom Jesus said, "To him the porter opens." And as you give heed to the Divine reading, seek, in the right way and with an unfaltering faith in God, the meaning of the Divine writings, which is hidden from the many. However, do not be content with knocking and seeking; for prayer is the most necessary qualification for the understanding of Divine things, and the Savior urged us to this when He said, not only, "Knock and it shall be opened, seek and you shall find," but also, "Ask and it shall be given to you." The Philocalia of Origen.

Anonymous: Let us then arouse ourselves as much as we can, beloved brethren; and breaking away from the slumber of indolence and security, let us be watchful for the observance of the Lord's precepts. Let us with all our hearts seek for what we have lost, that we may be able to find; because "to him that seeks," says the Scripture, "it shall be given, and to him that knocks it shall be opened." A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop. 5.662.

7:8 CYPRIAN: Let us ask, and we will receive; and if there be delay and tardiness in our receiving, since we have grievously offended, let us knock, because "**to him that knocks also it will be opened**,"²¹ if only our prayers, our groanings, and our tears, knock at the door; and with these we must be urgent and persevering, even although prayer be offered with one mind.²²

For,—which the more induced and constrained me to write this letter to you,—you ought to know (since the Lord has condescended to show and to reveal it) that it was said in a vision, "Ask, and you will obtain." Then, afterwards, that the attending people were bidden to pray for certain persons

¹⁷ Jn 10:3

¹⁸ Lk 11:9

Origen, The Philocalia of Origen, English Translation (1911), 13.4. Transcribed by Roger Pearse, (Ipswich, UK, 2003).

²⁰ Lk 11:10

²¹ Lk 11:10

²² Cf. Lk 18:3; Mt 18:19

pointed out to them, but that in their petitions there were dissonant voices, and wills disagreeing, and that this excessively displeased Him who had said, "Ask, and you will obtain," because the disagreement of the people was out of harmony, and there was not a consent of the brethren one and simple, and a united concord; since it is written, "God who makes men to be of one mind in a house;"23 and we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."24 And the Lord has bidden us with His own voice, saving, "This is my command, that you love one another." 25 And again, "I say to you, that if two of you will agree on earth as touching anything that you ask, it will be done for you of my Father which is in heaven."26 But if two of one mind can do so much, what might be effected if the unanimity prevailed among all? But if, according to the peace which our Lord gave us, there were agreement among all brethren, we should before this have obtained from the divine mercy what we seek; nor should we be wavering so long in this peril of our salvation and our faith. Yes, truly, and these evils would not have come upon the brethren, if the brotherhood had been animated with one spirit.

For there also was shown that there sat the father of a family, a young man also being seated at his right hand, who, anxious and somewhat sad with a kind of indignation, holding his chin in his right hand, occupied his place with a sorrowful look. But another standing on the left hand, bore a net, which he threatened to throw, in order to catch the people standing round. And when he who saw marveled what this could be, it was told him that the youth who was thus sitting on the right hand was saddened and grieved because his commandments were not observed; but that he on the left was exultant because an opportunity was afforded him of receiving from the father of the family the power of destroying. This was shown long before the tempest of this devastation arose. And we have seen that which had been shown fulfilled; that while we despise the commandments of the Lord, while we do not keep the salutary ordinances of the law that He has given, the enemy was receiving a power of doing mischief, and was overwhelming, by the cast of his net, those who were imperfectly armed and too careless to resist.

Let us urgently pray and groan with continual petitions. For know, beloved brethren, that I was not long ago reproached with this also in a vision, that we were sleepy in our prayers, and did not pray with watchfulness. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.286.

7:9ff TERTULLIAN: Him, therefore, whom you call the Creator recognize also as "Father." It is even He who knows what His children require. For when they asked for bread, He gave them manna from heaven; and when they wanted flesh, He sent them abundance of quails—not a serpent for a fish, nor for an egg a

²³ Ps 68:6

²⁴ Acts 4:32

²⁵ Jn 15:12

²⁶ Mt 18:19

scorpion.²⁷ Against Marcion, 3.393.

CYPRIAN: The Lord also in His Gospel, setting forth the love of God the Father, says, "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" The Lord is here comparing the father after the flesh, and the eternal and liberal love of God the Father. But if that evil father upon earth, deeply offended by a sinful and evil son, yet if he should see the same son afterwards reformed, and, the sins of his former life being put away, restored to sobriety and morality and to the discipline of innocence by the sorrow of his repentance, both rejoices and gives thanks, and with the eagerness of a father's exultation, embraces the restored one, whom before he had cast out; how much more does that one and true Father, good, merciful, and loving—Himself Goodness and Mercy and Love rejoice in the repentance of His own sons! Nor does He threaten punishment to those who are now repenting, or mourning and lamenting, but rather promises pardon and clemency.²⁸ Thus, the Lord in the Gospel calls those that mourn, blessed;²⁹ because he who mourns calls forth mercy. He who is stubborn and haughty heaps up wrath against himself, and the punishment of the coming judgment. And therefore, dearest brother, we have decided that those who do not repent, nor give evidence of sorrow for their sins with their whole heart, and with manifest profession of their lamentation, are to be absolutely restrained from the hope of communion and peace if they begin to beg for them in the midst of sickness and peril; because it is not repentance for sin, but the warning of urgent death, that drives them to ask; and he is not worthy to receive consolation in death who has not reflected that he was about to die. The Epistles of Cyprian, 5.333.

7:12 THE DIDACHE: The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God³⁰ who made you; second, your neighbor as yourself;³¹ and all things whatsoever you would not want to occur to you, you also do not do to another.³²

JUSTIN MARTYR: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ spoke well when He summed up all righteousness and piety in two commandments. They are these: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." For the man who loves God with all the heart, and with all the strength, being filled with a God-fearing mind, will reverence no other

²⁷ Lk 11:11-13

²⁸ Cf. Lk 15:11-32

²⁹ Mt 5:4

³⁰ Deut 6:5

³¹ Lev 19:18; Mt 22:37, 39; cf. Mark 12:30, 31

³² Cf. Tobit 4:15; Lk 6:31

³³ Mt 22:37

god; and since God wishes it, he would reverence that angel who is beloved by the same Lord and God. And the man who loves his neighbor as himself will wish for him the same good things that he wishes for himself, and no man will wish evil things for himself. Accordingly, he who loves his neighbor would pray and labor that his neighbor may be possessed of the same benefits as himself. *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, 1.246.*

ARISTIDES: Christians love their neighbors; they judge justly, and they never do to others what they would not wish to happen to themselves. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, 9.277.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Here is then a comprehensive precept, and an exhortation of life, all-embracing: "As you would that men should do to you, do likewise to them."³⁴ We may comprehend the commandments in two, as the Lord says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength; and your neighbor as yourself." Then from these He infers, "on this hang the law and the prophets."³⁵

Further, to him [the rich young ruler] that asked, "What good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"

He answered, "You know the commandments?" And on him replying, "Yes," Jesus said, "This do, and you shall be saved." Especially conspicuous is the love of the Instructor set forth in various health-giving commandments, in order that the discovery may be readier, from the abundance and arrangement of the Scriptures. We have the Decalogue given by Moses, which, indicating by an elementary principle, simple and of one kind, defines the designation of sins in a way conducive to salvation: "You shall not commit adultery. You shall not worship idols. You shall not corrupt boys. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother." And so forth. These things are to be observed, and whatever else is commanded in reading the Bible. *The Instructor, 2.292*.

ATHENAGORAS: For our account does not lie with human laws, which a bad man can evade (at the outset I proved to you, sovereign lords, that our doctrine is from the teaching of God), but we have a law which makes the measure of righteousness to consist in dealing with our neighbor as ourselves. A Plea for the Christians, 2.146.

BARDESANES: For men have not been commanded to do anything but that which they are able to do. For the commandments set before us are only two, and they are such as are compatible with freedom and consistent with equity: one, that we refrain from everything which is wrong, and which we should not like to have

³⁴ Lk 6:31

³⁵ Mt 22:37-40

³⁶ Mt 19:16-18; Lk 18:18-19; Mk 10:17-20

³⁷ Exod 20: Deut 5

done to ourselves; and the other, that we should do that which is right, and which we love and are pleased to have done to us likewise. Who, then, is the man that is too weak to avoid stealing, or to avoid lying, or to avoid acts of licentiousness, or to avoid hatred and deception? All these things are under the control of the mind of man; and are not dependent on the strength of the body, but on the will of the soul. For even if a man be poor, and sick, and old, and disabled in his limbs, he is able to avoid doing all these things. And, as he is able to avoid doing these things, so is he able to love, and to bless, and to speak the truth, and to pray for what is good for every one with whom he is acquainted; and if he be in health, and capable of working, he is able also to give of that which he has; moreover, to support with strength of body him that is sick and enfeebled—this also he can do. *The Book of the Laws of Divers Countries*, 8.725.

TERTULLIAN: "And as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise." In this command is no doubt implied its counterpart: "And as you would that men should *not* do to you, so should you also *not* do to them likewise." *Against Marcion*, 3.372.

CYPRIAN: When He taught what is life eternal, He embraced the sacrament of life in a large and divine brevity, saying, "And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." Also, when He would gather from the law and the prophets the first and greatest commandments, He said, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord your God is one God: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." And again: "Whatsoever good things you would that men should do to you, do even so to them. For this is the law and the prophets." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.455.

ARCHELAUS: And that is quite in accordance with the truth which we have learned now, that if one prevails in the keeping of the two commandments, he fulfills the whole law and the prophets. *The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, 6.217.

³⁸ In 17:3

³⁹ Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:29-31

⁴⁰ Mt 22:40

Two Ways

Matthew 7:13-14

<code>[13]</code> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: LK 13:23-25; JN 14:6

Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. LK 13:23-25

SUMMARY: Both BARNABAS and CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA linked Psalm 1:1 to the "broad way" in this passage. Some of the early Christians had much to say about the two ways. The two ways have also been called the way of light and the way of darkness (BARNABAS, IRENAEUS, ORIGEN), the way of life and the way of death (THE DIDACHE, IRENAEUS, LACTANTIUS), the angels of the Lord and the angels of Satan (BARNABAS, HERMAS, ORIGEN), the way to heaven and the way to hell (IRENAEUS, HIPPOLYTUS, LACTANTIUS), or the twofold desire (HERMAS). Those who believe in Him are those who walk in the straight and narrow way, which leads to life, and which is found by few (ORIGEN).

7:13ff Editor's Note: A textual variant occurs here where "the gate" may have been removed by scribes in order to make the adjectives "wide and broad" describe only "the way" or else it was supplemented in order to complete the parallelism with Matthew 7:14. Tatian does mention the "the wide gate" and Hippolytus says "broad gate," but Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, and Hippolytus (in another place) contain the variant reading. None of the readings fail to communicate the metaphor Jesus used to contrast the narrow way of practicing righteousness to the broad way of unrighteousness.¹

See Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale

BARNABAS: But let us now pass to another sort of knowledge and doctrine. There are two ways of doctrine and authority, the one of light, and the other of darkness. But there is a great difference between these two ways. For over one are stationed the light-bringing angels of God, but over the other the angels of Satan. And He indeed (i.e., God) is Lord forever and ever, but he (i.e., Satan) is prince of the time of iniquity.

The way of light, then, is as follows. If any one desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works.² The knowledge, therefore, which is given to us for the purpose of walking in this way, is the following. You shall love Him that created you:³ you shall glorify Him that redeemed you from death. You shall be simple in heart, and rich in spirit. You shall not join yourself to those who walk in the way of death. You shall hate doing what is unpleasing to God: you shall hate all hypocrisy. You shall not forsake the commandments of the Lord.⁵ You shall not exalt yourself, but shall be of a lowly mind.⁶ You shall not take glory to yourself. You shall not take evil counsel against your neighbor. You shall not allow over-boldness to enter into your soul. You shall not commit fornication: you shall not commit adultery:8 you shall not be a corrupter of youth. You shall not let the word of God issue from your lips with any kind of impurity. You shall not accept persons when you reprove any one for transgression. You shall be meek: you shall be peaceable. You shall tremble at the words which you hear. 11 You shall not be mindful of evil against your brother. You shall not be of doubtful mind as to whether a thing shall be or not.¹² You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain. 13 You shall love your neighbor more than your own soul. 14 You shall not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shall you destroy it after it is born. You shall not withdraw your hand from your son, or from your daughter, but from their infancy you shall teach them the fear of the Lord. 15 You shall not covet what is your neighbor's, 16 nor

House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 19; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 56.

² Cf. Tit 2:14; Rev 3:19

³ Cf. Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:13; 30:6; Josh 22:5; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27

⁴ Cf. Ps 1:1; Prov 14:12; 16:25; Jer 21:8

⁵ Cf. 1 Kgs 18:18

⁶ Cf. Lk 1:52; Jas 1:9

⁷ Cf. Exod 20:16; Deut 5:20; Prov 3:29; 24:28; 25:18

⁸ Cf. Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18

⁹ Cf. Jas 2:1, 9

¹⁰ Cf. Ps 37:11

¹¹ Cf. Isa 66:2

¹² Cf. Jas 1:8

¹³ Cf. Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11

¹⁴ Cf. Mk 12:33; Lk 10:27; Jn 13:34; 15:12

¹⁵ Cf. Ps 34:11

¹⁶ Cf. Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21; Rom 13:9

shall you be materialistic. You shall not be joined in soul with the haughty, but you shall be reckoned with the righteous and lowly. Receive as good things the trials which come upon you.¹⁷ You shall not be of double mind or of double tongue, for a double tongue is a snare of death. 18 You shall be subject to the Lord, and to other masters as the image of God, with modesty and fear. 19 You shall not issue orders with bitterness to your maidservant or your man-servant, who trust in the same God, lest you should not reverence that God who is above both; for He came to call men not according to their outward appearance.²⁰ but according as the Spirit had prepared them. You shall share in all things with your neighbor; you shall not call things your own;²¹ for if you are partakers in common of things which are incorruptible, how much more should you be of those things which are corruptible! You shall not be hasty with your tongue, ²² for the mouth is a snare of death.²³ As far as possible, you shall be pure in your soul. Do not be ready to stretch forth your hands to take, while you contract them to give. You shall love, as the apple of your eye, every one that speaks to you the word of the Lord. You shall remember the day of judgment, night and day. You shall seek out every day the faces of the saints, either by word examining them, and going to exhort them, 24 and meditating how to save a soul by the word, or by your hands you shall labor for the redemption of your sins. You shall not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give. "Give to every one that asks you," and you shall know who is the good Recompenser of the reward. You shall preserve what you have received in charge, neither adding to it nor taking from it. 25 To the last you shall hate the wicked one. You shall judge righteously. 26 You shall not make a schism, but you shall pacify those that contend by bringing them together. You shall confess your sins.²⁷ You shall not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light.²⁸

But the way of darkness is crooked,²⁹ and full of cursing; for it is the way of eternal death with punishment, in which way are the things that destroy the soul, namely, idolatry, over-confidence, the arrogance of power, hypocrisy, double-heartedness, adultery, murder, plunder, haughtiness, transgression, deceit, malice, self-sufficiency, poisoning, magic, avarice, lack of the fear of

¹⁷ Cf. Jas 1:2

¹⁸ Cf. 1 Tim 3:8; Jas 1:8; 4:8

¹⁹ Cf. Eph 6:5; Tit 2:9

²⁰ Cf. 2 Cor 10:7; Eph 6:9

²¹ Cf. Acts 1:19

²² Cf. Prov 29:20

²³ Cf. Prov 13:14

²⁴ Cf. Heb 3:13; 10:25

²⁵ Cf. Deut 12:32

²⁶ Cf. Jn 7:24

²⁷ Cf. Jas 5:16

²⁸ Cf. Prov 6:23

²⁹ Cf. Prov 4:19

God.³⁰ In this way, too, are those who persecute the good, those who hate truth, those who love falsehood, those who do not know the reward of righteousness, those who do not cleave to that which is good,³¹ those who do not attend with just judgment to the widow and orphan, those who do not watch to the fear of God, but incline to wickedness, from whom meekness and patience are far off,³² persons who love vanity,³³ follow after a reward,³⁴ do not pity the needy, do not labor in aid of him who is overcome with toil; who are prone to evil-speaking, who do not know Him that made them, who are murderers of children, destroyers of the workmanship of God; who turn away him that is in want, who oppress the afflicted,³⁵ who are advocates of the rich, who are unjust judges of the poor, and who are in every respect transgressors.

