THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Norman Russell

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS



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If Theophilus of Alexandria seems a minor figure to us today, it is because we persist in seeing him through the eyes of hostile contemporary witnesses, each of whom had his own reasons for diminishing Theophilus' stature. In fact, he was one of the greatest bishops of the Theodosian era, who played an important role in a crucial phase of the Roman Empire's transformation into a Christian society.

Norman Russell's new assessment of Theophilus shows him as an able theologian, an expert ecclesiastical lawyer, a highly skilled orator and, surprisingly, a spiritual teacher. The introductory section examines his efforts to Christianize an Egypt still dominated by its great temples, and his battles to maintain the pre-eminence of the Alexandrian Church in an age of rapid change. The texts, most of them translated into a modern language for the first time, reveal the full power and range of his thinking.

Theophilus of Alexandria brings back into focus a figure who has been long neglected in the study of early Christianity and will provide students and lecturers with a fresh perspective, not least through the translation of texts, for the first time, into English.

Norman Russell was educated at the Universities of London and Oxford. He is an independent scholar whose publications include *Cyril of Alexandria* (2000) in the Early Church Fathers series and *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (2004).

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

Edited by Carol Harrison
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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2007
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Russell, Norman.
Theophilus of Alexandria/Norman Russell.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Theophilus, patriarch, Archbishop of Alexandria, d. 412. I. Title.
BR1720.T45R87 2007
270.2092–dc22 2006017332

ISBN 0-203-96755-0 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN10: 0–415–28914–9 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0–415–28915–7 (pbk)
ISBN10: 0–203–96755–0 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978–0–415–28914–6 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978–0–415–28915–3 (pbk)
ISBN13: 978–0–203–96755–3 (ebk)

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PREFACE

Theophilus of Alexandria is a neglected figure. The least admired of the great bishops of Alexandria who dominated the ecclesiastical life of the Eastern Empire from Athanasius' succession in 328 to Cyril's death in 444, he is remembered chiefly for his destruction of the Serapeum, his persecution of the Origenists and his role in the downfall of John Chrysostom. His modern biographer, Agostino Favale, laments his 'deplorable violence', but such violence must be seen in context, both historically and textually. Historically, it is unreasonable to expect a bishop of the Theodosian empire to have behaved diffidently. If he had done, he would not have kept his throne for long. Textually, the violent ecclesiastical ruler presented in contemporary writings must be deconstructed to arrive at a perception of the reality underlying the rhetorical image. So far as the Church of Alexandria was concerned, Theophilus was a great pastor and decisive leader of his community, which is how the Copts still remember him.

The purpose of this book is to present a varied selection of Theophilus' writings, most of which have not previously been translated into English, so that his true stature can be appreciated. These include some little-known homilies and legal rulings as well as his anti-Origenist Festal Letters of 401–4.

The work could not have been completed without the generous help of several friends and colleagues. Michael Moore located a number of articles and sent copies to me in Italy. Père Daniel Misonne of the Abbey of Maredsous provided me with a copy of Theophilus' *On Isaiah 6: 1–7*. Charles Lomas read the introduction and made many useful suggestions. Richard Price of Heythrop College, London, elucidated a corrupt passage in the Latin text of the Second Synodal Letter. Carol Downer of Birkbeck College, London, with her University College colleagues Robert Kirby

and Basil Stein, carefully checked my adaption of Wallis Budge's translation of the *Homily on Repentance and Self-control* against the original Coptic, consulting the manuscript where the printed text was doubtful. Françoise Thelamon of the University of Rouen provided me with a photograph of the image of Theophilus from the *Alexandrian Chronicle*. I am most grateful to all of them.

I should also like to thank the staff of the Oasis Library of the Cappuchin Fathers in Perugia for their unfailing help and courtesy and Brenda Fewtrell for her expert typing of the manuscript.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to the series editor, Carol Harrison, for her patience and encouragement during the long delays in finishing this book since I first suggested it to her in Lucca in 2001. I hope the wait has been worthwhile.

Norman Russell
15 October 2005
Feast in the Coptic Calendar
of St Theophilus of Alexandria

ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, eds E. Schwartz and J. Straub, Berlin, 1914–84
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, revised A. Cleveland Coxe, Buffalo, 1885–96 (repr. Grand Rapids, 1950–)
CN	P. R. Coleman-Norton (ed.), *Palladii Dialogus de Vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, Cambridge, 1928
Cod. Th.	Codex Theodosianus
CPG	M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, Turnhout, 1974–
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Paris, Louvain, 1903–
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna, 1865–
CUF	Collection des Universités de France (Budé)
DS	*Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, ed. M. Viller *et al.*, Paris, 1933–95
DTC	*Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, eds A. Vacant, E. Mangenot and E. Amann, Paris, 1903–72
Ep.	*Epistula*
FL	*Festal Letter*
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig, Berlin, 1897–
HE	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
Hist. Mon.	*Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*, London, Oxford, 1903–
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint

Mansi	J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Florence, 1759–98 (repr. Graz, 1960–62)
NPNF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, eds Ph. Schaff and H. Wace, New York, 1887–92 (repr. Grand Rapids 1951–)
ODCC	*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. E. A. Livingstone, Oxford, 1997
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1857–66
PGL	*A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe, Oxford, 1961
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1841–64
PO	Patrologia Orientalis, ed. R. Graffin and F. Nau, Paris, 1907–
PW	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa *et al.*, Stuttgart, 1893–
R. Bén.	*Revue Bénédictine*, Lille, Bruges, Maredsous, 1884–
R. Bibl.	*Revue Biblique*, Paris, 1892–
RHE	*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain, 1900–*
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, Paris, 1896–
SC	Sources Chrétiennes, Paris, 1942–
Stud. Pat.	*Studia Patristica*, Louvain
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, eds O. von Gebhardt and A. von Harnack, Leipzig, Berlin, 1882–
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*, Amsterdam, 1947–

Part I

INTRODUCTION

1

THE LIFE OF THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA

During the later Roman Empire, bishops became prominent public figures. The old civic elite, whose wealth and classical education had made them the natural leaders of their cities, were joined by new men, often from a different social and cultural background. These new men, the bishops of the post-Constantinian era, sometimes showed themselves more effective than the traditional town councils at representing their city to the imperial government and controlling the behaviour of the populace.[1]

Theophilus exemplifies the tough characteristics required in the bishops of his time. He was politically astute, decisive and ruthless when his authority was challenged. He was also a brilliant orator, an efficient administrator and a capable theologian and canon lawyer. These qualities enabled him to rule the Alexandrian Church effectively and extend its influence. But they also made him bitter enemies. Posterity tends to believe his opponents' version of events rather than his own. I aspire to be fairer to Theophilus. He had greater integrity than the church historians, Socrates and Sozomen, and John Chrysostom's biographer, Palladius of Helenopolis, would have us believe. When set in context, Theophilus' energy, resilence and intelligence can inspire respect if not affection.

Early life

Theophilus was born around 345 CE.[2] According to a late source, John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*,[3] his birth place was Memphis, the old capital of Lower Egypt, which Jerome describes as 'the metropolis of the Egyptian superstition'.[4] John relates that Theophilus came from a Christian family, but both his parents died when he was still young, leaving him and his younger sister in the care of an Ethiopian slave woman. One morning before dawn she took the children into a

temple of Artemis and Apollo to pray, but when they entered, the gods' statues crashed to the ground and broke into pieces. Terrified, the slave fled to Alexandria, where she took the children to church to become 'acquainted with the practice of the Christian mysteries'. But God revealed to the bishop, Athanasius, who they were and where they were standing in the church. At the end of the *synaxis* he had the slave brought to him and questioned her. The three were subsequently baptized and taken into his care. The girl was placed with a community of nuns (though later to marry and become the mother of Cyril, Theophilus' nephew and successor); the boy was given a Christian education and enrolled in the clergy, rising through the diaconate and presbyterate eventually to sit on the throne of Saint Mark.[5]

As Theophilus' modern biographer, Agostino Favale, remarks, the story of how Theophilus came under Athanasius' protection is obviously legendary.[6] The broken pagan idols anticipate Theophilus' activities as bishop. But there is no reason to reject the tradition that he was born in Memphis, or that he was closely linked with Athanasius after the latter's return from his last exile. Favale has established that in around 370 Theophilus already belonged to the Alexandrian clergy.[7] John of Nikiu, taking for granted the clerical *cursus* normal to his own day, makes him a presbyter before his election. But a reliable contemporary source, the *Historia acephala*, states that Theophilus was raised to the episcopate directly from the diaconate.[8]

It was the practice in Alexandria for a deceased bishop to be succeeded by one of his own clergy. Five days before he died in 373, Athanasius chose Peter, a senior presbyter. In 381, Peter was succeeded by his brother, Timothy. Theophilus was elected on Timothy's death on 20 July 385.[9] At the time he was about forty years old, but we know almost nothing about his earlier career. Rufinus, who spent the years 373–80 in Alexandria, claimed to have been his auditor and disciple, though Jerome denies that Theophilus had any teaching role until he became bishop.[10]

The Church of Alexandria in 385

Upon his enthronement, Theophilus took possession of the most powerful see in the eastern provinces of the empire. Alexandria had a population of between 180,000 and 200,000.[11] Christians were in the majority, but not overwhelmingly so, as riots in the 390s were to show. The city had a number of churches – we know of fourteen

by name[12] – but they were insufficient for the Christian population. Writing in about 375, Epiphanius of Salamis lists ten of them.[13] The oldest was the Church of St Dionysius, which must have been founded by the Dionysius who was bishop from 247 to 256. It was the first episcopal church of Alexandria, but we do not know its location. Athanasius was consecrated bishop there,[14] and George of Cappadocia lived there from 24 February 357 to 29 August 358. The next episcopal church, the Church of Theonas, was built by the bishop of that name between 282 and 300. This was just inside the city's western gate, the Gate of the Moon, on the Via Canopica, the principal east–west street. It was enlarged by Alexander (bishop 312–28) and remained the residence of the bishops of Alexandria until the construction of a church in the Caesareum. The Caesareum was the former temple of the imperial cult, overlooking the Eastern Harbour. It was given by the Emperor Constantius II to his Arian appointee, Gregory of Cappadocia, but the building of a vast church within its precincts was not completed until Easter 352, under Athanasius. Known as 'the Great Church', it became the episcopal church in the second half of the fourth century.

Besides these three episcopal churches, there were at least a dozen parish churches. In Alexander's time, there were twenty-three presbyters, besides deacons and clerics in minor orders.[15] A number of presbyters had their own parish church where they regularly preached. We can connect only one of them, however, with the name of a particular building: Arius, who was the priest of the suburban church of Bacaulis.[16] These men were powerful. On the death of the bishop they formed the electoral college that chose the new bishop from among their number. Not only did they elect him, but, apparently, also consecrated him themselves until a surprisingly late date.[17]

The main reason for the bishop of Alexandria's power and prestige, however, lay not in the magnificence of Alexandria itself and the size of its Christian population but in the network of suffragan bishops he controlled in the Egyptian *chora*.[18] The binding together of the rest of Egypt with Alexandria through the creation of numerous suffragan sees was largely the work of Athanasius.[19] The early history of the Church of Alexandria is obscure. Most probably the Church all but perished in the Jewish wars of 117 and 132 along with the Jewish community that must have formed its matrix. Its recovery was slow. The first bishop for whom there is firm historical evidence is Demetrius (bishop 189–232). According to a late testimony, a tenth-century Melkite patriarch of Alexandria called

Eutychius, Demetrius was also the first bishop to have created suffragans. Eutychius seems to be drawing on a reliable source. He says that Demetrius established three sees, and his successor, Heraclas, a further twenty.[20] Sozomen reports that at the time of Athanasius' election in 328 there were fifty-four bishops, including Melitians.[21] When Theophilus succeeded there were nearly a hundred: fifty-six from Egypt, nineteen from the Thebaid, and twenty-three from Libya and the Pentapolis.[22]

Each of these depended personally on the bishop of Alexandria. Although the Libyans were metropolitans, they still sought consecration by his hand. The bishops of Egypt and the Thebaid were bound to him still more closely. The candidate for a vacant see was chosen by the local clergy and people and approved by the neighbouring bishops.[23] He then went to Alexandria to be ordained. If the local community could not agree on a candidate, two delegations, each with a rival candidate, might arrive. The bishop of Alexandria, however, could reject any of them and ordain the person of his choice. There was obviously scope here for gifts to members of the bishop's entourage to ensure a favourable reception, and indeed Isidore of Pelusium believed that money was important.[24] The candidate stayed in Alexandria to await the bishop's decision. After ordination he returned home carrying an episcopal letter confirming his appointment. The faithful met the new bishop at the entrance to the town and went in procession with him to the church, where the deacon read the letter and the bishop celebrated the Liturgy.[25] This relationship between the local bishops and Alexandria ensured the deference that a client owed to his patron. In church councils, the Egyptian bishops always voted unanimously with their patriarch.

Expansion of the Church in Egypt

In the late fourth century the Church of Alexandria had very little institutional wealth.[26] The chance survival of a papyrus from the time of Theophilus' episcopate reveals that the church had land holdings in the Arsinoite Nome which required the services of two stewards.[27] But this seems unusual. Most of the ecclesiastical leases and rent receipts recovered from ancient rubbish dumps belong to the mid-fifth century and later. Bishops were expected to contribute to church funds from their own resources.

Yet this was a time when under the aggressively anti-pagan policies of Theodosius I the Christian population was growing rapidly. There was need not just for new churches and monasteries but also

for the 'Christianization of space', the imposition of a Christian character on a land still dominated by its ancient temples. Theophilus was notorious for his *lithomania*, his 'itch to build', for which he solicited donations. Larger congregations certainly needed to be housed, but the primary purpose of his building projects was to bring about a revolutionary cultural change, and the great temples stood in the way.

The destruction of the Serapeum

In the Coptic tradition, Theophilus is remembered as a champion of the struggle against paganism. A fifth-century miniature (reproduced on the cover of this book) shows him standing triumphantly on the ruins of the Serapeum, a book in his left hand and what appears to be Serapis' sun-disk raised aloft in his right. The fall of the Serapeum was one of the more notable events of the end of the fourth century, remarked upon by both Christian and pagan authors. It was a watershed in the Christianization of Egypt. Yet it is not easy to reconstruct the historical circumstances of the temple's destruction.[28]

Our main sources are the ecclesiastical historians Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret and the pagan sophist Eunapius.[29] The Christian accounts are unsatisfactory. The version given by Socrates emphasizes Theophilus' role, claiming that Theodosius issued an order to demolish the temples at Theophilus' request. Theophilus then parodied the pagan rites and had the phalloi of Priapus carried through the forum. This provoked a riot in which pagans and Christians fought each other with deaths on both sides. After the unrest had subsided, many pagans, including Helladius and Ammonius, Socrates' informants, fled the city. The governor of Alexandria and the commander of the troops then helped Theophilus demolish the temples. These were razed to the ground and all the images broken up except one, which was kept as a reminder of superseded paganism.[30]

Socrates composed his history in Constantinople fifty years after these events. One of his sources was clearly Rufinus, who was writing in Aquileia in 402. In Rufinus' version, the riots followed the bishop's[31] request to the emperor that he should be given an old ruined basilica to provide a new church for the growing Christian population. The pagan rioters, hard pressed by the Christians, took refuge in the Serapeum and barricaded the entrance. Rufinus describes the Serapeum from personal knowledge:

> The site was elevated, not naturally but artificially, to a height of a hundred or more steps, its enormous rectangular premises extending in every direction. All the rooms up to the floor on top were vaulted, and being furnished with ceiling lights and concealed inner chambers separate from one another, were used for various services and secret functions. On the upper level, furthermore, the outermost structures in the whole circumference provided space for halls and shrines and for lofty apartments which normally housed either the temple staff or those called *hagneuontes*, meaning those who kept themselves pure. Behind these in turn were porticoes arranged in rectangles which ran around the whole circumference on the inside. In the middle of the entire area rose the sanctuary with priceless columns, the exterior fashioned of marble, spacious and magnificent to behold. In it there was a statue of Serapis so large that its right hand touched one wall and its left the other; this monster is said to have been made of every kind of metal and wood. The interior walls of the shrine were believed to have been covered with plates of gold overlaid with silver and then bronze, the last as a protection for the more precious metals.[32]

This complex was situated in the Rakhotis quarter in the south-west of Alexandria. It also housed a magnificent library, the second in importance after that of the Museum.

At this point the authorities consulted the government in Constantinople. The emperor replied that the rioters should be pardoned but the city's pagan cult images should be destroyed. This was done, beginning with the statue of Serapis in the Serapeum.[33] Even busts of Serapis in wall niches throughout the city were chiselled out.[34] Rufinus then goes on to say that Theophilus demolished temples at Canopus, some miles to the east of Alexandria, and built churches there. He also levelled the site of the Serapeum and built a church and a martyrion to house the relics of St John the Baptist on either side of the former tomb of Serapis.[35]

Sozomen based his account on Rufinus but also adds some further details. Rufinus' 'ancient basilica' which Theophilus converted into a church is named as the temple of Dionysus. The prefect of Alexandria (the *praefectus augustalis*) and the military commander (the *comes Aegypti*) are identified as Evagrius and Romanus respectively. Theodosius' instructions to them, according to Sozomen, included the demolition of the temples in Alexandria.

The remaining accounts are much less specific. Theodoret assigns a central role to Theophilus in the destruction of the temples without mentioning the secular authorities or giving any indication of date.[36] Eunapius, a contemporary of Rufinus, laments the fall of the Serapeum in general terms, but it appears from his account that the demolition took place not in the context of civil disturbances but at a time of peace and in connection with the destruction of the Serapeum at Canopus.[37]

What are we to make of these conflicting sources? Two points should be noted. First, the relationship of these events to the edict of 391 is not as obvious as some writers have assumed. On 16 June 391, Theodosius addressed a rescript to Evagrius and Romanus prohibiting pagan sacrifices in Egypt and public access to the temples.[38] This repeated a similar rescript addressed to Albinus, prefect of Rome, on 24 February of the same year.[39] But the edict was of limited relevance to Egypt, where offering sacrifice was not a characteristic feature of native Egyptian religion.[40] The high point of worship in Egypt was the opening of the doors of the temple and the glorious procession of the cult image on the god's feast day.[41] Theodosius' rescript was therefore unlikely to have caused a stir in Egypt. Second, pagan temples were state property. Their destruction could not be undertaken by a bishop without authorization.[42] Socrates claims that Theophilus received such an order for the demolition of temples in Alexandria. But there is no evidence for this in the legal codes, and Theophilus is unlikely to have taken matters into his own hands.[43]

The probable sequence of events has been reconstructed by Jacques Schwartz and Tito Orlandi.[44] What is clear from the surviving texts is that the destruction of the statue of Serapis and the transformation of the Serapeum into a Christian church were originally two separate events.[45] Underlying Rufinus' narrative of these events are two sources now lost. The first, as established by Schwartz, appears to have been an account written in Palestine by a pupil of Jerome called Sophronius. It covered the riots, the pagans taking refuge in the Serapeum, the imperial decision resolving the situation and the destruction of the statue. This was Rufinus' source for the first part of his account.[46] When he returns to it after an excursus on Tyrannus, a priest of Saturn, he draws on a different source which dealt with the destruction of the temples of Serapis at Canopus and Alexandria.[47] Orlandi has suggested that this may have been Theophilus' *Report to the Emperor Theodosius* on the occasion of the destruction of the two temples and the building of a martyrion of John the Baptist on the

site of the Alexandrian Serapeum.[48] The transfer of relics of John the Baptist and the settlement of monks at the shrines were the climax of this report. The date of these events (and the origin of the two traditions) is between 390 and 400.[49] The two traditions were conflated and the events telescoped by the later church historians.

The 'Christianization of space'

The Serapeum was not the first pagan site in Alexandria to have been converted to Christian use. Bishop Alexander was given the former temple of Cronos-Saturn, which he dedicated to St Michael (between 324 and 328).[50] As already mentioned, the Christian transformation of the Caesareum was completed by Athanasius in 352.[51] Besides the Serapeum, Theophilus apparently also acquired the former temple of Dionysus for use as a church at about the same time.[52] The Caesareum and possibly the ex-temples of Cronos-Saturn and Dionysus were the only Christian buildings in Alexandria's monumental centre.

In spite of his reputed *lithomania*,[53] there is no evidence that Theophilus added to the number of suburban churches. Indeed, the only church known to have been founded by him for congregational use was the Church of the Evangelists at Menouthis.[54] The 'Christianization of space' took a new form under his episcopate: the setting up of martyria and the foundation of urban monasteries.

Theophilus' concern to acquire the relics of martyrs is in marked contrast to Athanasius. Holiness for Athanasius was located not in church buildings or in the relics of martyrs, but in those who were 'within the truth', who possessed the apostolic faith.[55] There was a polemical purpose to these statements. When Athanasius was in exile, it was the Arians, not the orthodox, who possessed the churches. Moreover, throughout his episcopate the Melitians claimed superiority to the Church of Alexandria on the grounds that they were the church of the martyrs, whose relics they venerated. Athanasius therefore emphasized the holiness that came through correct faith against both Arian heretics and Melitian schismatics.[56] Theophilus had different priorities. With the destruction of the Serapeum, the sacred space of the temple precinct had been 'neutralized', but it also needed to be Christianized.[57] This was done by constructing a martyrion dedicated to St John the Baptist and transferring the saints' newly re-discovered relics to it. Theophilus' western contemporaries, Ambrose and Augustine, were also 'discovering' relics and transferring them to a central basilica. In their case,

the chief motive was to enhance the authority of the bishop.[58] Again, Theophilus' emphasis is different. The presence of Egyptian traditional religion was a power to be overcome and the relics of martyrs could do this.[59] For this purpose, biblical martyrs were more efficacious than local saints. John the Baptist's relics were conveniently accessible, having been sent to Alexandria after his shrine at Sebaste in Palestine was destroyed by Julian the Apostate.[60] Other relics were more difficult to come by. Attempts to procure relics of the Three Children from Ctesiphon in Persian territory failed, and Theophilus had to make do with an assurance of their invisible presence.[61]

In the traditions about Theophilus, the translation of relics is also associated with the establishment of urban monasteries. Here again, Theophilus marks a departure from Athanasius. Athanasius is interested in Antony as an example to be remembered and imitated. Theophilus uses monastic communities to bring a Christianizing presence to pagan sites. He established one community in Canopus after the Serapeum was destroyed there, and another on the site of the Alexandrian Serapeum, on the other side of the tomb of Serapis from the martyrion of John the Baptist. This harnessing of monasticism to the wider needs of the Church is also evident in his choice of monks as bishops.[62]

Relations with other churches

Under Theophilus' predecessor, Timothy, Alexandria sought to regain the international prestige she had enjoyed in Athanasius' time. Timothy's brother, Peter, had scarcely been enthroned when he was supplanted by the Emperor Valens' Arian nominee, Lucius. Peter escaped to Rome and wrote an encyclical letter describing in detail the outrages committed by the troops who had installed Lucius, and the repressive measures taken against the orthodox.[63] For five years Alexandria was isolated. Then, in the last year of Valens' reign, Peter returned and drove out Lucius. But he died in 381, just before the council called by the new emperor, Theodosius, to deal with the ecclesiastical problems left by his Arian predecessor assembled at Constantinople.

It was therefore Peter's successor, Timothy, who attended the council at the head of the Egyptian contingent. Whether Theophilus accompanied him as his deacon is not known, but is very likely.[64] The Egyptians arrived late after the council had already started but soon made an impression. They added their weight to the opposition to Gregory of Nazianzus, newly raised to the episcopal throne

of Constantinople, forcing him to resign. But the Egyptians had their disappointments. Their candidate for Constantinople, Maximus the Cynic, had already been exposed as a fraud and expelled. A worthy but dull Constantinopolitan, Nectarius, was chosen instead. The council's fourth canon confirmed the repudiation of Maximus. But more ominously, the third canon raised Constantinople to 'an honorary pre-eminence after the bishop of Rome, because it is New Rome'. The struggle for ecclesiastical primacy in the East between Constantinople and Alexandria that was to end in catastrophe for the Egyptians seventy years later at Chalcedon began in 381.[65]

Little of this was apparent when Theophilus succeeded Timothy in 385. At first he may have been occupied with domestic problems in Alexandria. An oration by the pagan rhetorician Libanius, composed in 387 or a little later, mentions disturbances in the city which were possibly of a religious nature.[66] It was a time of civil war in the empire between Theodosius and the usurper Magnus Maximus, who had been proclaimed emperor by the troops in Britain. According to Socrates, Theophilus sent Isidore, a trusted presbyter, to Rome with two sets of letters, one addressed to Theodosius and the other to Maximus. The appropriate letters were to be delivered to the one who proved victorious. Before Theodosius' victory over Maximus at Aquileia on 28 August 388, however, the existence of the letter to Maximus was betrayed by a lector in Isidore's entourage, and Isidore had to make a hasty return to Alexandria.[67]

The story is related by Socrates as the reason for Theophilus later presenting Isidore as a candidate for the see of Constantinople. Sozomen repeats the story, but expresses some reservation about its veracity.[68] Palladius, who would have been delighted to retail anything discrediting Theophilus, seems unaware of it. The episode lacks plausibility. Theophilus had nothing to gain from trying to anticipate the outcome of the war. Nor does such a risky stratagem seem characteristic of him. In any event, Isidore could hardly have been presented as a suitable candidate for Constantinople if he had been compromised as the bearer of treasonable letters.[69]

A surer guide to Theophilus' conduct at this time is provided by his letter to Theodosius (*c.* 390) on the Easter controversy. Theophilus discretely asserts Alexandria's prerogatives in determining the date of Easter for the whole Church, while fulsomely acknowledging the benefits Alexandria has enjoyed through the emperor. Here is a man comfortable in his relations with the emperor, suitably deferential towards him but exercising *parresia* on behalf of his community.

The Melitian schism

Theophilus' first intervention in foreign affairs was over Antioch's Melitian schism.[70] Melitius had become bishop of Antioch by popular acclaim in 360. But he was exiled within a month of his inaugural sermon by Constantius II and replaced by the Arian Euzoius. When he returned to his see under Julian in 362, he found that the followers of Eustathius, an earlier bishop deposed under Constantine in 337, had consecrated one Paulinus in his stead. Antioch now had two orthodox bishops, neither of whom would give way. The schism was maintained with outside help. Athanasius supported Paulinus; Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus favoured Melitius. Athanasius' successor, Peter, while in exile in Rome, denounced Melitius to Damasus as an Arian, but in the East Melitius enjoyed considerable support. He died in Constantinople while presiding over the council of 381 and was succeeded by Flavian. In 388, Paulinus also died in extreme old age, having consecrated Evagrius as his successor.

With the schism now in its second generation, imperial intervention was needed for its resolution. In 391, Theodosius called a synod at Capua, near Naples.[71] Evagrius took part but Flavian refused to attend. A new council was therefore proposed under the presidency of Theophilus as the most senior hierarch outside the dispute, a Roman synod of 382 having pronounced for Paulinus.[72] Theophilus convoked a council at Alexandria and requested the presence of Flavian, who again refused to attend, preferring a personal appeal to Theodosius. Theophilus then seems to have proposed the deposition of both contenders.[73] But the emperor, on the basis of decisions taken at Capua, summoned a new council at Caesarea in Palestine. The president of this council, which met in 393, should have been Theophilus, but he declined on the grounds that disturbances between pagans and Christians in Alexandria prevented him from leaving the city.[74] The council, probably presided over by Gelasius of Caesarea, recognized Flavian as the legitimate bishop of Antioch.

As regards Theophilus' subsequent role, the sources give conflicting accounts. Favale suggests a plausible reconstruction:[75] Theophilus' predecessors had supported Paulinus, but after the council of Caesarea Theophilus recognized Flavian. Evagrius died at about the time of the council and Flavian was able to prevent the election of a successor, remaining the sole bishop of Antioch. Theophilus could not afford to spurn his friendship because he

needed support against the growing supremacy of Constantinople. The friendship was mutually advantageous. A major problem still to be resolved was the status of clergy ordained by Paulinus and Evagrius. Flavian consulted Theophilus, who replied in conciliatory terms.[76] In the surviving fragments of his letter, Theophilus speaks of his friendly relations with Rome, whose bishop, Anastasius, admitted the Paulinian clergy to communion. He urges Flavian to show generosity, from which there is much to be gained, pointing to the example of Ambrose, who magnanimously received the clergy ordained by the Arian bishop, Auxentius. Then, towards the end of 398, Theophilus sent an embassy to Rome led by Isidore and Acacius of Beroea, which resulted in Rome's official recognition of Flavian.

The Bostra dispute

Soon after the Council of Caesarea, Theophilus was asked to help resolve another long-running succession dispute concerning Bostra in Arabia.[77] Some time in the early 380s Palladius and Cyril of Jerusalem had deposed the bishop, Bagadius, and replaced him with one Agapius. Bagadius, convinced of the irregularity of his deposition, wanted to be restored. Agapius opposed him with support from the deposing bishops. The Constantinopolitan council of 381 received Bagadius' appeal and referred it to Gregory of Nyssa. But Gregory was unable to resolve it, in spite of travelling to Bostra. Antioch at the time was preoccupied with its schism. So the two contenders took their appeal to Pope Siricius, who sent them to Theophilus with letters requesting him to adjudicate.

Agapius and Bagadius arrived in Egypt just when Theophilus had been summoned by the praetorian prefect Rufinus to go to Constantinople for the dedication of the great new church of the Apostles he had built near Chalcedon. Theophilus could not refuse to go, so the case was necessarily transferred to Constantinople. Bishops from many of the Eastern provinces gathered there on 29 September 394 for the dedication, after which they held a synod at which the Bostra dispute was discussed. Twenty-seven bishops were present, including Flavian of Antioch and Theophilus, with Nectarius presiding as the bishop of the host city. The decision regarding Bostra has not been preserved, but seems to have favoured Bagadius.

Theophilus was asked by the council for his opinion on two points of canon law: (1) whether the condemnation of a deceased bishop is licit; (2) whether it is licit for a bishop to be deposed by only two

others. The two questions are linked, as reinstating Bagadius would have implied condemning Cyril of Jerusalem, who had died in 386. Theophilus replied that deceased bishops could not be judged because they could not defend themselves. They must simply give account to God. On the second question he recommended that in future the deposition of a bishop should not be made by only two others, but if possible in the presence of the accused and with the consent of all the bishops of the province.

Theophilus must have impressed the assembled bishops with his prudence and maturity of judgement. Excerpts from his legal rulings on various matters of ecclesiastical discipline were appended to the *Acts* of the council in the form of fourteen canons.[78] Favale comments that the conflict demonstrates the application of the fifth canon of Sardica providing for appeal to the Roman pope in the case of the deposition of a bishop, and highlights the role of Alexandria as an intermediary between East and West.[79] On a more personal level, the conflict shows Theophilus at the beginning of the tenth year of his episcopate as a man trusted by his peers and respected as an expert on ecclesiastical law.

Mediation in Palestine

In 396, Theophilus was approached by John of Jerusalem to mediate in a matter that was undermining his authority in his own diocese. John was engaged in a bitter dispute with Jerome and his monastic community in Bethlehem over a canonical issue with broad theological implications that had split Palestine into two hostile camps. The immediate point of contention concerned the ordination in 394 of Jerome's brother, Paulinian, by Epiphanius of Salamis at Besanduc in Palestine without the consent of the bishop of Jerusalem. The broader context lay in the open warfare that had arisen in the previous year between Epiphanius and John over the status of Origen's theological legacy.[80]

Epiphanius, a Palestinian monk before he became bishop of Cyprus' principal see, was an old campaigner against Origen. He had written against him in his *Ancoratus* (374) and then in much greater detail in the sixty-fourth chapter of his *Panarion* (374–6). On a visit to Jerusalem in September 393 for the annual Dedication Festival of the Church of the Resurrection, he had been invited to preach and had used the opportunity to denounce Origenism in the bishop's presence. John rebuked him publicly and later himself preached against Anthropomorphism.[81] Relations between them deteriorated

rapidly, so that Epiphanius' ordination of Paulinian in the following summer was seen by John as a deliberate snub. Epiphanius met John's protest with a self-justificatory letter which only deepened the rift. Jerome contributed to the conflict by making a Latin translation of an inflammatory pamphlet by Epiphanius denouncing John as a heretic. 'All Palestine fought for copies of it,' he says.[82] As a result, Jerome and his monks were excommunicated by John. In autumn 395, John obtained a rescript from the praetorian prefect, Rufinus, banishing Jerome and his monks from Palestine.[83] But Rufinus was murdered soon afterwards and the rescript lapsed.

In spring 396, an attempt at mediation by an imperial official, Count Archelaus (probably the *praefectus augustalis*), came to nothing.[84] John then turned to the bishop of Alexandria. Theophilus was the obvious choice as an ecclesiastical mediator. John would not have wanted the bishop of Antioch to have adjudicated the matter, far less his metropolitan, the bishop of Caesarea, for Jerusalem was already claiming apostolic status as 'mother of all the churches'.[85] Theophilus was the leading bishop in the Greek East.[86] He had already intervened with some success in the Melitian schism and the Bostra dispute and was an acknowledged expert on canon law. In June 396, he sent his trusted confidant, Isidore, to Jerusalem to attempt to resolve the dispute.

Although Isidore was experienced in conducting diplomatic missions for Theophilus, on this occasion he failed spectacularly.[87] Three months previously, in April 396, probably at the time of Archelaus' mission, Isidore had written John a letter of support promising that he would come to Jerusalem and that when he did so, John's enemies would be crushed: 'As smoke vanishes in the air, and wax melts beside the fire, so shall they be scattered who are for ever resisting the faith of the Church, and are now endeavouring through simple men to disturb that faith.'[88] This letter fell into the hands of a friend of Jerome, a priest called Vincentius, and completely sabotaged Isidore's mission. According to Jerome, Isidore also wrote to Rufinus of Aquileia, who at the time was John's chief adviser, attacking Epiphanius and urging Rufinus to stand firm in the faith.[89]

On arriving in Jerusalem, Isidore had three meetings with John and Jerome. According to Jerome, Isidore refused to give him the letters addressed to him he was carrying from Theophilus. Jerome then lost any belief he might have had that Isidore would give him a fair hearing.[90] Before long, negotiations broke down completely, and Isidore, having drawn up a report for John, returned to Alexandria.

Isidore's report was incorporated into John's letter to Theophilus,[91] and so fell into Jerome's hands. Jerome was shocked to find that Isidore had represented him as completely reconciled to John ('What undisguised and shameless lying!') and as humbly admitting error in the matter of Paulinian's ordination.[92]

Theophilus, however, seems to have accepted Isidore's version of events. He ignored the letters Jerome sent him at the time.[93] But he did write to him a year or two later, urging him to be reconciled with his bishop. Jerome was deeply moved: 'You coax as a father, you instruct as a teacher, you enjoin as a bishop.'[94] Theophilus had evidently pitched his letter well. Jerome still accuses John of injustice towards him but is prepared to accept a peaceful settlement.

The election and consecration of John Chrysostom

The year after Isidore's mission to Palestine, Theophilus made another visit to Constantinople. Nectarius died on 27 September 397 and intense lobbying began for his successor. Theophilus brought Isidore (now in his eighties) with him as his candidate, but the political situation was unfavourable to Alexandria. Theodosius I had died in Milan on 17 January 395. The new emperor in the East was his son Arcadius, a young man of about twenty who was under the control of his powerful minister, the *praepositus sacri cubiculari*, Eutropius. Eutropius had his own candidate for the episcopal throne, the Antiochene presbyter, John Chrysostom. To the Alexandrians it was important to secure an incumbent friendly to Alexandrian interests. But this proved impossible. Socrates says that Theophilus was blackmailed into presiding at John's ordination by Eutropius, who showed him some *libelli* presented to the bishops gathered at Constantinople containing accusations against Theophilus. He claims that Theophilus complied with the demand because he was alarmed at the prospect of answering charges at an ecclesiastical trial.[95] Sozomen also says that Theophilus feared Eutropius but reports the blackmail threat as hearsay.[96] Theodoret simply says the bishops were ordered to install John as bishop of the capital.[97] Seven years later Theophilus showed himself well able to handle such threats. There can be no doubt, however, that pressure was brought to bear on the bishops. Theophilus left Constantinople without having achieved his aim.

The Origenist controversy

The outcome of Theophilus' attempt to mediate in Palestine suggests that he and Isidore, while both supporting Bishop John, had different agendas.[98] Theophilus was conciliatory. His chief concern seems to have been the canonical obedience that even a monk owed his bishop. Isidore, on the other hand, was strongly partisan. An enthusiastic admirer of Origen, he seized on the opportunity to put down his detractors.

These conflicting agendas came to a head in 399. We have several different accounts of how this happened. The earliest is from Theophilus himself.[99] Writing in 400 to the bishops of Palestine, with a copy to Epiphanius and the Cypriot episcopate, Theophilus claims that the crisis arose because he would not allow the Nitrian hermitages to be polluted by Origen's doctrines, the immediate occasion being the monks' determination to make a public issue of a case concerning Isidore. Isidore, the former trusted confidant, was now facing serious but unspecified charges. A trial had been fixed with a certain woman and her son as star witnesses. Isidore's friends had tried to buy the woman's silence by inscribing her on the roll of widows supported from church funds. But a deacon had reported this to Theophilus. Isidore's supporters then demonstrated in Alexandria, calling on the pagans to make common cause with them against their bishop. Theophilus then moved on to the offensive. He called a synod at Nitria of the bishops of the region at which he had a selection of passages read from Origen's *Peri archon*, *De oratione* and *De resurrectione*. The bishops were duly shocked and condemned Origen and his followers. The latter resisted, barricading themselves in the church of Nitria to avoid expulsion. But the orthodox majority joined Theophilus in driving them out.

The next account is by Palladius of Helenopolis, writing in exile in Syene in Upper Egypt between 403 and 408.[100] Palladius' account is extremely hostile to Theophilus but fits in with what Theophilus says, amplifying some of the details. Palladius claims that Theophilus fell out with Isidore over a gift of 1,000 gold coins which a widow had given to Isidore in his capacity as almoner for distribution to the poor. The widow had asked Isidore not to tell Theophilus because she was afraid he would divert the money to his building fund. But Theophilus found out and decided Isidore had to go. To get rid of him he produced a *libellus* which he said had been deposited with him eighteen years previously (presumably when he was archdeacon of Alexandria), accusing Isidore of sodomy with a sailor. He had been

too busy to deal with it then. What did Isidore have to say now? Isidore denied it and pointed out that as the accuser had not come forward, the charge had lapsed. But Theophilus bribed a young man, with money supplied by his sister, to bring a fresh charge. When this was revealed to Isidore, he fled to Nitria. But Theophilus pursued him, writing to the neighbouring bishops and ordering the expulsion of some of the Nitrian leaders. A deputation of monks, including Ammonius, one of the four Tall Brothers, then came to Alexandria to ask for an explanation. According to Palladius, Theophilus became so enraged that he struck Ammonius with his fist, giving him a bloody nose, and shouted, 'Anathematize Origen, you heretic!' Theophilus then called a synod of neighbouring bishops against the monks, branding the Tall Brothers as frauds because of their relationship with Isidore. He induced five monks of no standing to indict them on bogus charges, and with this document went to the *praefectus augustalis*. He then returned to Nitria with a warrant and military escort to arrest them, but they had hidden in a well. After burning cells and books, Theophilus returned to Alexandria. The Tall Brothers immediately took their melotes and made for Palestine. Three hundred Nitriotes went with them.

Socrates, whose account dates from between 438 and 443, prefaces the story of Isidore and the Tall Brothers with a discussion of the Anthropomorphite controversy.[101] When news reached the desert that Theophilus had been preaching against those who attributed a human form to God, a large deputation of monks went up to Alexandria and demonstrated violently outside the episcopal residence. Theophilus calmed them with the words: 'In seeing you, I behold the face of God.' They then demanded that he should anathematize Origen's books, from which their opponents drew their arguments. Theophilus agreed to do this because he himself disapproved of Origen's books.

There the matter would have rested, says Socrates, if it had not been for the affair of the Tall Brothers. Theophilus had made one of them, Dioscorus, bishop of Hermopolis (with jurisdiction over Nitria) and ordained two of the others as priests, employing them in administrative roles in Alexandria. But disgusted at the way the church was run, and disillusioned with a bishop 'devoted to gain', they resigned their posts and returned to the desert. Theophilus, jealous at the esteem in which they were held, mounted a campaign against them on the pretext of the harm they were causing with their Origenist views. The violent discord that arose between Origenists and Anthropomorphites gave Theophilus the occasion to intervene.

He went to Nitria and armed the monks against Dioscorus and his brothers, who nevertheless managed to make their escape.

Socrates then offers a different account from Palladius on how Isidore fell out with Theophilus.[102] The matter concerned Peter the Archpresbyter. Wanting to depose him from office, Theophilus brought a charge against him that he had admitted a Manichaean woman to the Eucharist without requiring her first to abjure her errors. Peter claimed that the woman had indeed abjured and that Theophilus himself had sanctioned her admission to the Eucharist. He summoned Isidore as a witness. Isidore at the time was in Rome on his mission concerning the Antiochene schism. When he returned he supported Peter's story, and Theophilus in fury ejected them both. Isidore subsequently accompanied Dioscorus and his brothers to Constantinople to submit to the emperor the injustice he had experienced.

Sozomen, writing a few years later, bases his narrative on Socrates, but adds some further details.[103] To explain how Theophilus' quarrel with Isidore arose, he repeats the Manichaean story, and then says that someone who knew the Tall Brothers well told him there were two basic reasons. One was that Isidore had refused to attest to the existence of a will which settled an inheritance on Theophilus' sister, the other that he had refused to give up a donation entrusted to him for the relief of the poor which Theophilus wanted to appropriate for his building programme. Isidore, excommunicated by Theophilus, withdrew to Nitria. Ammonius, one of the Tall Brothers, led a delegation to Theophilus to ask him to lift the excommunication. Theophilus promised he would do so, but did nothing. When Ammonius and his companions came a second time, Theophilus imprisoned one of the group to intimidate the others. But the latter staged a sit-in at the prison, which forced Theophilus to free the prisoner. It was this humiliating climb-down that motivated Theophilus to mount his campaign against the Tall Brothers. He fomented strife between those who mentioned the incorporeality of God, now dubbed 'Origenists', and the majority of the opposite opinion, the 'Anthropomorphites'. As a result of Theophilus' machinations, Isidore and the Tall Brothers were forced to leave Egypt.

We have here four partisan accounts. Theophilus' 'official' version concentrates on theological issues and skims over the more salacious details. The anecdotal evidence reported by Palladius, Socrates and Sozomen, deriving probably from the Nitrian refugees themselves, concentrates on personal animosities. But we cannot assume that these personal animosities exhaust the truth of the matter. The

refugees could hardly have argued that Theophilus was in theological error.[104] Any attempt to represent the reality of the situation must do justice to the theological issues underlying the rhetoric.

I suggest the following reconstruction. The Origenist crisis was preceded by the 'anthropomorphite controversy'.[105] We have Theophilus' own statement that he had argued against those who conceived of God in human form in an official ecclesiastical letter.[106] This would have been the festal letter for 399.[107] According to Cassian, it was badly received by the majority of monks in Egypt.[108] In Scetis, only one of the priests who presided over the four churches there would allow the letter to be read. The reports in Socrates and Sozomen that there were serious demonstrations in Alexandria against Theophilus are probably true.[109]

Cassian implies that the letter arrived in Scetis shortly after Epiphany.[110] This ties in with the chronology of the Isidore affair. In late 398, Isidore was in Rome with Acacius of Beroea on an embassy to persuade Pope Anastasius to accept Flavian as the canonical bishop of Antioch. The problem would have blown up on his return when the sea lanes were open again in the spring of 399. Theophilus' discrete 'for various reasons'[111] suggests that allegations of a sexual nature were indeed made, though this does not preclude financial charges as well. Both Theophilus and Palladius mention a mother and son as key witnesses, which suggests that the sexual allegation was uppermost, though which side was trying to suborn the witnesses is difficult to say.[112]

Isidore fled to Nitria before the case was heard, which Theophilus suggests was tantamount to a confession of guilt, though it could mean that he had despaired of a fair trial.[113] Ammonius came twice to Alexandria with a delegation to intercede for Isidore, on the second occasion successfully resisting Theophilus' attempt to intimidate him.

Up to this point Origenism was not an issue. But at Nitria tension was growing between the 'Anthropomorphites' and the 'Origenists'. Socrates claims that this was deliberately encouraged by Theophilus.[114] It certainly cannot have been unwelcome to him, for it gave him a legitimate reason to intervene in Nitrian affairs.

In late 399 or early 400, Theophilus summoned a synod of bishops to meet at Nitria. He prepared a dossier against Origen, selecting texts from *De principiis*, *De oratione* and *De resurrectione*. The bishops were duly shocked and condemned Origen together with his disciples. The Origenist faction refused to accept the verdict and barricaded themselves in the church. This provided Theophilus with

grounds for calling on official co-operation from the *praefectus augustalis*, enabling him to return to Nitria with a military escort and arrest the leaders of the condemned faction. But Isidore and the Tall Brothers had gone to ground. After burning their cells and books, Theophilus and the soldiers returned to Alexandria. The fugitives made for the frontier.

It is often said that in this dispute theological issues were not of importance. That, of course, was the view that Theophilus' ancient detractors wanted to promote.[115] Palladius in particular had strong links with the Origenists and could not forgive Theophilus for what he had done to John Chrysostom. For him Theophilus is a 'secretly-biting dog' stirred up by the wily serpent.[116] Socrates presents him as having performed a *volte-face* on Origenism, and this judgement is generally accepted by scholars today. Theophilus himself claims to have been even-handed in his condemnation of both Origenists and Anthropomorphites. Is his statement credible?

To answer that we need to know what he meant by the Anthropomorphite 'heresy'. He declares that he was roused to combat it by the fact that certain uneducated monks held that it was necessary to conceive of God in human form.[117] The Festal Letter of 399 has not survived. But so far as we can tell from Gennadius' summary, it demonstrated from Scripture that God was incorruptible and incorporeal, and moreover the only incorruptible and immutable nature, because all created natures, even intellectual ones, are corporeal, corruptible and mutable.[118] This defence of the ontological gulf between God and humanity draws on Athanasius.[119] It cannot be construed as evidence of an Origenism of which Theophilus later repented. Like Athanasius, Theophilus held that although created in the divine image, humanity lost this through the Fall. For the image was not corporeal but lay in the attributes of immortality and incorruptibility. Fallen humanity was consequently in danger of lapsing into non-existence, had it not been re-orientated towards God by the Incarnation.

Two stories reflect the dismay felt by non-Origenist monks on hearing Theophilus' letter, for the role of the Incarnation in recreating the image does not seem to have been mentioned. Cassian paints a vivid picture of the monk Sarapion who broke down in tears after hearing the letter together with supporting arguments from a visiting monk. 'They have taken my God from me,' he cried. The context in which Cassian sets this is his teaching on imageless prayer: an anthropomorphic image of God must be rejected if spiritual realities are to be contemplated.[120]

The other story is about Aphou, a monk from Pemdjé (Oxyrhynchus), who according to a fifth-century Coptic hagiographer was scandalized on hearing in Theophilus' letter the sentence: 'It is not the image of God which we human beings bear.' He therefore went to Alexandria humbly to remonstrate with the bishop about the correct exegesis of Genesis 1:26 on the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God. Aphou denies that Adam lost the divine image, and Theophilus defers to the old monk's wisdom.[121]

These texts suggest that there was a current of spirituality opposed to Origenism but do not prove the existence of an 'Anthropomorphite heresy'. Several scholars have therefore concluded that 'anthropomorphism' was a construction put upon mainstream monasticism by the Origenists.[122] Recently it has been argued that esoteric traditions parallel to Jewish Merkabah mysticism (the contemplation of the throne-chariot of God) were preserved by some monks who could have been seen as holding Anthropomorphite views.[123] A text from Theophilus' time, the *History of the Monks in Egypt*, indirectly supports such an argument. The *History* is cast in the form of a travel narrative, probably based on a real journey to the centres of Egyptian monasticism made by a party of Jerusalem monks in the winter of 394–5. But it incorporates texts of different genres and was later revised in an anti-Origenist spirit.[124] One kind of text it incorporates is the 'heavenly journey' narrative. The party hear stories of encounters with God in dreams and visions. The monk Apollo dreamed of being present at Christ's tribunal and 'saw angels and the just prostrate before God'.[125] Another monk, Patermuthius, was transported physically to Paradise, from which he brought back a succulent fig as a souvenir, and was also taken up in a vision to heaven.[126] And another, Abba Sourous, often saw 'tens of thousands of angels standing before God'.[127] The heavenly journey motif was nourished by the apocryphal apocalypses, which owe their survival to their monastic readership.[128] It is significant that Theophilus in another Festal Letter warns his hearers against apocryphal scriptures.[129] As Guy Stroumsa has said, the new religious sensibility of late antiquity was against esoteric traditions.[130] Perhaps the elusive 'Anthropomorphites' censured by Theophilus (and later by Cyril)[131] were monks receptive to traditions of this kind.

The leading Nitrian Origenists are much easier to profile. Isidore began his monastic career in Nitria and maintained a cell there even after he became Theophilus' almoner in Alexandria.[132] Palladius describes him as extremely learned and ascetical and notes that he

was given to frequent ecstasies.[133] Of the Tall Brothers, Ammonius was the most distinguished. Palladius comments on his learning and asceticism too and quotes Evagrius' praise of his attainment of dispassion.[134] The *History of the Monks* describes his monastic settlement with its 'beautifully constructed cells with a courtyard, a well and other necessary things'.[135] Other leading Nitrians in 399 included Origen the Priest, 'a man magnificent in all things and of the highest prudence,'[136] and Ammonius' brother Dioscorus, who before his appointment as bishop of Hermopolis by Theophilus had been a priest of Nitria.[137]

Among those who had recently died were Didymus and Evagrius. Like Isidore, Didymus also retained a cell in Nitria after he had been appointed to a post in Alexandria (Athanasius made him head of the Catechetical School). Although he was a biblical exegete rather than a theoretician of the spiritual life, Evagrius calls him 'the Great Gnostic teacher'.[138] In the manner of Origen, he presents spiritual progress as an ascent from the human to the divine through participation in the Word of God.[139] Evagrius developed Origen's thinking more systematically. For him, the mind's journey to God is simply a return to its source. After struggling successfully against human passions and demonic temptations, the mind attains to the vision of God, an intellectual joy beyond all images when, having regained its original state, it is deified through participating equally with Christ in the true *gnosis*, which is the divine Word.[140]

Didymus and Evagrius were condemned along with Origen by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553 on account of their Christology and spiritual teaching.[141] But Theophilus makes no direct reference to them, choosing to attack Origen himself. He draws on Epiphanius' arguments[142] and those refuted in an anonymous defence of Origen (possibly by Didymus),[143] but on the whole develops his criticism of Origen in an independent way.[144]

In the First Synodal Letter he makes only two charges, accusing Origen of teaching: (1) that the soul pre-existed in heaven before the body; and (2) that the embodied life is a punishment for earlier sin committed in heaven. He adds further charges in the Second Synodal Letter as a result of a personal study of three of Origen's works, *De principiis*, *De oratione* and *De resurrectione*. From the treatise *De principiis* he derives seven heretical statements: (1) the Son is truth compared to us, but falsehood in relation to the Father; (2) the Saviour is less than the Father; (3) the Kingdom of Christ will come to an end; (4) the devil will be saved and restored to glory; (5) the Word of God did not assume a human body; (6) Christ is a soul that has descended

from the celestial regions; and (7) Christ will suffer for the demons. A further five heresies are drawn from the *De oratione*: (1) we should not pray to the Son but only to the Father; (2) resurrected bodies will dissolve into aether; (3) resurrected bodies are corruptible and mortal; (4) the orders of angels are the result of lapses and falls; (5) angels are nourished by the (spiritual) food of altars. And a final error is attributed to the *De resurrectione*: magic is not harmful. These are repeated in the Sixteenth Festal Letter of 401 along with a new charge: the sun, moon and stars are the result of sins committed by souls. The Seventeenth Festal Letter of 402 does not repeat these charges, but adds four new ones, namely that: (1) souls are reincarnated; (2) the Holy Spirit is of limited operation and does not work on inanimate matter; (3) the soul and God are of a single nature; and (4) God made only as many thing as he was capable of conceiving and controlling. Finally, in the Letter from Constantinople of 403 Theophilus repeats many of these charges, attacking also the notions that: (1) the two Seraphim in Isaiah's vision (Isa. 6:2) represent the Son and the Holy Spirit; (2) resurrected bodies are spherical in shape; and (3) Adam's body came into being when he fell through sin.

Modern students of Origen judge most of these charges to be unjust.[145] They are probably right to do so, but they are wrong to accuse Theophilus (as Crouzel does) of lack of intelligence.[146] Theophilus had no intention of trying to read Origen sympathetically. He deployed all his formidable dialectical skills to exploit any inconsistency in Origen, any real or apparent incompatibility with fourth-century orthodoxy, that might wrong-foot his opponents. He was so successful that his official letters not only contributed to the Emperor Justinian's condemnation of Origen in the sixth century, but have continued until recently to colour the way scholars have read Origen.[147] Even now, few doubt that Origen, as Theophilus claims,[148] was unduly influenced by Platonism. Yet this too, it has recently been argued, misrepresents his thinking.[149] Origen was concerned to present the true Christian faith in the language of contemporary thought. Even though his thinking was speculative at times, his intention was to expound the apostolic tradition faithfully. But by the fourth century, with the new emphasis since the rise of the Arian controversy on the gulf separating created from uncreated, generate from ingenerate, Origen's approach no longer found general favour.