It is well, therefore, that he who has learned the judgments of the Lord, as many as have been written, should walk in them. For he who keeps these shall be glorified in the kingdom of God; but he who chooses other things shall be destroyed with his works. *Epistle of Barnabas*, 1.148-149.

THE DIDACHE: There are two ways, one of life and one of death;³⁶ but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God³⁷ who made you; second, your neighbor as yourself;³⁸ and all things whatsoever you would not want to occur to you, you also to another do not do.³⁹ And of these sayings the teaching is this: Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for them that persecute you.⁴⁰ For what thank is there, if you love them that love you? Do not also the Gentiles do the same?⁴¹ But do you love them that hate you; and you shall not have an enemy.⁴² Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts.⁴³ If one gives you a blow upon your right cheek, turn to him the other also;⁴⁴ and you shall be perfect. If one compel you for one mile, go with him two.⁴⁵ If one takes away your cloak, give him also your coat.⁴⁶ If one take from you what is your own, do not ask for it back,⁴⁷ for indeed you are not

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; Rev 21:8
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³¹ Cf. Rom 12:9

³² Cf. 1 Tim 6:11

³³ Cf. Ps 4:2

³⁴ Cf. Isa 1:23

³⁵ Cf. Prov 22:22

³⁶ Deut 30:15, 19; Jer 21:8

³⁷ Deut 6:5

³⁸ Lev 19:18; Mt 22:37, 39; cf. Mark 12:30, 31

³⁹ Cf. Tobit 4:15; Lk 6:31

⁴⁰ Mt 5:44

⁴¹ Mt 5:46-47; Lk 6:32

^{42 1} Pet 3:13

⁴³ 1 Pet 2:11

⁴⁴ Mt 5:39: Lk 6:29

⁴⁵ Mt 5:41

⁴⁶ Mt 5:40: Lk 6:29

⁴⁷ Lk 6:30

able. Give to every one that asks you, and do not ask for it back; ⁴⁸ for the Father wills that to all should be given of our own blessings (free gifts). Happy is he that gives according to the commandment; for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receives; for if one having need receive, he is guiltless; but he that receives not having need, shall pay the penalty, why he received and for what, and, coming into straits (confinement), he shall be examined concerning the things which he has done, and he shall not escape from there until he pays back the last farthing. ⁴⁹ But also now concerning this, it has been said, "Let your alms sweat in your hands, until you know to whom you should give."

And the second commandment of the Teaching; You shall not commit murder, you shall not commit adultery,⁵⁰ you shall not commit pederasty, you shall not commit fornication, you shall not steal,⁵¹ you shall not practice magic, you shall not practice witchcraft, you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten.⁵² You shall not covet the things of your neighbor,⁵³ you shall not forswear yourself,⁵⁴ you shall not bear false witness,⁵⁵ you shall not speak evil, you shall bear no grudge.⁵⁶ You shall not be double-minded nor double-tongued;⁵⁷ for to be double-tongued is a snare of death. Your speech shall not be false, nor empty, but fulfilled by deed.⁵⁸ You shall not be covetous, nor rapacious, nor a hypocrite, nor evil disposed, nor haughty. You shall not take evil counsel against your neighbor. You shall not hate any man; but some you shall reprove,⁵⁹ and concerning some you shall pray, and some you shall love more than your own life.

My child, flee from every evil thing, and from every likeness of it. Do not be prone to anger, for anger leads the way to murder; 60 neither jealous, nor quarrelsome, nor of hot temper; for out of all these murders are engendered. My child, do not be a lustful one; for lust leads the way to fornication; neither a filthy talker, nor of lofty eye; for out of all these adulteries are committed. My child, do not be an observer of omens, since it leads the way to idolatry; neither an enchanter, nor an astrologer, nor a purifier, nor be willing to look at these things; for out of all these idolatry is committed. My child, do not be a liar, since a lie leads the way to theft; neither money-loving, nor vainglorious, for out of all

⁴⁸ Lk 6:30

⁴⁹ Mt 5:26. A farthing is a quadrans (about the fourth part of an "as"); in the NT a coin equal to one half the Attic chalcus worth about 3/8 of a cent.

⁵⁰ Exod 20:13-14

⁵¹ Exod 20:15

⁵² Cf. Exod 21:22-23

⁵³ Exod 20:17

⁵⁴ Mt 5:34

⁵⁵ Exod 20:16

⁶ Jas 4:11

of. Jas 1:8; 3:10-11; 4:8

⁵⁸ cf. 1 Jn 3:18

⁵⁹ Lev 19:17

⁶⁰ Cf. 1 Jn 3:15

these thefts are committed. My child, do not be a murmurer, since it leads the way to blasphemy; neither self-willed nor evil-minded, for out of all these blasphemies are committed. But be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth. Be long-suffering and pitiful and trustworthy and gentle and good and always trembling at the words which you have heard. You shall not exalt yourself, nor give over-confidence to your soul. Your soul shall not be joined with lofty ones, but with just and lowly ones shall it have its relationships. The workings that befall you receive as good, knowing that apart from God nothing comes to pass. 4

My child, him that speaks to you the word of God remember night and day; and you shall honor him as the Lord⁶⁵ for in the place from where lordly rule is uttered, there is the Lord. And you shall seek out day by day the faces of the saints, in order that you may rest upon their words. You shall not long for division, but shall bring those who contend to peace. You shall judge righteously, you shall not respect persons in reproving for transgressions. 66 You shall not be undecided whether it shall be or not. Do not be a stretcher forth of the hands to receive and a drawer of them back to give. 67 If you have anything at all, through your hands you shall give ransom for your sins. 68 You shall not hesitate to give, nor murmur when you give; 69 for you shall know who is the good repayer of the hire. You shall not turn away from him that is in want, but you shall share all things with your brother, and shall not say that they are your own; for if you are partakers in that which is immortal, how much more in things which are mortal?⁷⁰ You shall not remove your hand from your son or from your daughter, but from their youth shall teach them the fear of God. 71 You shall not enjoin anything at all in your bitterness upon your bondman or maidservant, who hope in the same God, lest ever they shall not fear God who is over both; ⁷² for he comes not to call according to the outward appearance, but to them whom the Spirit has prepared. And you bondmen shall be subject to your masters as to a type of God, in modesty and fear. 73 You shall hate all hypocrisy and everything which is not pleasing to the Lord. In no way forsake the commandments of the Lord; but you shall keep what you have received, neither

⁶¹ Mt 5:5

⁶² Isa 66:2

⁶³ Lk 18:14

⁶⁴ Cf. Sir 2:4

⁶⁵ Heb 13:7

⁶⁶ Cf. Deut 1:17; 16:19; Jas 2:1, 9

⁶⁷ Sir 4:31

⁶⁸ Prov 16:6

⁶⁹ Cf. 2 Cor 9:7

⁷⁰ Cf. Acts 4:32; Rom 15:27

⁷¹ Cf. Eph 6:4

⁷² Eph 6:9; Col 4:1

⁷³ Cf. Eph 6:5; Col 3:22

adding thereto nor taking away therefrom. ⁷⁴ In the church you shall acknowledge your transgressions, and you shall not come near for your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

And the way of death is this: First of all it is evil and full of curse: murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, witchcrafts, plunders, false witnessings, hypocrisies, double-heartedness, deceit, haughtiness, depravity, self-will, greediness, filthy talking, jealousy, over-confidence, loftiness, boastfulness; persecutors of the good, hating truth, loving a lie, not knowing a reward for righteousness, not cleaving to good nor to righteous judgment, not watching for that which is good, but for that which is evil; from whom meekness and endurance are far, loving vanities, pursuing revenge, not pitying a poor man, not laboring for the afflicted, not knowing Him that made them, murderers of children, destroyers of the handiwork of God, turning away from him that is in want, afflicting him that is distressed, advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor, utter sinners. Be delivered, children, from all these.

See that no one causes you to err from this way of the Teaching, since apart from God it teaches you. For if you are able to bear all the yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you are not able, what you are able that do. And concerning food, bear what you are able; but against that which is sacrificed to idols be exceedingly on your guard; for it is the service of dead gods. 7.377-379.

HERMAS: "Hear now," he said, "in regard to faith. There are two angels with a man—one of righteousness, and the other of iniquity."

And I said to him, "How, sir, am I to know the powers of these, for both angels dwell with me?"

"Hear," he said, "and understand them. The angel of righteousness is gentle and modest, meek and peaceful. When, therefore, he ascends into your heart, forthwith he talks to you of righteousness, purity, chastity, contentment, and of every righteous deed and glorious virtue. When all these ascend into your heart, know that the angel of righteousness is with you. These are the deeds of the angel of righteousness. Trust him, then, and his works. Look now at the works of the angel of iniquity. First, he is wrathful, and bitter, and foolish, and his works are evil, and ruin the servants of God. When, then, he ascends into your heart, know him by his works."

And I said to him, "How, sir, I shall perceive him, I do not know."

"Hear and understand," he said. "When anger comes upon you, or harshness, know that he is in you; and you will know this to be the case also, when you are attacked by a longing after many transactions, and the richest delicacies, and drunken revels, and various luxuries, and things improper, and by a hankering after women, and by overreaching, and pride, and by whatever is like to these. When these ascend into your heart, know that the angel of iniquity

⁷⁴ Deut 12:32

⁷⁵ Cf. Acts 15:29; 21:25; 1 Cor 8:1-10; Rev 2:14, 20

is in you. Now that you know his works, depart from him, and in no respect trust him, because his deeds are evil, and unprofitable to the servants of God. These, then, are the actions of both angels. Understand them, and trust the angel of righteousness; but depart from the angel of iniquity, because his instruction is bad in every deed. For though a man be most faithful, and the thought of this angel ascend into his heart, that man or woman must sin. On the other hand, be a man or woman ever so bad, yet, if the works of the angel of righteousness ascend into his or her heart, he or she must do something good. You see, therefore, that it is good to follow the angel of righteousness, but to bid farewell to the angel of iniquity.

"This commandment exhibits the deeds of faith, that you may trust the works of the angel of righteousness, and doing them you may live to God. But believe the works of the angel of iniquity are hard. If you refuse to do them, you will live to God." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.24.

HERMAS: He says to me, "Put away from you all wicked desire, and clothe yourself with good and chaste desire; for clothed with this desire you will hate wicked desire, and will restrain yourself in even as you wish. For wicked desire is wild, and is with difficulty tamed. For it is terrible, and consumes men exceedingly by its wildness. Especially is the servant of God terribly consumed by it, if he falls into it and is devoid of understanding. Moreover, it consumes all such as have not on them the garment of good desire, but are entangled and mixed up with this world. These it delivers up to death."

"What then, sir," I say, "are the deeds of wicked desire which deliver men over to death? Make them known to me, and I will refrain from them."

"Listen, then, to the works in which evil desire slays the servants of God. Foremost of all is the desire after another's wife or husband, and after extravagance, and many useless dainties and drinks, and many other foolish luxuries; for all luxury is foolish and empty in the servants of God. These, then, are the evil desires which slay the servants of God. For this evil desire is the daughter of the devil. You must refrain from evil desires, that by refraining you may live to God. But as many as are mastered by them, and do not resist them, will perish at last, for these desires are fatal. Put on, then, the desire of righteousness; and arming yourself with the fear of the Lord, resist them. For the fear of the Lord dwells in good desire. But if evil desire see you armed with the fear of God, and resisting it, it will flee far from you, and it will no longer appear to you, for it fears your armor. Go, then, garlanded with the crown which you have gained for victory over it, to the desire of righteousness, and, delivering up to it the prize which you have received, serve it even as it wishes. If you serve good desire, and be subject to it, you will gain the mastery over evil desire, and make it subject to you even as you wish."

"I should like to know," I say, "in what way I ought to serve good desire."

"Hear," he says: "You will practice righteousness and virtue, truth and the fear of the Lord, faith and meekness, and whatsoever excellences are like to these. Practicing these, you will be a well-pleasing servant of God, and you will

live to Him; and every one who shall serve good desire, shall live to God. . . . You have now these commandments. Walk in them, and exhort your hearers that their repentance may be pure during the remainder of their life. Fulfill carefully this ministry which I now entrust to you, and you will accomplish much. For you will find favor among those who are to repent, and they will give heed to your words; for I will be with you, and will compel them to obey you."

I say to him, "Sir, these commandments are great, and good, and glorious, and fitted to gladden the heart of the man who can perform them. But I do not know if these commandments can be kept by man, because they are exceeding hard"

He answered and said to me, "If you lay it down as certain that they can be kept, then you will easily keep them, and they will not be hard. But if you come to imagine that they cannot be kept by man, then you will not keep them. Now I say to you, If you do not keep them, but neglect them, you will not be saved, nor your children, nor your house, since you have already determined for yourself that these commandments cannot be kept by man."

These things he said to me in tones of the deepest anger, so that I was confounded and exceedingly afraid of him, for his figure was altered so that a man could not endure his anger. But seeing me altogether agitated and confused, he began to speak to me in more gentle tones; and he said: "O fool, senseless and doubting, do you not perceive how great is the glory of God, and how strong and marvelous, in that He created the world for the sake of man, and subjected all creation to him, and gave him power to rule over everything under heaven? If, then, man is lord of the creatures of God, and rules over all, is he not able to be lord also of these commandments? For," he says, "the man who has the Lord in his heart can also be lord of all, and of every one of these commandments. But to those who have the Lord only on their lips, ⁷⁶ but their hearts hardened, ⁷⁷ and who are far from the Lord, the commandments are hard and difficult. Therefore, you who are empty and fickle in your faith, put the Lord in your heart, and you will know that there is nothing easier or sweeter, or more manageable, than these commandments. Return, you who walk in the commandments of the devil, in hard, and bitter, and wild licentiousness, and do not fear the devil; for there is no power in him against you, for I will be with you, the angel of repentance, who am lord over him. The devil has fear only, but his fear has no strength. 78 Do not fear him, then, and he will flee from you."79

I say to him, "Sir, listen to me for a moment."

"Say what you wish," he says.

"Sir," I say, "man is eager to keep the commandments of God, and there is no one who does not ask of the Lord that strength may be given him for these commandments, and that he may be subject to them; but the devil is hard, and holds sway over them."