Apart from condemning Origen himself, Theophilus also attacks contemporary Origenists in a sermon probably delivered on Holy

Thursday 400, accusing them of: (1) dissolving the hope of resurrection; (2) rejecting the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father; and (3) denying the reality of the Eucharist. 'If Christ is not God, with whose body are the Church's sheep fed?' he asks.[150] The Eucharist cannot communicate eternal life if Christ is less than God on account of the Incarnation.

Elizabeth Clark claims to detect a progression in Theophilus' concerns: 'the charges against Origen of Trinitarian error recede while contemporary Origenist issues being discussed in the Egyptian desert – especially those pertaining to the body – gain importance in Theophilus's polemic, even within the brief time that elapsed between 400 and 404.'[151] But if Richard's dating of the Homily on the Mystical Supper is correct, issues pertaining to the body were at the centre of the controversy from the beginning. The First Synodal Letter of late 399 or early 400 confirms this, protesting at the denigration of the embodied life as punishment for sin. Even the Trinitarian charges are often related to practical considerations. If the Holy Spirit, for example, is of limited operation and does not work on inanimate matter, the eucharistic bread does not become the body of Christ. Theophilus was well informed about the Origenism of the desert. Its intellectualism and spiritualism contradicted his understanding of salvation within the ecclesial body.

Theophilus' comprehensive attack on Origenian ideas highlights the strong post-Nicene divide between the 'ingenerate' and 'generate' orders of reality. After the Council of Nicaea, the Father and the Son (and later the Holy Spirit) were on one side of the divide, and created nature, including purely spiritual beings, on the other. Origen's notion of a chain of being extending from the Father down through the Son and the Spirit to the angelic orders and human souls did not fit into this scheme. Nor did his speculations about the descent and return of souls, which were developed systematically by Evagrius of Pontus. What troubled Theophilus most about these ideas was their implication for prayer to the Son, the reception of Christ's body in the Eucharist, and the resurrection of the dead. If salvation is a process of increasing spiritualization as the human mind, purified of all material images, ascends to God, what is the purpose of the Incarnation and the sacraments? What happens to the human body, which is so much part of our identity? We are saved as embodied creatures, not as minds returning to their original unity with God.

Theophilus may have had agents in the desert monasteries who kept him abreast of currents of thought.[152] But it seems likely that if he

had not come into conflict with Isidore and the Tall Brothers over matters of ecclesiastical policy he might have let the Origenists be. His relations with Synesius, for example, are revealing of his fundamental attitude. Synesius, a Christian Neoplatonic philosopher, was made bishop of Ptolemais in Libya by Theophilus, probably in 411.[153] This was in spite of objections set out by Synesius in a letter which Theophilus was meant to see.[154] He did not want to separate from his wife, nor was he inclined to accept onerous full-time duties of a bishop. On the doctrinal level, he regarded popular belief as crude and inferior to the truths of philosophy. Nevertheless, Theophilus wanted to ordain him because as a prominent local notable he was in a strong position to exercise effective leadership. He was therefore allowed to hold private opinions provided they did not affect his public life – to philosophize in private, as he put it, and mythologize in public.[155] Formal loyalty to official church policies and to his ecclesiastical superior made him perfectly acceptable to Theophilus.[156]

Isidore and the Tall Brothers, by contrast, betrayed the loyalty Theophilus expected of them. Isidore, whether by pursuing an independent policy in Palestine or by concealing funds entrusted to him in Alexandria, forfeited Theophilus' confidence. Ammonius put himself beyond the pale by defending Isidore publicly and perhaps humiliating Theophilus over the matter of the imprisoned monk. His brother Dioscorus had been made bishop of Hermopolis by Theophilus and had accompanied him to the Constantinopolitan Council of 394.[157] As Nitria lay within the diocese of Hermopolis, Dioscorus' support for his brother was clearly intolerable to Theophilus. The younger brothers, Eusebius and Euthymius, had implicitly, or perhaps explicitly, criticized Theophilus' ecclesiastical administration by resigning their posts in Alexandria. This nucleus of opposition to Theophilus in Nitria was potentially dangerous. Theophilus was aware that there were no canonical sanctions he could apply against the Tall Brothers, as Isidore's trial was still pending, so attacking the orthodoxy of their opinions was his only option. And the best way to attack their orthodoxy was to attack their authoritative teacher, Origen. Theophilus could not afford to have a hostile group close to Alexandria, confident of their moral and intellectual superiority, who could undermine his leadership.

The Synod of The Oak[158]

In spite of Theophilus' efforts to make sure that the Nitrian refugees were denied hospitality in Palestine, their leaders finally managed to

make their way to Constantinople. Their last hope lay in a direct appeal to the emperor and the bishop of the imperial capital, John Chrysostom, especially as, according to Sozomen, Theophilus had already lodged a complaint in Constantinople to forestall any petition from them.[159] John received them very correctly. He did not give them official hospitality but put them up at a hospice attached to the church of the Anastasia. Confident of his ability to resolve the dispute, he forbade them to air their grievances in public and undertook to negotiate with Theophilus on their behalf.

John's letter to Theophilus was couched in conciliatory terms. He wrote as 'your son as well as your brother,' acknowledging Theophilus' role as his consecrator and requesting him to receive back the Nitrians as a personal favour.[160] But the letter alarmed Theophilus. At the time, John was intervening in Ephesus, deposing bishops and acting generally as if he had the right to regulate the affairs of the Ephesine Church.[161] According to Socrates, it was also rumoured that John had admitted the Nitrians to communion.[162] From the Alexandrian viewpoint, it seemed that Constantinople was claiming appellate jurisdiction over Alexandria. From now on Origenism ceased to be the major issue. The dispute became a power struggle between Constantinople and Alexandria, and Theophilus planned his strategy accordingly.

First he wrote to Epiphanius, enclosing a copy of the Synodal Letter he had sent to the bishops of Palestine and urging him to hold a synod in Cyprus to condemn Origen.[163] The results of the synod were to be sent to the bishops of Alexandria and Constantinople. The bishops of Isauria and Pamphylia, in the coastlands of Asia Minor to the north of Cyprus, were also to be informed of the matter. The synodal decision and Theophilus' own despatches were to be forwarded to Constantinople by special messenger. This Epiphanius duly did, calling on John to summon a council to confirm the condemnation of Origenism in his own diocese.[164] Theophilus also sent two delegations to Constantinople to defend his interests, the first consisting of Nitrian monks, the second of experienced orators.[165]

The fugitives began to feel the pressure. They wrote to Theophilus abjuring errors of doctrine but not mentioning Origenism specifically. Naturally, this did not elicit a positive response. They then made a formal petition to John with a catalogue of charges against Theophilus.[166]

On his return from Ephesus, John found himself facing a growing crisis.[167] He attempted to defuse it by asking the Nitrians to drop

their charges. When they refused to do so, he wrote again to Theophilus enclosing a copy of the indictment. Theophilus reacted with fury. His reply, as summarized by Palladius, was as follows:

> I think you are not unaware of the ordinance of the Nicene canons forbidding a bishop to adjudicate a case which falls outside his ecclesiastical area. If, however, you are unaware, now that you have been informed refrain from meddling with accusations brought against me. If it were necessary for me to be put on trial, it would be before Egyptian judges and not before you, who live more than seventy-five days' journey away.[168]

Here Theophilus moves the whole affair firmly on to his own home ground, that of canon law. A desperate act of the Nitrian refugees, however, changed the situation yet again. They found an opportunity on the feast of John the Baptist (24 June 402) to present a petition listing their grievances to the imperial couple at the Precursor's shrine at Hebdomon, seven miles outside Constantinople. As a result of this petition the government decided to summon Theophilus to stand trial in the capital.

The summons, delivered in Alexandria by Elaphius, head of the imperial couriers (*agentes in rebus*), must have come as a shock to Theophilus. The worst possible scenario was facing him: a trial presided over by John which, if it went against him, would result in the subjection of Alexandria to the appellate jurisdiction of Constantinople and his own deposition and exile.

Theophilus at once began his counter-measures. The best way to prevent the trial from taking place was to discredit John. Accordingly, he arranged with John's Syrian enemies in Constantinople to investigate John's early life for any damaging material.[169] He also wrote to Epiphanius, warning him that orthodoxy was in danger at the capital as a result of John's giving hospitality to the Nitrian heretics.[170] Finally he chose to take the long overland route to Constantinople rather than the much shorter sea voyage so as to organize support on the way.

Soon after Easter (28 March) 403, before Theophilus had even left Alexandria, Epiphanius set sail to put John Chrysostom in his place, just as he had done with John of Jerusalem a decade earlier. His ship docked at Hebdomon, where he celebrated the Liturgy and ordained a deacon without episcopal permission. He then entered Constantinople, put up at private lodgings, and without reference to John

invited all the bishops who happened to be in the capital to a meeting with him. Epiphanius' intention was that they should ratify the Alexandrian and Cypriot condemnations of Origenism, but most of them refused to sign. So he resolved to repeat his action at the Jerusalem dedication festival when he had denounced Origenism from John's pulpit. He arrived unannounced at the Church of the Holy Apostles just before the Liturgy, but John Chrysostom, forewarned, had his entry barred and threatened him with violent consequences if he persisted in his campaign. Thwarted, Epiphanius decided to return to Cyprus. He died on the voyage on 12 May 403.[171]

Towards the end of August, Theophilus arrived at Chalcedon, on the opposite shore of the Bosporus from Constantinople. He was not alone. Although he had made the journey overland himself, he had sent ahead twenty-nine Egyptian bishops by the shorter sea route. Chalcedon was an ideal centre from which to organize his entry into Constantinople. Its bishop, Cyrinus, was an Egyptian and hostile to John.[172] Besides his own bishops and those who had joined him en route, Theophilus gathered there other clerics alienated by John's abrasive manner who bore a grudge against him. He then staged a triumphant entry into Constantinople, not by Chalcedon's quay in the Golden Horn, but by the great commercial harbour of Eleutherius in the Sea of Marmora. The annual Egyptian grain fleet had arrived, and Theophilus was able to step ashore to the rousing cheers of his fellow-countrymen.[173]

The next three weeks were well used by Theophilus. He took up residence in the Palatium Placidianum, a mansion at the Empress Eudoxia's disposal near the imperial palace itself, and networked the opposition to John in government circles. The Nitrian refugees also used their contacts, and to such good effect that the emperor suddenly summoned John to the Rufinianae palace just outside Chalcedon to preside at a council which was to try Theophilus. As J. N. D. Kelly remarks, 'this was John's great opportunity. Had he been a political realist, he would have seized it without hesitation.'[174] But he did not. In a letter to Pope Innocent he explains his motives:

> Aware as I was of the laws of our fathers, respecting and honouring this man, having moreover in my hands a letter of his which demonstrated that judicial cases may not lawfully be tried outside the territory of their origin but that matters affecting each province should properly be settled within that province, I refused to act as his judge, indeed rejected the proposal with the utmost vehemence.[175]

Whether John felt himself on weaker canonical ground than Theophilus and judged legal scrupulousness to be his best policy, or whether he was simply intimidated by Theophilus' legal expertise and political acumen, his refusal to co-operate was disastrous for him. It led to the collapse of the case against Theophilus, and the implementation of an alternative plan: the trial, instead, of John himself. To make arrangements for this, Theophilus moved back across the Bosporus to Cyrinus' ecclesiastical territory and took up residence at the Rufinianae palace (which, as Kelly says, suggests official backing).[176]

Confident now of his position, he summoned John's archdeacon to help him prepare a case. He also brought the Nitrian matter to a swift conclusion. As his letter from Constantinople shows, he did not change his mind on Origen's errors, but his dispute with the Nitrian refugees was now of secondary importance. In any case, the main leaders of the Nitrians were now dead – Isidore, Dioscorus and Ammonius having all died in 403.[177] Eusebius and Euthymius threw themselves on Theophilus' mercy – there was nothing else they could do in the circumstances – and there, so far as Theophilus was concerned, the matter ended. He does not seem to have borne any personal animus against them. In the heat of the controversy, Ammonius had been among those noted for their 'pre-eminence in wickedness'.[178] But when he died a little before the Synod of The Oak opened, Sozomen reports that Theophilus shed tears and said that although Ammonius had caused him much trouble, no monk could have been of higher moral character.[179] Perhaps we should beware of reading too much personal feeling into the rhetorical language of invective.

The Synod of The Oak opened probably in late September 403. Thirty-six bishops were present, including Theophilus' suffragans, with Bishop Paul of Heraclea presiding.[180] Twenty-nine charges had been compiled, largely from evidence supplied by two deacons whom John had sacked.[181] They range from accusations concerning proper decorum, such as having his bath heated for himself alone, to the more weighty charges of misappropriating church funds and ordaining men without regard for canon law. John declared his willingness to be tried by a general council but he was not prepared to submit to the judgement of a court packed with his enemies.[182] The synod summoned him to appear four times (once more than the three required by canon law), and on his refusal to comply he was tried summarily *in absentia*, found guilty and deposed.

Three days later John was arrested by the authorities and transported across the Bosporus to begin his journey into exile. The populace, however, began rioting in protest. Then an earthquake (according to Theodoret)[183] or, more likely, a personal tragedy experienced by the imperial family (Kelly suggests a miscarriage by Eudoxia)[184] prompted a sudden reversal of policy. John was recalled and in the face of mounting violence, with rival mobs in support of John or Theophilus fighting it out in Hagia Sophia itself,[185] Theophilus boarded ship and returned to Alexandria.

John now seemed victorious. On the Sunday after his return he was induced by the people, in spite of his misgivings, to take his seat on the throne of Hagia Sophia and give them his episcopal blessing. He also preached a triumphant sermon comparing himself to Abraham when the Egyptian Pharaoh had tried to take his wife Sara from him.[186] His canonical position, however, was anomalous. After deposition by a church council, he could not be reinstated simply by an administrative act. A new council was needed to annul the decision of The Oak.

The Emperor Arcadius did summon a new council. Theophilus begged to be excused on the grounds that the Alexandrian populace would riot if he left the city.[187] The current was now flowing again in John's favour. But John then committed an extraordinary act of folly. He denounced a recently erected silver statue of Eudoxia and followed it up with a sermon widely taken to compare the empress to Herodias asking for John the Baptist's head on a platter.[188] Eudoxia was understandably furious.

This change in John's standing with the palace gave Theophilus the chance he needed to regain control. He wrote to the government citing Canon 4 of the Dedication Council of Antioch of 341. This canon laid down that if a bishop deposed by a synod regained his see and resumed his duties on his own initiative without first having been reinstated by another synod, he was to be permanently excluded from office without right of appeal. Arcadius called a meeting of representatives of the two sides. John's supporters, led by Elpidius of Laodicea maintained that the canons of the Dedication Council of 341 were devoid of validity because they had been framed by heretics for the purpose of deposing Athanasius. In any case, John had not been deposed by a canonically constituted council and had not resumed his duties on his own initiative. He had been expelled and brought back by government decree. The discussion centred on the orthodoxy of the Dedication Council. Theophilus' spokesmen, Acacius of Beroea and Antiochus of Ptolemais, were challenged to

sign a declaration that they shared the doctrinal position of the bishops of that council. When they said they were prepared to do so, Arcadius seems to have accepted the validity of the Antiochene canons. That John had disqualified himself from office, making a further council unnecessary, then became the official government position.[189]

At this stage (between Easter and Pentecost 404), John Chrysostom wrote to Pope Innocent, Venerius of Milan and Chromatius of Aquileia cataloguing the injuries he had suffered from Theophilus and appealing for support: a declaration that his condemnation was invalid.[190] The letter was carried to Rome by a high-level delegation of four bishops, who also presented a letter signed by forty bishops still loyal to John. Coincidentally, three days earlier a brief letter had arrived from Theophilus announcing John's deposition and implying that the pope should break off communion with him.[191] This letter was in keeping with Theophilus' role as the leading bishop of the East and the established channel of communication with Rome. But the pope was not inclined to follow the Alexandrian line. He replied to both Theophilus and John that he remained in communion with John as the legitimate bishop of Constantinople and demanded a general council to review the trial in an impartial manner.[192]

Shortly afterwards, Innocent received from Theophilus a copy of the *Acts* of the Synod of The Oak, with notice that the canons of the Council of Antioch had been applied in John's case. The synodal *Acts* did not reassure Innocent that justice had been done. He wrote again to Theophilus insisting that he could not break off communion with John on the evidence supplied. If Theophilus continued to regard John as deposed, the matter would have to be referred to a more representative council that relied solely on the canons of Nicaea.[193] Refugees from Constantinople (including Palladius) gave the pope detailed accounts of their sufferings.[194] Anti-Johnites also lobbied him, bringing letters from Antiochus and others.[195] But Innocent was now firmly on the Johnite side and sent no further letter to Theophilus.

Theophilus' opposition became harsher. In autumn 404, he wrote a ferocious *libellus* against John, translated by Jerome into Latin.[196] It described John as a man glorying in his insanity who had sold his adulterous soul to the devil. The *libellus* had no effect. Innocent called a synod, probably in early summer 405,[197] which included Chromatius of Aquileia and Eastern bishops who had come to Rome. Having dismissed the charges against John Chrysostom and

excommunicated Theophilus, Arsacius and their followers, it called for a general council to meet in Thessalonica.

Innocent then invoked the help of the Western emperor, Arcadius' younger brother Honorius, and sent an embassy to Constantinople carrying letters from himself and Honorius. To the loyalist Johnite clergy, Innocent deplored that a guiltless bishop should have been unjustly deposed without a fair hearing.[198] Honorius' letter to his brother described recent events in Constantinople as 'an insult to God'.[199] Following Innocent's line, it regards as unacceptable that the matter had been decided and John sent into exile while the pope, to whom appeal had been made, was still in communion with him. It concludes by calling for a general council which Theophilus must attend.

The delegation bearing these letters never arrived in Constantinople. The Greek members (including Palladius) were arrested and imprisoned in Thrace before being sent into exile. The Latin members were refused audience by the emperor and sent back to Italy. Eastern Christians were required to be in communion with Atticus of Constantinople (who had succeeded Arsacius), Porphyrius of Antioch and Theophilus of Alexandria. Innocent reacted by breaking off communion with all three until a general council was held.[200]

The council did not take place. Alexandria remained out of communion with Rome until Theophilus' successor and nephew, Cyril, grudgingly restored John to the diptychs, though it seemed to him like restoring Judas to the Apostles.[201] Only in 419 were normal relations re-established between Alexandria and Rome.

Last years

Although Theophilus won his battle with Constantinople in the short term, the rise of the imperial see to ecclesiastical supremacy in the East was inevitable. In spite of a repetition of Theophilus' feat in the following generation, when Cyril brought about the deposition of Nestorius, Constantinople's primacy next after Rome was confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. But even Theophilus' short-term victory was a Pyrrhic one. After 406, he does not seem to have played any important role internationally.

He was still regarded, however, as a highly experienced churchman. Porphyrius, who succeeded Flavian at Antioch in September 404, consulted Theophilus, perhaps soon after his consecration, on how to deal with people who wanted to revive the Christological

errors of Paul of Samosata.[202] In his reply, Theophilus recalled Nicaea's condemnation of Arianism, adding: 'and Bishop Athanasius himself of blessed memory condemned the last impiety of Paul of Samosata in a tome which he dictated'.[203] It was right, he said, to reject impious writings and always correct those who write against the apostolic doctrines out of ignorance and vainglory.[204] According to the Fifth Ecumenical Council, this letter was directed principally against Theodore of Mopsuestia and his followers.[205] If so, it lays the foundations for Cyril's attack on Theodore of Mopsuestia in the late 430s.[206]

This was probably Theophilus' last contribution to theological debate. He remained active in his own diocese, administering the church, consecrating bishops, and responding to such requests as that of a Bishop Maximus of a diocese in Gaul to give hospitality to a group of women ascetics, under the care of his nephew Daniel, displaced by barbarian invasions.[207] He died on 15 October 412 after an episcopate of twenty-seven years.

Theophilus as a theologian

Although Theophilus is remembered today mainly for his persecution of the Origenists and his role in the downfall of John Chrysostom, his immediate posterity valued his defence of the Nicene faith and regarded him as a worthy successor of Athanasius. His homilies and letters show why.

Theophilus' theological reflection was not speculative but a product of his scriptural exegesis. His hermeneutic principle was the same as that of Athanasius: the *hypothesis* (or 'argument') of Scripture from Creation to the eschatological fulfilment of the Resurrection provides the 'overarching story'[208] that enables the biblical text to be interpreted correctly. This *hypothesis* comes from the Church's rule of faith that has been handed down from the Apostles. There is no simple contrast between 'literal' and 'allegorizing' approaches. Like Athanasius, Theophilus opposes not allegory as such but arbitrary readings:

> We are not so obstinate that we should reckon to refute an allegory if it is pious and imbibes from the fountain of truth; but only in so far as it is not contrary to the truth, does not distort the factual record, follows the sense of sacred Scripture, and does not prefer the will of a perverse interpreter of the Scriptures to authority.[209]

His aim in commenting on Scripture is 'not to undermine the divine prophecies or explain them away, but to clarify their relationship to their antecedents'.[210] For Christ instructs us through symbols. Thus his taking of bread and wine at the Last Supper, his girding himself with a towel, his pouring water into a basin, his washing the disciples' feet have a deeper level of meaning connecting Redemption with Creation and identifying the Redeemer with the Creator.[211] Sometimes the details of the biblical narrative have multiple referents. The upper room, for example, is also the virtuous life above earthly concerns, or the Holy of Holies, or heaven itself.[212] The reliability of such detailed exposition is proved by its coherence with the rule of faith: 'those who contradict the divine doctrines of the Church [cannot] receive the mystical meanings of the heavenly words'.[213] The guardians of the divine doctrines are the bishops. It is therefore they, not independent spiritual teachers, who correctly expound the mystical meanings of the Scriptures. The Origenists are heretics because they do not follow the apostolic rule. They 'stitch the philosopher's rags on to the new and sound garment of the church'.[214] Fidelity to the 'overarching story' enables Theophilus to offer his own symbolic interpretations with confidence. In 'clarifying the relationship of the divine prophecies to their antecedents' he presents an Athanasian Christology of divine condescension and human ascent:[215] 'I became as you are . . . that you might become through me "partakers of the divine nature" ' (2 Pet. 1:4). 'I became the true vine . . . that you may bear in me fragrant fruit.'[216] The drama of divine condescension is well brought out in the Homily on the Mystical Supper. Through a Christological or 'typological' interpretation we are invited to contemplate how he who rules the ends of the earth prepared himself for the mystical supper, how he who sits on the Cherubim reclined at the meal, how he who was eaten in Egypt acknowledges his own type, how he who was mystically sacrificed in Egypt sacrifices himself voluntarily in Sion.[217]

Christ is the Creator who contracted himself in the Incarnation. The living Word of God came to be within the body of the Virgin so as to become like us.[218] His being wrapped in swaddling clothes symbolizes his acceptance of our weakness.[219] Outwardly he was in the form of a servant, but his works prove that he was God.[220] At the Last Supper the Word's condescension is awe-inspiring:

> He who put on light like a garment (cf. Ps. 104:2) girds himself with a towel. He who binds water in clouds and has sealed the abyss with his fearful name (cf. Job 26:8) winds

> a girdle round his waist. He who gathers together the waters of the sea as in a bottle (cf. Ps. 33:7) pours water into a bowl. He who roofs in water his firmament (cf. Gen 1:7) washed in water his disciples' feet. He who marked off the heavens with a span and enclosed the earth in a handful (cf. Isa. 40:12) cleansed his servants' feet with immaculate palms. He to whom 'every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2:10) bowed his neck to his servants. Angels saw it and were astounded; heaven observed it and shuddered; creation took note of it and was afraid.[221]

The skilful use of the rhetorical figures of anaphora, antithesis and hypozeuxis is striking.[222] Equally striking is the rich intertextuality of the passage. Genesis, Job, the Psalms and Philippians are woven together with the Gospel narrative of the Last Supper to form a seamless garment, a powerful statement of the unity of divine action throughout sacred Scripture.

The cosmic dimensions of divine condescension are brought out by Theophilus in his meditation on the Crucifixion, for the whole of creation was purified from the moment Christ was hung on the cross:

> His divine body . . . hanging on the cross made the whole air clean and pure. With the shedding of his sacred blood, the whole earth was equally purified of its contamination . . . All the air is in motion because the body of the Creator is suspended on high. All the earth rejoices because the blood of its king is sprinkled upon it.[223]

This cosmic salvation also embraces the individual Christian through the symbolic actions of the Church's rite of initiation, for 'just us the cross purified all creation, so the sign of the cross purifies the new human being in the baptistery'.[224]

But if Christ was more than a mere human being 'with a sovereignty congruent with his divinity',[225] he was nonetheless truly human. His assumption of human frailty was real, not illusory. By his Incarnation he 'made the body's weakness his own, while remaining the power and wisdom of God',[226] as his works prove. This bodily weakness may belong properly to the outward form, but it cannot be detached from Christ. We should not divide the divine and indissoluble yet unconfused 'one of the Trinity' into two persons. He was simultaneously both invisible God and visible man.[227] His baptism in the Jordan demonstrates the coherence of the two natures. Baptism

did not give him a new title; he was still the 'only-begotten Son'. Our likeness was not changed into the divine nature, nor was the Godhead changed into our nature.[228] Yet although the human and the divine are not two autonomous entities, some things, such as healing lepers, restoring the dead to life, driving out demons and forgiving sins, may be described as 'miracles of his divinity',[229] while others, such as hunger, thirst and fear, are not properties of the Godhead but distinctive bodily features.[230] One crux that Theophilus considers is the cry of dereliction from the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' (Mt. 27:46). This was a bodily utterance because 'the created body in no way wished to be deprived of the life natural to it'.[231] 'He uttered this cry because of the intimate clinging of the body to its own life on the approach of death.'[232] It proves the reality of Christ's humanity.

For the Word did not replace Christ's soul, as the Apollinarians claimed. Gregory of Nyssa had alerted Theophilus to the dangers of Apollinarianism in 395,[233] but in his Festal Letter of 402, Theophilus develops his arguments independently of him, linking his exposition to the exegesis of Scripture. 'Now is my soul troubled' (Jn 12:27) does not mean that the divinity is subject to perturbation, as the Apollinarists maintain. Nor did Christ only have an animal soul; 'Ephraim is a senseless dove' (Hos. 7:11 LXX) cannot be applied to him. Nor is the Saviour's soul the Pauline 'will of the flesh' (cf. Rom. 8:6–7), which cannot be taken to refer to the animal soul because the Apostle equates it with death and hostility to God.[234] To deny the Saviour's rational soul is to deny the principal part of his created humanity.

But Christ is not just a subject for theological analysis. Theophilus draws us into the drama of Christ's death and resurrection to engage our emotions and stir compunction in us. His homilies present a paraenetic exegesis of Scripture designed to foster the life of faith. Texts are used creatively not only to provide moral guidance but also to bring his hearers into an active engagement with Christ.

Two examples will illustrate this, one from the Homily on the Mystical Supper, the other from the Homily on the Crucifixion. In the first, Theophilus develops a powerful appeal to the Christian on the basis of an exegesis of Proverbs 9:1–6: 'come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed'. He amplifies the text, putting his words into the mouth of Christ. Christ is the host at the eucharistic celebration, calling, even coaxing, believers to participate in his body and blood. In the Homily on the Crucifixion, the words, 'Truly truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise'

(Lk. 23:43), are also expanded as a soliloquy spoken by Christ, in which great emotional intensity is achieved.

The exhortation to repentance and mimesis is the purpose of these soliloquies. Salvation is participation in Christ through imitation of him.[235] We become partakers with him in his sufferings that we might inherit with him the kingdom of heaven. There is a devotion in Theophilus' homilies to the person of Jesus that can perhaps still move us.

Theophilus presents a spirituality for lay people. Monks, he says, have the possibility of remaining sinless. But sin is inevitable for people 'caught up in the cares of life'.[236] Theophilus therefore uses all the resources of rhetoric to move his hearers to compunction. The sufferings of Christ can stimulate us to change our lives.[237] All we have to do is imitate Jesus as far as possible in his humility, love and faith.[238] For Christ made war against the devil and we can choose which side we are on.[239] If we desist from the vices, they will die away completely. We simply need 'to take hold of the rudder of the virtues',[240] for 'hell is filled as a result of moral indifference'.[241]

It is no wonder that the Greek East found it difficult to understand the precise nature of Pelagius' error.[242] Theophilus' teaching is typical of Greek confidence that people could change their lives by an act of will. We are free to do or not to do good.[243] Not that Theophilus assumed that such an act of will was easy. Hence his vivid portrayals of the torments of hell that await the unrepentant.[244] But no one has lived a life so depraved that he or she cannot through repentance become a companion of Christ.[245] The adulteress who anointed Christ's feet is restored to the virginal state through participating in the purity of Christ's divinity.[246] The penitent thief on the cross, a convicted murderer, is told: 'You were fixed with me on the cross, and you united yourself with me of your own free will. I will therefore love you, and my Father will love you, and the angels will serve you with my holy food.'[247] We should pray without ceasing and through fasting and voluntary hardship put to death what is earthly in us.[248] For the shedding of tears of repentance moves God to compassion, causes the Holy Spirit to enter into us, and restores us and makes us new.[249]

Repentance brings us to prayer, night vigils, meditation on the psalms, and the singing of hymns.[250] That is to say, it brings us into the liturgical life of the community. Blessed are those, says Theophilus, who frequent the church daily, morning and evening, especially at the time of the reception of the Holy Mysteries of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.[251] Theophilus has a strongly

realist view of the Eucharist. The bread and wine are sanctified by the invocation of the Holy Spirit. They become the food of life-in-itself and the drink of immortality.[252] 'For when the bread and wine are sacrificed on the holy altar, they are no longer bread and wine as before, but a divine body and a sacred blood.'[253] This divine sustenance overcomes the effects of the Fall. The eucharistic bread restores our nature and 'cleanses us of the ancient bitterness'.[254] The eucharistic wine generates the exultation of immortality and soothes the pain of the wound.[255] Such a precious gift must be protected from profanity. The Liturgy is only for the orthodox, not for heretics.[256] And after it has ended, the unconsecrated remains of what has been offered must be consumed only by the clergy and the faithful, not by the catechumens who are not yet members of the body.[257]

Through the Eucharist we become 'that which we shall be in the future'.[258] For we are united to the angels in heaven and join in their worship.[259] In his Homily on the Mystical Supper, Theophilus says that through imitating Christ we become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4), sharers in the divine attributes of immortality and incorruption. But philosophical discussion of the nature of our participation in the divine is of no interest to him. He presents his vision of our final beatitude in the imagery of the Apocalyptic tradition. The repentant thief will be enveloped in glory and surrounded by light.[260] He will be served by the angels and become a companion of Christ. Let us, too, he says, 'cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light' (Rom. 13:2), 'that we may inherit the habitation of the saints which is in heaven, and of the sons of light, through Jesus Christ, our Lord'.[261]

Theophilus' legacy

Theophilus was regarded by the admirers of John Chrysostom as the architect of their hero's downfall. But outside the Johnite camp he was venerated as a great bishop of Alexandria on a par with Athanasius himself. In his First Festal Letter in 412, Cyril refers to him as 'our father Theophilus of everlasting and glorious memory'.[262] And at the Council of Ephesus in 431 he cited him as an authoritative Church Father. Synesius maintained good relations with him until the end of his life, describing him to Cyril as 'our common father of holy memory'.[263] Atticus of Constantinople also wrote to Cyril declaring him a saint and comparing him to the apostles.[264] Even Westerners were impressed by Theophilus' defence of

orthodoxy. Vincent of Lérins refers to him as a bishop 'illustrious for his faith, life and learning'.[265] And Pope Leo the Great mentions Theophilus with Athanasius and Cyril as 'the most distinguished bishops' of the Alexandrian Church.[266]

Some of these expression were doubtless purely formal. It was in Egypt that Theophilus was remembered with the greatest warmth. When Paul of Emesa delivered a sermon in Alexandria in 432 as part of a concerted effort to heal the rift between Alexandria and Antioch in the aftermath of the Council of Ephesus, the people shouted approvingly: 'This is the teaching of the blessed Athanasius, this is the doctrine of the great Theophilus, the pillars of orthodoxy.'[267] Theophilus' fight to preserve the pre-eminence of Alexandria in the East certainly did him no harm in his own country. He also left his mark on the wider world. For his Christological teaching contributed through Cyril to the conciliar definitions of the fifth century, his assessment of Origenism carried weight in the renewed controversy of the sixth century, and his judgements on matters of church discipline passed into the canonical collections of the Eastern Church. But his memory was particularly revered in the Coptic monastic tradition.[268] He was not forgotten for having played a crucial role in the Christianization of Egypt, and his homilies, both genuine and spurious, have had a lasting influence on the Egyptian Church. The Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Churches celebrate his feast day on 15 and 17 October, respectively.

Part II

TEXTS

2

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXTS

Theophilus is one of the least accessible authors in the Greek Patrology because so much of his *oeuvre* is fragmentary or preserved only in Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Syriac or Arabic versions.[1] To study him, as Marcel Richard has remarked, one needs to have a whole library at one's disposal.[2] Excerpts from his letters were included in the florilegia that played an important part in the Christological controversies of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, as well as in other works. But his writings were not handed down as a corpus in the Byzantine manuscript tradition.

This is not altogether surprising. Theophilus did not leave any dogmatic treatises or biblical commentaries. His Christological doctrine could conveniently be excerpted from his Festal Letters. Moreover, although he was revered in the Coptic monastic tradition, his role in the downfall of John Chrysostom, and the hostility to which this exposed him from Palladius, Socrates and Sozomen damaged his reputation in Constantinople.[3]

Theophilus was the author of twenty-seven Festal Letters written at the beginning of each year of his episcopate to announce the date of Easter. He also preached a large number of homilies, maintained a wide correspondence, delivered canonical judgements, and compiled an important table on the dates of Easter. Very few of these writings survive in their entirety or at all. A collection of Greek fragments was published in 1770 by Andrea Gallandi in the seventh volume of his *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, and reprinted by Migne in PG 65. 33–68. These have since been supplemented by the publication of new Greek fragments and the reallocation to Theophilus of a homily on the Mystical Supper formerly attributed to Cyril.[4]

If it had not been for the work of translators, the homily on the Mystical Supper would have been the only text of Theophilus that we possess in its entirety. We owe to Jerome a number of letters

concerned with the Origenist controversy (including the important Sixteenth Festal Letter of 401), which were translated by him into Latin and handed down in his own collected correspondence.[5] Much of the homiletic material, on the other hand, is preserved only in Coptic.[6] There is no evidence that Theophilus was bilingual, but some of his homilies were clearly addressed to a monastic audience and were translated into Coptic at an early date.[7] The authenticity of many of these Coptic homilies is doubtful. To the monks, Theophilus was a great hero, the destroyer of pagan temples and the scourge of heretics. Texts easily came to be attributed to him. In fact, a later Coptic literary school deliberately forged a cycle of works purportedly by him on the Christianization of Egypt.[8] The wider theological importance of Theophilus to the non-Chalcedonian churches also led to the translation of many of his writings into Syriac and Armenian. The Armenian tradition is particularly rich, but it, too, is problematic, as many of the homilies attributed to him appear to be composite works without counterparts in the Greek, Coptic or Syriac traditions.[9]

Although perhaps not the most original mind among the Greek Fathers,[10] Theophilus was a trenchant exponent of Nicene orthodoxy and a skilful preacher. The texts offered here illustrate his work as a pastor and controversialist. Only the *Homily on Repentance and Self-control*, the brief *Sermon on Death and Judgement*, the *Letter to the monks of Pbow*, and some fragments have previously been translated into English. Each text is accompanied by an introduction and explanatory notes. The biblical quotations are given in the Revised Standard Version except where the RSV has been adapted to reflect the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. The psalms are numbered according to the Hebrew version, with the Septuagint numbering in square brackets. Text in italics is editorial matter inserted by the ancient compilers of the fragments.

3

THE EARLIER FESTAL LETTERS

Introduction

The bishop of Alexandria's custom of issuing a letter each year before the beginning of Lent announcing the date of Easter seems to have originated in the mid-third century with Dionysius the Great.[1] Of the fifteen letters that Theophilus must have written prior to the Origenist controversy, only fragments of the first, third, fifth, sixth and probably tenth survive.

The First Festal Letter belongs to 386. Two fragments are quoted by Cosmas Indicopleustes, a sixth-century Alexandrian geographer of Nestorian sympathies, in the tenth book of his *Christian Topography* (PG 88, 417A [= PG 65, 53A]). According to the oldest manuscript of the *Christian Topography*, Vaticanus gr. 699, however, the second fragment is from the Tenth Festal Letter of 395.[2] A paragraph of the Third Festal Letter was quoted by Timothy Aelurus and is extant only in an Armenian version.[3] The fragments of the Fifth and Sixth Festal Letters were quoted by Cyril at the Council of Ephesus in 431 as part of his patristic florilegium supporting the Alexandrian Christological position, and have long been known through the acts of the council.[4]

The fragments from Cosmas Indicopleustes (*CPG* 2. 2580) and Cyril of Alexandria (*CPG* 2. 2582, 2583) are translated from the critical editions by W. Wolska-Conus[5] and E. Schwartz.[6]

TEXT

FIRST FESTAL LETTER (SC 197. 257)

Of Theophilus of Alexandria from the First Festal Letter: Let us rise above earthly conduct. Let us enter the lofty house of virtue and like the disciples eat the Passover in the upper room. For we have with us Christ who was sacrificed for our sake, and consume the whole of him as life.

FIFTH FESTAL LETTER (ACO I. 1. 2. 41)

Of Theophilus the most holy bishop of Alexandria from the Fifth Festal Letter: For there are still today relics of the wonders of those times. Do not refuse to believe that God's power can make a virgin give birth. The living Word of God came to be within her for the purpose of becoming like us (for no other way would have enabled him to commune more closely with us), so that he should not receive a body from pleasure and sleep (cf. Wisd. 7:2), as is the case with the rest of humanity. Born of a virgin, he assumed a body in our likeness, appearing outwardly like us in the form of a servant (cf. Phil. 2:7), but proving by his works that he is the lord and creator of all things, since the works he performs are those of God.

SIXTH FESTAL LETTER (ACO I. 1. 2. 41–2)

Of the same from the Sixth Festal Letter: The best artists are not only admired for showing their skill in precious materials. They often demonstrate the level of their expertise by choosing common clay and pliable wax, and are praised all the more highly. Similarly, when the supreme artist of all that is,[7] the living and active Word of God, structured the universe in a harmonious order, he did not come to us by taking a heavenly body made, as it were, from some precious material, but demonstrated the greatness of his skill through clay. He restored a humanity that had been fashioned from clay (cf. Gen. 2:7) by himself coming forth from a virgin as a human being in a novel way. He differed from us in the manner of his birth, but having decided not to shun likeness to us in all things but sin (cf. Heb. 4:15), he was born as a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger (Lk. 2:12). For he accepted the weakness of our nature

for the reasons I have explained. But even when he was still a baby, he threw the enemy together with his cohort into confusion, since he drew Magi to repentance and caused them to ignore the king who had sent them (cf. Mt. 2:8, 12).

TENTH FESTAL LETTER (SC 197. 257–9)

Of the same from the Tenth Festal Letter: Drawing aside again the curtain and veil of the word,[8] they behold with unveiled face the Passover festival of the divine Pascha, crying out to Jesus, 'Where will you have us prepare for you the Passover?' (Mt. 26:17; Lk. 22:9). When they learned from him that they had to celebrate the Passover in the upper room, they rose above earthly concerns, and running ahead in their minds came to the Holy of Holies. Christ himself entered there on our behalf and put an end to the typological practice of the High Priest. For he appeared on our behalf in the presence of God and won eternal redemption for us (cf. Heb. 9:24). At that time the High Priest alone entered into the Holy of Holies once a year, the people remaining outside because they lacked sufficient power. But the Saviour went in and gave leave for those who wish to enter.

4

HOMILIES

Introduction

The powerful rhetoric of Theophilus' homilies has caused some modern scholars to doubt his sincerity.[1] But no fourth- or fifth-century preacher eschewed rhetorical devices in his effort to move his audience. The antitheses, exclamations, rhetorical questions and anaphorae that we find in Theophilus' sermons may be paralleled in other ecclesiastical orators.[2] Theophilus naturally used all the rhetorical resources of his age to make the Christian gospel as persuasive as possible.

One striking aspect of the homilies is how restrained Theophilus' use of allegorical exegesis is. In the longer ones he begins with the typological foreshadowing of the Old Testament and then moves on to consider the spiritual meaning of the New Testament, amplifying the details of the text he is considering in an inventive way. A characteristic feature is the soliloquy he puts into the mouth of Christ, building on a sentence or two of Christ's words as reported in the gospels. The effect is an appeal to the heart rather than the head. Theophilus wants to move his hearers to compunction, to impress on them the seriousness of the Christian vocation.

Translated below are the three homilies that have survived completely, together with the fragments from four others. These are:

1. *Homily on the Mystical Supper* (*CPG* 2. 2617)
   This fine homily on the institution of the Eucharist was included by Jean Aubert among Cyril of Alexandria's works in his collected edition of 1638, and reprinted by Migne in 1859 (Homily 10, PG 77. 1016–29).[3] In 1937, the homily was brilliantly restored to its true author by Marcel Richard, who identified the events referred to in the final section as the

Alexandrian disturbances that accompanied the Origenist crisis of 399–401.[4] In consequence, Richard has suggested that the homily was delivered by Theophilus in Alexandria on 29 March 400, the Holy Thursday of that year.[5] In the absence of a critical edition, I have translated the Aubert/Migne text, taking into account the improved readings offered by Richard.[6]

2. *Sermon on Death and Judgement* (*CPG* 2. 2618)
   This brief sermon is well known through its inclusion as a saying in the alphabetical series of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.[7] Its title comes from Vaticanus gr. 2000, fol. 260^{r}, where its superscription is 'Of Theophilus Archbishop of Alexandria, on the departure of the soul and judgement and sentence'. In the Vatican manuscript, it is followed by another short text attributed to Cyril of Alexandria. The two texts also appear in reverse order in John Damascene's *Sacra Parallela*.[8] In the later manuscript tradition, they were conflated and mixed with other excerpts, perhaps from Ephrem the Syrian.[9] The whole was subsequently attributed solely to Cyril, appearing in Aubert's edition as Homily 14.[10] Syriac, Arabic and Armenian versions are mentioned by Geerard.[11] Recently attention has also been drawn to a Slavonic version hitherto overlooked by scholars.[12] I have translated Migne's Greek text as printed in the *Apophthegmata*, supplementing it from Brière's French translation of the Syriac version.[13]
3. *Sermon on Providence* (*CPG* 2. 2619)
   Two fragments from the florilegium of Vaticanus gr. 1455 were published by Cardinal Mai in 1853.[14] No other fragments are known. My translation is from the Greek text of Mai's edition.
4. *Sermon on the Woman Suffering from a Flow of Blood* (*CPG* 2. 2620)
   Two fragments survive in Latin in the acts of the anti-monothelite Lateran Council of 649.[15] The second of these has also been recovered in the original Greek from a catena, where it is entitled: 'Of Theophilus of Alexandria from a sermon on repentance'.[16] I have translated the first fragment from the Latin of Mansi's acts of the Lateran Council and the second from Diekamp's edition of the Greek text.
5. *Sermon on the text 'Jesus went about all Galilee'* (Matt. 4:23) (*CPG* 2. 2621)
   A fragment preserved in a catena on the psalms, first published by Simond, was included by Gallandi in his collection and reprinted by Migne. Richard also reproduces the text in his collection of exegetical fragments.[17] A Syriac version is also

extant.[18] My translation is from Richard's edition of the Greek text.

6. *Homily on the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (*CPG* 2. 2622)
   This homily, which survives only in Coptic, was edited with a careful Italian translation by Francesco Rossi in 1884.[19] Probably originally delivered on a Good Friday, it entered into liturgical use in the Coptic Holy Week cycle. I have translated it from Rossi's Italian version.
7. *Homily on Repentance and Self-control* (*CPG* 2. 2623)
   This homily, too, survives only in Coptic. It was published with an English translation by E. A. W. Budge in 1910.[20] Opitz, on internal evidence, believes it to date from the period of the conflict with the Nitrian monks.[21] But Favale thinks that Theophilus' appeal to priests and monks in the twentieth paragraph is a more general call to them to remain faithful to their vocation.[22] I offer a corrected version of Budge's English translation, revised by Carol Downer, Robert Kirby and Basil Stein. I am most grateful to Carol Downer for checking Budge's printed Coptic text against the manuscript in the British Library (Brit. Mus. Oriental 5001). The notes marked CD have kindly been supplied by Carol Downer.

   These two Coptic homilies (6 and 7) are described cautiously by Orlandi as having 'some probability to be at least in part authentic'.[23] Geerhard, however, does not classify them with the 'Dubia et Spuria'.

TEXT

HOMILY ON THE MYSTICAL SUPPER
(PG 77. 1016C–1029B)

What gives greater pleasure or delight to those who love God and long for true life than to enjoy God permanently and dwell upon his divine memorials?[24] Those who seek satisfaction in food and drink and cultivate their own dangerous pleasures make the paltry flesh stronger and more arrogant. How much more so will those who carefully watch over their souls and have been nourished by the water of rest (cf. Ps. 23 [22]:2) – I mean the divine Gospel – shine forth adorned and decked, as the prophet says, with gold-woven clothing (Ps. 45 [44]:13)? 'They shall grow wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint' (Isa. 40:31).

We have now completed the spiritual race and arrived at the crown of the life-giving mysteries. The Lord's transcendent gifts are set before us as provisions of immortality. Come, then, all who feast on the sacraments,[25] all who share in a heavenly calling (cf. Heb. 3:1). Let us with the utmost zeal put on the wedding garment of unblemished faith. Let us run together to the mystical supper. Christ today is our host at the feast. Christ today waits on us. Christ, the lover of humanity, offers us refreshment. What we are speaking of fills us with awe. What we are celebrating inspires us with fear. The fatted calf is sacrificed. 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (Jn. 1:29) is slaughtered. The Father rejoices. The Son of his own accord is offered as sacrifice, not today by the enemies of God but by himself to demonstrate that his saving passion is voluntary.

Do you want me to give you the best possible proof of what I am saying? Pay no attention to the brevity or inadequacy of my expression. Pay attention to the nobility of those who have proclaimed these things in advance and their trustworthiness with regard to them. It was not some low-class people, riff-raff, members of the common herd rounded up by market-place lads, who preached these things on street corners. It was the great king Solomon who was sent ahead as herald of the universal sovereign. He who ruled over exalted thrones proclaimed the mysteries of the Most High. He who was robed in purple and wore a diadem on his head announced the order for the appointment and transfer of kings. Have you marked how great is the dignity of the herald? Look, too, at the force of what was foretold to you through him. 'Wisdom', he says, 'built herself a house, she has set up her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her victims, she has mixed her wine, she has also prepared her table. She has sent out her servants to call from the highest places in the town, saying, "Whoever is foolish, let him turn aside to me!" To those who lack sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave foolishness and live, and seek wisdom that you may live, and attain insight through knowledge"' (Prov. 9:1–6).[26]

These things, my beloved, are the types for you of what we are now celebrating. These things are the delights for you of the present banquet. The bountiful one is ready. The divine gifts are laid out, the mystical table has been prepared, the life-giving cup has been mixed. The King of Glory is summoning, the Son of God accepts, the incarnate Word of God invites. The substantive Wisdom[27] of God the Father, who prepared for herself a temple not made by human hands, distributes her own body as bread, and gives her own

life-giving blood as wine. O fearful mystery! O unutterable dispensation! O inconceivable condescension! O unsearchable compassion! The Creator lays himself out for the enjoyment of the creature. Life-in-itself offers himself to mortal beings as their food and drink. Come, eat my bread, he exhorts, and drink the wine I have mixed for you. I have prepared myself as food. I have mixed myself for those who desire me. Although I am life, I willingly became flesh. Although I am Word and substantive impress[28] of the Father, I voluntarily partook of flesh and blood for your salvation. 'Taste and see that I, the Lord, am good' (Ps. 34 [33]:8). You have tasted the fruit of disobedience and learned that the food of a bitter counsellor is itself bitter. Taste now the fruit of obedience that wards off evil and know that it is good and indeed profitable to obey God. You tasted at an inopportune time and you died. Eat at an opportune time and you will live. You chose to learn by experience the outcome of disobedience. Be taught by experience, too, the advantage of obedience. 'Taste and see that I, the Lord, am good (Ps. 34 [33]:8). Answer experience by experience. By the perception of evil you received the knowledge of disobedience. By the perception of good learn well the discernment of obedience. 'Taste and see that I, the Lord, am good' (Ps. 34 [33]:8). Adam did wrong to put out his hand and fail to honour my saving commandment. Not willing to acknowledge the Master's bidding and the servant's obedience, not willing to reject by faith the denial that springs from lack of faith, he put out his hand and made a terrible bargain. He sold the life of blessedness he held in his hand, trading it of his own free will for a pitiable death. He became the author of his own death of which he had been forewarned (cf. Gen. 2:17), a death which had no being. He made real that which did not exist. He took off the immortality he possessed by grace and of his own free will put on corruption.[29] He voluntarily made himself subject to judgement. By his act of rejection he learned to distinguish between my dominical commandment and the tempter's deceit. By subjecting the true precept to fallacious reasoning he procured himself the death that follows unbelief, and attained a likeness to folly.

For all these reasons I offer again the fruit of obedience towards me to all who have died through unbelief. Taste and see that I the Lord am most true in all things. It is not possible to derive a lie from truth, or to pluck the flower of death from life. Contraries are incapable of coexisting.[30] Eat me who am life and you will live, for that is what I desire. Eat life that does not pass away. That is why I came, that you may have life and have it abundantly (cf. Jn 10:10). Eat my

bread, for I am the life-giving seed of the grain, and 'I am the bread of life' (Jn 6:35). Drink the wine I have mixed for you, for I am the drink of immortality. Put away the foolishness of your impiety and you will live. Learn again through experience what is good and you will receive again through obedience those rewards of which the disobedience of your first ancestor deprived you. He was expelled from Paradise through disobedience. Enter it yourselves through obedience. Turn away from his impiety and acquire instead piety towards me, the Creator. Seek wisdom that you may live, and attain insight through knowledge of me (cf. Wisd. 9:6). If anyone is most foolish, let him turn aside to me and he will know the light of truth (cf. Wisd. 9:4). I am God first, I am also after, and apart from me God was not begotten of God the Father. 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me' (Jn 14:10). 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10:30). And 'he who has seen me has seen my Father' (Jn 14:9). 'I am the life and the resurrection' (Jn 11:25). 'I am the bread of life which came down from heaven and gives life to men' (cf. Jn 6:35, 41). Receive me like yeast in your dough, that you may share through me in everlasting life. 'I am the true vine' (Jn 15:1). 'Drink my gladness, the wine I have mixed for you' (cf. Prov. 9:5). For my cup inebriates me, like a powerful inebriating antidote, like joy against the sadness that welled up in Adam. 'See, I have prepared a table for you in the presence of those who afflict you' (Ps. 22 [23]:5). Adam treated Eden with insolence. I have settled him opposite that celebrated place, that by seeing for himself the delights that were no longer accessible he might be struck by a grief that never ceases to consume. In complete contrast again with those who afflict you, I have given you a table that brings life and joy, that requites those who have borne ill-will against you not with sorrow but with inexpressible joy. Eat bread that restores your nature; drink wine that generates the exultation of immortality. Eat bread that cleanses you of the ancient bitterness; drink wine that soothes the pain of the wound. This is nature's treatment room; this is the place of punishment of him who wounded you. For your sake I became as you are, though without changing my nature, that you might become through me 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4).[31] Change yourselves, then, for the good. Beautified, turn from the world to God, and from the flesh to spirit. I became the true vine amongst your race that you may bear in me fragrant fruit. Suckle the richness of my immortality and grow fat. I, the Lord, am the giver of food to all flesh, but in a different way to those who fear me, as David foretold when he said, 'The Lord is gracious and merciful; he provides

food for those who fear him' (Ps. 111 [110]:4–5). I once rained down manna on Israel, and sent down from heaven bread that was ready without labour. But my beloved dismissed the miracle and spurned it. 'And Israel did not know me, and my people did not understand' (Isa. 1:3). I give you my body, but not like those who ate the manna in the desert and died. For 'he who eats this bread will live for ever' (Jn 6:58).

Beloved, have you understood these things? Has the Lord's discourse on the ineffable mysteries of this most holy day been expounded with sufficient clarity? Or would you like to contemplate the glorious things of this day in a more exalted manner? For we shall explain them most willingly and bring into the open for the disciples of truth 'things into which angels long to look' (1 Pet. 1:12). We shall do this not to undermine the divine prophecies or explain them away but to clarify their relationship to their antecedents. Therefore pray for me, my loyal children, I beseech you, for I have entered on the last stage of my life poised, wizened and bent, on the verge of the upward journey.[32] Pray for me that the Lord may give me the power to speak with judgement and interpret the text worthily. And once you have raised me up, dearly beloved, like the Israelites raised up him who was once born among us, let us go together to the most renowned city of Sion. Let us contemplate that citadel in the mind's eye, how he who rules the ends of the earth prepared himself for the mystical supper, how he who sits on the Cherubim (cf. Ps. 18 [17]:10) reclined at the meal, how he who was eaten symbolically in Egypt acknowledges his own type, how he who was mystically sacrificed in Egypt[33] sacrifices himself voluntarily in Sion. By eating the type as the fullness of what is symbolized, he manifested the truth. He presented himself there and then as the food of life, that by uniting again the principle of what in his absolute wisdom was taught by him to the goal of what was prophesied by him, and prolonging the human race for ever in a common condition, he might make available the divine gifts of his love.