⁷⁶ Isa 29:13: Mt 15:8

⁷⁷ Jn 12:40; 2 Cor 3:14

⁷⁸ Jas 2:19; 4:6-7

⁷⁹ Jas 4:7

"He cannot," he says, "hold sway over the servants of God, who with all their heart place their hopes in Him. The devil can wrestle against these, but he cannot overthrow them. If, then, you resist him, he will be conquered, and flee in disgrace from you.⁸⁰ Therefore, as many as are empty, fear the devil, as possessing power. When a man has filled very suitable jars with good wine, and a few among those jars are left empty, then he comes to the jars, and does not look at the full jars, for he knows that they are full; but he looks at the empty, being afraid lest they have become sour. For empty jars quickly become sour, and the goodness of the wine is gone. So also the devil goes to all the servants of God to try them. As many, then, as are full in the faith, resist him strongly, and he withdraws from them, having no way by which he might enter them. He goes, then, to the empty, ⁸¹ and finding a way of entrance, into them, he produces in them whatever he wishes, and they become his servants.⁸²

"But I, the angel of repentance, say to you: Do not fear the devil; for I was sent," he says, "to be with you who repent with all your heart, and to make you strong in faith. Trust God, then, you who on account of your sins have despaired of life, and who add to your sins and weigh down your life; for if you return to the Lord with all your heart, and practice righteousness the rest of your days, and serve Him according to His will, He will heal your former sins, and you will have power to hold sway over the works of the devil. But as to the threats of the devil, do not fear them at all, for he is powerless as the sinews of a dead man. Give ear to me, then, and fear Him who has all power, both to save and destroy, say and keep His commandments, and you will live to God."

I say to him, "Sir, I am now made strong in all the ordinances of the Lord, because you are with me; and I know that you will crush all the power of the devil, and we shall have rule over him, and shall prevail against all his works. And I hope, sir, to be able to keep all these commandments which you have enjoined upon me, the Lord strengthening me."

"You will keep them," he says, "if your heart be pure towards the Lord; and all will keep them who cleanse their hearts from the vain desires of this world, and they will live to God." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.28-30.

IRENAEUS: For one is the way leading upwards for all who see, lightened with heavenly light: but many and dark and contrary are the ways of them that do not see. This way leads to the kingdom of heaven, uniting man to God: but those ways bring down to death, separating man from God. Wherefore it is needful for you and for all who care for their own salvation to make your course unswerving, firm and sure by means of faith, that you do not falter, nor be retarded and detained in material desires, nor turn aside and wander from the right. *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching.* 84

⁸⁰ Jas 4:7

⁸¹ Cf. Mt 12:44

⁸² Eph 4:27

⁸³ Mt 10:28; Lk 12:5

⁸⁴ Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, tr. Armitage Robinson, D.D.

Tatian: Enter by the narrow gate; for the wide gate and the broad way lead to destruction, and many they be which go therein. How narrow is the gate and straitened the way leading to life! And few be they that find it. *The Diatessaron*, 9.60.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: David, too, and Moses before David, show the knowledge of the three precepts in the following words: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly;" as the fishes go down to the depths in darkness; for those which do not have scales, which Moses prohibits touching, feed at the bottom of the sea. "Nor stands in the way of sinners," as those who, while appearing to fear the Lord, commit sin, like the sow, for when hungry it cries, and when full does not know its owner. "Nor sits in the chair of pestilences," as birds ready for prey. And Moses enjoined not to eat the sow, nor the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the raven, nor any fish without scales. So far Barnabas.85 And I heard one skilled in such matters say that "the counsel of the ungodly" was the heathen, and "the way of sinners" the Jewish persuasion, and explain "the chair of pestilence" of heresies. And another said, with more propriety, that the first blessing was assigned to those who had not followed wicked sentiments which revolt from God; the second to those who do not remain in the wide and broad road, whether they be those who have been brought up in the law, or Gentiles who have repented. *The Stromata*, 2.362.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: They have heard in the commandment that "the broad and wide way leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." *The Stromata*, 2.415.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We ought not to gnaw and consume the soul by idleness and by vexation, on account of things which happen against our wishes. Wretched, accordingly, was the man whom Homer also says, wandering alone, "ate his own heart." But again, seeing the Gospel supposes two ways—the apostles, too, similarly with all the prophets—and seeing they call that one "narrow and confined" which is circumscribed according to the commandments and prohibitions, and the opposite one, which leads to perdition, "broad and roomy," open to pleasures and wrath, and say, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and does not stand in the way of sinners." ** The Stromata, 2.451.

TERTULLIAN: Who, when so many incentives to evil were assailing him, would desire that good, which he could despise with impunity? Who, again, would take care of what he could lose without danger? You read how broad is the road to

⁽London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), 70.

⁸⁵ Ps. 1:1. Quoted from Barnabas, with some additions and omissions (*Epistle of Barnabas*, ANF, 1.143).

⁸⁶ Ps 1:1

evil, how crowded it is in comparison with the opposite: would not all glide down that road if there were nothing in it to fear? We dread the Creator's tremendous threats, and yet scarcely turn away from evil. What then, if He did not threaten? Will you call God's justice an evil, when it is all unfavorable to evil? Will you deny it to be a good, when it has its eye towards good? What sort of being ought you to wish God to be? Would it be right to prefer that He should be such, that sins might flourish under Him, and the devil make mock at Him? Would you suppose Him to be a good God, who should be able to make a man worse by security in sin? Who is the author of good, but He who also requires it? In like manner who is a stranger to evil, except Him who is its enemy? Who its enemy, besides Him who is its conqueror? Who else its conqueror, than He who is its punisher? Thus God is wholly good, because in all things He is on the side of good. *Against Marcion*, 3.307-308.

HIPPOLYTUS: For this, he says, is the gate of heaven; and this a house of God, where the Good Deity dwells alone. And into this gate, he says, no unclean person shall enter, nor one that is natural or carnal; but it is reserved for the spiritual only. And those who come near ought to receive their garments, and become all of them bridegrooms, emasculated through the virginal spirit. For this is the virgin⁸⁷ who carries in her womb and conceives and brings forth a son, not animal, not corporeal, but blessed forevermore. Concerning these, it is said, the Savior has expressly declared that "straight and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there are that enter upon it; whereas broad and spacious is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are that pass through it." The Refutation of All Heresies, 5.56.

HIPPOLYTUS: He who desires to partake of the water in the garden must renounce the broad gate, and enter by the strait and narrow. *Exegetical Fragments*, 5.192.

ORIGEN: The book of the Shepherd declares . . . that each individual is attended by two angels; that whenever good thoughts arise in our hearts, they are suggested by the good angel; but when of a contrary kind, they are the instigation of the evil angel. The same is declared by Barnabas in his Epistle, where he says there are two ways, one of light and one of darkness, over which he asserts that certain angels are placed;—the angels of God over the way of light, the angels of Satan over the way of darkness. *De Principiis*, 4.332.

ORIGEN: He who considers what great evils men on earth are committing daily, and, with nearly all turning aside and having together become useless; 88 how they are walking down the broad and spacious road which leads to destruction, having disregarded the narrow road which leads to life, despite the fact that God lets his sun rise daily on all of them and serves them with rain; 89 and if one

⁸⁷ Isa 7:14

⁸⁸ Cf. Ps 14:3

⁸⁹ Cf. Mt 5:45

considers how much blasphemy against God they speak every day and how they stretch out their tongues against heaven;⁹⁰ this person is able to understand the riches of God's goodness. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁹¹

ORIGEN: But when our Lord and Savior came, he began to condemn their ways and to say, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees!" and again, "Woe to you who are rich" and again, "Woe to you, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you." Moreover, by saying many things like this in his charges against them, he began to block the roads of their destruction and for them he became a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal by not allowing them to travel the broad road that leads to death. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*

CYPRIAN: According to Matthew: "How broad and spacious is the way which leads to death, and many there are who go in thereby: how straight and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there are that find it!" The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.534.

LACTANTIUS: There are two ways, O Emperor Constantine, by which human life must proceed—the one which leads to heaven, the other which sinks to hell. . . .

We therefore speak better and more truly, who say that the two ways belong to heaven and hell, because immortality is promised to the righteous, and everlasting punishment is threatened to the unrighteous. *The Divine Institutes*, 7.164.

LACTANTIUS: There are two ways; but the one on the right hand, in which the just walk which leads to heaven, for they become immortal; the other on the left leads to Tartarus, ⁹⁷ for the unjust are sentenced to eternal tortures. Therefore the way of justice, which leads to life, is to be held by us. *The Epitome of the Divine*

⁹⁰ Cf. Ps 73:9; Jer 9:2

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 105. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁹² Mt 23:13

⁹³ Lk 6:24

⁹⁴ Mt 23:37

⁹⁵ Cf. 1 Pet 2:8

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 131. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁹⁷ The name of the underworld region, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the place where the wicked dead suffer punishment for their evil deeds; it answers to Gehenna of the Jews. See 2 Pt 2:4 and editor's note for Mt 5:24 in this work.

Institutes, 7.247.

7:14 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "For narrow," in truth, "and strait is the way" of the Lord. And it is to the "violent that the kingdom of God belongs." *The Stromata*, 2.410.

ORIGEN: Now the way of the Lord is made straight in two fashions. First, in the way of contemplation, when thought is made clear in truth without any mixture of falsehood; and then in the way of conduct, after the sound contemplation of what ought to be done, when action is produced which harmonizes with sound theory of conduct. And that we may the more clearly understand the text, "Make straight the way of the Lord," it will be well to compare with it what is said in the Proverbs, "Do not depart, either to the right hand or to the left." For he who deviates in either direction has given up keeping his path straight, and is no longer worthy of regard, since he has gone apart from the straightness of the journey, for "the Lord is righteous, and loves righteousness, and His face beholds straightness." ¹⁰⁰ Hence he who is the object of regard, and receives the benefit that comes from this oversight, says, "The light of Your countenance was shown upon us, O Lord."101 Let us stand, then, as Jeremiah exhorts, upon the ways, and let us see and ask after the ancient ways of the Lord, and let us see which is the good way, and walk in it. 102 Thus did the Apostles stand and ask for the ancient ways of the Lord; they asked the Patriarchs and the Prophets, enquiring into their writings, and when they came to understand these writings they saw the good way, namely, Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way," 103 and they walked in it. For it is a good way that leads the good man to the good father, the man who, from the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things, and who is a good and faithful servant. This way is narrow, indeed, for the many cannot bear to walk in it and are lovers of their flesh; but it is also hard-pressed by those who use violence¹⁰⁴ to walk in it, for it is not called afflicting, but afflicted. Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.360.

ORIGEN: Now, those who believe in Him are those who walk in the straight and narrow way, which leads to life, and which is found by few. *Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.408*.

ORIGEN: "Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter in through the narrow door and shall not be able;" 105 and also that which

⁹⁸ Mt 11:12

⁹⁹ Prov 4:27

¹⁰⁰ Ps 11:7

¹⁰¹ Ps 4:7

¹⁰² Jer 6:16

¹⁰³ Jn 14:6

¹⁰⁴ Mt 11:12

¹⁰⁵ Lk 13:24

is written in the Gospel of Matthew thus, "For narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leads to life, and few be they that find it." Now, if you attend to the saying, "Many, I say to you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able," 106 you will understand that this refers to those who boast that they are of the church, but live weakly and contrary to the word. Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.457.

ORIGEN: The Word says that the agreeing of two on the earth is the same thing as the agreeing with Christ. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name." Therefore the two or three who are gathered together in the name of Christ are those who are in agreement on earth, not two only but sometimes also three. But he who has the power will consider whether this agreement and a congregation of this sort in the midst of which Christ is, can be found in more, since "narrow and straightened is the way that leads to life, and few be they that find it." Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, 9.494-495.

ORIGEN: "In afflictions" ¹⁰⁸ let us unfailingly walk upon the strait and narrow way that we may attain to life. If it is needful, let us also commend ourselves "by scourgings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by watchings, and by fastings." For behold the Lord is here with his reward in his hand to render to each man according to his works." ¹⁰⁹ Exhortation to Martyrdom. ¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Lk 13:24

¹⁰⁷ Mt 18:20

^{108 2} Cor 4:6

¹⁰⁹ Isa 40:10; 62:11; Ps 62 (61):12; Rom 2:6; Rev 2:23; 22:12

Origen, Exhortation to Martyrdom 42. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 424. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

Two Trees

Matthew 7:15-20

[15] Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ACTS 20:29-31; 2 COR 11:13-15; 2 PET 2:1-3; 1 JN 4:1

 $^{[16]}$ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? $^{\rm LK~6:44;~JN~8:39-45;~JAS~3:12}$

 $^{[17]}$ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. MT 12:33-35; LK 6:43

 $^{[18]}$ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. $^{\rm LK\,6:43;\,1\,JN\,3:19}$

 $^{[19]}$ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. $^{\rm MT\,3:10;\,LK\,3:9;\,JN\,15:2-6;\,HEB\,6:8}$

[20] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

SUMMARY: There are many wolves that carry captive those that are running towards God (IGNATIUS). He who inquires of a false prophet in regard to any action is an idolater, and devoid of the truth, and foolish (HERMAS). There are, therefore, and there were many, who, coming forward in the name of Jesus, taught both to speak and act impious and blasphemous things (JUSTIN MARTYR). False Christs, false prophets, and false apostles have come to split up the one Church into parts through their corrupting doctrines (HEGESIPPUS). There are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep's clothing in the eyes of the world (IRENAEUS). For the false prophets possessed the prophetic name dishonestly, being prophets, but prophets of the liar (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). One who sets forth in detail things yet to be, was rightly judged a prophet (HIPPOLYTUS). What are these sheep's clothing, but the external surface of the

Christian profession? Who are the ravening wolves but those deceitful senses and spirits which are lurking within to waste the flock of Christ? Who are the false prophets but deceptive predictors of the future? (Tertullan). Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known (The Didache). Converting into unholy persons, manifests them to be enemies of God and false prophets (Dionysius of Alexandria). The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those that profess themselves to be Christ's are known not only by what they say, but by what they practice (Ignatius). For the fruits of the prophet must needs be brought to the test: for "from its fruit is the tree known" (Apollonius). It may be called a good tree if, through its power of choice, it appoints good things; or it may be called evil if it should choose evil things (Origen). A man is unfruitful when he is carnal (Hippolytus). An honest mind and good faith cannot produce evil deeds, any more than an evil disposition can produce good deeds (Tertullian). If, however, a tree continues alone, not producing fruit fully formed, it is utterly destroyed (Hippolytus).

7:15ff IGNATIUS: Do not err, my brethren. Those that corrupt families shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If, then, those who do this as respects the flesh have suffered death, how much more shall this be the case with any one who corrupts by wicked doctrine the faith of God, for which Jesus Christ was crucified! Such an one becoming defiled in this way, shall go away into everlasting fire, and so shall every one that listens to him. *Epistle to the Ephesians*, *1.56*.

IGNATIUS: For there are many wolves that appear worthy of credit who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, carry captive those that are running towards God; but in your unity they shall have no place. *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, 1.80.

HERMAS: He pointed out to me some men sitting on a seat, and one man sitting on a chair. And he says to me, "Do you see the men sitting on the seat?"

"I do, sir," I said.

"These," he says, "are the faithful, and he who sits on the chair is a false prophet, ruining the minds of the servants of God. It is the doubters, not the faithful, that he ruins. These doubters then go to him as to a soothsayer, and inquire of him what will happen to them; and he, the false prophet, not having the power of a Divine Spirit in him, answers them according to their inquiries, and according to their wicked desires, and fills their souls with expectations, according to their own wishes. For being himself empty, he gives empty answers to empty inquirers; for every answer is made to the emptiness of man. Some true words he does occasionally utter; for the devil fills him with his own spirit, in the hope that he may be able to overcome some of the righteous. As many, then, as are strong in the faith of the Lord, and are clothed with truth, have no connection with such spirits, but keep away from them; but as many as are of doubtful minds and frequently repent, go to soothsaying, even as the heathen, and bring greater sin upon themselves by their idolatry. For he who inquires of a false prophet in regard to any action is an idolater, and devoid of the truth, and

foolish. For no spirit given by God requires to be asked; but such a spirit having the power of Divinity speaks all things of itself, for it proceeds from above from the power of the Divine Spirit. But the spirit which is asked and speaks according to the desires of men is earthly, light, and powerless, and it is altogether silent if it is not questioned."