On these matters listen now to the narrative of the divine Gospels. 'For as they were eating, Jesus took bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this all of you; for this is the blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" ' (Mt. 26: 26–8). O the wonder! O that sacred rite! O that divine institution of a mystery! He guided through the letter; he perfected through the spirit. He instructed through the symbols; he endowed with grace

through the actions. In Sion he fulfilled the law of the letter; from Sion he proclaimed the law of grace.

Let us now turn to the rites celebrated in the course of the supper and consider their nature and their significance. 'He rose from supper,' it says, 'laid aside his garments, and taking a towel, girded himself with it. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded' (Jn 13:4–5). What is more astonishing than this? What is more awe-inspiring than this? He who put on light like a garment (cf. Ps. 104 [103]:2) girds himself with a towel. He who binds the water in clouds and has sealed the abyss with his fearful name (cf. Job 26:8) winds a girdle round his waist. He who gathers together the waters of the sea as in a bottle (cf. Ps. 33 [32]:7) pours water into a bowl. He who roofs in water his firmament (cf. Gen. 1:7) washed in water his disciples' feet. He who marked off the heavens with a span and enclosed the earth in a handful (cf. Isa. 40:12) cleansed his servants' feet with immaculate palms. He to whom 'every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2:10) bowed his neck to his servants. Angels saw it and were astounded; heaven observed it and shuddered; creation took note of it and was afraid.

Then 'he came to Simon Peter, and Peter says to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"' (Jn 13:6). 'Did I not earlier declare my own unworthiness, saying, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk. 5:8)? And now who am I that I should be so presumptuous? Surely this miserable nature of mine will be struck rigid and perish with fear if I accept this. Surely the whole of nature will reproach my arrogance if I have the audacity to aspire to this. Do not burden your servant, Master. Let not the sun witness Peter's rashness and withdraw its light from me. Spare Peter, your servant, Lord. I am not fit to be called your slave. You shall never wash my feet. I see and shudder; I understand and am astounded. God ministers to man; the king serves the subject; the master submits to the slave. Do not allow the world, I beseech you, to learn of Peter's impiety.'

But how did the wise dispenser of the rites respond to this? 'What I am doing you do not know now, Peter, but afterwards you will understand. Let me therefore perform this sacred service for you, too. If I do not, you have no part in me' (cf. Jn 13:7–8).

When the chief apostle heard this, he changed his attitude to obedience, and was at a loss what to reply. 'Alas, Lord,' he said, 'I am pressed on every side. Stubbornness is heavy, contradiction harmful, denial damaging, and consent most onerous to me. But let

God's command prevail, not your servant's resistance. Let God's wisdom prevail, not your servant's self-justification. I for my part deprecate my boldness. Do you permit me to stay and receive the sacred enactment. Do what you wish, Master; do what you feel is right, Lord. And for the sake of the good inheritance in you, wash not my feet only but also my hands and my head (cf. Jn 13:9). I now beseech you; I now importune you. May I succeed in attaining to the imitation of the divine that I may not be deprived of divine grace. May I succeed in fulfilling your adorable will, that I may not lose your joy. I will extend my feet; I will hold out my hands; I will bow my head. Only may I not be separated from the lot of my Lord. May I not lose the blessedness that passes all description. May I not conspire against my own interests by resisting God. Let the whole of creation know that today I have bought the kingdom of heaven for a basin.'

When the divine washing was finished, the Lord reclined again at the table and said to them, '"Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:12–15). Therefore imitate me, your Lord, that through my work of love you may "become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). This excellent way of exaltation I delineate in advance for you. I stooped to the ground long ago when I supplied a beginning of being and well-being for your race, and taking clay, formed man and procured the spirit for him upon the earth (cf. Gen. 2:7). And now I have been pleased to stoop again, to strengthen the foundations and footings of my ruined creation. I set enmity and a curse between the deceiver and the deceived, a guarding of head and heel (cf. Gen. 3:15). And now I am arming the bruised heel against the serpent that it should no longer limp on the straight road. "I strengthened your feet to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall harm you" (Lk. 10:19). Through pride the whisperer captured the eminence occupied by the earth-born ancestor of the human race. Allay this insolence in pleasant humility towards each other. Strive to attain this with all your strength. I am the Lord who gives grace to the humble and loathes arrogance. "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk. 18:14). That is why I command you to love one another. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"' (Jn 13:35).

Again I say, beloved, see how great is the dignity of this glorious day, the things celebrated for you with such splendour, the presence of God, the offering of the dread sacrifice, the gift of immortality, the pledge of everlasting life. On that account,[34] my dear ones and sharers in a heavenly calling (cf. Heb. 3:1), we shall imitate so far as possible Jesus, the author and perfecter of our salvation (cf. Heb. 12:2). Let us ardently desire a humility that soars heavenwards, a love that unites one to God,[35] and a pure faith with regard to the divine mysteries. Avoid schisms; shun discords; repudiate every kind of profane nonsense (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20), especially that which the empty-headed and beguiling (cf. Tit. 1:10) ministers of Satan have invented.[36] I mean those garbed in the eremitical but unquiet tunic of the new wisdom – the Lord commanded us to be extremely vigilant (cf. Mt. 7:15) because they are difficult to guard against on account of their animal-skin habits[37] – I mean those who have disturbed our spiritual fraternity and beloved peace, and in no small measure have caused disorders in your God-protected city. He who calmed the sea with a word (cf. Mt. 8:23) silenced their impious howling. For they have produced an erroneous doctrine about Christ our true God and have attempted with profane mouths to dissolve our hope of salvation – I mean our resurrection in Christ. Where are they now, these denyers of God, these solitary wolves? Dressed in the Christian faith, they deny its power, these unholy pseudo-Christians who reject the consubstantiality of Christ with the almighty Father on account of the Incarnation. Let these prattlers, more devoid of reason than any other men, therefore tell us with whose body the Church's sheep are fed (cf. Jn 21:17) or by what waters the nurslings of Truth are refreshed (cf. Ps. 23 [22]:2). For if it is the body of God that is distributed, then Christ the Lord is true God, not a mere man or an angel, as they claim, a minister and one of the incorporeal beings. And if the drink is the blood of God, then one of the adorable Trinity, the Son of God, is not unveiled Godhead but God the Word incarnate. If Christ's body is food and Christ's blood is drink (cf. Jn 6:55), yet Christ in their view is a mere man, how does one preach eternal life to those who approach the holy table? And how is he shared out here and everywhere and is not diminished? In no way is a mere body a fount of life for those who partake of it. Or do they call us false witnesses of God in the presence of God, the lover of truth, when we preach the truth openly and teach the mysteries delivered by God?

May the divine grace be merciful to us for having referred to polluted things in this most holy celebration. Therefore let us

partake of the body of life-in-itself, which for our sake tabernacled in our own nature. As the divine John says, 'The life was made manifest' (1 Jn 1:2). And again, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (Jn 1:4), who is Christ the Son of the living God (cf. Mt. 16:16), one of the Holy Trinity. And let us drink his holy blood in remission of our sins and as participation in the immortality it contains. We should believe that he remains simultaneously priest and victim, that he is both the one who offers and the one who is offered, that he receives and is distributed. For we should not divide the divine and indissoluble, yet at the same time unconfused, union of one of the all-honourable Trinity into two persons.[38] To him be glory and worship with the Father and the Holy Spirit for all eternity. Amen.

SERMON ON DEATH AND JUDGEMENT[39]
(PG 65. 200A–201A)

You are not unaware, my brethren,[40] of what fear and trembling and anguish we are to see when the soul is separated from the body. For an army and host of hostile powers comes towards us, the princes of darkness, the rulers of wickedness, principalities and powers, the spirits of wickedness (cf. Eph. 6:12). And with a degree of justice they arrest the soul, and charge it with all the sins it has committed, knowingly and in ignorance, from its youth up until the age when death overtook it. And so they stand, accusing it of all the things done by it. Well then, how much trembling do you think the soul will undergo in that hour until the verdict is given and it is allowed to go free? This is the hour of its anguish until it knows what the outcome is for it.

The divine powers, in turn, stand facing their opponents and bring forward the good things done by it. Understand, then, how much fear and trembling the soul experiences while standing between the two until its case receives judgement from the just judge.[41]

And if it is found worthy, its opponents are censured and it is seized by the other side. And then you are free from anxiety, or rather, you have your dwelling in accordance with the text: 'As of all who rejoice is the dwelling in you' (cf. Isa. 9:2–3). Then what is written will be fulfilled: 'Pain and sorrow and sighing flee away' (cf. Isa. 35:10, 51:11). Then delivered, the soul journeys to that unutterable joy and glory, in which it will be established. But if it is found to have lived in negligence, it hears those terrible words: 'Let

the impious be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord' (cf. Isa. 26:10). Then the soul is overtaken by the day of wrath, the day of affliction, the day of darkness and gloom. Delivered to the outer darkness, and to everlasting fire, it will be punished for ages without end. Then where is the world's vanity? Where is vainglory? Where is self-indulgence? Where is relaxation? Where is imagining? Where is repose? Where is boasting? Where is money? Where is noble birth? Where is father? Where is mother? Where is brother? Which of these can deliver a soul burning in fire and gripped by bitter torments?

When these things occur in this way, what sort of effort should we make to lead a holy and pious life? What sort of love should we acquire? What manner of life? What regime? What path? What kind of observance? What kind of prayer? What kind of security against stumbling? 'Therefore,' as Scripture says, 'since we wait for these, let us be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace' (cf. 2 Pet. 3:14), that we might be found worthy to hear him saying, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34). May this come to pass through the grace and mercy of God, to whom be praise for all eternity.[42] Amen.

SERMON ON PROVIDENCE
(Mai, *Patrum Nova Bibliotheca* 6. 164)

(a) *Of Theophilus bishop of Alexandria from the sermon on providence*: The psalmist expounds the trustworthiness of these when he sings: 'Our fathers have declared to us the work which he did in their days, in the days of old' (Ps. 44 [43]:1). For so long as the definition stands, it does not violate the nature of the things themselves, since it is constructed from the differences between genera.[43] That their combination remains undivided is made clear by their own proper operations. If one applies the definition to inappropriate things, one actually dissolves it.

(b) *From the same sermon*: A definition of a human being, if we may now also touch on this topic, is that such a being is a rational, mortal animal.[44] If one were to dissolve the combined difference of animals, one would introduce something different by separating the animal from its definition. And if one were to remove from the definition of a human being either the mortal element, or the rational, or that a human being is essentially an animal, one would destroy

humanity's existence altogether. For it is from these that our nature in the present life is derived, constituted as it is by combinations of dissimilar things. If one conceives of a human being only as a mortal animal without adding to this the attribute of rationality, one excludes the more honourable element and does not allow human beings to differ in any way from the beasts.

SERMON ON THE WOMAN SUFFERING FROM A FLOW OF BLOOD

(Mansi 10. 1092CD; Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum*, 120)

(a) *Of Saint Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, from the sermon on the woman suffering from a flow of blood*: Although our Saviour on the cross said, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mt. 27:46), it does not signify here that he was far from the Father. No, he uttered this cry because of the innate clinging of the body to its own life on the approach of death. It was also to show by this means that he was joined to our likeness not in some illusory fashion but in reality and truth.

(b) *Of Theophilus of Alexandria from the sermon on repentance*:[45] Hunger and thirst and growing weary were not properties of the Godhead but distinctive bodily features. Similarly, the cry, 'Why hast thou forsaken me' (Mt. 27:46) was characteristic of a more bodily utterance, the created body in no way wishing to be deprived of the life natural to it. If even the Saviour himself said this, it was because he made the body's weakness his own, while remaining the power and wisdom of God. For the body was not that of any ordinary man, but of the Saviour himself, which he constructed for himself from Mary. That is why he said, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Mt. 26:41).

SERMON ON THE TEXT 'JESUS WENT ABOUT ALL GALILEE'

(Matt. 4:23) (PG 65. 65A)

'The Lord reigns; he has robed himself in majesty' (Ps. 93 [92]:1). Because he assumed a corruptible body, he robed it in majesty when he raised it not as corruptible but as incorruptible. 'The Lord reigns;

he has robed himself in majesty.' For when he rose again, he received his own body, in accordance with his personal promise, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up' (Jn 2:19). What he raised up he therefore put on as his body. For he said, 'Thou didst not give up my soul to Hades, or let thy holy one see corruption' (Ps. 16 [15]:10). And moreover, 'My flesh will dwell in hope' (Ps. 16 [15]:9). When he rose from the dead, he did not remain in the tomb, and when he was in the tomb, he did not see corruption. Corruption did not prevail over him. The incorruptible Word raised the corruptible body to incorruption.

HOMILY ON THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE GOOD THIEF

(Rossi, *Memorie*, 244–50)

The sun of righteousness appeared in the east, and gave light to those who were in darkness and in the shadow of death (cf. Lk. 1:79). The king of righteousness adorned himself with the diadem of the kingdom and all his enemies bowed down at his feet (cf. Ps. 72 [71]:9). A fragrant odour arose on the altar of salvation; the evil smell was blotted out by the perfume of his ointment.

The powerful lion sprang up out of the wood; all the wild beasts hid in their dens. The holy physician came to us with his medicines of life. All those who are afflicted receive medicine without charge. Joy spread throughout the whole of creation. All the abandoned rejoiced with him, because like a city encircled and besieged by a hostile king, the hearts of all its inhabitants are in great distress. Just when they are oppressed, abandoned and groaning, the king who rules over the city receives word of his enemy's audacity, how he was planning to massacre the inhabitants. And so he assembles all his own people and trains them how to shoot his own arrows of war. Once his own people had learned how to wage war with his enemies, they marched against them with joy, knowing that they would defeat his enemies with great slaughter.

This, if you like, is the way of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he saw the real enemy of the whole human race, who is the devil. For the devil invaded the whole earth, and afflicted everyone with many kinds of sins, which he spreads with these great scourges, namely, idolatry, robbery, vanity, fornication, theft, murder, slander, licentiousness, envy, hatred, contempt, anger, sorcery, pollution, fraud, arrogance, perjury, falsehood, corruption, prostitution, deceit and

whatever is similar to them. These are the traps which the devil set for humanity, until he brought it to perdition and dispersed it.

Well now, let us consider in what way Christ the king made war against the devil until he released our souls from him and set them free. Let us begin, then, to penetrate the great treasure house full of the fruits of life. This is the great holy mystery of the wood of the cross, on which the true God, Jesus Christ, mounted out of love.

When he descended into this world, he came to the people of Israel and preached to them, saying, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. 4:17). But they paid no heed to his holy counsels. After this he performed all the signs of his divinity in their presence, miracles without number. He made the blind see, the lame walk and the deaf hear. He healed lepers. He brought the dead back to life. He drove out demons. He made paralytics stand on their feet and forgave their sins. He made tax gatherers repent. He straightened vainglorious hands. He evangelized the poor. He remitted the sins of adulteresses and purified them with his divinity, restoring them to a virginal state. It was because an adulterous woman was made worthy of this great grace that her hands anointed the feet of him who had created her (cf. Lk. 7:37–8). From the moment she participated in the purity of his divinity, the voice of God came to her: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace' (Lk. 7:50).

In spite of all these things accomplished by him in their presence, they did not give him credence, but seized him and delivered him to be crucified. Having brought him into the court of the High Priest, they treated him with contempt rather than honour. Then the word of Scripture was fulfilled: 'They brought evils upon me instead of blessings, and hatred instead of my love' (Ps. 109 [108]:5).

What, then, are the evils which the people he created, the people who killed him, did to him? They are terrible to describe or to hear. My tongue trembles, my eye weeps, my spirit groans, my soul is distressed to utter them. It is God that they have seized, the Lord that they have bound, the king of glory that they have crucified. Jesus Christ is the one that they have bound. They have pierced with nails the hands of him who created them. They slapped the face of their Lord. They beat his head with their fists. They placed a crown of thorns on his head. They dressed him in a purple cloak. They gave him vinegar and gall. On this day[46] they did all these things to him. They crucified with him two thieves. One of them, who was unworthy of the vision of his divinity, said to the Lord, deriding him: 'If you are the Christ, save yourself and us' (Lk. 23:39). The other replied, rebuking him with indignation: '"Do you not fear

God? We are receiving the due reward of our sins which we have committed, but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus said to him with great joy, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise"' (cf. Lk. 23:40–3).

'The gate of Paradise has been closed since the time when Adam transgressed, but I will open it today, and receive you in it. Because you have recognized the nobility of my head on the cross, you who have shared with me in the suffering of the cross will be my companion in the joy of my kingdom. You have glorified me in the presence of carnal men, in the presence of sinners. I will therefore glorify you in the presence of the angels. You were fixed with me on the cross, and you united yourself with me of your own free will. I will therefore love you, and my Father will love you, and the angels will serve you with my holy food. If you used once to be a companion of murderers, behold, I who am the life of all have now made you a companion with me. You used once to walk in the night with the sons of darkness; behold, I who am the light of the whole world have now made you walk with me. You used once to take counsel with murderers; behold, I who am the Creator have made you a companion with me.

'All these things I will pardon you because you have confessed my divinity in the presence of those who have denied me. For they saw all the signs which I performed, but did not believe in me. You, then, a rapacious robber, a murderer, a brigand, a swindler, a plunderer have confessed that I am God. That is why I have pardoned your many sins, because you have loved much (cf. Lk. 7:47). I will make you a citizen of Paradise. I will wash your body so that it will not see corruption before I resurrect it with me on the third day and take you up with me. The other who has denied me will see you enveloped in glory, but he will be enveloped in pain and shame. He will see you surrounded by light, but he will be surrounded by darkness. He will see you in a state of joy and happiness, but he will be in a state of weeping and groaning. He will see you enjoying ease and benediction, but he will be suffering oppression and malediction. He will see you refreshed by the angels, but he will be troubled by the powers of darkness. And in the midst of intense cold the worm that never rests will consume him.[47] Not only did he not confess me, but after having denied me he reviled me.

'For this reason all will receive according to their works. For as I have already said to them explicitly and in public: "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my

Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven"' (Mt. 10:32–3).

See now, brethren, what torment the man who denied the Lord brought upon himself! We should therefore watch over ourselves that we should not be led astray, that for the sake of the things of this life we should not be made strangers to him who has created us. Perhaps there is someone today who is denying God for the sake of riches, because the love of money closes the eyes of those who are given to it. Such a person takes the part of Judas. He has sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

It is therefore good for us to direct our concerns towards the Lord, since it is he who takes care of us [. . .].[48] Let us turn now to the goal proposed to us by the cross. For the ladder which Jacob contemplated that was fixed to the ground and reached up to heaven, on which the angels of the Lord ascended and descended (cf. Gen. 28:12), is our Lord Jesus Christ raised up on the wood of the cross. The angels [. . .] surrounded the cross, attending to his will.

Consider and contemplate God's mercy and great patience. He looks down from on high and sees his only-begotten Son nailed to the wood, and is longsuffering in his great bounty. For him, then, they still pierce our Lord Jesus Christ's holy hands with nails, they still slap his face, they still beat his head with fists, they still give him vinegar mixed with gall to drink, they still divide his garments by lot, and they still break a cane on his head. And in spite of all these things, he does not grow angry, nor has he any rancour in his heart against them.

Do you want to know the truth? I will not tell you; listen to him. After all these things he cried out, saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Lk. 23:34). Do you realize how great is the Father's mercy towards us, and that of his Son, who mounted on the cross for the salvation of the entire created world? For the moment he was hung on the cross, he purified the whole of creation, the things of heaven and the things below. His divine body, then, hanging on the cross made the whole air clean and pure. With the shedding of his sacred blood, the whole earth was equally purified of its contamination. Moreover, his divinity descended into Hades, despoiled it, and released the souls shut up in darkness, setting them free. For this is what he promised us with his mouth of truth, which in all eternity has never uttered any falsehood.

'If they exalt me on earth, I will draw them to me' (cf. Mt. 10:32). In another place it says, 'I will draw them to me with the chains of my love' (cf. Jn 12:32). What great love, then, is equal to this, which

makes him mount up on the wood of the cross and surrenders him voluntarily to imprisonment? For if it was not of his own free will, who would have been able to seize him? For who could ever have seized God, the Creator?

At the moment the impudent Jews surrounded him to arrest him, he asked them with great mercy, 'Whom do you seek with swords and clubs?' (cf. Lk. 22:52). But they replied in their pride, hardness of heart and arrogance, saying, 'We seek Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, saying, 'I am he' (Jn 18:5). The ray of light of his divinity struck their faces and they fell to the ground (cf. Jn 18:6). Likewise in his great mercy he made them stand up because perhaps they would repent. But they stood up and seized his disciples with real harshness.

God does all these things, then, in his desire to save us. Otherwise in that hour he would have brought it about that the earth would have opened its mouth and they would have descended through the opening into the place of their Ninevite brother, along with the other brothers whom the earth opened its mouth and swallowed. I refer to Dathan and Abiram and the sons of Korah, the men who rebelled against Moses (cf. Num. 16:1–33).

Let us turn now to the holy grandeur of the precious cross. Let us speak of it, and let us become acquainted with the prophecies which the prophets spoke concerning it from beginning to end. Therefore expand your uncultivated minds and listen in silence. Come, let us open up the great holy treasury. Let us draw out the spiritual ornaments. Let us adorn our souls with the love of the word. Invoke with me the friend of God and man, the giver of hospitality to the angels, I mean Abraham, the companion of God.

Come, Abraham, tell me what the typological meaning is of that thicket to which the ram was tied. Its name is *sabek* (Gen. 22:13). The interpretation of *sabek* is the Saviour's place of repose, that is, the wood of the cross upon which the Lamb of God mounted with great splendour to bring about the great economy of salvation, and on which he died in the form of a man.[49] He will go up to his field having suffered through his labour. He lies on his bed and rests from his suffering. This is the manner in which the Saviour acted. For his bed on which he lay is the cross, which neither suffers, nor causes pain, nor torments, nor debilitates, nor perturbs, nor gets angry with those who pierce his hands with nails, nor gets impatient with those who place a crown of thorns on his head, nor does it rebuke those who strike his face with blows, nor does it bear rancour in its heart against those who offer vinegar and gall to his sacred mouth, nor

does it contend with those who deride him, nor does it get irritated with those who divide his garments by lot.

Do you want to know the truth? Listen, I will tell you it. I will say to you again that while they do all these things to him, he turned his eyes towards heaven and prayed to his Father, saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Lk. 23:34). At the same time you should be aware that God the Father determines at what hour to send down on them his irrevocable anger, even as the voice of his Only-begotten ascends to him, beseeching him to put aside the indignation of his anger.

He sent a powerful angel and rent the curtain of the temple from top to bottom, tearing it into two. The earth shook, the rocks were split, the sun, that great source of light, was obscured and darkness filled the world to cover his sacred body on the cross, for it was stripped of his clothing which they had divided (cf. Mt. 27:45, 51; Lk. 23:44–5).

Ponder, then, my beloved, and reflect on God's mercy towards the world. He who had clothed the whole of creation was despoiled of his own clothing. He was left naked on the wood of the cross. But the sun, that wise minister, covered its Lord with darkness, which endured until the eyes of those atheists were dimmed, so that they should not see the great mystery that lay on the wood of the cross, for they are not worthy of it.

For he who was worthy of contemplating it at that hour saw the accomplishment of the mystery of his divinity. Who was ever worthy of this great glory at that hour?

Let us examine this. The Father contemplates it from heaven. The thief, too, after ascending to the height of the cross, contemplates all the things that had taken place, and rejoices and exults to see them. Who has ever seen them? The host of angels surrounds the cross and praises him with hymns. The Father looks down from heaven, giving glory to his Only-begotten. All the air is in motion because the body of the Creator is suspended on high. All the earth rejoices because the blood of its king is sprinkled upon it.

He purified all the germinating plants because the Lord was suspended on the wood of the cross – the wood of immortality, the wood of incorruptibility, the wood of the remitter of sins, the wood of the restorer to health, the wood of the giver of life, the wood of the provider of fruit, the wood full of peace, the wood full of rejoicing, the wood full of joy, the wood full of sweetness, the wood full of health, the wood full of benediction, the wood full of all the

graces through the work of Jesus Christ, of him who was suspended on the wood of the cross.

In my view, the whole of creation is established and confirmed in the shape of the cross. It is the cross that produces a new man from the old, signing him in the holy baptistery with the oil that seals. It is the cross that purifies him. [It is the cross that opposes, that is, that combats obstacles and drives them away.][50]

The cross is the completion of the sacred mystery. For when the bread and wine are sacrificed on the holy altar, they are no longer bread and wine as before, but a divine body and a sacred blood.

The cross is the consolation of those who are afflicted by their sins. The cross is the straight highway. Those who walk on it do not go astray. The cross is the lofty tower that gives shelter to those who seek refuge in it. The cross is the sacred ladder that raises humanity to the heavens. The cross is the holy garment that Christians wear. The cross is the helper of the wretched, assisting all the oppressed. The cross is that which closed the temples of the idols and opened the churches and crowns them.[51] The cross is that which has confounded the demons and made them flee in terror. The cross is the firm constitution of ships admired for their beauty. The cross is the joy of the priests who dwell in the house of God with decorum. The cross is the immutable judge of the apostles. The cross is the golden lampstand whose holy cover gives light. The cross is the father of orphans, watching over them. The cross is the judge of widows, drying the tears of their eyes. The cross is the consolation of pilgrims. The cross is the companion of those who are in solitude. The cross is the ornament of the sacred altar. The cross is the affliction of those who are bitter. The cross is our help in our hour of bodily need. The cross is the administration of the demented. The cross is the steward of those who entrust their cares to the Lord. The cross is the purity of virgins. The cross is the solid preparation. The cross is the physician who heals all maladies.

Come, peoples of all the earth, rejoice, celebrate today because the Lord reigns from the wood. All you that move in the waters raise your spirits, because the blood was shed mingled with water. All you birds of the sky flap your wings with joy, because he extended his arms on the cross, and the perfume filled the whole air. Wild animals of the desert rejoice, because his preaching to you was bountiful.

You have seen now how great is the majesty of the cross, its power and the great help it gives to all creation. For when a man extends his arms in the shape of a cross and prays with faith, the angels compete among themselves to satisfy his request. Zechariah prayed

and the angel Gabriel came to him and granted his request (cf. Lk. 1:13). John [. . .]. Peter prayed and the angel came to him and the iron chains were loosed and the iron gate opened of its own accord (cf. Acts 12:6–10). He prayed likewise and restored Tabitha to life (cf. Acts 9:36–41). In the same way, too, Cornelius prayed with faith and the angel appeared to him and granted his request: Peter came to him and baptized him (cf. Acts 10:1–48). Paul and Silas were lying in prison and also prayed in the form of the cross. The angel at once came to them, shook the prison, and the doors all opened immediately, and everyone's fetters were unfastened (cf. Acts 16: 25–6). Moses prayed and God came to him and defeated the Amalekites (cf. Ex. 17:11–12). Tobias prayed, and the angel Raphael came to him and healed him (cf. Tob. 3:16–17).

Let us therefore pray without interruption in every season and in every place, and we shall be delivered from every temptation. For the Apostle said, 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thes. 5:17). Even with demoniacs, it is prayer that heals them. The Lord said, 'This nation cannot be saved except by prayer and fasting' (cf. Mk 9:29; Mt. 17:21).