"How then, sir," I ask, "will a man know which of them is the prophet, and which the false prophet?"

"I will tell you," he says, "about both the prophets, and then you can try the true and the false prophet according to my directions. Try the man who has the Divine Spirit by his life. First, he who has the Divine Spirit proceeding from above is meek, and peaceable, and humble, and refrains from all iniquity and the vain desire of this world, and contents himself with fewer wants than those of other men, and when asked he makes no reply; nor does he speak privately, nor when man wishes the spirit to speak does the Holy Spirit speak, but it speaks only when God wishes it to speak. When, then, a man having the Divine Spirit comes into an assembly of righteous men who have faith in the Divine Spirit, and this assembly of men offers up prayer to God, then the angel of the prophetic Spirit, who is destined for him, fills the man; and the man being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude as the Lord wishes. Thus, then, will the Spirit of Divinity become manifest. Whatever power therefore comes from the Spirit of Divinity belongs to the Lord.

"Hear, then," he says, "in regard to the spirit which is earthly, and empty, and powerless, and foolish. First, the man who seems to have the Spirit exalts himself, and wishes to have the first seat, and is bold, and impudent, and talkative, and lives in the midst of many luxuries and many other delusions, and takes rewards for his prophecy; and if he does not receive rewards, he does not prophesy. Can, then, the Divine Spirit take rewards and prophesy? It is not possible that the prophet of God should do this, but prophets of this character are possessed by an earthly spirit. Then it never approaches an assembly of righteous men, but shuns them. And it associates with doubters and the vain, and prophesies to them in a corner, and deceives them, speaking to them, according to their desires, mere empty words: for they are empty to whom it gives its answers. For the empty vessel, when placed along with the empty, is not crushed, but they correspond to each other. When, therefore, it comes into an assembly of righteous men who have a Spirit of Divinity, and they offer up prayer, that man is made empty, and the earthly spirit flees from him through fear, and that man is made dumb, and is entirely crushed, being unable to speak. For if you pack closely a storehouse with wine or oil, and put an empty jar in the midst of the vessels of wine or oil, you will find that jar empty as when you placed it, if you should wish to clear the storehouse. So also the empty prophets, when they come to the spirits of the righteous, are found on leaving to be such as they were when they came. This, then, is the mode of life of both prophets. Try by his deeds and his life the man who says that he is inspired. But as for

¹ Cf. 1 Cor 2:11-12

you, trust the Spirit which comes from God, and has power; but the spirit which is earthly and empty do not trust at all, for there is no power in it: it comes from the devil. Hear, then, the parable which I am to tell you. Take a stone, and throw it to the sky, and see if you can touch it. Or again, take a squirt of water and squirt into the sky, and see if you can penetrate the sky."

"How, sir," I ask, "can these things take place? For both of them are impossible."

"As these things," he says, "are impossible, so also are the earthly spirits powerless. But look, on the other hand, at the power which comes from above. Hail is of the size of a very small grain, yet when it falls on a man's head how much annoyance it gives him! Or, again, take the drop which falls from a pitcher to the ground, and yet it hollows a stone. You see, then, that the smallest things coming from above have great power when they fall upon the earth. Thus also is the Divine Spirit, which comes from above, powerful. Trust, then, that Spirit, but have nothing to do with the other." *The Shepherd of Hermas*, 2.27-28.

JUSTIN MARTYR: And let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to His word: . . . "For many shall come in My name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly being ravening wolves. By their works you shall know them. And every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." The First Apology, 1.168.

JUSTIN MARTYR: The fact that there are such men confessing themselves to be Christians, and admitting the crucified Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, yet not teaching His doctrines, but those of the spirits of error, causes us who are disciples of the true and pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, to be more faithful and stedfast in the hope announced by Him. For what things He predicted would take place in His name, these we do see being actually accomplished in our sight. For he said, "Many shall come in My name, clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." . . There are, therefore, and there were many, my friends, who, coming forward in the name of Jesus, taught both to speak and act impious and blasphemous things; and these are called by us after the name of the men from whom each doctrine and opinion had its origin. Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew, 1.212.

JUSTIN MARTYR: There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and which they heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings

are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things, and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know, provided he has believed them. For they did not use demonstration in their treatises, seeing that they were witnesses to the truth above all demonstration, and worthy of belief; and those events which have happened, and those which are happening, compel you to assent to the utterances made by them, although, indeed, they were entitled to credit on account of the miracles which they performed, since they both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and proclaimed His Son, the Christ sent by Him: which, indeed, the false prophets, who are filled with the lying unclean spirit, neither have done nor do, but venture to work certain wonderful deeds for the purpose of astonishing men, and glorify the spirits and demons of error. But pray that, above all things, the gates of light may be opened to you; for these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man to whom God and His Christ have imparted wisdom. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 1.198.

JUSTIN MARTYR: The prophetical gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that the gifts formerly among your nation [the Jews] have been transferred to us [the Christians]. And just as there were false prophets in the same time period with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers among us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven. For He said we would be put to death, and hated for His name's sake;² and that many false prophets and false Christs would appear in His name, and deceive many: and so has it come about. For many have taught godless, blasphemous, and unholy doctrines, forging them in His name; have taught, too, and even yet are teaching, those things which proceed from the unclean spirit of the devil, and which were put into their hearts. Therefore we are most anxious that you be persuaded not to be misled by such persons, since we know that every one who can speak the truth, and yet does not speak it, shall be judged by God, as God testified by Ezekiel, when He said, "I have made you a watchman to the house of Judah. If the sinner sin, and you do not warn him, he himself shall die in his sin; but his blood will I require at your hand. But if you warn him, you shall be innocent."4 And on this account we are, through fear, very earnest in desiring to converse with men according to the Scriptures, but not from love of money, or of glory, or of pleasure. For no man can convict us of any of these vices. No more do we wish to live like the rulers of your people, whom God reproaches when He says, "Your rulers are companions of thieves, lovers of bribes, followers of the rewards." Now, if you know certain among us to be of this sort, do not for their sakes blaspheme the Scriptures and Christ, and

² Mt 24:9

³ Mt 24:11, 24

⁴ Ezek 3:17-19

⁵ Isa 1:23

do not diligently strive to give falsified interpretations. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 1.240.

HEGESIPPUS: The Church was called a virgin, for she was not as yet corrupted by worthless teaching. Thebulis it was who, displeased because he was not made bishop, first began to corrupt her by stealth. He too was connected with the seven sects which existed among the people, like Simon, from whom come the Simoniani; and Cleobius, from whom come the Cleobiani; and Doritheus, from whom come the Dorithiani; and Gorthaeus, from whom come the Gortheani; Masbothaeus, from whom come the Masbothaei. From these men also come the Menandrianists, and the Marcionists, and the Carpocratians, and the Valentinians, and the Basilidians, and the Saturnilians. Each of these leaders in his own private and distinct capacity brought in his own private opinion. From these have come false Christs, false prophets, false apostles—men who have split up the one Church into parts through their corrupting doctrines, uttered in disparagement of God and of His Christ. Concerning His Journey to Rome, and the Jewish Sects, 8.764.

IRENAEUS: Certain men have set the truth aside, and bring in lying words and vain genealogies, which, as the apostle says, "minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith," and by means of their craftily-constructed plausibilities draw away the minds of the inexperienced and take them captive. These men falsify the oracles of God, and prove themselves evil interpreters of the good word of revelation. They also overthrow the faith of many, by drawing them away, under a pretense of superior knowledge, from Him who rounded and adorned the universe; as if they had something more excellent and sublime to reveal, than that God who created the heaven and the earth, and all things that are therein. By means of specious and plausible words, they cunningly allure the simple-minded to inquire into their system; but they nevertheless clumsily destroy them, while they initiate them into their blasphemous and impious opinions . . . and these simple ones are unable, even in such a matter, to distinguish falsehood from truth.

Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than the truth itself. One far superior to me has well said, in reference to this point, "A clever imitation in glass casts contempt, as it were, on that precious jewel the emerald (which is most highly esteemed by some), unless it come under the eye of one able to test and expose the counterfeit. Or, again, what inexperienced person can with ease detect the presence of brass when it has been mixed up with silver?" Lest, therefore, through my neglect, some should be carried off, even as sheep

⁶ See Appendix B: Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies.

⁷ 1 Tim 1:4

are by wolves, while they perceive not the true character of these men,—because they outwardly are covered with sheep's clothing (against whom the Lord has enjoined us to be on our guard), and because their language resembles ours, while their sentiments are very different,—I have deemed it my duty . . . to unfold to you, my friend, these portentous and profound mysteries, which do not fall within the range of every intellect, because all have not sufficiently purged their brains. I do this, in order that you, obtaining an acquaintance with these things, may in turn explain them to all those with whom you are connected, and exhort them to avoid such an abyss of madness and of blasphemy against Christ. Against Heresies, 1.315.

IRENAEUS: It appears probable enough that this man possesses a demon as his familiar spirit, by means of whom he seems able to prophesy, 8 and also enables as many as he counts worthy to be partakers of his Charis 9 themselves to prophesy. He devotes himself especially to women, and those such as are wellbred, and elegantly attired, and of great wealth, whom he frequently seeks to draw after him, by addressing them in seductive words. . . .

But already some of the most faithful women, possessed of the fear of God, and not being deceived (whom, nevertheless, he did his best to seduce like the rest by bidding them prophesy), abhorring and cursing him, have withdrawn from such a vile company of revelers. This they have done, as being well aware that the gift of prophecy is not conferred on men by Marcus, the magician, but that only those to whom God sends His grace from above possess the divinely-bestowed power of prophesying; and then they speak where and when God pleases, and not when Marcus orders them to do so. *Against Heresies*, 1.334-335.

IRENAEUS: Moreover, those also will be thus refuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates [heretical teachers], and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles—who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray. For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons—[none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the

⁸ Cf. Acts 16:16

⁹ Another term for charisma or the Greek word for "grace."

brotherhood on account of some necessity—the entire Church in that particular locality entreating with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints—that they do not even believe this can be possibly be done, [and hold] that the resurrection from the dead ¹⁰ is simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.

Since, therefore, there exist among them error and misleading influences, and magical illusions are impiously wrought in the sight of men; but in the Church, sympathy, and compassion, and stedfastness, and truth, for the aid and encouragement of mankind, are not only displayed without fee or reward, but we ourselves lay out for the benefit of others our own means; and inasmuch as those who are cured very frequently do not possess the things which they require, they receive them from us;—since such is the case, these men are in this way undoubtedly proved to be utter aliens from the divine nature, the beneficence of God, and all spiritual excellence. But they are altogether full of deceit of every kind, apostate inspiration, demoniacal working, and the phantasms of idolatry, and are in reality the predecessors of that dragon who, by means of a deception of the same kind, will with his tail cause a third part of the stars to fall from their place, and will cast them down to the earth. 11 It behooves us to flee from them [the Gnostics] as we would from him; and the greater the display with which they are said to perform their marvels, the more carefully should we watch them, as having been endowed with a greater spirit of wickedness. If any one will consider the prophecy referred to, and the daily practices of these men, he will find that their manner of acting is one and the same with the demons. Against Heresies, 1,407-408.

IRENAEUS: There are those who inwardly are wolves, yet wear sheep's clothing in the eyes of the world; and that God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man, while at the same time He issued His own exhortations, in order that those who do not obey Him should be righteously judged (condemned) because they have not obeyed Him; and that those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honored with immortality. *Against Heresies*, 1.480.

IRENAEUS: He shall judge false prophets, who, without having received the gift of prophecy from God, and not possessed of the fear of God, but either for the sake of vainglory, or with a view to some personal advantage, or acting in some other way under the influence of a wicked spirit, pretend to utter prophecies, while all the time they lie against God. *Against Heresies*, 1.508.

TATIAN: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, while within they are ravening wolves. But by their fruits you shall know

^{10 2} Tim 2:17-18

¹¹ Rev 12:4

them. For every tree is known by its fruit. ¹² For figs are not gathered of thorns, neither are grapes plucked of briers. Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit, but the evil tree brings forth evil fruit. The good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can the evil tree bring forth good fruit. The good man from the good treasures that are in his heart brings forth good things; and the evil man from the evil treasures that are in his heart brings forth evil things: and from the overflowings of the heart the lips speak. ¹³ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them. *The Diatessaron*, 9.60.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The devil is called "thief and robber;" ¹⁴ having mixed false prophets with the prophets, as tares with the wheat. ¹⁵ "All, then, that came before the Lord, were thieves and robbers; ¹⁶ not absolutely all men, but all the false prophets, and all who were not properly sent by Him. For the false prophets possessed the prophetic name dishonestly, being prophets, but prophets of the liar. For the Lord says, "You are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." ¹⁷

But among the lies, the false prophets also told some true things. And in reality they prophesied "in an ecstasy," as the servants of the apostate. And the Shepherd, the angel of repentance, says to Hermas, of the false prophet: "For he speaks some truths. For the devil fills him with his own spirit, if perchance he may be able to cast down any one from what is right." *The Stromata*, 2.319.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: We have been taught to recognize by their works false prophets and all who merely pretend to the truth. *On Marriage*. ¹⁹

HIPPOLYTUS: For as the blessed prophets were made, so to speak, eyes for us, they foresaw through faith the mysteries of the word, and became ministers of these things also to succeeding generations, not only reporting the past, but also announcing the present and the future, so that the prophet might not appear to be one only for the time being, but might also predict the future for all generations,

¹² Lk 6:44

¹³ Lk 6:45

¹⁴ In 10:10

¹⁵ Cf. Mt 13:24-30

¹⁶ In 10:8

¹⁷ In 8:44

¹⁸ See *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Book 2, Commandment Eleventh (ANF, 2.27).

Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.4.35. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 55. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

and so be reckoned a (true) prophet. For these fathers were furnished with the Spirit, and largely honored by the Word Himself; and just as it is with instruments of music, so had they the Word always, like the plectrum, ²⁰ in union with them, and when moved by Him the prophets announced what God willed. For they did not speak of their own power²¹ (let there be no mistake as to that), neither did they declare what pleased themselves. But first of all they were endowed with wisdom by the Word, and then again were rightly instructed in the future by means of visions. And then, when thus themselves fully convinced, they spoke those things which were revealed by God to them alone, and concealed from all others. For with what reason should the prophet be called a prophet, unless he in spirit foresaw the future? For if the prophet spoke of any chance event, he would not be a prophet then in speaking of things which were under the eye of all. But one who sets forth in detail things yet to be, was rightly judged a prophet. *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 5.204-205*.

TERTULLIAN: But let us rather be mindful of the sayings of the Lord, and of the letters of the apostles; for they have both told us beforehand that there shall be heresies, and have given us, in anticipation, warnings to avoid them; and inasmuch as we are not alarmed because they exist, so we ought not to wonder that they are capable of doing that, on account of which they must be shunned. The Lord teaches us that many "ravening wolves shall come in sheep's clothing." Now, what are these sheep's clothing's, but the external surface of the Christian profession? Who are the ravening wolves but those deceitful senses and spirits which are lurking within to waste the flock of Christ? Who are the false prophets but deceptive predictors of the future? Who are the false apostles but the preachers of a spurious gospel? Who also are the Antichrists, both now and evermore, but the men who rebel against Christ? *The Prescription Against Heretics*, 3.245.