That is why, you see, we gather here together for five days and five nights [. . .].[52]

HOMILY ON REPENTANCE AND SELF-CONTROL[53]

(Budge, *Coptic Homilies*, 212–25)

The prophet has said, 'My tears have been my food day and night' (Ps. 42 [41]:3), and again, 'A worn and humble heart God will not despise' (cf. Ps. 51 [50]:17). Let us therefore, my dear brethren, afflict our souls now with fasting while giving our bodies over to death through many kinds of suffering, until we have become companions to the angel of repentance, that he may direct his path towards us. The saints delivered their bodies over to death until they overcame the one who was opposed to them, according to the text, 'For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered' (Rm. 8:36; cf. Ps. 44 [43]:22). And again, the Apostle taught us, saying, 'Put to death those things that pertain to the earthly members: immorality, impurity, passion, and evil desire' (Col. 3:5).

Whenever we deliver ourselves over to affliction through fasting and prayer and nights of vigil, and crucify both our bodies and our souls, we apply to ourselves the cry of the psalmist David: 'Thou hast

examined me by fire; thou hast not found wickedness of heart' (Ps. 17 [16]:3). Then the angel of repentance will come, and will root out the evil weeds which the devil has planted in our midst. And he will plant instead the fruits of the Spirit, in accordance with what the Apostle said: 'The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, gentleness of heart, purity' and those that follow after them (cf. Gal. 5:22).

Repentance, brethren, will then quickly come and dwell in us. It will fill our members and purge away all our sins. It will burn up in us all pride of heart, all anger, all wickedness, every evil thing and every evil thought. It will force the virtues to come and dwell in our souls, planting each one in its place. It will straightaway root out anger and plant in its place long-suffering. It will root out arrogance and plant in its place humility. It will root out enmity and plant in its place peace. It will root out envy and hatred and drive them from our midst. And it will crown us with peace and love. It will carry away from us carelessness and slothfulness and will arouse us to prayer, night vigils, meditation and recitation of psalms and spiritual hymns.

Consider repentance again, brethren, and observe how great an abundance of fruit it produces in the man who repents, making all his members put forth shoots like a tree flourishing by a stream.

O repentance, how great are your consolations: the joy that is rooted in grief, and the happiness that is born of tears. The fruits of repentance ripen fully in the strength of the Spirit. For even if he who repents keeps silent, the fruits of repentance show in his face. Beautiful are you, O repentance, in your soft gentleness, your quiet speech, and your appearance, which is a rebuke to all of us, for you are the one who has pointed out the way for all the saints to the contest and to suffering.

Come then, my beloved, and adorn repentance with the apparel of your fasting. Anoint her with the perfume of your prayers. Crown her with the humility of your tears, so that when all the other excellences besides see the beauty of the apparel in which you have decked her, they will then gather together and come and dance among those which are of the soul. Moreover, when these make their home in your midst, they will render you free from sin. Behold, where now are the body's carelessness and burden? Or where are the disturbances of the passions? Or where are profane thoughts and everything that is evil? Or where are envy, hatred and disputes? Or where are anger and wickedness? Where are arrogance and indeed cruel words? Where are fornication, impurity, and adultery? Where are vanity and splendid apparel? Where are profligacy, eating,

imbibing and drunkenness? Where are idleness and pampered living?[54] Who is there who would not wish to be a companion of repentance, and make himself a stranger to all evil things, which blind the eyes of our hearts, making them incapable of seeing the marvellous light?

For through her excellences repentance endows us with wings like an eagle and makes us soar to the heights. A person who repents, and becomes practised in enduring hunger and thirst, eagerly awaits the good things of heaven which will last for all eternity. Therefore, my beloved, let us subdue our bodies by fasting, prayer and nights of vigil, that we may share in his promises of heavenly things, in accordance with the text, 'You are those who have endured with me in my trials; as my Father established a kingdom for me, so do I establish it for you that you may eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom' (Lk. 22:28–30).

Moreover, brethren, let us realize how honourable is the condition of repentance, and appreciate the gifts of grace she has given us. It is repentance who is the food of those who suffer hunger and the fountain of the waters of life to those who are thirsty. It is repentance who is the consolation of those who spend their nights in vigil, consoling them with the fruits of their suffering. It is repentance whose tears are a perfumed delight to God's angels. It is repentance who is the help of those who have despaired of themselves.

Let us consider the solidarity she showed with the people of Nineveh, when she invited them to embrace her out of her love for humanity, and when they hastened to open themselves to her in great abasement, and in tears and sackcloth (cf. Jon. 3:4–5). Now, it was not only the people who put on sackcloth, but also the domestic animals (cf. Jon. 3:8). And when the almighty, the good and merciful and compassionate God saw such great fruits as these in the hand of repentance, which she poured out before the throne of mercy, not only did he reverse his sentence of condemnation, but even made the prophet Jonah's word false, since he did not destroy the city (cf. Jon. 3:10).

And now, my beloved, do not abandon repentance, for what will you find to adorn you in your sufferings like repentance? On the contrary, let us load her with honours in recompense for the good things she has brought us from on high. Of what kind are the good things she has brought us from on high? And again of what kind are the good things we shall give her? They are fasting and pure prayer with our hands stretched out and our hearts in the highest heaven. Give her humility and sighing, for through these the angels become

companions of men. Give her tears, for these quench the threats of Gehenna. Give her faith and hope, for these make one draw near to God. Give her compassion and love for one another, and charity, for these qualities cover a multitude of sins completely and blot them out at the judgement. Moreover, after all the good things of this kind, let none of us be deceived and return again to the filthiness of sin after repentance, like the dog which returns to its vomit (cf. Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet. 2:22) and is therefore held in abomination.

But I entreat you, my beloved, to guard yourselves with the greatest care, and not omit anything which can augment our treasure. For our enemy takes counsel against us at all times; the thief and robbers are always conspiring against the place where our property is stored. Since this is so, my beloved, and since the Comforter, the Spirit is looking upon us with mercy, let us pour out our tears daily to God that they may go ahead of us as messengers before we depart from the body. Let us repent in the measure of our forgiveness, with the saints as our companions to act with us in supplication. Let us not be constrained, but seek repentance and not fail to find her.

Let us not permit ourselves to fall into tribulation, for God will not listen to us in the other world. Let us not allow ourselves to fall into the hands of the merciless who will make us endure suffering, for even if we cry out, they will not pay heed to us. Let us not allow them to cast us into Gehenna. But let us pursue repentance in this world, for there is no repentance in the next. There the avenging angels will answer and say to us angrily and threateningly: 'Why do you cry out in vain? This is not the place in which to cry out.' And they will reproach us for the offences we have committed, and rebuke us because of what we have heeded.[55] And the saints will accuse us and bring their appeal to God because of us, saying, 'We endured and cried out until our throats were raw.'[56]

Then immediately the angels of wrath, who are in charge of the punishments, will bind the souls of sinners in chains and cast them into the deepest pit of hell. And they will inflict their punishments on them with all their strength. And if we suffer pain and weep there, who will listen to us? Who will show compassion on us in the other world? Or who will take away our tears and carry them to the places of compassion? Or who is there among the saints who will intercede with God on account of our tribulation and the necessity in which we find ourselves, if we die before we have repented of our sins? Those things we left undone in the world while we were in the body, where will we find them to help us in the other world? Neither gold, nor

silver, nor vineyards, nor any possessions will be of any help to us in the other world. Neither will a father have the power to seek out his son in the other world, nor will a mother have the power to seek out her daughter, nor will a son have the power to help his parents, nor will a brother have the power to help his brother. None of these will become the redeemer of our miserable souls, but each will bear his own burden of the punishments to which he is condemned.

Moreover, the Saviour concluded by saying that 'he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who will not leave his son or daughter and take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me, and will not inherit the kingdom of heaven' (cf. Mt. 10:37–8; 19:29). O how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God at the hour of our visitation! (cf. Heb. 10:31). The holy Apostle is explaining these words for us when he says, 'Wretched man that I am! Who is it that will deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7:24). What great terror is this, and what great tribulation will come upon all souls at the moment they are separated from our limbs!

In that hour the deepest mist of darkness will enshroud us, and the blackness will cover our eyes and block out all light. And our hearts will be greatly perturbed because of those beings that will come for us. They will be perturbed by the horror of their forms as they deal with us, by the appearance of their faces, by their gnashing teeth, their furious eyes, their quivering limbs, their roaring mouths, and by every form of cruelty that they use against us in their eagerness to devour us.

When we see all these things before us, what shall we say? Or what words shall we utter? Or how shall our mouths speak? And where can we flee to? Or where shall we hide? It will be impossible to escape from their clutches, and equally impossible to flee to any place besides the presence of God. For it is written, 'Whither can I flee from thy face, or whither can I flee from thy Spirit?' (Ps. 139 [138]:7). Let us therefore now recognize what the medicines are that will cure us of this great sickness, or what it is that will give us shelter during such a great affliction. Neither silver, nor gold, nor possessions, nor riches will do, for none of these can bring about our healing. Not even the whole world or anything in it can help us. The only medicine we shall find to cure us is prayer, fasting and humility, for it is such things as these that have the power to protect us in the hour of our need.

Let us keep in remembrance the Lord of all things, Jesus, the Son of the living God, who fashioned everything that breathes, the

heavens, the earth, the sea, and the rivers. He is the Lord of everything in heaven and on earth. To him alone belongs power. He has his being in the Father, and the Father has his being in him. He cries out, saying: 'My Father, deliver me from this hour' (cf. Mk. 14:35). And again, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt' (Mt. 26:39). And he prayed till a third time, saying, 'If this be thy will, let it come to pass' (cf. Mt. 26:42–4).

Mark and consider these dread words which the Lord of all uttered, he who was not afraid of death, for it is he who has power over death, and it is he who is its Master. But it was as God, living in exalted glory, but having appeared in the lowly form of a human being, that he might taste of death on behalf of all that he uttered them. For it was fitting that he should do so, and that they should deliver him over into the hands of sinners. That is why he proclaimed to all that the necessity for the death which must come upon all human beings in their last hour was compelling. That day will be a day of tribulation, necessity and sighing, until we have passed by this great danger, so full of terror.

If we have made repentance a fellow-worker with us, we shall find her at once, and we shall proclaim her at the feet of God, the Father of Good, who will deliver us from all these necessities, and from the tribulations which will come upon us. And she will lift us out of the hands of those cruel, pitiless angels. And if we have made humility a fellow-worker with us, she will never cease to supplicate God, until he has scattered these adversaries, and taken us in gladness to the bosom of the saints in the land of the living. And if we have made love a fellow-worker with us, she will never cease to cry out to the Merciful One, the Father of compassion, until he has driven these adversaries from us, and we have been taken with gladness into the glorious sanctuary of the heavenly Jerusalem, and been presented as gifts to the Beloved.

But if we have none of these as fellow-workers with us, then you should know that when we are in torment, and cry out under punishment, and weep in misery, no mercy of any kind whatsoever will be shown to us. On the contrary, the avenging angels will vent their fury upon us. They will revile us mercilessly and inflict most just punishments upon us. Moreover, in that other world no pity will exist with which they may show compassion to souls. But rather there will be bitter-hearted ones whose appointed work will only be to inflict torments on the souls of sinners.

What a terrible thing it will be to fall into those places from which there can be no deliverance. For it is written that he who does not fear will find himself in the places never deserving any visitation (cf. Mt. 13:40–42; 25:41, 46). O what a terrible state! And what will you say in your defence, you who have borne the sacred names of priests and monks, and yet have treated the commandments of God with contempt? The sinners enduring punishment there will revile you, and say to you: 'It was unavoidable for us to commit sins because we were caught up in the cares of life, and were led astray by the error of matter. But as for you, what are you doing here? And why are you suffering these endless punishments? Are you not those who wore the garb of piety in the world?' How great their disgrace will be in that other world, for it has no fixed term but will endure for ever. My beloved, God forbid that this great state of misery should come upon us. On the contrary, let us strive against it with all our strength, that we may obtain for ourselves the great glory of the other world, in which all the saints are arrayed. Pray, my beloved, that we may attain this glory, for it is the glory that endures forever.

Let us repent, then, my beloved and my brethren; let us weep continuously before the Saviour, until his voice comes to us in joy, saying, 'Your sins are forgiven you' (Mt. 9:2; Lk. 5:20, 23; 7:48). For the shedding of tears of repentance moves God to compassion that he might look upon you and have mercy on you. It is the shedding of tears of repentance that makes the Holy Spirit quickly enter into you and take up his abode in you. By the shedding of tears of repentance God restores you and makes you a new creature again. He returns to you the fruit of your suffering that brings salvation. For the shedding of tears does not happen without a change of heart, and a change of heart does not happen in those who pass their lives in wantonness and amusement. Nor does repentance flourish in someone who is sated with indolence. But through the suffering of fasting and the hungering of the flesh, your heart will learn humility and you will seek repentance and sigh for your sins.

And now, my beloved, let us keep careful watch over our lives at all times, as if they were making supplication for us to become faithful through the Lord. See what a multitude of sufferings our Lord and Saviour, Christ, endured on our behalf! For what evil did he do, and who in all creation is there who can rebuke him for sin? No, he endured all these sufferings on behalf of us sinners, that he might bestow on us this great salvation of repentance.

Let the eyes of our heart contemplate the nails which were driven through his holy hands, as he hung on the wood of the cross for our

sins, and his side which they pierced with a spear, causing it to discharge blood and water (cf. Jn 19:34), and the reed with which they struck him on his head (cf. Mt. 27:30), and the shameless servant who struck him on his face and he was silent. And when he was thirsty on the cross, they had no compassion on him, but gave him vinegar mixed with gall to drink. In fulfilling all these things, he bore himself in patience and love for humanity's sake, for he wished to make us partakers with him in his sufferings that we might inherit with him the kingdom of heaven. And he spoke, saying, 'He who loves me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (cf. Mt. 16:24). Moreover, the holy Apostle Paul himself recognizes the honour of the cross and therefore cries out, saying, 'Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal. 6:14). And again he says, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal. 2:20). And again, 'Without sufferings one is powerless to please God' (cf. Rom. 12:1–2). And again, 'If we endure sufferings with him, we shall also reign with him' (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12).

Therefore, my beloved, let us also be prudent and watchful. For our adversary the devil prowls around roaring like the lions, seeking to devour our souls (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8), and wishing to make us strangers to these great goods. Blessed, then, are those who resist him firmly in the faith, for they are those who will receive glory with Jesus, in accordance with his saying, 'You are those who have endured patiently with me in my trials. And I establish a kingdom for you as my Father establishes one for me, so that you shall eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom' (cf. Lk. 22:28–30). Blessed is he who has endured suffering through fasting and prayers, through night vigils and sighing. For Christ shall exalt him and he shall eat and drink at the feast of the saints in freedom.[57] Blessed is he who has shown himself to be compassionate, and a lover of his neighbour through love for God, for he shall be consoled in the bosom of Abraham in the kingdom of heaven. Blessed is he who has become soaked in tears shed for the sins he has committed, for he shall escape from the place of weeping and of gnashing of teeth. Blessed is he who has grieved for his sins, for he shall rejoice with God and his angels in the age of light. Blessed is he who has given his bread to one who is hungry, for he shall be filled with the bread of life in heaven (cf. Mt. 25:35). Blessed is he who has clothed the naked, for his sins shall be covered over on the day of judgement (cf. Mt. 25:36). Blessed is he who shows mercy to the poor, for mercy will be shown

to him (cf. Mt. 5:7). He shall be worthy to hear those glad and joyful words, 'Come, blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34). And again, he says: 'Whoever gives to one of these little ones a cup of very cold water to drink, truly, I say to you, his reward shall not be lost' (Mt. 10:42). Blessed is he who has forgiven his neighbour when he sinned against him, for if he has, the promissory note which has been drawn up against him will be torn up, as also that which he has of everyone else.[58] Blessed are those who shall frequent the church daily, both morning and evening, and especially at the time of receiving from the holy mysteries of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. For through these he shall become united to the angels in heaven, as he sees them face to face, and answers them mouth to mouth with their salutation of 'Alleluia'.

Therefore, my beloved, we must not give sleep to our eyes or slumber to our eyelids either by day or by night, that we may escape all evil. For the enemy lies in wait for us and creeps up on us through a multitude of insidious sins. If he does not come through negligence, he will come through ignorance. If he does not come through arrogance, he will come through anger. If he does not come through vainglory, he will come through fornication. If he does not come through remissness, he will come through hatred. If he does not come through fornication, he will come through complaining. If he does not come through theft, he will come through perjury and lies. If he does not come through the passions, he will come through evil thoughts. In short, Satan will never leave us alone. He will lay a snare for us after an error of heart, craftily leading us from there to a perverted judgement by sowing moral indifference within us. Now hell is filled as a result of moral indifference.

Let us, therefore, keep in mind these battles of various kinds which the enemy scatters before us. Let us put on the armour of righteousness, that is to say, prayer, fasting, purity, peace, love, humility, charity, love for one another, and courteous relations with everyone in the fear of God. For these are the means which do battle with his guileful crookedness. Above all, let us fear before the dread judgement hall of God, and 'let us cast off the works of darkness and put on ourselves the armour of light' (Rom. 13:12), that we may inherit the habitation of the saints who are in heaven, and of the sons of light, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and with him the Father and the Holy Spirit for all eternity.[59] Amen.

5

ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION

Introduction

By Theophilus' time the Paschal Controversies had already had a long history.[1] The essential point was whether Easter should be celebrated on the day of the week on which Passover fell in the Jewish liturgical calendar, or whether it should always be kept on a Sunday in deference to the Gospel narratives.[2] The Jewish liturgical calendar followed a lunar cycle. Each month, of which the first was Nisan, began with the new moon. The fourteenth Nisan, the prescribed date for Passover (cf. Deut. 16:1), was therefore the first full moon of the liturgical year. But as the solar year is longer than the lunar year, an extra month was intercalated so that Passover would fall on the next full moon after the spring equinox, enabling the first-fruits of the barley harvest to be available as an offering. Some Christians wanted to keep Easter each year on the fourteenth Nisan (hence their name 'Quartodecimans'); others devised cycles based on the solar Julian calendar to allow Easter to be kept on a Sunday as near as possible to Passover. The Council of Nicaea in 325 fixed the rule, still observed today, that combined the Sunday preference with an acknowledgement of Easter's relationship to Passover, but without allowing the two to fall on the same day: Easter henceforth was to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

The Nicene ruling, however, did not end the matter because the great sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch each based their calculations on different premises. Rome used an eighty-four-year cycle devised by Hippolytus, and Alexandria a nineteen-year cycle devised by the Alexandrian scholar Anatolius of Laodicea. Antioch followed the Jewish calendar, which by then may have been ignoring the

spring equinox.[3] Rome and Alexandria both took account of the spring equinox, but in Rome it was held to occur on 18 March, whereas in Alexandria it was calculated, with greater accuracy, as occurring on 21 March. On occasion, the three-day discrepancy could result in the correlation of the Paschal moon with different solar months. Which is what happened in 387, early in Theophilus' episcopate, when the Alexandrians celebrated Easter on 25 April, five weeks after the Romans.

Two years later an important change was made to the Roman civil calendar. An imperial rescript addressed to Albinus, prefect of Rome, on 7 August 389, abolished in effect all pagan holidays and for the first time accorded Easter official status.[4] The correct calculation of Easter now acquired vital significance for the public life of the empire. Theophilus' letter to Theodosius therefore probably dates from early 390.

Theophilus' nephew and successor, Cyril, believed that Nicaea had given Alexandria authority to fix the date of Easter for the whole Church.[5] His uncle no doubt felt the same. The authority and prestige of his see demanded that the emperor should be furnished with the correct dates of Easter as calculated by the Alexandrians. Rome eventually accepted the Alexandrian method of calculation, but not until the time of Leo the Great.

Theophilus' letter does not survive in the original Greek. I have translated it from the old Latin version published by Bruno Krusch (*CPG* 2. 2593). The prologue to the Easter Table does survive in Greek, but incompletely (*CPG* 2. 2675). It is printed in Krusch and Migne, each with a different but equally old Latin translation. The last two paragraphs are preserved only in the Latin versions.

The other texts translated below (*CPG* 2. 2678) give us insight into the routine business of the bishop of Alexandria. As the metropolitan of over a hundred suffragans, Theophilus would have had many questions referred to him for his decision. The following excerpts from letters to local bishops or his agents have come down to us in the canonical collection of the great twelfth-century Greek canonist, Theodore Balsamon. They were adopted in the form of fourteen canons by the Constantinopolitan council which Theophilus attended in 394. Besides illustrating some of Theophilus' pastoral concerns, they preserve precious evidence of how ordinations were conducted and how schismatic clergy were to be readmitted to the Church.

TEXT

LETTER TO THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS
(Krusch, 220–1)

Theophilus, bishop of the Church of Alexandria to the most pious and most God-beloved Emperor Theodosius, greeting in God.

1. Your piety's love for God has indeed been celebrated throughout all the churches, but supreme in all things, like the splendor of the sun, you ordain blessed and salutary laws that you may strengthen the souls of the wayward. Thus the glory of your name will endure for many centuries on account of your imitation of God and your orthodox faith. For to the emperor belong glory, virtue, which draws him closer to God, and an unassailable piety which is firm and persevering. For my part, O Christ-loving emperor, when I review the glorious distinctions of the Church of Alexandria, in no area of human life do I count myself able to offer adequate thanks to your beatitude, since of all the things that come from God we enjoy a proper happiness and prosperity through you. I repay the debt to you, however, with prayers alone, trusting in my untiring zeal and joined by all the people, who supplicate almighty God for you that he may reward you in return.

2. But since it is right to communicate to the emperor, the lover of the Saviour, what God has given, deign to receive the fruits of our researches on the holy Pascha, that the truth might be made known. For although many people urged us earnestly to reflect on a number of questions about the date of Easter arising out of the divine Scriptures, I considered it to be a work beyond my capability. But once I had confided in the Saviour, who said: 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you' (Mt. 7:7), and applied myself to holy books and the investigation of divine law, I felt confident enough to compile a table of the dates of the most blessed holy Pascha in your most blessed times from the first consulate of your God-loving name, O most blessed emperor, to a hundred years thence.[6] I have therefore thought it entirely appropriate to send it to your reverence as the first-fruits, as it were, of a good work. I have also appended questions dealing with which days one should observe every year, and shown how anyone who enquires carefully should not subsequently be in error about the festal day.

3. I have fixed the beginning of the hundred years at your name's first consulate, from which, by God's judgement, you have been found worthy to continue, O most blessed emperor, that readers of this little work may naturally call to mind the years of your reign and continue to praise them. I believe, however, that you will be known more for your doctrine of God than for our devotion to you. For it was necessary even in your blessed times for the reliable date of the divine Pascha to be established by diligent examination in the Alexandrian Church, which, in offering up constant prayers for you, desires your name to remain in perpetuity amongst all people, that from what is read the memory of your name might remain eternal as a result of this little work both now and in time to come.

PROLOGUE TO THE EASTER TABLE
(Krusch, 221–6; PG 65. 48–52)

On the holy and saving Pascha, celebrated each year according to the divine Law, and a brief solution, together with supporting arguments, of the problems pertaining to it.

1. The holy and blessed Pascha of God is explicitly acknowledged by the Law, which at the same time indicates the month in which it is to be celebrated and lays down that the day is to be observed with great scrupulousness. For what is conveyed by the Law is the voice of God: 'Observe the month of the new and keep the Passover to the Lord your God on the fourteenth day of the first month' (Deut. 16:1; Num. 9:3 LXX).[7] The new month is also called the first month, in which the fruits, having come to maturity, announce already the passing of the old. God commanded the Passover to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month for no other reason than this, that by imitating the light of the moon when it is perfectly full, we might make the luminary of our understanding perfect, and not spend our time in the darkness of sin. Coming to maturity in some degree with an abundance of virtues, and sheltered by their leaves like pleasant plants (cf. Isa. 5:7), we should remain full of joy like fields of standing corn (cf. Deut. 16:9). Scripture calls it the fourteenth of the month, not according to the solar cycle but according to the moon. For the children of the Hebrews were taught to reckon the month not from the sun's course but from the moon's phases, because the word 'month' is derived from 'moon'. For in Greek the moon (*selēnē*) is also called *mēnē*.[8] The Egyptians were therefore the

first to devise the reckoning of the days of the month from the sun.[9] This was because the moon runs its course more quickly, and on account of this people tended to miscalculate the days. The sun's course is slower than that of the moon, with the result that it can more easily be grasped.[10]

2. Although this is so, many people are completely ignorant of both the first month and the fourteenth day of the first month. For they often reckon that the month which according to the Jews is the last month of the preceding year (and still marks the end of winter) is the first month of the following year.[11] They do this in ignorance of the fact that spring begins on 12 kalends April, which is Phamenoth 25, and among the Syrians of Antioch and the Macedonians Dystros 21, in the solar calendar.[12] This is the date that must be marked very carefully, lest anyone should erroneously place the fourteenth of the moon earlier and be mistaken about the Pascha, thinking that this fourteenth is the full moon of the first month. For the month of the new is not to be identified with the twelfth month, it being still winter, as I have already said, when the new fruit has not yet ripened, nor is it possible for the sickle to be put to the standing corn. For this is the chief sign of the first month designated by the divine Law (cf. Deut. 16:9).

3. Now because it happens that some people fall into error, on the grounds that when the fourteenth of the moon of the same first month falls on a Sunday, to end the fast on Saturday, which is then the thirteenth of the moon, is to act contrary to the Law, it is important to take careful note of the following. If it happens that the same fourteenth of the moon falls on a Sunday, it is better to postpone it to the following week, for two reasons: first, that we should not end the fast when the thirteenth of the moon falls on a Saturday (this is not fitting, since the law forbids it, and besides the moon is not yet full); and second that when Sunday and the fourteenth of the moon coincide, we should not be obliged to fast and thus do something unseemly (this is a practice characteristic of the Manichaeans). Therefore since we should neither fast when the fourteenth of the moon falls on a Sunday, nor end the fast in consequence of the thirteenth corresponding to a Saturday, postponement to the following week is necessary, as I said a little earlier, without any irregularity arising with regard to Easter on account of the postponement. We may take as an analogy the way the number ten includes the number nine. When the fourteenth of the moon falls on a Sunday, postponement should be made to the following week, so that we should

not be obliged to fast on that day, the postponement of six days not diminishing Easter, since it includes the other days too.

4. Furthermore, since our Saviour was betrayed on the thirteenth, that is on a Thursday, was crucified on the fourteenth, and rose again on the third day, that is on the sixteenth of the moon, which fell then on a Sunday, as the Gospels note, let us have the consolation of keeping Easter well, even if we have to postpone it for a compelling reason. In summary, if the fourteenth of holy Pascha falls on a Saturday, or before Saturday on one of the other days of the week, it is certainly right to celebrate Easter on the Sunday. But if the fourteenth of the moon of the first month falls on a Sunday, it must be postponed to the following week. For Sunday is the first day of the week, as I have already said.

5. Having argued this at some length, I would also add the following. The divine Law permits those who for some compelling reason are unable to celebrate Easter in the first month, to celebrate it in the second month. For it is better for us, when forced by necessity, to follow the higher rather than the lower, because the lower is contained in the higher, but the lower cannot contain the higher. As I demonstrated in the example given above, the number nine can be contained in the number ten, but not the other way round. Therefore if the divine Law allows postponement to the following month, how can it be denied that when the fourteenth of the moon falls on a Sunday a week's postponement is allowed, seeing that the month is the same, and the fifteenth of the moon, on which our Saviour was crucified, falls in the same week, and the seventeenth day, on which he rose again, is seen not to exceed a week's postponement?

6. To these arguments serving as a modest preface, I have also attached below the table itself, from the first consulate of your God-loving name, O emperor, to a hundred years thence, arranged both in the order of fourteenths of the moon and as a full list of Sundays.[13]

ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE HOLY THEOPHANY FALLING ON A SUNDAY (Joannou, 262–3; PG 65. 33B)[14]

Both custom and what is fitting demand that we should honour every Sunday and treat it as a feast day, because it was on this day that our

Lord Jesus Christ granted us the resurrection from the dead. Accordingly, in the sacred Scriptures, too, it is called the first day, since it is the beginning of life for us, and also the eighth day, since it supersedes the Sabbath observance of the Jews.[15] Therefore when it happens that the vigil of the holy Theophany falls on a Sunday,[16] let us make an accommodation and conduct ourselves correctly in acknowledging both the fast and the feast. By partaking of a few dates we avoid the heresies that do not honour the resurrection day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time maintain our obligation to keep the fast, and so await the evening *synaxis*, which, God willing, will be celebrated here. Let us therefore assemble here from the ninth hour.

MEMORANDUM TO AMMON[17] REGARDING LYCOPOLIS[18]

(Joannou 264–70; PG 65. 36–44)

Canon 1

With regard to those who have been in communion with Arians and until now have kept their churches, let the customary thing be done.[19] That is to say, let others be appointed who have given evidence of their orthodoxy, and let these occupy their posts. When these arrangements have been carried out, just as orthodox bishops in the Thebaid have done in other cities, let those appointed by Bishop Apollo[20] who have been in communion with Arians who hold churches be disciplined, provided, of course, they did this of their own free will. But if they have become obedient to their own bishop, let them remain in their posts, even if they were ignorant of what was right. If all the laity reject them, however, along with the rest, let others be ordained. If, on the other hand, they defend them, along with those with whom they have been in communion, let these too benefit from the custom followed by all orthodox bishops in the Thebaid.

Canon 2

With regard to Pistos, who was appointed a presbyter in Ereba,[21] an inquiry is needed. If he really did force himself on a divorced woman while her husband was still alive, let him not be permitted to be a

presbyter. He should not even be admitted to the Eucharist as a layman, for the Church's custom is to excommunicate such people. This preliminary judgement is without prejudice to Bishop Apollo, if he appointed him in ignorance. The holy synod, however, has laid down that the unworthy convicted of a crime after ordination are to be expelled.[22]

Canon 3

With regard to Sur, since Bishop Apollo has affirmed that he has both dismissed him and expelled him from the Church, let it be as the bishop has decided. Sur, however, can plead his own defence and challenge the bishop's decision if he wishes.

Canon 4

With regard to Panuph, who was appointed a deacon in Lycopolis, an inquiry is needed. If it is found to be true that he married his niece when he was still a catechumen,[23] and then after baptism was received into the clergy, let him remain in the clergy, provided, of course, that she has died and that after baptism he did not have marital relations with her. But if he was a Christian when he married his niece, let him be expelled from the clergy. This is without prejudice to Bishop Apollo if he appointed him in ignorance of the facts.

Canon 5

With regard to Jacob, an inquiry is needed. If he had been a reader,[24] was found guilty of the charge of fornication and expelled by the presbyters, and was then himself ordained, let him be expelled, once a careful investigation has been made, and it is not simply a matter of suspicion against him stirred up by gossip and back-biting. If he is found not guilty, let him remain in the clergy. No attention should be paid to baseless slanders.

Canon 6

With regard to candidates for ordination, the prescribed form is the following: when the entire priesthood[25] has agreed and made its choice, the bishop is to test the candidate, and with the consent of

the priesthood ordain him in the body of the church. The laity should be present, and the bishop should address them to see if they, too, can also testify in his favour. Ordinations are not to be carried out in private. When the Church is at peace, it is fitting that ordinations should be carried out in the churches in the presence of the saints. Moreover, candidates should be ordained in their home district, where there are people familiar with their opinions. They should not be ordained unless they have been examined by truly orthodox clergy, with the bishop himself present, who addresses the laity, who are also present. This is to prevent any canvassing of favours becoming a means of obtaining ordination.[26]

Canon 7

The remainder of what has been offered for the sacrifice, when what is needed for the Mysteries has been consumed, is to be shared out by the clergy. But not even catechumens should eat and drink of these, only clerics and the faithful brethren with them.[27]

Canon 8

Whereas Hierax says that a certain person should not be in the clergy because he has been accused of fornication, but Bishop Apollo has affirmed that no accuser has come forward against him, let that person, too, be examined. And if some accuser appears who is worthy of belief, and guilt is proved with the support of reliable witnesses, let him be expelled from the Church. But if he is worthy of his office, and evidence is produced of his chastity, let him remain in the clergy.[28]

Canon 9

Therefore in the opinion of the whole priesthood someone else should be appointed steward, to which Bishop Apollo has also agreed, that the Church's resources may be expended on what is needful.[29]

Canon 10

Widows, the poor, and visiting strangers should be afforded every relief, and no one should appropriate the Church's funds for personal use.[30]

RULING ON 'THE PURE'
(Joannou, 271; PG 65. 44B)

Your piety has reported to me that certain people calling themselves 'the Pure' (*Katharoi*)[31] seek readmission into the Church. The great synod held in Nicaea by our holy Fathers ruled that those readmitted should be ordained.[32] They therefore intended by this ruling that those wishing to be readmitted to the Church should be ordained, provided, of course, that they are leading upright lives and that there is nothing else against them.

TO BISHOP AGATHON[33]
(Joannou, 272–3; PG 65. 44–5)

Maximus maintains that he contracted an illicit marriage without being aware of the Church's laws. Because the irregularity troubles him, he has affirmed that since he did what was unlawful in ignorance, he would, by agreement, abstain from illicit cohabitation. He claims that his wife is happy with this arrangement. If you are able to verify that they really are doing this by agreement, and are not dissembling, for they have been living together for a decade, and if you think that for the time being they should be admitted to the *synaxis* with the catechumens, make the appropriate arrangements. But if you see that there is a wish to deceive, and that an astringent remedy is required in their case, do whatever God suggests to you, guided by the Church's general practice. Being on the spot, you are better able to assess their disposition.

TO BISHOP MENAS[34]
(Joannou, 273; PG 65. 45C)

The presbyters acted lawfully in the village of Geminus, if the woman who brought Eustathes' letter is telling the truth. For she says that as Kyriadon has done wrong and does not want to put it right, they have excluded her from the *synaxis*. Since I have learned, however, that she has healed the wrong she has done and wishes to be readmitted to the *synaxis*, please see that she first renounces the wrong and persuade her to repent. In this way, if you judge that she is ready for admission to the *synaxis*, allow her to be admitted with the people.

6

THE ORIGENIST CONTROVERSY

Introduction

This final section presents a selection of texts on the Origenist controversy not previously translated into English. The volume devoted to Jerome in the second series of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers contains three of Theophilus' personal letters,[1] but omits the Synodal Letter of 400 to the bishops of Palestine and Cyprus, and the three Festal Letters of 401, 402 and 404, rhetorical *tours de force* preserved in their entirety only in Jerome's Latin translations. Jerome asserts in a covering letter to a copy of his translation of *FL* 17 of 402, together with the Greek original, addressed to his Roman friends Pammachius and Marcella that he has worked hard to render Theophilus' sense and tone accurately (*Ep.* 97. 3). The Greek fragments support his claim. Also offered here is an exegetical fragment translated by Jerome and entitled by its modern editors *On Isaiah 6: 1–7*. The remaining texts have been handed down in the original Greek, but only in fragmentary form. Some of the fragments have long been known through their having been cited by Palladius, Theodoret and Justinian. Others have been recovered more recently from anti-Origenist florilegia.

The texts are as follows:

1. *First Synodal Letter* (*CPG* 2. 2595)
   This letter, composed by Theophilus after the synod called by him to consider Origen's writings, belongs to late 399 or early 400.[2] Three fragments were quoted in the mid-sixth century by Justinian in his *Liber adversus Origenem*.[3] Recently a further fragment, linking Justinian's first and second fragments, has been discovered by José Declerck in a remarkable Athonite manuscript containing a unique collection of theological texts, Vatopedi gr. 236.[4] I have translated Justinian's first two

fragments from Declerck, with the additional linking passage from Vatopedi gr. 236, and Justinian's third fragment from PG 86. 971AB.

2. *Second Synodal Letter to the Bishops of Palestine and Cyprus* (*CPG* 2. 2596)
   This letter has been preserved completely only in Jerome's Latin translation (*Ep*. 92). Written in the autumn of 400, it seeks to prevent the Cypriot and Palestinian bishops from giving hospitality to the monks expelled from Nitria.[5] I have translated Jerome's version from Hilberg's CSEL edition, comparing it with Labourt's Budé text and often (as also with *FL* 16, 17 and 19) adopting the interpretations suggested by Labourt's punctuation.
3. *Letters to the Origenist monks* (*CPG* 2. 2601–3 and 2611)
   Four fragments survive of Theophilus' correspondence with the Nitrian dissidents. The first has been edited by Eduard Schwartz from Vaticanus gr. 1431.[6] Two are given by Justinian in his *Liber adversus Origenem*.[7] The fourth has been published by Richard from Vatopedi gr. 236.[8] In these fragments Theophilus calls on the dissidents to renounce Origen and accept the decisions of the Western and Alexandrian synods of 399–400.
4. *Sixteenth Festal Letter* (401) (*CPG* 2. 2585)
   This important Festal Letter, almost entirely devoted to refuting selected doctrines attributed to Origen, survives completely in Jerome's Latin translation (*Ep.* 96) and apparently also in Coptic.[9] As it was much cited in antiquity, however, a number of Greek fragments have been preserved.[10] I have translated this and the remaining two Festal Letters from Jerome's Latin version, except where the Greek fragments allow direct translation from the original text.
5. *Seventeenth Festal Letter* (402) (*CPG* 2. 2586)
   This letter survives completely only in Jerome's Latin translation (*Ep.* 98).[11] Jerome describes it as consisting of four parts: (i) an exhortation to celebrate Easter; (ii) an attack on Apollinarius, 'not lacking in dialectical subtlety'; (iii) an attack on Origen; and (iv) an exhortation to heretics to repent (*Ep*. 97. 3). There are two Greek fragments in Theodoret's *Eranistes*, which I have used to control the corresponding Latin passages in Jerome's translation.[12]
6. *Letter written at Constantinople* (403) (*CPG* 2. 2612)
   According to Marcel Richard, this letter was written by Theophilus while he was in Constantinople (therefore in 403) to

justify his action against the Tall Brothers. Nine fragments have been edited by Richard from Vatopedi gr. 236.[13]

7. *Nineteenth Festal Letter* (404) (*CPG* 2. 2588)
   The Nineteenth Festal Letter has come down to us only in Jerome's Latin version (*Ep.* 100).[14] By now the urgency of the Origenist controversy had diminished, for Theophilus devotes only a short section to combating Origen's teaching. We have Jerome's letter which accompanied the copy of his translation he sent to Theophilus (*Ep.* 99), in which he dwells on the pains he has taken to capture the style as well as the sense of the original. Jerome praises Theophilus for his combination of philosophy and rhetoric. He exaggerates, for Theophilus gives no evidence of having pursued philosophical studies, but his mastery of dialectic amply demonstrates his training in rhetoric.
8. *Tractate on Isaiah 6: 1–7* (*CPG* 2. 2683)
   The authorship of this long Latin fragment refuting Origen's exegesis of Isaiah's vision of the *merkabah* (God's heavenly throne) is disputed. It has been edited twice, by Dom A. M. Amelli (Monte Cassino, 1901) and Dom G. Morin (Maredsous, 1903), both of whom place it among Jerome's works. Theophilus' authorship, first suggested by Diekamp, is supported by Altaner (1943) and Chavoutier (1960). The many similarities of expression with Jerome's *Epistles* 96, 98 and 100, the quotations from the Septuagint version of Isaiah, rather than from Jerome's own translation from the Hebrew, and the general method of argument seem to me sufficient grounds for attributing authorship to Theophilus. If this is accepted, the presentation of arguments in the text not only against Origen's subordinationism but also against anthropomorphite ideas of God further supports Theophilus' denial of a *volte-face*. The translation is based on Morin's edition.

TEXTS

FIRST SYNODAL LETTER
(Declerck, 503–4; ACO III. 202.20–203.2 = PG 86. 969C–971B)

From the letter of the Egyptian and Alexandrian synod, written against the opinions of Origen.[15]

This Origen we are discussing therefore came to be like the desolating sacrilege (cf. Mt. 24:15) in the midst of the true Church. And

although he was ordained a presbyter by the canonical and one true hand, he had merely the rank of a presbyter and nothing more, just as the thief and traitor, Judas, had nothing more than the rank of an apostle. When he began to deliver his blasphemous homilies, the bishop at that time, Heraclas of blessed memory, labourer and honest vinedresser of truth's estate that he was, plucked him out of the good corn, since he was truly a weed sown by the evil one (cf. Mt. 13:38).[16] And like a doctor who does not pretend to be kind but seeks only the body's health, he cut him out with the divine two-edged sword (cf. Heb. 4:12), as if he were a terrible abscess and malignant ulcer, or a painful spreading gangrene, and threw him out of the Church.[17] He was ejected from the truth like the stone in Leviticus with chronic leprosy which was cut out of the house by Aristaeus, the priest of truth at that time (cf. Lev. 14:39–40).

Then after he had been expelled from the Church – for he was not truly of the Church but rather against the Church, for if he had spoken on the Church's behalf he would not have been expelled from the Church – he fell to earth from heaven like lightning, just as his father, the devil and Satan, did (cf. Lk. 10:18: Jn 8.44), and being full of a great and terrible anger against the truth, sailed off to the country called Palestine. He settled in the city of Caesarea and there unmasked himself totally. Vomiting forth whatever dark and black thing happened to please him, like the fish some call the cuttlefish, he set it down there in writing and, like a Jewish merchant in the guise of an honest man, mixed bitterness with sweetness.[18] For what does this scheming madman say? The soul, he says, pre-existed in heaven before the body. And because it sinned there, he says, God shut it up in a prison. That is, God sent it down into the body for the purification and punishment, he says, of the sins previously committed by it in heaven.[19] This is the starting-point from which that most impious of men directly invents his fables and seeks to fight against the truth.[20]

And after a little:[21] If the soul had pre-existed in heaven and sinned there previously, as that madman and enemy of God, Origen, claimed, the most holy prophet would not have said: 'and forming the spirit of man within him' (cf. Zech. 12:1). He would have said instead: 'shutting in the spirit of man within him', or perhaps: 'sending down'. Now as he does not say this, but 'forming', he shows Origen to be a most savage wolf dressed outwardly in sheepskins to deceive and destroy. For as if he had come down from heaven and knew clearly all that had been formed there, that reprehensible man says that the soul not only pre-existed but also sinned previously in

heaven. Since he has precise knowledge of what is in heaven, let him say in what manner and for what reason the soul sinned in heaven.

SECOND SYNODAL LETTER TO THE BISHOPS OF PALESTINE AND CYPRUS
(Jerome, *Ep.* 92, CSEL 55. 147–55)

This circular letter was sent to the bishops of Palestine and Cyprus. We have given the opening lines of each of the two versions.

To the Palestinians:
To the most beloved lords, brothers and fellow-bishops Eulogius,[22] John, Zebinnus, Auxentius, Dionysius,[23] Gennadius, Zeno, Theodosius, Dictenus, Porphyrius,[24] Saturninus, Alanes, Paul, Ammonius, Helianus, the other Paul, Eusebius and all the catholic bishops gathered in Aelia for the Dedication Feast,[25] Theophilus sends greetings in the Lord.

To the Cypriots:
To the most beloved lords and brothers and fellow-bishops Epiphanius,[26] Marcian, Agapetus, Boethius, Helpidius, Eutasius, Norbanus, Macedonius, Ariston, Zeno, Asiaticus, Heraclides, the other Zeno, Kyriacus and Aphroditus, Theophilus sends greetings in the Lord.

1. I suspect that, before you receive our letter, news will have quickly reached you that certain people have attempted to spread Origen's heresy in the Nitrian monasteries and serve up a polluted cup to the most pure congregation of monks.[27] That is why we were compelled by the powerful entreaties of the holy fathers and presbyters who are the superiors of the monasteries to visit the places themselves. We were afraid that so long as we delayed going, those who flatter itching ears were corrupting the hearts of the simple. These men's pre-eminence in wickedness, and their rabid passion for every outrage that ignorance and pride can propose, is such that they rush forward headlong without realizing their limitations. Wise in their own estimation – which is the fount of error – they think themselves very lofty,[28] which they are not. In the end, they broke out in such insanity that they turned their hands against themselves and cut off their own members with a knife. They foolishly thought on this account that if they went about with mutilated face and severed

ears they were proving themselves to be religious and humble.[29] One of them has even amputated his tongue by biting it off.[30] He did this so that he too might show the ignorant the fear with which he kept God's laws, and demonstrate by the very infirmity of impeded eloquence how much his heart burned with ardour.

I have discovered that these men have moved to your province in the company of some of the pilgrims who stay for a while in Egypt – people poor in grace but enticed by money who are obliged to earn a living by manual labour – that in them the scripture may be fulfilled: 'The wicked walk in a circle' (Ps. 12 [11]:8).[31] Like the Jews, they prefer to be consumed by fire, rather than see Origen's writings condemned, thus proclaiming: 'We have placed our hope in a lie and are protected by a lie' (Isa. 28.15 LXX). In my anxiety that they might disturb the minds of the laity and the monks in your area, and turn to attack us and undermine the truth with a network of lies, though having been reprimanded for their wickedness they would have been better employed doing penance, I have considered it very proper to write to your holinesses and briefly report the facts, namely that the bishops of the region, who individually make up the quorum of a synod,[32] proceeded to Nitria. And that in the presence of many monastic superiors who had hastily gathered together from almost the whole of Egypt, Origen's books, which he had sweated over with impious labour, were read and by universal consent condemned.

2. For when the book *Peri archon* (which we would call *De principiis*)[33] was read, in which it is written that the Son compared to us is truth, but in relation to the Father is falsehood;[34] and again: 'In the degree that Peter and Paul differ from the Saviour, so is the Saviour less than the Father';[35] and again: 'The kingdom of Christ will eventually come to an end; the devil, liberated from the filth of all his sins, will be honoured with an equal glory and will be subjected to God with Christ;'[36] and in another book, which is entitled *De oratione*: 'We should not pray to the Son, but only to the Father, and not even to the Father with the Son,'[37] we put our hands over our ears and unanimously condemned not only Origen but his disciples as well, lest even a modicum of yeast should corrupt the whole lump of dough.

What shall I say about the resurrection of the dead, with regard to which he clearly blasphemes, saying that after the passage of many centuries our bodies will gradually be reduced to nothing and will dissolve into thin air, and, in case we should think this a small

matter, adding that 'the resurrected body will not only be corruptible but also mortal'?[38] Evidently our Lord and Saviour destroyed the devil, who had sovereignty over death, in vain if even after the resurrection, with human bodies dissolved into nothing, corruption and immortality really are triumphant.

He also put together some outrageous statements about the angels, claiming that the whole range of heavenly ministries in the service of God was not created in heaven, but that the names of the different offices were allotted as a result of various lapses and falls. It was therefore because of earlier events that the angels were promoted or reduced in rank. In the course of this, as if oblivious to the pain he was causing, with the people shouting out: 'But the Jerusalem above is free' (Gal. 4:26), he contends that nothing in her is pure, nothing free from vices and secure in lasting virtue. His profane discussion of angels does not stop here, but advances more deeply into crime: 'Just as the demons,' he says, 'settling by the altars of the gentiles, used to feed on the fumes of the sacrificial victims, so, too, the angels, attracted by the blood of the victims which – as a type of spiritual things – Israel offered, and by the smoke of the incense, used to stay near the altars and in this way be nourished with food.'[39] Who would imagine that he could find anything more extreme than this to demonstrate the complete breakdown of a raving mind? He also attributes the knowledge of the future, which is known to the Lord alone, to the movements of the stars. He believes that from their course and the variety of their forms the demons know the future and either do certain things or entrust the stars to do them. It is evident from this that he approves of idolatry and astrology and the various pagan tricks of fraudulent divination.

3. Certain people bearing the name of monks were living in the monasteries, believing and teaching these and similar doctrines. Indignant that the author of such evil, along with his error, should be condemned, they incited a number of destitute people and slaves by material inducements to join their band. Forming a party, they tried to put pressure on me at my see in Alexandria. They wanted to make a public issue of Isidore's case, which for the sake of decency and ecclesiastical discipline we were reserving for the judgement of the bishops, and come out with things that were not proper matters for discussion in the hearing of pagans, with the intention of stirring up sedition and disorder against the Church.[40] God destroyed their plans like those of Achitophel (cf. 2 Sam. 15:21–17:23). Yet every effort of theirs was directed to this end, that under the name

of Isidore, who for various reasons had been separated by many bishops from the communion of saints, they should defend heresy.

Meanwhile a woman and her adolescent son were produced by them, and set up in a very populous part of the city, which, if I am not mistaken, is called Genius.[41] They bawled out whatever they believed to be prejudicial to us, inciting the pagan populace against us with the kind of things that unbelievers will readily give ear to. Amongst the things they shouted, even reminding them in passing, so to speak, of the destruction of Serapis[42] and other idols, was the cry: '[outrages] against the rights of temples have not been [committed] in the Nitrian monasteries!'[43] They did all this with the idea of winning the support of the unbelieving rabble and rescuing Isidore from the judgement of the bishops to prevent an examination of the charge against him with the mother and the boy as witnesses, and to stir up hostility against us. For our part, what we wanted was that he should be heard in church patiently, with the clergy and the faithful present, and that in his person the Church's rule should be observed with all reverence and gentleness. For we are not his enemy. Nor have we injured him, or the handful of slaves and fugitives who are his associates in his affairs. But we have preferred the fear of God and the rigor of the Gospel to our former friendship and intimacy.

Isidore was summoned to an examination in the presence of the bishops to explain the affair to the whole clergy. He was called repeatedly to answer the charge. But he began to be evasive and defer his appearance from one day to another, clearly in the hope, as many people said, that given time he could buy the woman's silence. And by this conduct he injured the souls of the holy brethren. For who does not doubt that confidence belongs to a good conscience, but that flight and dissimulation, to put it rather mildly yet still make clear what I think, are judged by most people to be a kind of confession? Especially when the woman pressed a serious charge against him, depositing written statements, and the matter became widely known. Whereupon he made every effort to bring things to a conclusion by any means other than a judgement of the bishops. The woman was inscribed in the roll of widows, without my knowledge, through the good offices of his friends, to ease the pain of the wound by charitable support. I learned this afterwards from a certain deacon, who, refusing to be intimidated, reported that the woman had been put on the list of widows to silence her complaints. I straightaway revealed the informer to Isidore through

many people and warned him to prepare himself for judgement by the bishops. As for the woman, I simply had her taken off the list, until we should see the outcome of the case. For it was not right that she should be maintained out of the Church's resources, when she had either made such a serious accusation frivolously or else had remained silent.

This is the man who is the standard-bearer of the heretical faction. This is the man the people we described at the beginning of this letter regard as their leader and most wealthy patron, for he has the means to keep them supplied with food and support them in the hardships of their wanderings. Where fury and slaughter are called for, they need nobody else's help. Where funds and various disbursements are required, nothing is more accommodating than this generous sponsor.

4. They take offence and rage against me because I have not permitted the desert places and cells of the monks, where a holy way of life is led, to be polluted by Origen's wicked doctrines. I shall pick out some of these, leaving the rest aside. In the *De resurrectione* which he wrote for Ambrosius in imitation of the style of a disputation, a question is put concerning the art of magic and the response approving it is given in the following words: 'The art of magic does not seem to me a term for anything that really exists, but if it did, it is by no means an evil work, nor is what may be held a matter to be despised.'[44] In saying this, he clearly contradicts the Lord, who says through the prophet: 'Stand now in your enchantments, in your many sorceries, to which you have been dedicated since your youth, if you are able to succeed. You have laboured in your counsels; let the astrologers of the heavens stand forth and let those who contemplate the stars save you; let them predict for you what the future holds for you' (Isa. 47:12–13).

Moreover, in the *Peri archon* he also tries to persuade us that the living Word of God did not assume a human body. Going against the opinion of the Apostle (cf. Phil. 2:6), he wrote that he who was in the form of God and therefore equal to God was not the Word of God but a soul descending from the celestial region who emptied himself of the form of eternal majesty and assumed a human body. In saying this, he very clearly contradicts John, who writes: 'And the Word became flesh' (Jn 1:14). Nor can it be believed that the Saviour's soul rather than God the Word possessed both the form of the Father's majesty and equality to it.

In his raving he also delights in other impieties, claiming that he who in consummation of the ages and for the destruction of sin suffered once and for all, our Lord Jesus Christ, will also suffer crucifixion at some time in the future for the demons and evil spirits. He is unmindful of Paul, who writes: 'It is impossible for those who have once been enlighted, who have moreover tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted nothing less than the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and have lapsed, to be restored again to repentance, since they crucify again the Son of God himself on their account and hold him up to contempt' (Heb. 6:4–6). If he had wanted to understand these things, or at least if he had not disregarded the things he knows, he would never have contradicted the Apostle and said that Christ will also suffer for the demons, exposing him to contempt with his ears closed to the words: 'Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God' (Rom. 6:9–10). For the expression 'once for all' does not admit a second or third time. That is also why the Apostle, knowing Christ to have been crucified once for all, tells the Hebrews with the utmost confidence: 'He did this once for all in offering up himself' (Heb. 7:27).

5. For this reason, and a number of others which an epistolary discourse does not allow me to go into, these people have been condemned and expelled from the Church. And with pride joined to foolishness they reject the judgements of the bishops, eager to defend their fellow-heretic by seditious means. Travelling surreptitiously through foreign provinces as condemned men, they have a condemned man as their leader, and take courage from this fact. I therefore beseech you, my dear brethren, that if they should come into your territory you should move them to tears with the precepts of the Gospel. It is our devout wish that both they and others should correct their error with penitence and live in a manner worthy of their name, so that those who are called monks – if they really want to be what they say they are – may love silence and the catholic faith, to which nothing whatsoever is to be preferred. But, as I hear, they run hither and thither in imitation of the devil, and seek whom they may devour by their impieties (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). For they take insanity to be faith, and audacity to be courage. And for that reason in their lofty arrogance they prefer Origen's doctrine, which is mixed with idolatry, to the preaching of the Church.