ALEXANDER OF ALEXANDRIA: Although we grieve at the destruction of these men [the heretics of Arianism], especially that after having once learned the doctrine of the Church, they have now gone back; yet we do not wonder at it; for this very thing Hymenaeus and Philetus suffered,²² and before them Judas, who, though he followed the Savior, afterwards became a traitor and an apostate. Moreover, concerning these very men, warnings are not lacking to us, for the Lord foretold: "Take heed that you are not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draws near: therefore do not go after them." Paul, too, having learned these things from the Savior, wrote, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils which turn away from the truth." Epistles on the Arian

²⁰ The plectrum was the instrument with which the lyre was struck.

²¹ 2 Pet 1:21

²² 2 Tim 2:17

²³ Lk 2.1:8

²⁴ 1 Tim 4:1

Heresy and the Deposition of Arius, 6.298.

7:15ff THE DIDACHE: Whosoever, therefore, comes and teaches you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine to the destruction of this, do not hear him; but if he teaches so as to increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the Gospel, thus do. Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. 25 But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaks in the Spirit²⁶ you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.²⁷ But not every one that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he hold the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known. And every prophet who orders a meal²⁸ in the Spirit does not eat from it, except indeed he be a false prophet; and every prophet who teaches the truth, if he does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself does, shall not be judged among you, for with God he has his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets. But whoever says in the Spirit, "Give me money," or something else, you shall not listen to him; but if he says to you to give for others' sake who are in need, let no one judge him.

But let every one that comes in the name of the Lord be received, and afterward you shall prove and know him; for you shall have understanding right and left. If he who comes is a wayfarer, assist him as far as you are able; but he shall not remain with you, except for two or three days, if need be. But if he wills to abide with you, being an artisan, let him work and eat;²⁹ but if he has no trade, according to your understanding see to it that, as a Christian, he shall not live with you idle. But if he wills not to do, he is a shame. Watch that you keep

There are some indications that traveling evangelists were termed apostles. Even in the New Testament, the term *apostolos* is sometimes translated as "messengers/apostles" and has been applied to others than the Twelve and Paul: Acts 14:4, 14; 1 Cor 15:5, 7; 2 Cor 8:23; Gal 1:19; 1 Thess 2:6. The reference to false "messenger/apostles," probably itinerant, in Rev 2:2 and 2 Cor 11:13, corresponds with this. These false apostles could not have pretended to be "messengers/apostles" if there were none other than the Twelve and Paul. The name Apostles was specified by Christ Himself: "He named them Apostles" (Lk 6:13; cf. Acts 1:2). It is these Apostles of Christ upon whom the church is built according to Eph 2:20 and Rev 21:14 (cf. Lk 11:49; Eph 3:5; 4:11).

Probably a reference to an utterance made by the spiritual gift spoken of in 1 Cor 12:3; 14:2. Another indication of an early date.

²⁷ Probably a reference to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:31, 32; Mk 3:29, 30.

²⁸ Probably a love-feast, commanded by the prophet in his peculiar utterance.

²⁹ Cf. 2 Thess 3:10

your distance from such.

But every true prophet that wills to abide among you is worthy of his support. So also a true teacher is himself worthy, as the workman, of his support.³⁰ Every first-fruit, therefore, of the products of wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and of sheep, you shall take and give to the prophets, for they are your high priests. But if you do not have a prophet, give it to the poor. If you make a batch of dough, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment. So also when you open a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruit and give it to the prophets; and of money (silver) and clothing and every possession, take the first-fruit, as it may seem good to you, and give according to the commandment. . . .

Watch for your life's sake. Do not let your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed;³¹ but be ready, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord comes.³² But often you shall come together, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate;³³ for when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute and betray one another,³⁴ and then shall appear the world-deceiver as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, 35 and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, ³⁶ and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved³⁷ from under the curse itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first, the sign of an out-spreading in heaven; then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and the third, the resurrection of the dead; yet not of all, but as it is said: "The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him."38 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.39 7.380-382.

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA: For as the wisdom which is according to the Gentiles, by changing them into holy persons, constitutes them friends of God and prophets; so, conversely, the wickedness by converting into unholy persons, manifests them to be enemies of God and false prophets. *Letter to Stephen*,

³⁰ Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7

³¹ Cf. Lk 12:35

³² Mt 24:42

³³ Mt 24:11-12

³⁴ Mt 24:10

³⁵ Mt 24:24

³⁶ Cf. 1 Pet 4:12

³⁷ Cf. Mt 10:22

³⁸ Zech 14:5

³⁹ Cf. Mt 24:30

Bishop of Rome. 40

LACTANTIUS: But since many heresies have existed, and the people of God have been rent into divisions at the instigation of demons, the truth must be briefly marked out by us, and placed in its own peculiar dwelling-place, that if any one shall desire to draw the water of life, he may not be borne to broken cisterns⁴¹ which hold no water, but may know the abundant fountain of God, watered by which he may enjoy perpetual light. Before all things, it is befitting that we should know both that He Himself and His ambassadors foretold that there must be numerous sects and heresies, 42 which would break the unity of the sacred body; and that they admonished us to be on our guard with the greatest prudence, lest we should at any time fall into the snares and deceits of that adversary of ours, with whom God has willed that we should contend. Then that He gave us sure commands, which we ought always to treasure in our minds; for many, forgetting them, and abandoning the heavenly road, have made for themselves devious paths amidst windings and precipices, by which they might lead away the incautious and simple part of the people to the darkness of death: I will explain how this happened. There were some of our religion whose faith was less established, or who were less learned or less cautious, who rent the unity and divided the Church. But they whose faith was unsettled, when they pretended that they knew and worshipped God, aiming at the increase of their wealth and honor, aspired to the highest sacerdotal power; and when overcome by others more powerful, preferred to secede with their supporters, than to endure those set over them, over whom they themselves before desired to be set.

But some, not sufficiently instructed in heavenly learning, when they were unable to reply to the accusers of the truth, who objected that it was either impossible or inconsistent that God should be shut up in the womb of a woman, and that the Majesty of heaven could not be reduced to such weakness as to become an object of contempt and derision, a reproach and mockery to men; lastly, that He should even endure tortures, and be affixed to the accursed cross; and when they could defend and refute all these things neither by talent nor learning, for they did not thoroughly perceive their force and meaning, they were perverted from the right path, and corrupted the sacred writings, so that they composed for themselves a new doctrine without any root and stability. But some, enticed by the prediction of false prophets, concerning whom both the true prophets and he himself had foretold, fell away from the knowledge of God, and left the true tradition. But all of these, ensnared by frauds of demons, which they ought to have foreseen and guarded against, by their carelessness lost the name and worship of God. For when they are called Phrygians, or Novatians, or Valentinians, or Marcionites, or Anthropians, or Arians, or by any other name,

Dionysius of Alexandria, Newly discovered letters to the Popes Stephen and Xystus, tr. F.C. Conybeare, *English Historical Review 25* (1910), 111-114. Transcribed by Roger Pearse, (Ipswich, UK, 2002).

⁴¹ Jer 2:13

⁴² See Mt 18:7; Lk 17:1; 1 Cor 11:19; 2 Pet 2:1.

they have ceased to be Christians, who have lost the name of Christ, and assumed human and external names.⁴³

Therefore it is the catholic Church⁴⁴ alone which retains true worship. This is the fountain of truth, this is the abode of the faith, this is the temple of God; into which if any one shall not enter, or from which if any shall go out, he is estranged from the hope of life and eternal salvation. No one ought to flatter himself with persevering strife. For the contest is respecting life and salvation, which, unless it is carefully and diligently kept in view, will be lost and extinguished. But, however, because all the separate assemblies of heretics call themselves Christians in preference to others, and think that theirs is the catholic Church, it must be known that the true catholic Church is that in which there is confession and repentance, which treats in a wholesome manner the sins and wounds to which the weakness of the flesh is liable. I have related these things in the meanwhile for the sake of admonition, that no one who desires to avoid error may be entangled in a greater error, while he is ignorant of the secret of the truth. Afterwards, in a particular and separate work, we will more fully and copiously contend against all divisions of falsehoods. The Divine Institutes, 7.133-134.

7:16 IGNATIUS: None of these things are hid from you, if you perfectly possess that faith and love towards Christ Jesus⁴⁵ which are the beginning and the end of life. For the beginning is faith, and the end is love.⁴⁶ Now these two, being inseparably connected together, are of God, while all other things which are requisite for a holy life follow after them. No man truly making a profession of faith will continue in sin;⁴⁷ nor does he that possesses love hate any one. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognized by their conduct. For there is not now a demand for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end. . . . Those that profess themselves to be Christ's are known not only by what they say, but by what they practice. "For the tree is known by its fruit." It is better for a man to be silent and be a Christian, than to talk and not to be one. *Epistle to the Ephesians, 1.55-56.*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: It is the manner of life which shows up those who know the commandments; for as a man's word is, so is his life. The tree is known by its fruit, not by its blossom and leaves. Knowledge, then, comes from the fruit and from behavior not from talk and from blossom. We say that knowledge is not mere talk, but a certain divine knowledge, that light which is kindled in the soul as a result of obedience to the commandments, and which

⁴³ See Appendix B: Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies.

That is, "universal" or including all Christians (not to be confused with Roman Catholic)

^{45 1} Tim 1:14

^{46 1} Tim 1:5

⁴⁷ 1 Jn 3:7

⁴⁸ Mt 12:33

reveals all that is in a state of becoming, enables man to know himself and teaches him to become possessed of God. *On Marriage*.⁴⁹

7:17 APOLLONIUS: But who is this new teacher [Montanus, a heretic]? His works and teaching inform us. This is he who taught the dissolution of marriage; who instilled fasting; . . . who craftily contrives the taking of gifts under the name of voluntary offerings; who grants stipends to those who publish abroad his doctrine, that by means of gluttony the teaching of the doctrine may prevail.

We declare to you, then, that these first prophetesses, as soon as they were filled with the spirit, left their husbands. . . . Do you not think that all Scripture forbids a prophet to receive gifts and money? Therefore, when I see that the prophetess has received gold and silver and expensive articles of dress, how can I avoid treating her with disapproval? . . .

For whereas the Lord has said, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor two coats a piece," these men have, on the flat contrary, transgressed the command by the acquisition of these forbidden things. For we shall show that those who are called among them prophets and martyrs obtain money not only from the rich, but also from the poor, from orphans and widows. And if they are confident that they are right in so doing, let them stand forward and discuss the point, in order that, if they be refuted, they may cease for the future so to transgress. For the fruits of the prophet must needs be brought to the test: for "from its fruit is the tree known." 51 . . .

If they deny that their prophets have taken gifts, let them confess thus much, that if they be convicted of having taken them, they are not prophets; and we will cite ten thousand proofs that they have. It is proper, too, that all the fruits of a prophet should be examined. Tell me: does a prophet dye his hair? Does a prophet pencil his eyelids? Is a prophet fond of dress? Does a prophet play at gaming-tables and dice? Does a prophet lend money on interest? Let them confess whether these things are allowable or not. For my part, I will prove that these practices have occurred among them. *Concerning Montanism*, 8.775-776.

ORIGEN: It may be called a good tree if, through its power of choice, it appoints good things; or it may be called evil if it should choose evil things. And in this way, each person, according to the impulses of his own purpose, will be designated [either] a good olive tree, if he travels down the road of virtue, or a wild olive tree, if he follows the opposite [path]. This, after all, is why even the Lord was saying in the Gospel, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or

⁴⁹ Clement of Alexandria, On Marriage, Miscellanies, 3.5:44. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 60. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

⁵⁰ Mt 10:9

⁵¹ Mt 12:33

make the tree evil and its fruit evil,"52 in order to show that a tree, good or evil, is made, not born. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*53

7:18 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: [On laughter:]⁵⁴ People who are imitators of ludicrous sensations, or rather of such as deserve derision, are to be driven from our polity.⁵⁵

For since all forms of speech flow from mind and manners, ludicrous expressions could not be uttered, did they not proceed from ludicrous practices. For the saying, "It is not a good tree which produces corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree which produces good fruit,"56 is to be applied in this case. For speech is the fruit of the mind. If, then, facetious jokers are to be ejected from our society, we ourselves must by no manner of means be allowed to stir up laughter. For it were absurd to be found imitators of things of which we are prohibited to be listeners; and still more absurd for a man to set about making himself a laughing-stock, that is, the butt of insult and derision. For if we could not endure to make a ridiculous figure, such as we see some do in processions, how could we with any propriety bear to have the inner man made a ridiculous figure of, and that to one's face? Therefore we ought never of our own accord to assume a ludicrous character. And how, then, can we devote ourselves to being and appearing ridiculous in our conversation, thereby perverting speech, which is the most precious of all human endowments? It is therefore disgraceful to set one's self to do this; since the conversation of facetious jokers of this description is not fit for our ears, inasmuch as by the very expressions used it familiarizes us with shameful actions.

Pleasantry is allowable, not facetious joking. Besides, even laughter must be kept in check; for when given vent to in the right manner it indicates orderliness, but when it issues differently it shows a lack of restraint. *The Instructor*, 2.249-250.

Tertullian: "The good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit, neither the corrupt tree good fruit." Which means, that an honest mind and good faith cannot produce evil deeds, any more than an evil disposition can produce good deeds. *Against Marcion*, 3.272.

7:19ff IRENAEUS: Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe on Him a well of water springing up to eternal life, ⁵⁷ but He

⁵² Mt 12:33

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 104, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 176. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

⁵⁴ Cf. Lk 6:25; Jas 4:9

⁵⁵ Or, society.

⁵⁶ Lk 6:43

⁵⁷ Jn 4:14

causes the unfruitful fig tree immediately to dry up; and in the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and acted as He did in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but that at the same time He might preserve the model,58 the formation of Adam. And it was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, "an example of the righteous judgment of God,"59 that all may know, "that every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."60 And it is He who uses the words, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine. 61 For as He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment; thus extending equal justice to all, and being to exact more from those to whom He gives the more; the more, . . . because He has, by means of His advent, poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace. Against Heresies, 1.516.

HIPPOLYTUS: For he is unfruitful when he is carnal, and causes the desire of the flesh. This, he says, is what is spoken: "Every tree not producing good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire." The Refutation of All Heresies, 5.54-55.

HIPPOLYTUS: There will not be chaff and wood begotten for fire, but mature fruit, fully formed, equal and similar to the unbegotten and indefinite power. If, however, a tree continues alone, not producing fruit fully formed, it is utterly destroyed. For somewhere near, he says, is the axe which is laid at the roots of the tree. Every tree, he says, which does not produce good fruit, is hewn down and cast into fire.⁶³ *The Refutation of All Heresies*, 5.78.

CYPRIAN: It is of small account to be baptized and to receive the Eucharist, unless one profit by it both in deeds and works. In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that they which run in a race all run indeed, although one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And those indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." In the Gospel according to Matthew: "Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." Also in the same place: "Many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your

⁵⁸ 1 Pet 3:20

⁵⁹ Jude 7

⁶⁰ Mt 3:10

⁶¹ Mt 11:24; Lk 10:12

⁶² Mt 3:10; Lk 3:9

⁶³ Mt 3:10; Lk 3:9

^{64 1} Cor 9:24

EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

name, and in Your name have cast out devils, and in Your name have done great works?' And then shall I say to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who work iniquity." *The Treatises of Cyprian*, 5.542.

I Never Knew You Matthew 7:21-23

^[21] Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. MT 12:50, 25:11-12; JAS 2:14

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? LK 13:25-26

^[23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. MT 25:11; LK 13:25-27; TIT 1:16

SUMMARY: Let us, then, not only call Him Lord, for that will not save us (SECOND CLEMENT). And let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to His word (JUSTIN MARTYR). He loves Christ Jesus who does His will and keeps His commandments (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA). And it is necessary that they who perform this will, not hear it merely, should enter into the kingdom of heaven (HIPPOLYTUS). Now, those who believe in Him are those who walk in the straight and narrow way, which leads to life, and which is found by few (ORIGEN). All things are not at once to be received and assumed which are boasted of in the name of Christ, but only those things which are done in the truth of Christ (CYPRIAN). He showed how rash was belief in signs and wonders, which were so very easy of accomplishment by even false christs (TERTULLIAN). He says that even some who lead wicked lives will perform miracles in the name of Jesus, and expel demons out of men (ORIGEN). For both to prophesy and to cast out devils, and to do great acts upon the earth is certainly a sublime and an admirable thing; but one does not attain the kingdom of heaven although he is found in all these things, unless he walks in the observance of the right and just way (CYPRIAN). The ignorance of God, i.e., "I never knew you," is His disapproval (MELITO).

7:21ff IGNATIUS: Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but also truly will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found a Christian, I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed in His glory. Christianity is not a work of silence only, but also of manifest greatness. *Epistle to the Romans*, 1.74.

SECOND CLEMENT: Since He has displayed so great mercy towards us, and especially in this respect, that we who are living should not offer sacrifices to gods that are dead, or pay them worship, but should attain through Him to the knowledge of the true Father, whereby we will show that we do indeed know Him by not denying Him through whom this knowledge has been attained. For He Himself declares, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father." This, then, is our reward if we shall confess Him by whom we have been saved. But in what way shall we confess Him? By doing what He says, and not transgressing His commandments, and by honoring Him not with our lips only, but with all our heart and all our mind. For he says in Isaiah, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

Let us, then, not only call Him Lord, for that will not save us. For He says, "Not every one that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall be saved, but he that works righteousness." Therefore, brethren, let us confess Him by our works, by loving one another, by not committing adultery, or speaking evil of one another, or cherishing envy; but by being continent, compassionate, and good. We ought also to sympathize with one another, and not be materialistic. By such works let us confess Him, and not by those that are of an opposite kind. And it is not fitting that we should fear men, but rather God. For this reason, if we should do such wicked things, the Lord has said, "Even though you were gathered together to me in my very bosom, yet if you were not to keep my commandments, I would cast you off, and say to you, "Depart from me; I do not know from where you are, you workers of iniquity." 4.518.

JUSTIN MARTYR: Impelled by the desire of the eternal and pure life, we seek the abode that is with God, the Father and Creator of all, and hasten to confess our

¹ 2 Cor 4:18

² Mt 10:32

³ Isa 29:13

⁴ Cf. Mt 7:23; Lk 13:27

faith, persuaded and convinced as we are that they who have proved to God by their works that they followed Him, and loved to abide with Him where there is no sin to cause disturbance, can obtain these things. *The First Apology, 1.165.*

JUSTIN MARTYR: And that we ought to worship God alone, He thus persuaded us: The greatest commandment is, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve, with all your heart, and with all your strength, the Lord God that made you."5 And when a certain man came to Him and said, "Good Master," He answered and said, "There is none good but God only, who made all things." And let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to His word: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. For whosoever hears Me, and does My sayings, hears Him that sent Me. 7 And many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Your name, and done wonders?' And then will I say to them, 'Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.' Then shall there be wailing and gnashing of teeth, when the righteous shall shine as the sun, and the wicked are sent into everlasting fire." The First Apology, 1.168.

JUSTIN MARTYR: The matters of our religion lie in works, not in words. *Hortatory Address to the Greeks, 1.288.*

TATIAN: "Not all that say to me, 'My Lord, my Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of the heavens; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many shall say to me in that day, 'My Lord, my Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out devils, and in your name do many powers?' Then shall I say to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, you servants of iniquity.'" The Diatessaron, 9.60.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: "Not every one," therefore, "that says Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God; but he that does the will of God." Such is the Christian laborer, who has the mastery of worldly desires even while still in the flesh; and who, in regard to things future and still invisible, which he knows, has a sure persuasion, so that he regards them as more present than the things within reach. This able workman rejoices in what he knows, but is cramped on account of his being involved in the necessities of life; not yet deemed worthy of the active participation in what he knows. So he uses this life as if it belonged to another,—so far, that is, as is necessary. *The Stromata*, 2.544.

⁵ Mt 12:30

⁶ Mt 19:6-7

⁷ Lk 10:16; Jn 14:24

⁸ Cf. Mt 13:42-43; Lk 13:28

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: A Christian, having grown old in the Scriptures, and maintaining apostolic and ecclesiastic orthodoxy in doctrines, lives most correctly in accordance with the Gospel, and discovers the proofs, for which he may have made search (sent forth as he is by the Lord), from the law and the prophets. For the life of the Christian, in my view, is nothing but deeds and words corresponding to the tradition of the Lord. But "all do not have knowledge. For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," says the apostle, "that all were under the cloud, and partook of spiritual meat and drink;" clearly affirming that all who heard the word did not take in the magnitude of knowledge in deed and word. Therefore also he added: "But with all of them He was not well pleased." Who is this? He who said, "Why do you call Me Lord, and do not do the will of My Father?" That is the Savior's teaching, which to us is spiritual food, and drink that knows no thirst, the water of Christian life. *The Stromata*, 2.554.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: He loves Christ Jesus who does His will and keeps His commandments. "For not every one that says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father." Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?, 2.599.

HIPPOLYTUS: The Savior has declared, "Not every one that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven." And it is necessary that they who perform this will, not hear it merely, should enter into the kingdom of heaven. ¹² The Refutation of All Heresies, 5.54.

ORIGEN: "Now, when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He did. But He, Jesus, did not trust Himself to them, because He knew all men and because He did not need that any should testify of man, for he Himself knew what was in man." One might ask how Jesus did not Himself believe in those of whom we are told that they believed. To this we must say it was not those who believed in Him that Jesus did not trust, but those who believed in His name; for believing in His name is a different thing from believing in Him. He who will not be judged because of his faith is exempted from the judgment, not for believing in His name, but for believing in Him; for the Lord says, "He that believes in Me is not judged," 14 not, "He who believes in My name is not judged;" the latter believes, and hence he is not worthy to be condemned already, but he is inferior to the other who believes in Him. Hence it is that Jesus does not trust Himself to him

^{9 1} Cor 10:1-4

¹⁰ Lk 6:46, combined with Mt 7:21

¹¹ In 14:15

¹² Cf. Jas 1:22-25

¹³ Jn 2:23-25

¹⁴ Jn 3:18

who believes in His name.

We must, therefore, cleave to Him rather than to His name, in case after we have done wonders in His name, we should hear these words addressed to us which He will speak to those who boast of His name alone. With the Apostle Paul let us seek joyfully to say, "I can do all things in Christ Jesus strengthening me." We have also to notice that in a former passage the Evangelist calls the Passover that of the Jews, while here he does not say that Jesus was at the Passover of the Jews, but at the Passover at Jerusalem; and in the former case when the Passover is called that of the Jews, it is not said to be a feast; but here Jesus is recorded to have been at the feast; when at Jerusalem He was at the Passover during the feast, and many believed, even though only in His name. We ought to notice certainly that "many" are said to believe, not in Him, but in His name. Now, those who believe in Him are those who walk in the straight and narrow way, which leads to life, and which is found by few. **I Commentary on the Gospel of John, 9.407-408.**

CYPRIAN: Again, there is no ground for anyone, for the circumvention of Christian truth, opposing to us the name of Christ, and saying, "All who are baptized everywhere, and in any manner, in the name of Jesus Christ, have obtained the grace of baptism,"—when Christ Himself speaks, and says, "Not everyone that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." And again, He forewarns and instructs, that no one should be easily deceived by false prophets and false Christs in His name. "Many," He says, "shall come in my name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and shall deceive many." And afterwards He added: "But take heed; behold, I have foretold you all things." From which it appears that all things are not at once to be received and assumed which are boasted of in the name of Christ, but only those things which are done in the truth of Christ. *The Epistles of Cyprian*, 5.383.

7:22ff Editor's Note: In this verse, there is a textual variant which contains an addition taken from the parallel passage in Luke 13:26: "We have eaten and drunk in your presence." Among the early witnesses of this variant reading are Justin Martyr and Origen. But the addition is not found within Cyprian or in another work of Origen.¹⁹

JUSTIN MARTYR: For He alone taught openly those mighty counsels which the Father designed both for all those who have been and shall be well-pleasing to Him, and also for those who have rebelled against His will, whether men or

¹⁵ Phil 4:13

¹⁶ Jn 2:23

¹⁷ Mt 7:14

¹⁸ Mt 24:5, 25

Philip W. Comfort, New Testament Text and Translation Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2008), 20; New Testament Greek Manuscripts, Matthew, ed. Reuben J. Swanson (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 58.

angels, when He said: "They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." And, "Many shall say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten, and drunk, and prophesied, and cast out demons in Your name?' And I will say to them, 'Depart from Me." Again, in other words, by which He shall condemn those who are unworthy of salvation, He said, "Depart into outer darkness, which the Father has prepared for Satan and his angels." Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, 1.236.

TERTULLIAN: He declared that many would come and "show great signs and wonders," so as to turn aside the very elect, and yet for all that were not to be received, He showed how rash was belief in signs and wonders, which were so very easy of accomplishment by even false christs. *Against Marcion*, 3.322.

ORIGEN: Celsus [a pagan critic] asserts that it is by the names of certain demons, and by the use of incantations, that the Christians appear to be possessed of miraculous power; hinting, I suppose, at the practices of those who expel evil spirits by incantations. And here he manifestly appears to malign the Gospel. For it is not by incantations that Christians seem to prevail over evil spirits, but by the name of Jesus, accompanied by the announcement of the narratives which relate to Him; for the repetition of these has frequently been the means of driving demons out of men, especially when those who repeated them did so in a sound and genuinely believing spirit. Such power, indeed, does the name of Jesus possess over evil spirits, that there have been instances where it was effectual, when it was pronounced even by bad men, which Jesus Himself taught would be the case, when He said: "Many shall say to Me in that day, 'In Your name we have cast out devils, and done many wonderful works." Against Celsus, 4.398-399.

ORIGEN: And in another passage: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Your name, and by Your name have cast out demons, and done many wonderful works?' And then will I say to them, 'Depart from Me, because you are workers of iniquity." . . . He says that even some who lead wicked lives will perform miracles in the name of Jesus, and expel demons out of men, sorcery in the case of these individuals, or any suspicion of such, is rather, if we may so speak, altogether banished, and the divinity of Christ established, as well as the divine mission of His disciples; seeing that it is possible that one who makes use of His name, and who is wrought upon by some power, in some way unknown, to make the pretense that he is the Christ, should seem to perform miracles like those of Jesus, while others through His name should do works resembling those of His genuine

²⁰ Mt 8:11

²¹ Cf. Mt 25:41

²² Mt 24:24

disciples. Against Celsus, 4.450.

CYPRIAN: For both to prophesy and to cast out devils, and to do great acts upon the earth is certainly a sublime and an admirable thing; but one does not attain the kingdom of heaven although he is found in all these things, unless he walks in the observance of the right and just way. The Lord denounces, and says, "Many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and in Your name have cast out devils, and in Your name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity." There is need of righteousness, that one may deserve well of God the Judge; we must obey His precepts and warnings, that our merits may receive their reward. The Lord in His Gospel, when He would direct the way of our hope and faith in a brief summary. said, "The Lord your God is one God: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment; and the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."23 The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.426.

Anonymous: He says, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father which is in heaven," its meaning is assuredly with respect to future time—to the time at which the Lord shall begin to judge the secrets of men—to the time at which we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ—to the time at which many shall begin to say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and in Your name cast out devils, and in Your name done many wonderful works?" And yet they shall hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Depart from me, all you that have worked iniquity: I do not know you." Then shall it be fulfilled that He says, "I also will deny them." But whom will the Lord Christ chiefly deny, if not all of you heretics, and schismatics, and strangers to His name? For you who were some time Christians, but now are Novatians, no longer Christians, have changed your first faith by a subsequent deceitfulness in the calling of your name. A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop. 5.659.

7:23 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: On martyrdom the Lord has spoken explicitly, and what is written in different places we bring together. "But I say to you, 'Whoever shall confess in Me before men, the Son of man also shall confess before the angels of God; but whoever shall deny Me before men, I deny him before the angels." "Whoever shall be ashamed of Me or of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with His angels. Whoever therefore shall confess in Me before men, him will I also confess before my Father in

²³ Mt 22:40; Mk 12:29-31

²⁴ Mt 10:33

²⁵ Lk 7:8

heaven."²⁶ "And when they bring you before synagogues, and rulers, and powers, do not think beforehand how you shall make your defense, or what you shall say. For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you must say."²⁷ . . .

So some "confess that they know God," according to the apostle; "but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate."28 And these, though they confess nothing but this, will have done at the end one good work. Their witness, then, appears to be the cleansing away of sins with glory. For instance, the Shepherd says: "You will escape the energy of the wild beast, if your heart become pure and blameless."²⁹ Also the Lord Himself says: "Satan has desired to sift you; but I have prayed." Alone, therefore, the Lord, for the purification of the men who plotted against Him and disbelieved Him, "drank the cup;"31 in imitation of whom the apostles, that they might be in reality Christians, and perfect, suffered for the Churches which they founded. So, then, also the Christians who tread in the footsteps of the apostles ought to be sinless, and, out of love to the Lord, to love also their brother; so that, if occasion call, enduring without stumbling, afflictions for the Church, "they may drink the cup." Those who witness in their life by deed, and at the tribunal by word, whether entertaining hope or surmising fear, are better than those who confess salvation by their mouth alone. But if one ascend also to love, he is a really blessed and true martyr, having confessed perfectly both to the commandments and to God, by the Lord; whom having loved, he acknowledged a brother, giving himself up wholly for God, resigning pleasantly and lovingly the man when asked, like a deposit. The Stromata, 2.421-422.

MELITO: The ignorance of God is His disapproval. In the Gospel: "I do not know you." The Key, 8.761.

TERTULLIAN: I must, however, on my side, dispel one fond conceit by another, and contend with even leaven is suitable for the kingdom of the Creator, because after it comes the oven, or, if you please, the furnace of hell. How often has He already displayed Himself as a Judge, and in the Judge the Creator? How often, indeed, has He repelled, and in the repulse condemned? In the present passage, for instance, He says, "When once the master of the house is risen up;" but in what sense except that in which Isaiah said, "When He shall arise to terribly shake the earth?" And has shut the door," thereby shutting out the wicked, of

²⁶ Mt 10:32

²⁷ Lk 12:11-12

²⁸ Tit 1:16

²⁹ The Shepherd of Hermas (ANF, 2.18)

³⁰ Lk 22:31-32

³¹ See Mt 20:22-23

³² Lk 13:25

³³ Lk 13:25

³⁴ Isa 2:19

I NEVER KNEW YOU —MATTHEW 7:21-23

course; and when these knock, He will answer, "I do not know from where you are;" and when they recount how "they have eaten and drunk in His presence," He will further say to them, "Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But where? Outside, no doubt, when they shall have been excluded with the door shut on them by Him. There will therefore be punishment inflicted by Him who excludes for punishment, when they shall behold the righteous entering the kingdom of God, but themselves detained without. *Against Marcion*, 3.400.

ORIGEN: [I]t says in another passage, "Depart from me, workers of iniquity!" Surely the due punishment for the wages of iniquity is paid out to them. This is also why the same Apostle says in another passage, "The wages of sin is death." And he did not go on to say in similar fashion: but the wages of righteousness is eternal life. Instead he says, "But the gift of God is eternal life," in order [not only] to teach that the wages, which are assuredly comparable with debt and a reward, are a repayment of punishment and death, but to establish eternal life in grace alone. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

³⁵ Lk 13:27

³⁶ Rom 6:23

³⁷ Rom 6:23

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 243-244. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press.

Two Houses

Matthew 7:24-29

1241 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: LK 6:47; 11:28; ROM 2:13; ACTS 10:34-35; JAS 1:22-25

 $^{[25]}$ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. $^{\rm LK~6:48}$

 $^{[26]}$ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: $^{\rm LK\,6:49}$

 $^{[27]}$ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. $^{\rm LK~6.49}$

 $^{[28]}$ And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: $^{MK\ 1:22;\ LK\ 4:32}$

[29] For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. MT 28:18

SUMMARY: Only those who believe in Him and do His will are the sons of God (IRENAEUS). We have power over our own will, and possess in ourselves the causes either of our salvation or of our ruin (ORIGEN). We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did (CYPRIAN). The most devout was found to be like the rock on which the house was built with the most solid foundations; and when the rain descended, and the floods and the winds burst in and beat upon that house, it stood firm: for it had been built on the most solid and immoveable foundations (ARCHELAUS). The

Lord made known the future destruction in the Gospel (Anonymous). His word was the power of God (Justin Martyr). His divine discourse gave forth both power and grace, building up rather than pulling down the substance of the Law and the prophets (Tertullian).

7:24ff IRENAEUS: For this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through His instrumentality He might be manifested to all, and might receive those righteous ones who believe in Him into incorruption and everlasting enjoyment (now, to believe in Him is to do His will); but He shall righteously shut out into the darkness which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe, and who do consequently avoid His light. The Father therefore has revealed Himself to all, by making His Word visible to all; and, conversely, the Word has declared to all the Father and the Son, since He has become visible to all. And therefore the righteous judgment of God shall fall upon all who, like others, have seen, but have not, like others, believed. *Against Heresies*, 1.468-469.

IRENAEUS: But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: only those are so who believe in Him and do His will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil. . . . According to nature, then, they are His children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children.

For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. *Against Heresies*, 1.524-525.

TATIAN: Every man that comes to me, and hears my sayings, and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like the wise man which built a house, and dug and went deep, and laid the foundations on a rock: 1 and the rain came down, and the rivers overflowed, and the winds blew, and shook that house, and it did not fall: for its foundation was laid on rocks. And every one that hears my words, and does not do them, is like the foolish man which built his house on sand, without foundation: and the rain descended, and the rivers overflowed, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house, and it fell: and the fall of it was great. The Diatessaron, 9.60.

ORIGEN: He declares: "Every one who hears my words, and does them, I will show to whom he is like: he is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock," etc. So also the declaration: "Whoever hears these things, and does not do them, is like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand," etc. Even the words addressed to those who are on His right hand, "Come to Me, all you

¹ Cf. Lk 6:47-48

blessed of My Father," etc.; "for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink," manifestly show that it depended upon themselves, that either these should be deserving of praise for doing what was commanded and receiving what was promised, or those deserving of condemnation who either heard or received the contrary, and to whom it was said, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire." Let us observe also, that the Apostle Paul addresses us as having power over our own will, and as possessing in ourselves the causes either of our salvation or of our ruin: "Do you despise the riches of His goodness, and of His patience, and of His long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But, according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath on the day of judgment and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to everyone according to his work: to those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and immortality, eternal life; while to those who are contentious, and do not believe the truth, but who believe iniquity, anger, indignation, tribulation, and distress, on every soul of man that works evil, on the Jew first, and (afterwards) on the Greek; but glory, and honor, and peace to every one that does good, to the Jew first, and (afterwards) to the Greek." You will also find innumerable other passages in holy Scripture, which manifestly show that we possess freedom of will. Otherwise there would be a contrariety in commandments being given us, by observing which we may be saved, or by transgressing which we may be condemned, if the power of keeping them were not implanted in us. De Principiis, 4.306.

ORIGEN: Is it the rock upon which Christ builds the church, or is the rock the church?⁵ For the phrase is ambiguous. Or is it as if the rock and the church were one and the same? This I think to be true; for neither against the rock on which Christ builds the church, nor against the church will the gates of Hades prevail; just as the way of a serpent upon a rock, according to what is written in the Proverbs, cannot be found.⁶ Now, if the gates of Hades prevail against any one, such an one cannot be a rock upon which Christ builds the church, nor the church built by Jesus upon the rock; for the rock is inaccessible to the serpent, and it is stronger than the gates of Hades which are opposing it, so that because of its strength the gates of Hades do not prevail against it; but the church, as a building of Christ who built His own house wisely upon the rock, is incapable of admitting the gates of Hades which prevail against every man who is outside the rock and the church, but have no power against it. *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 9.456-457.

ORIGEN: The Lord also says in the Gospel, "He who believes in me keeps my

² Mt 25:34

³ Mt 25:41

⁴ Rom 2:4-10

⁵ Mt 16:18

⁶ Prov 30:19

commands;"⁷ and again, "**he who hears these words of mine and does them**;" and likewise, "Why do you say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"⁸ You see, then, that everywhere faith is joined with works and works are united with faith. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*⁹

ORIGEN: Long ago we heard Jesus' words, and it is now in the distant past that we were made disciples of the gospel, and all built for ourselves a house. Where we have built, whether we have dug deep and founded it on the rock, or on the sand without any foundation, the present struggle will show. For a storm is imminent bringing rain and rivers and winds, or, as Luke says, flood-water. 10 When these break upon the house, either they will not be able to shake it, and the house will not fall for the reason that it is built upon the rock, on Christ, or they will show up the weakness of the building which will fall under the blows of the tempest. May this never happen to our buildings. A fall by apostasy is very great, or, as Luke says, great is the ruin of the building that lacks any foundation. Therefore let us pray that we may be like the wise man who built his house on the rock. Against such a house there may come the rain from the spiritual powers of evil in the heavens or from the rivers from the world-rulers of this darkness¹¹ or the flood-water of the spirits beneath the earth. Let them break themselves on our building founded on the rock, not only that the house may not fall but that it may not be shaken in the least, and that it may be rather they than we who suffer from their onslaught. Let each one of us say as he strikes the hostile powers, "So I fight, but not as a man beating the air." 12 Exhortation to Martyrdom. 13

CYPRIAN: An example is given us to avoid the way of the old man, to stand in the footsteps of a conquering Christ, that we may not again be incautiously turned back into the nets of death, but, foreseeing our danger, may possess the immortality that we have received. But how can we possess immortality, unless we keep those commands of Christ whereby death is driven out and overcome, when He Himself warns us, and says, "If you will enter into life, keep the

⁷ Cf. Jn 14:15, 21, 23

⁸ Lk 6:46

Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5, The Fathers of the Church, Volume 103, tr. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). 156. Reprinted with permission from The Catholic University of America Press

¹⁰ Mt 7:24-27: Lk 6:48-49

¹¹ Eph 6:12

^{12 1} Cor 9:26

Origen, Exhortation to Martyrdom 48. Extract from The Library of Christian Classics: Volume II, Alexandrian Christianity, trs. John Ernest Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press; London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1954), 427. Used with permission from Westminster John Knox Press and Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. rights@hymnsam.co.uk.

commandments?"14 And again: "If you do the things that I command you, henceforth I do not call you servants, but friends."15 Finally, these persons He calls strong and stedfast; these He declares to be founded in robust security upon the rock, established with immoveable and unshaken firmness, in opposition to all the tempests and hurricanes of the world. "Whosoever," He says, "hears my words, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock: the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it did not fall: for it was founded upon a rock." We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did. But how can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do?¹⁶ How shall he attain to the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment? He must of necessity waver and wander, and, caught away by a spirit of error, like dust which is shaken by the wind, be blown about; and he will make no advance in his walk towards salvation, because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation. The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.421-422.

CYPRIAN: In Solomon, in Ecclesiasticus: "Do not be hasty with your tongue, and in your deeds useless and remiss." And Paul, in the first to the Corinthians: "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Also to the Romans: "Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Also in the Gospel according to Matthew: "He who shall do and teach so, shall be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Also in the same place: "Every one who hears my words, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it did not fall: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one who hears my words, and does not do them, I will liken him to the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and its ruin became great." The Treatises of Cyprian, 5.554.

ARCHELAUS: I now take the place of Diodorus, not on account of any impossibilities attaching to him, but because I came to know this person here at a previous time, when he made his way with his wicked designs into the parts where I reside, by the favor of Marcellus, that man of illustrious name, whom he endeavored to turn aside from our doctrine and faith, with the object, that is to say, of making him an effective supporter of this impious teaching. Nevertheless, in spite of all his plausible addresses, he failed to move him or

¹⁴ Mt 19:17

¹⁵ Jn 15:14

^{16 1} Jn 2:4

¹⁷ Sir 4:29

^{18 1} Cor 4:20

¹⁹ Rom 2:13

TWO HOUSES -- MATTHEW 7:24-29

turn him aside from the faith in any one particular. For this most devout Marcellus was only found to be like the rock on which the house was built with the most solid foundations; and when the rain descended, and the floods and the winds burst in and beat upon that house, it stood firm: for it had been built on the most solid and immoveable foundations. *The Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, 6.221-222.

7:25 IRENAEUS: But since parables admit of many interpretations, what lover of truth will not acknowledge, that for them to assert God is to be searched out from these, while they desert what is certain, indubitable, and true, is the part of men who eagerly throw themselves into danger, and act as if destitute of reason? And is not such a course of conduct not to build one's house upon a rock which is firm, strong, and placed in an open position, but upon the shifting sand? Hence the overthrow of such a building is a matter of ease. *Against Heresies*, 1.399.

ORIGEN: "For neither death nor life nor angels nor other things can separate us from the love of Christ." Neither can the flooding of rivers, as in the lands of Egypt and Assyria, do harm. Only those are harmed who build on sand, who practice the wisdom of the world. The winds that blow are like the false prophets. All these, coming together in one place, "beat upon" the house. If it is founded on rock, they do no harm. "The way of a snake upon a rock" is not to be found. But in the form of temptations and persecutions, which may mount into a flood, they beat upon even the one who seems to be well-founded. The house falls if it does not have Christ as its basis and foundation. But the truly wise person builds one's house "upon a rock." This is the way the Lord builds his church—upon the rock, with steadfastness and strength. This is why "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." All the persecutions that fall upon that house accomplish nothing. The house is founded upon the rock. Fragment 153.23

7:26 Anonymous: The Lord made known the future destruction in the Gospel in these words, saying, "He who hears my words and does not do them, I will liken him to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: the tempests came and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was its destruction." A Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian by an Anonymous Bishop. 5.659

7:28ff JUSTIN MARTYR: Brief and concise utterances fell from Him, for He was

²⁰ Rom 8:38-39

²¹ Prov 30:19

²² Mt 16:18

Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-), 41.1:76. Taken from Matthew 1-13 Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. Manlio Simonetti. Copyright (c) 2001 by the Institute of Classical Christian Studies, Thomas C. Oden and Manlio Simonetti. Kindle Locations 6467-6476. Used with permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com.

no sophist, but His word was the power of God. The First Apology, 1.167.

TERTULLIAN: But "they were all astonished at His doctrine." Of course they were; for, Luke says, "His word was with power"24—not because He taught in opposition to the law and the prophets. No doubt, His divine discourse gave forth both power and grace, building up rather than pulling down the substance of the law and the prophets. Otherwise, instead of "astonishment," they would feel horror. It would not be admiration, but aversion, prompt and sure, which they would bestow on one who was the destroyer of law and prophets, and the greater propounder as a natural consequence of a rival god; for he would have been unable to teach anything to the disparagement of the law and the prophets, and so far of the Creator also, without premising the doctrine of a different and rival divinity. Inasmuch, then, as the Scripture makes no other statement on the matter than that the simple force and power of His word produced astonishment, it more naturally shows that His teaching was in accordance with the Creator by not denying that it was so, than that it was in opposition to the Creator, by not asserting such a fact. And thus He will either have to be acknowledged as belonging to Him, in accordance with whom He taught; or else will have to be adjudged a deceiver since He taught in accordance with One whom He had come to oppose. Against Marcion, 3.352-353.

²⁴ Lk 4:32

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Appendix A:

Pre-Nicene Christian Biographies

Alexander of Alexandria (d. 328): Bishop of Alexandria and leader of the opposition against Arianism at the First Council of Nicaea. He is also remembered for being the mentor of Athanasius of Alexandria.

Alexander of Jerusalem and Cappadocia (d. 251): First Bishop of Cappadocia. Alexander had been imprisoned for his faith in the time of Roman Emperor Alexander Severus and upon being released came to Jerusalem. In his old age, he was taken captive to Caesarea, where he suffered and survived many tortures. He died in prison.*

Alexander of Lycopolis (3d century): Bishop of Lycopolis and writer of a short treatise against the Manicheans (c. 301).*

Anatolius of Alexandria (d. 283): Bishop of Laodicea. He was credited with a rich knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, physics, rhetoric, dialectic, and astronomy. There are fragments of ten books on arithmetic, and also a treatise on the time of the Paschal celebration. A story is told by Eusebius about how Anatolius broke up a rebellion in Alexandria.

Apollonius (2d century): Bishop of Ephesus. His writings against Montanism were so forcible as to call forth Tertullian himself. He bears testimony to the existence of a canon of Scripture. According to Eusebius, the book of Revelation was used by him in his works. He also died as a martyr.

Archelaus (3d century): Bishop of Caschar in Mesopotamia. To him is

APPENDIX A: PRE-NICENE CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHIES

attributed the *Disputation of Archelaus and Manes*, which is a purported record of the debate between Archelaus and Manes, the founder of Manichaeism.

Aristides (early 2d century): Christian apologist. Aristides was a converted Greek philosopher of Athens and author of one of the earliest Christian apologies, the *Apologia for Christianity*, which was presented to Emperor Hadrian in 125

Aristo of Pella (c. 100-160): Christian apologist about whom little is known. Only brief excerpts remain of his apology.*

Arnobius (d. c. 330): Christian apologist during the reign of Diocletian (284–305). Arnobius was a distinguished Numidian rhetorician at Sicca, North Africa, before his conversion. Because Arnobius had previously been an outspoken opponent of Christianity, the local bishop demanded proof of his sincerity before receiving him into the church. So Arnobius wrote an apologetic work entitled *Against the Pagan*.

Athenagoras (c. 133-190): Christian apologist. A converted Greek philosopher, he identified himself as, "Athenagoras, the Athenian, Philosopher, and Christian." He is also the author of a Christian apology called *Embassy for the Christians* which was presented to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

Bardesanes (c. 154-222): Syriac convert to Christianity who later lapsed into heresy. His work, *The Book of the Laws of Divers Countries*, has been included in this commentary very sparingly and only where it contains doctrine that is consistent with pre-Nicene orthodoxy. Though the work is credited to Bardesanes in the ANF (under the name "Bardesan"), it may have actually been written by his student, Philip.

Barnabas: The *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70-130) was widely circulated among the early church. Some considered it Scripture, but Eusebius described it as one of the non-canonical books. Though the work itself was anonymous, Clement of Alexandria believed it was written by the companion of the apostle Paul. However, most modern scholars doubt that the epistle was written by the same Barnabas of the Scriptures.

Caius (c. 180-217): Presbyter in the church at Rome. Only fragments of his works are known, which are given in the ANF. In one of the fragments is evidence of the deaths of the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul at Rome. The Muratorian fragment, an early attempt to establish the New Testament canon, is often attributed to Caius and is included in that collection.*

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215): Presbyter in the church and an instructor

of new Christians at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Prominent for his study of Scripture, Clement was an educated Christian convert who was familiar with classical Greek philosophy and literature. Among his pupils were Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem.

Clement of Rome (c. 30-100): Bishop of Rome. One of the prominent early Christian leaders, Clement was personally instructed by the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul. Clement is mentioned by name in Paul's epistle to the Philippians (4:3). On behalf of Rome, he wrote a letter to the Corinthian church known as *First Clement* (c. 95). Scholars believe that *Second Clement* is a sermon written anonymously around 95-140.

Commodianus (c. 250): Bishop of a church in North Africa and Christian poet. Having read the Bible, he adopted Christianity. Little is known of him except what we learn from his own writings. However, there appears to be certain unorthodox statements contained in his writings with regard to the Trinity.

Cyprian (c. 200-258): Bishop of Carthage, North Africa, during a period of aggressive persecution. He was born into a rich, pagan family sometime during the early third century. After his baptism, he sold entire estates and distributed his wealth to the poor. He had the testimony of pastoral strength and conduct during the Novatianist schism and outbreak of the plague, and eventual martyrdom.

Dionysius of Alexandria (c. 190-264): Bishop of Alexandria. After his conversion to Christianity, he joined the Catechetical School of Alexandria and was a pupil of Origen. He wrote against Sabellianism and Paul of Samosata.

Dionysius of Corinth (2d century): Bishop of Corinth. He is only known to us through Eusebius.*

Dionysius of Rome (d. 268): Bishop of Rome. After the persecutions of the Emperor Valerian I (257) and the edict of toleration by his successor Gallienus (259), Dionysius reorganized the church in Rome.

Eusebius (270-340): Bishop of Caesarea and the "Father of Church History." Eusebius produced the *Ecclesiastical History*, which is a primary source for the history of the church from the first century to the time of Emperor Constantine, his contemporary.

Firmilian (c. 200-268): Bishop of Caesarea and a disciple of Origen. He sided with Cyprian against Stephen, bishop of Rome, in the mid-third century controversy over baptism by heretics. He was excommunicated by Stephen for his position.*

APPENDIX A: PRE-NICENE CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHIES

Gregory Thaumaturgus (c. 213-270): Bishop of Caesarea. Gregory was converted to the Christian faith through discussions with Origen, head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Presumably many miracles won for him the title of Thaumaturgus ("the wonder-worker" in Latinized Greek), though little is known about his pastoral work.*

Hegesippus (c. 110-180): A Christian historian of the early Church. His works are now entirely lost, except eight passages concerning Church history preserved in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.

Hermas (1st or 2d century): Author of an allegory called *The Shepherd of Hermas*, which was widely read and held in great esteem by many early Christian churches. Some believe that Paul the apostle spoke of the same Hermas in the salutations of his epistle to the Romans (16:14). The Muratorian Fragment asserts that Hermas was the brother of Pius, the second century bishop of Rome.

Hippolytus (c. 170-236): A presbyter in the church at Rome and pupil of Irenaeus. His most important work is called *The Refutation of All Heresies*. He accused Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, of modalism. He also disputed Callistus, bishop of Rome, for pardoning Christians who had committed grave sins, such as adultery. He also died as a martyr.

Ignatius (c. 35-107): Bishop of Antioch, disciple of the apostle John and a companion of Polycarp. He was also martyred in Rome. On his way to Rome as a prisoner, Ignatius wrote letters to several churches. He encouraged churches to be on guard against new heresies and urged them to hold fast to the apostolic tradition.

Irenaeus (130-202): Bishop of Lyons (modern-day France). In his youth, Irenaeus heard the preaching of Polycarp. His best known extant work is *Against Heresies* which exposes the errors of Gnosticism. In 190, Irenaeus wrote to Victor, bishop of Rome, not to excommunicate the Christians of Asia Minor who celebrated Pascha (or Easter) on a different day than did Rome.

Julius Africanus (c. 160-240): Christian historian. He was a soldier and pagan prior to his conversion. Little is known of his life and only a few of his writings remain.

Justin Martyr (c. 100-165): Evangelist and apologist for the Christian faith. A philosopher who converted to Christianity, Justin wrote more concerning Christianity than any other disciple prior to his time. Many of his writings are available to us today and various fragments. He spent the last years of his life in Rome where he was martyred.

Lactantius (c. 250-325): Christian apologist, advisor to the Roman Emperor Constantine, and a tutor to the emperor's son. After conversion, he resigned as teacher of rhetoric in Nicomedia before the publication of Diocletian's first edict against the Christians (303). Lactantius wrote apologetic works, most important is his *Divine Institutes* which was a systematic presentation on Christianity.

Mathetes (2d century): Unknown Christian apologist who wrote *The Epistle to Diognetus* (c. 125-200). Most likely "Mathetes" is not a proper name; it simply means "a disciple."

Mark Minucius Felix (2d or 3d century): Roman lawyer who converted to the Christian faith. He wrote one of the earliest Latin apologies for Christianity. He is now exclusively known by his *Octavius*, written in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a pagan.

Melito (d. c. 180): Bishop of Sardis. Though he was a prolific writer, most of his works have been lost. His most famous work, *Apology for Christianity*, was written to Marcus Aurelius.

Methodius (d. c. 311): Bishop of Olympus in Lycia, and author of several theological and moral works. *On Free Will* was an important treatise in support of the freedom of the human will and attacking the Gnostic view of the origin of evil. He also died as a martyr.

Novatian (d. 257): Roman presbyter and theologian who wrote many works in Latin. He led a schism when Cornelius was ordained bishop of Rome (c. 251). The Novatianists refused to re-admit to Communion those Christians who had denied Christ in persecution or fallen away, and allowed no place for their repentance. This schism led to Novatian's excommunication.

Origen (c. 185-255): Bishop of Caesarea, theologian, prolific writer, pupil of Clement of Alexandria, and teacher at the Catechetical School in Alexandria. During the persecution under Emperor Decius (250), Origen was made to endure chains and torture in a dungeon. This excruciating torture may have contributed to his death a few years later. Thus he died in the communion of the church as a confessor.

Papias (c. 60-130): Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor and companion of Polycarp. He was informed by John the presbyter, the daughters of Philip and many "elders" who had themselves heard the Twelve Apostles. Papias provides the earliest extant account of the authorship of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Unfortunately most of the works of Papias are lost.

Peter of Alexandria (3d century): Bishop of Alexandria. His time as bishop was during a severe ten-year persecution of Christianity from the Roman Emperor

Diocletian, which began in 303.

Polycarp (c. 69-156): Bishop of Smyrna, personal disciple of the apostle John and companion of Polycarp. To Irenaeus, Polycarp was a human link to the apostolic era. In his old age, Polycarp was arrested and martyred by being burned alive. Today we can read Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* as well as the epistle concerning his martyrdom.

Polycrates (2d century): Bishop of Ephesus and companion of Polycarp and Irenaeus. He is best known for his letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, who attempted to compel all Christians to observe Rome's date for celebrating Pascha (or Easter). His letter has been used to demonstrate that the churches in Asia Minor did not always accept the authority of the bishops at Rome.*

Serapion of Antioch (d. c. 211): Bishop of Antioch and one of the chief theologians of his time. Serapion also worked to refute the Docetic *Gospel of Peter* and Gnosticism.*

Tatian (2d century): Christian apologist from Syria and pupil of Justin Martyr. He traveled to Rome and converted to Christianity from paganism. His work, the *Diatessaron*, is the most prominent harmony of the Gospels. Sadly, after the death of Justin (c. 165), Tatian deviated into heresy, becoming a leader of the Encratites, an ascetic sect.

Tertullian (c. 160-230): Leader of the church in Carthage, North Africa. Tertullian wrote numerous apologies, works against heretics and exhortations to other Christians. Some of Tertullian's writings reflect the teachings of the Montanist sect. His later writings reflect the teachings of the Montanist sect, which have been included in this commentary when he is in agreement with early Christianity.

Theonas of Alexandria (d. 300): Bishop of Alexandria. The only work of his that has come down to our time is his letter to Lucianus, the chief chamberlain of the Emperor.

Theophilus of Antioch (d. c. 183-185): Bishop of Antioch and Christian apologist. He was the first person to use the word "Trinity" when speaking of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The one undisputed extant work of Theophilus is his *Apology to Autolycus*, a series of books defending Christianity to a pagan friend.

Victorinus (d. c. 303-304): Bishop of Poetovio in Syria. He composed commentaries on several books of Scripture, and wrote treatises against the heresies of his time. Unfortunately, all of his works have disappeared except his *Commentary on the Apocalypse* and short tract *On the Construction of the*

EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

World. He was also martyred during the persecutions of Emperor Diocletian.

* Not mentioned in this commentary

Appendix B:

Pre-Nicene Christian Heresies

Anthropianism – The Anthropians believed that Jesus Christ was merely human. This heresy was rejected in the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325), which was convened to deal directly with the nature of Christ's divinity.

Arianism – A presbyter in Alexandria, Arius (c. 250-336) denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. He taught that Jesus was only the highest created being, created out of nothing in time, and was not of the same substance as the Father. Arius's bishop, Alexander of Alexandria (d. 328), strongly opposed this heresy. The Arian heresy was condemned at the First Council of Nicaea.

Donatism – Named for their second leader Donatus Magnus (d. c. 355), the ordained Bishop of Carthage in 313. The Donatists taught that moral unworthiness (even if repentant) invalidated the sacraments. They refused to accept the sacraments and spiritual authority of church leaders who were traitors during the persecution of Christians under Diocletian.

Ebionites – The Ebionites regarded Jesus Christ as the Messiah while rejecting His divinity. They also insisted on the necessity of observing circumcision and the Jewish Law. The rejected the Apostle Paul as an apostate from the Law. The early Christians deemed the Ebionites as heretical Judaizers.

Gnosticism – Gnosticism was the primary heresy during the time of the Pre-Nicene church. The term "gnostic" derives from "gnosis," which means "knowledge" in Greek (cf. 1 Timothy 6:20-21). The Gnostics claimed that the apostles had secretly passed down this revealed knowledge (gnosis) to few

chosen followers.

Gnostics taught that the earth and mankind were created by an imperfect "god" they called the Demiurge, other than Christ's Father, the good "god." According to them, the Demiurge was the "god" of the Old Testament. Because of the inferiority of the Demiurge, all matter, whether it be the physical universe or the human body, is evil. Thus, all material things (including the flesh) are inherently corrupt and incapable of salvation. But the Gnostics were privy to the secret knowledge of salvation.

Gnostics taught that the Father of Jesus sent his Son to show humanity the way to salvation. Since the flesh is inherently flawed, according to the Gnostics, Jesus Christ never actually became man (cf. 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7). **Docetism**, a doctrine closely related to Gnosticism, stated that Jesus Christ was a spirit and had only taken on the illusion of flesh. The belief was mentioned in a letter by Bishop Serapion of Antioch (c. 197–203), who discovered the doctrine in the Gospel of Peter, and later condemned it as a forgery. Other Gnostic teachers taught that there was an actual man named Jesus, whose body the Son of God inhabited—only to abandon Jesus at the crucifixion.

Because matter was inherently evil, most Gnostic teachers rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the intermediate state of the dead, and the physical sacraments of baptism and communion. Some Gnostic groups practiced rigorous asceticism, while others were notoriously sinful.

Some of the foremost Gnostic teachers and sects of the first three centuries are listed below:

First Century:

- **Simonians** It was said that all sorts of heresies "derive their origin" from Simon Magus, the "father of all heretics," who made an appearance in Acts 8:9-21.
- Cerinthus A Gnostic teacher who flourished around 100, Cerinthus taught that the world was made by a power separated from God and denied that Jesus was born of a virgin. Cerinthus was also devoted to carnal pleasures.
- **Nicolaitans** The Nicolaitans were the followers of that Nicholas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles (Acts 6:5; Revelation 2:6, 15, 20). They led lives of indulgence, practiced adultery and ate things offered to idols.

Second Century:

- Basilideans During the first half of the second century, Basilides was one of the foremost Gnostic teachers who lived in Alexandria. Basilides taught that Christ only appeared as a man and that Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his place.
- Carpocratians A magician and a fornicator, Carpocrates was one of the leading Gnostic teachers who lived in Alexandria. He claimed that the world was created by angels and that Jesus was just like other men.
- Marcionites The Marcionites were a sect founded by the heretic Marcion (c. 85-160), who rejected Jesus' birth from Mary. Marcion

incorporated many Gnostic beliefs such as the rejection of the Old Testament and the Hebrew "god" in favor of the New Testament "god." Marcion established a "canon" which consisted only of the Gospel of Luke and the epistles of Paul, and even these he altered. The Marcionites also forbid to marry (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1-3).

Valentinians – The Valentinians were a Gnostic and dualistic sect founded by an Egyptian named Valentinus (c. 100-160), one of the foremost Gnostic teachers of the early second centuries. He taught that Christ had a heavenly or spiritual body, and assumed nothing from the virgin Mary. He also constructed an elaborate cosmology of malefemale aeons who supposedly govern the universe. The Valentinians also said that the resurrection was already past (cf. Timothy 2:18).

Third Century:

• Manichaeism – Manes (c. 216-276), also known as Mani or Manichaeus, founded this Persian heretical sect that incorporated many Gnostic doctrines. It was a highly dualistic religion stating that good and evil are equally powerful, and that material things are evil. He believed in two "gods," one who is "just" and the other "good." Manes denied that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. They also abstained from meat and marriage (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1-5). Manichaeism is dealt with as heresy by the early Christians.

Monarchianism – Also known as Modalism, Patripassianism, and Sabellianism, it refers to the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three characterizations of one and the same person, rather than three distinct persons in the Trinity. Two of the early teachers of monarchianism were Noetus and Praxeas, later refined by Sabellius. The early Christians wrote in opposition to this heresy because it challenged trinitarian orthodoxy.

Montanism – In the second century, Montanism was based on the new revelation of the "prophet" Montanus. The Montanists referred to their movement as the New Prophecy, but the Church usually called them Phrygians, Cataphrygians, or Montanists. Montanus claimed to be the Paraclete or Comforter whom our Lord promised to send. After the death of Montanus, the sect was led by two self-proclaimed prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla. In the Montanist period of Tertullian's life, various false and distinctly Montanist teachings are found in his writings such as new revelations, Christians should not flee persecution, no second marriages after death of a spouse, and no forgiveness for post-baptismal sins. Montanists also sought out eestatic spiritual experiences. But the early Christians denounced the Montanist movement.

Novatianists – In the third century, the Novatians were a sect founded by Novatian. They pridefully called themselves the title of "the Pure" and were marked by their rigorous discipline. The Novatianist sect refused to re-admit to Communion those Christians who had denied Christ in persecution or fallen

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away. They allowed no place for the lapsed repentance, not even if they did everything required for genuine confession and conversion.

About the Editor

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