Therefore if they attempt to cause a disturbance in any place to the breathren and the people entrusted to you, guard the Lord's flock and repel their frenzied attacks. We have not done them any harm; we have not acted aggressively. There is only one reason for their animosity against us, the fact that we are prepared to defend the faith to the death.

6. I pass over the rest, how they have attempted to murder us, and the tactics they used to try to achieve this. For after they were condemned they even occupied the church which is in the monastery of Nitria to prevent us from entering, together with the many bishops who were with us, and the fathers of monks, venerable in age and conduct. They used for this purpose hired freedmen and slaves, who to satisfy their voracious appetites were armed for every outrage! These occupied the more strategic parts of the church, as if in the siege of a city, covering their cudgels and staves with palm branches, to hide hearts bent on bloodshed behind the symbols of peace. And to strengthen their party and make their troops more eager for action, they distributed money to many of the freeborn, who accepted it not because they consented to crime, but so as to disclose the attempt to us and warn us by exposing the ambush prepared for us. When the vast gathering of monks perceived this, they all began to shout out and deter the fury of the few by a united clamour that at least through fear they might allow the assembly to be held and the Church's rights to be respected. And if God's grace had not restrained the attack of the mob, what normally happens in riots would have occurred. For people break out into such criminal foolhardiness, or rather insanity, that even monks leading a holy way of life and normally the mildest of men cannot hold back their fury.

All of which, by God's mercy, we listened to patiently and humbly with concern for the salvation of those who were fighting bitterly against us, though without sacrificing the Church's canons and the orthodox faith to anyone's friendship. For the Lord is able to grant both us and all his servants in common to prefer the true faith to human friendship. At the same time we entreat each of you, together with the people entrusted to you, to pray earnestly and beseech God for mercy, that through him we might be able to resist the devilish attacks of the heretics and thus be at peace with those who have always fought for the truth, that we might all together prove worthy of the crown of righteousness. The people who are with me send greetings in the Lord to the brethren who are with you.

LETTERS TO THE ORIGENIST MONKS

(a) Letter to Monks
(Schwartz, 'Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431', 36)

Of Bishop Theophilus from the letter to monks: Christ became man and mediated between us and the Father. But neither did he forsake his consubstantiality with the Father, nor was he alien to communion with us. On the contrary, the theologians[45] have declared him to be both invisible God and visible man, hidden by the form of a servant yet also Lord of glory.

(b) Letter to Origenist Monks
(Richard, 'Nouveaux fragments', frag. 2 = ACO III, 2001.5–9 = PG 86. 967BC)

Of the same bishop of Alexandria from the letter written to the Tall clerics when they were in Alexandria, after they had been degraded by him for holding the opinions of Origen, in which he exhorts them to repent: Therefore anathematize Origen and the other heretics, as we ourselves have done, and also Anastasius, the bishop of the holy Church of the Romans, who was appointed glorious governor of a distinguished people as a result of earlier conflicts. The entire synod, too, of the blessed bishops in the West follows him, having accepted the decree of the Church of the Alexandrians against impiety.[46]

(c) Letter to the Saints in Scetis
(ACO III, 201.12–16 = PG 86. 967CD)

Of the same from the letter to the saints in Scetis, on account of those who object to the condemnation of Origen's doctrines: Some have dared to call Origen a doctor of the Church. Is it right to tolerate such people? If Origen is a doctor of the Church, Arians and Eunomians take heart and so do pagans. The former blaspheme the Son and the Spirit; the latter are like them in their impiety and deride the resurrection as well.[47]

(d) Third Letter to the Dissidents
(Richard, 'Nouveaux fragments', frag.1)

Of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, from the third letter to the dissidents: I hear that being wily, they purport to be willing to anathematize

the cruder doctrinal errors, such as not praying to the Lord and the other blasphemous things that Origen utters against the Son and the Holy Spirit. But you know these errors of theirs.[48] What I should like you to do, then, is to say the following to them, should you have any dealings with them: they say that souls existed before bodies and after lapsing through sin were sent down into bodies, that the devil will be restored to what he was formerly, that the souls of sinners, even that of Judas, will also be restored and will return to their original state, and so on.

And writing to them in the twenty-seventh letter in a similar vein, he says much the same things.

SIXTEENTH FESTAL LETTER (401)
(Jerome, *Ep.* 96, CSEL 55. 159–81)

1. Let us once again, my dear brethren, praise Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with one voice, and be eager to fulfil the words of the prophet, who encourages us, saying: 'Sing to the Lord a new song' (Ps. 149:1). Let those of us who partake of the faith that guides us to the kingdom of heaven welcome the approach of the sacred festival. Let us celebrate the coming holiday with the whole universe rejoicing with us. One of the sages proclaims: 'Come, eat your bread with enjoyment and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has approved what you do' (Eccles. 9:7). For those who perform good works, and, having left behind the milk of infancy, receive nourishment from more solid food (cf. Heb. 5:13–14) contemplate the divine senses more deeply. Filled with spiritual food, they have God to praise them and witness to the quality of their life. Referring to guests for this kind, Ecclesiastes says: 'Let your garments be always white; let not oil be lacking on your head' (Eccles. 9:8), that clad in the garment of the virtues they might imitate the splendour of the sun, and by the daily reading of the sacred Scriptures pour oil into their understanding and prepare the mind's lamp, which according to the Gospel precept 'gives light to all in the house' (Mt. 5:15).

2. Therefore let us imitate such guests who celebrate together the feasts of the Lord's passion in this way, and let us say with the saint: 'I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being' (Ps. 104 [103]:33). Let us hasten to the mother city of the angels (cf. Gal. 4:26), which is free and unsullied by the filth of any evil, where there are no dissensions, or falls, or

deportations from one place to another.[49] Once we have trampled on every passion and checked the waves of lasciviousness which swell up against us in quick succession, let us join with the heavenly choirs, that already carried there in spirit and seeing more venerable places, we might even now be that which we shall be in the future. The Jews made themselves unworthy of such beatitude. They have forsaken the resources of sacred Scripture and in their lack of understanding are content with their teachers.[50] They therefore hear to this day: 'they ever err in heart' (Ps. 95 [94]:10). They refuse to say to Christ present among us: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (Ps. 118 [117]:26; Mt. 21:9), even though the deeds testify more clearly than any words that he is God. He never says: 'the Lord says this,' but 'I say to you', by which he shows himself to be legislator, Lord and true God, not simply one of the prophets.

3. For neither was the assumption of the form of a servant able to obscure his divinity, which is not circumscribed by any spatial dimensions, nor were the confines of a human body able to limit the ineffable excellence of his majesty, when the greatness of his works proves him to be the Son of God. For when he restored the waters of the raging sea, with its high waves rising up like mountains, to sudden tranquillity, the little boat of the apostles was saved from shipwreck, and the depths of the waters sensed the sovereign power of the Lord's presence. When such great dangers from contrary winds and waves stirred up from every side ceased at the Saviour's command, those who were in the boat with him said, as if inspired by the divine Spirit: 'Truly he is the Son of God' (cf. Mt. 14:33), not doubting the divinity to the greatness of which the works testified. For it is to him that the prophetic utterance refers: 'Thou dost rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, thou stillest them' (Ps. 89 [88]:9). And the prophet himself gives the song a title |[51] so that he who was manifested may be believed to be the true God not by words alone but by his acts of power.

Through the greatness of his works he manifestly confirms that he is fully God and completely inhominated, with nothing omitted pertaining to human likeness except sin alone, which has no substance.[52] For he even became a baby, and was acknowledged to be Emmanuel, with Magi coming to him and by worshipping him declaring that he who was manifested was God. And when he was crucified in the flesh, the sun drew in its rays, and making his deity obvious by an unprecedented miracle he in no way dissipated himself or resolved himself into two saviours. Furthermore, he said to his

disciples: 'Call no man teacher on earth, for you have one master, the Christ' (cf. Mt. 23:8–10). For when he gave this as a precept to the apostles, he was not separating his own Godhead from the visible body, nor when he testified that he was the Christ did he divide the soul from the body. In this way he was both: he was God and also man, seen as a servant and recognized as Lord, hiding the grandeur of the Godhead by the humble purpose of the Incarnation, and transcending the lowliness of the visible body by the operation of the Godhead, | that he should not be believed to be one of the saints, as a great many think, but the one whom Paul wishes to present when he writes: 'there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ' (1 Tim. 2:5); and again: 'now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one' (Gal. 3:20). |[53] Because the one Son, the mediator between the Father and us, neither laid aside equality with him nor separated himself from fellowship with us, He was both invisible God and visible man: hidden in the form of a servant and acknowledged as the Lord of glory in the confession of believers (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8).

4. For the Father did not deprive him of the name expressing his nature after he became a human being and poor for our sake. Nor when he was baptized in the River Jordan was he called by any other title than Only-begotten Son: 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Lk. 3:22; Mt. 3:17). |[54] Nor was our likeness, in which he shared, changed into the nature of the Godhead; nor was his Godhead changed into our likeness. For he remains what he was from the beginning: God. He remains such, preparing our condition within himself. | He did not come like Jeremiah, so as to say: 'Woe is me, my mother, that you love me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have done no good. Nor has anyone done good to me' (Jer. 15:10), for he came to bestow freedom. Nor did he cry out like Isaiah: 'Woe is me! For although I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips, I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of hosts!' (Isa. 6:5). He himself was the King of glory, as is written in the twenty-third psalm (cf. Ps. 24 [23]:7–10). He was victorious on the cross and checked the advance of the enemy that he might make human beings fashioned from clay inhabitants of heaven and endow them with a share of his victory.

5. Therefore, although those who think that he was changed into another being do not accept this, nevertheless 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever' (Heb. 13:8). There will never

be an end to his kingdom, as Origen's wicked error teaches. Nor when his kingdom ends will he be deprived of eternity. On the contrary, he says in the presence of all: 'I am in the Father and the Father in me' (Jn 14:10, 11). And wishing to teach us that both the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father will rule over all creatures, he also added in corroboration: 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10:30), in case anyone should divide up the one kingdom he shares with the Father on the pretext of his human flesh. For if, according to Origen's madness, Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, is at any time to lay aside his Kingdom, how did he himself say to the apostles: 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10:30), when afterwards he is not to share the one dominion, implying that he has a glory in this world which he is to lay down in the next? And how will it be that the Son is always in the Father and the Father in the Son, if the Son's kingdom is not assured? Indeed, let those who maintain such doctrines perish if they do not show any repentance. Moses, moved by zeal for faith and piety, says to them: 'Cursed are you in the city, and cursed are you in the field' (Deut. 28:16). The psalmist reproves them equally: 'Let sinners and the wicked be consumed from the earth that they may be no more' (Ps. 104 [103]:35).[55]

6. For my part, I cannot understand by what temerity Origen invents such things, and follows his own error rather than the authority of the Scriptures, or how he could have the audacity to publish things potentially harmful to everyone. He does not reckon that there will ever be anyone who will oppose his assertions, if he mixes the subtlety of the philosophers with his own arguments, and advancing from an evil beginning to certain fables and lunacies, turns Christian doctrine into a game and a farce. He does not rely on the truth of divine teaching at all, but on the judgement of the human mind. He swells with such pride at being his own teacher that he does not imitate the humility of Paul, who, though filled with the Holy Spirit, took counsel on the Gospel with the leading apostles, for fear he should be running or had run in vain (cf. Gal. 2:2). He does not know that it is an impulse of a demonic spirit to follow the sophisms of human minds and reckon anything outside the authority of the Scriptures as divine.

Let those henceforth keep silent who, idly imagining the end of Christ's kingdom, desire to feed parasitically on Origen's verbiage. Let them not mix with the faithful and simulate a faith which they do not have. Or rather, let them learn that anything which is one thing and purports to be another is a deceit and a fraud, trying to

conceal vices under the appearance of virtue. Moreover, when Christ underwent the ignominy of the cross, which he suffered for us, he did not cease to be the Lord of glory, as the blessed Apostle tells us (cf. 1 Cor. 2:8), even though the Jews called out against him: 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross' (Mt. 27:40). When he suffered in the flesh and was hanging on the cross he displayed the strength of his own majesty, making the sun stop in its course and by the greatness of the signs forcing from the thief a full confession of faith: 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingly power' (Lk. 23:42). Therefore after the glory of the resurrection he is never to lose his kingdom, however many blasphemous stones Origen hurls against him. Or what is the point of promising the perpetuity of the kingdom to the disciples, saying: 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34), if he himself lacked what he was granting to others? Or when Paul writes to the Corinthians: 'Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!' (1 Cor. 4:8), how can Christ's kingdom be understood to come to an end after a long period of time? Especially when John cries: 'He who comes from above is above all' (Jn 3:31), and the Apostle writes: 'To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever' (Rom. 9:5).

7. There is therefore no doubt at all that he who remains God for all eternity should at the same time both have the kingdom and be called perpetual king over those to whom he granted possession of the kingdom, since he possesses a sovereignty congruent with his divinity, and he has nothing in him loutish or upstart except the assumption of human frailty. For if, according to Origen's madness, Christ's kingdom is to come to an end after cycles of many centuries, it follows as a consequence of his impiety to say that at some time Christ will cease to be God. Anyone who sets a term on the kingdom must be thought to feel the same about the divinity, which naturally possesses a perpetual sovereignty. Since the Word of God reigns, he is certainly God, and for that reason it follows that anyone who attempts to set a term to the kingdom is compelled, as I have argued, to believe that Christ will also cease to be God. While the teacher of no learning prattles on about these things with his impious devotees, let us for our part believe that Christ's kingdom is eternal and on the solemn day let us sing with the angel and say: 'of his

kingdom there will be no end' (Lk. 1:33). For if he is one with the Father, he will never lose that oneness. And the union of the Father and the Son will never be divided into parts, nor will what is said to be one ever cease to be so.

8. |[56] Let these madmen be gone from here, or rather, 'let them go down to Hades alive' (Ps. 55 [54]:15), as the psalm says. And when they descend there and see the patron of their impiety, let them cry out: 'You too have become as weak as we are! You have become like us! Your glory has descended to Hades,' and so forth (Isa. 14:10–11). For since he has become a shepherd of base disciples, he has set his mind on dishonouring Christ everywhere. He has dared to pay great honour to the devil, saying that when he has been freed from all sin he will return to his original state, and that the kingdom of Christ will come to an end, which means that Jesus will one day, jointly with the devil, be ruled over by God. It was against Origen rather than the Jews that the prophet said: 'Heaven was appalled at him and was exceedingly shocked, says the Lord, for he has committed two evils' (cf. Jer. 2:12–13). For on the one hand Origen asserts that Christ will one day lay aside his own kingdom, and on the other he maintains falsely that the devil will be released and will ascend to his original glory.[57] Having dug for himself this deep pit of impiety, which cannot hold water, he thereby made the devil equal in honour to the Son. For he changed the glory of the Only-begotten and conceived of him as being ruled over one day together with the devil by God. But Christ's kingdom will have no end, as he himself bore witness to the disciples when he said: 'You are those who have continued with me in my trials, and I will appoint an eternal covenant for you, that you may eat and drink for ever at my table in my kingdom' (cf. Lk. 22:28–30). For how will the expression 'for ever' apply unless his kingdom remains for ever and never ceases to exist? | The Magi also understood this, and turning to penitence, enquired very earnestly: 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him' (Mt. 2:2). The Magi called Christ a king, yet Origen denies it, saying that he will not reign in perpetuity. Nor does he notice that he is like the blasphemies of the Jews.

9. We read in the Gospel that when the Lord and Saviour, showing us a model of fortitude and patience, mounted the cross, 'Pilate wrote a title and put it over his head; it read: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". Many of the Jews read this title, which was written in

Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate: "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written"' (Jn 19:19–22). Therefore if Pilate could not be moved either by civil discord or by entreaty to remove Christ's kingdom from the title, Origen should know that without any compulsion he is doing what the Jews did in reckoning that Christ's kingdom would come to an end. They, indeed, denied that he was a king when he was on earth; Origen strives, so far as he can, to disparage him as one reigning in heaven. As a result he has Pilate who replied to the Jews: 'What I have written, I have written' (Jn 19:22) as the accuser of his crime.

Let us also adduce the prophet's word and it will proclaim Christ's kingdom without any ambiguity: 'Rejoice, O daughter of Sion; proclaim aloud O daughter of Jerusalem; be joyful and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Israel. The Lord has taken away your iniquities; he has redeemed you from the hand of your enemies. The King of Israel is in your midst; you shall experience evil no more' (Zeph. 3:14–15). Nor will he, as Origen's ravings and fables claim, cast down from heaven again and dismiss those whom he has once saved, that they might fall again from the heights. And the text: 'you shall experience evil no more' (Zeph. 3:15) is proof of eternal security, namely, that those who have once been liberated and have enjoyed the possession of the kingdom of heaven will never be drawn down to earth by vices. Nor will they lack the help of God, who according to the prophetic word 'sets up a wall and bulwark' (Isa. 26:1), surrounding them with his strength. That is why the psalmist also sings: 'He abides for ever who dwells in Jerusalem' (Ps. 125 [124]:1), and the Lord assures us: 'I will never fail you nor forsake you' (Josh. 1.5; Heb. 13:5).

It is without any basis that Origen imagines souls ascending to heaven and descending, sometimes advancing and sometimes sinking lower, so that through countless falls they die many times and Christ's passion is rendered ineffectual. For he who died once for us gave us the eternal joy of his victory, which no weight of sin can diminish. Nor does any man die repeatedly, as Origen dared to write, seeking to reinforce the most impious doctrine of the Stoics with the authority of the most divine Scriptures.[58]

10. But why do we mention these things, when he has broken out into such folly – indeed madness – that he brings another charge against the Saviour, saying that he will be fixed to the cross in the realms above on behalf of demons and evil spirits?[59] Nor does he

understand what a deep abyss of impiety he has fallen into. For if Christ, who suffered for men became man, as the Scriptures testify, it logically follows that Origen should say: 'and as he is to suffer for demons, he will become a demon'. For this is the inference one must necessarily suppose he draws, that his argument should not appear to be inconsistent with its premises, and also that he might reproduce the blasphemies of the Jews, whom he always imitates. For they, too, also spoke of Christ in a similar way, saying: 'You have a demon' (Jn. 7:20; 8:48, 52), and 'You cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons' (Lk. 11:15). But far be it that Christ should suffer on behalf of demons, let alone that he should himself also become a demon. Those who believe this crucify the Son of God once again and make him a sham. By no means will he assume the seed of demons in the same way that he assumed the seed of Abraham, much less be crucified for them. Nor will the demons see God suffering for them and cry with the prophet: 'he has borne our sins, and is afflicted for us' (Isa. 53:4). Nor will they say with Isaiah: 'with his stripes we are healed' (Isa. 53:5). Nor will Christ be led to the slaughter like a lamb (cf. Isa. 53:7) for the demons as he was for the human race. Nor will it be said for their salvation: 'He did not spare his own Son' (Rom. 8:32). Because neither will the demons cry: 'he was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification' (Rom. 4:25). |[60] On the contrary, Paul cries explicitly: 'For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3). And he cites scriptural texts, resolving ambiguities and establishing the reliability of the doctrine by their testimony. But Origen violates the truth by arguments not supported by testimony, reckoning to search out the truth with an unlit lamp.

11. And loving demons rather than Christ, he is unrestrained and insolent in his frequent misrepresentations. He crucifies the Son of God again for himself and makes an example of him, not fearing what absurd and dreadful depths of impiety follow such an argument. For he must go on to say that having been crucified for the demons, the Saviour will say to them: 'Take, eat; this is my body' (Mt. 26:26), and 'Take, drink; this is my blood' (cf. Mt. 26:27). For if he is also crucified for the demons, as the innovator thought, is it not unreasonable to say that only human beings partake of his body and blood, and not the demons as well, if, as that ignoramus holds, he was also crucified for their sake? But the demons will not hear: 'Take, eat' and 'Take, drink', nor will the Saviour annul his own

commandment to the disciples, when he said: 'Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you' (Mt. 7:6). And just as the Apostle, too, writes: 'I do not want you to be partners with demons; you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons' (1 Cor. 10:20–1), so, too, the demons cannot drink the cup of the Lord or partake of the table of the Lord. | Those who deny God are the food of the devil, for Habakkuk says: 'his food is choice' (Hab. 1:16). On the other hand, the accursed devil himself is the food of the impious, for the prophet's utterance declares: 'Thou didst give him as food for the Ethiopian peoples' (Ps. 74 [73]:14 LXX). All this proves that Christ cannot be crucified for the demons, lest the demons become partakers of his body and blood.

12. Therefore since the Apostle declares of the Saviour: 'He did this once for all when he offered up himself' (Heb. 7:27), and Origen has the audacity flatly to contradict his judgement, it is time to apply to him: 'O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! Write this man down as disowned' (Jer. 22:29–30). For what hell can receive these evils? What Tartarus can ponder things of this kind? What madness of giants has proved to be so rebellious and constructed such a tower of impiety? What lewd desire, desperately in love with the demons, has thus spread the legs of its mind, in violation of catholic doctrine? (cf. Ez. 16:25). Who has drunk so much of the vine of Sodom that inebriated with the wine of his wrath he will perish utterly? (cf. Deut. 32:32; Jer. 25:15). Who has been so refreshed with the waters of the Babylonian rivers that he has forsaken the living fountains of Israel? (cf. Jer. 2:13). Who, going out of Jerusalem and imitating Jeroboam the son of Nebat, has built so many altars of error and burned profane incense on them? (cf. 1 Kgs 12:28–33). Why should Dathan and Abiram, who committed lesser sins, not come before Christ's tribunal and condemn him by their evidence, since he has filled the thuribles with the diabolical fire of various doctrines outside the Saviour's Church? (cf. Num. 16:1–33).

For it was not the Lord, who says through the prophet: 'It was I who multiplied visions and by the hands of the prophets gave likenesses of myself' (Hos. 12:10) who taught him to bring forth counterfeit doctrines. Nor was it those who from the beginning saw the Word of God and were his ministers, or the choir of prophets who used to be called 'seers' (cf. 1 Sam. 9:9), who instructed him in these things. No, it was he himself who, submitting to the fury of

the demons by the judgement of his own mind, and deceived by the seductive error of his thinking, has let loose in the minds of the ignorant throughout the world a troop and swarm, so to speak, of perverse doctrines. He is the one who opened his mouth to the rivers of Assyria and Babylon, who attempted with waves of doctrine to overwhelm the ship of the Church, laden with the good merchandise of salvation, while he himself is lifted up by the praise of the ignorant and in his confusion prides himself on expounding the sense of the Scriptures in a manner contrary to the truth.

For who has written books in such a vast number, and so prolix and full of verbosity and ignorance, and has merged day into night in indefatigable study, that in publishing these monuments of error he should deserve to hear: 'You have been led astray by your many journeys'? (cf. Prov. 12:26). For he adopted the worst of guides, popular favour, and after writing several volumes of spurious learning and fighting with a rebellious mind against God, he mingled some kind of corrupt discharge and the filth of his stench with the unguent of heavenly doctrines, so that again it may be said with regard to his soul: 'you are unclean and notorious and abundant in iniquities' (Ez: 22:5. LXX). Nor did he wish to hear the prophet warning him: 'How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?' (Ps. 4:2). He fixed Christ to the cross for the demons, so that he should be a mediator not only between God and human beings, but also between God and demons. Far be it indeed for us to believe such a shocking impiety about the Saviour that he should lose the temple of his body, which was deemed worthy to be raised from the dead for us, and attach to himself another temple of the demonic creation, that their likeness also having been received, he might suffer crucifixion for them.

13. I beg you, my dearest brethren, to forgive the pain I feel at opposing impious doctrines. For while we strive to repel the impudence of his followers, we have brought into the open the structure of his armour and the deceits of his poisoned mind, that the following text too might be fulfilled in him: 'I shall lay bare your ignominy and show it to your lovers' (cf. Ez. 16:36. LXX). For among other things he so corrupts and violates even the resurrection of the dead, which is the hope of our salvation, that he dares to say that our bodies will again be subject to corruption and death once they have been raised.[61] Tell me, O source of impiety, how Christ, according to the Apostle Paul, will have conquered him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (cf. Heb. 2:14), if our bodies are to

be raised corruptible and mortal again? What benefit has Christ's passion been to us, if death and corruption are once again to possess our bodies? Or what does the Apostle mean when he says, 'For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. 15:22), if cruel death will have dominion over those who have risen again? Or how can those who believe such things say in all sincerity: 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24), if they make death stronger than Christ, so that the bodies raised by him come to be destroyed and it is not proved that they have survived in every respect? |[62] But even if Origen would not have it so, Christ our Lord destroyed both death and the devil who has the power of death (cf. Heb. 2:14). He kept his sign of victory immortal for us in heaven, not bringing bodies into non-being, but contriving to resolve death and corruption into non-being after the resurrection of bodies.

14. That is why we rightly celebrate the feast, having been delivered from death and corruption. | Discerning that the oxen and fatted calves are sacrificed by Wisdom according to the Gospel parable (cf. Matt. 22:4), let us feed upon a food that is stronger and full of muscles, a food fatter with doctrine, that leaving behind the milk of infancy we might receive more solid nourishment (cf. Heb. 5:12–14) and escape the ignorance that is the cause of all evils. When it has bound the feet of many with various heresies, this ignorance enjoys Origen as its greatest lover, for amongst other things he dared to say that the Son is not to be prayed to, nor the Father with the Son.[63] After many centuries he has reinstated Pharaoh's blasphemy, when he said: 'Who is he that I should heed his voice? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go' (Ex. 5:2 LXX). To say 'I do not know the Lord' is no different from Origen's statement: 'the Son is not to be prayed to', for Origen certainly acknowledges the Son as Lord.[64] And although he breaks out in such open blasphemy, nevertheless the Son is to be prayed to. Of him the prophet testifies, saying: 'And they shall make obeisance to thee and make supplication to thee, because God is in thee, and there is no God besides thee' (Isa. 45:14 LXX), and again: 'Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved' (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13). And Paul argues: 'How are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed?' (Rom. 10:14). It is necessary first to believe that he is the Son of God, that he may be invoked correctly and logically. And if the proposition 'He who is not God is not be prayed to' is true, how is it that the contrary is not also true, that he who is known to be God is to be adored? So it was that Stephen knelt down and prayed

for those who were stoning him, saying to the Son: 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them' (Acts 7:60). Also, 'At the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2:10). When it says 'every knee should bow', that is an indication of anxious and most humble prayer. Accordingly, Origen does not believe the Son of God to be God, for he does not think he is to be adored and wounds him with insults. Although he flatters himself that he is familiar with the Scriptures and thinks he understands them, he does not hear Moses saying against him: 'Whoever curses God shall bear his sin, and whoever names the name of God shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him' (Lev. 24: 15–16 LXX). And who reproaches Christ with such great insults as someone who dares to say: 'He should not be prayed to', attributing to him the name of divinity so devoid of meaning?

15. But what need is there to dwell on such impieties? Let us move on to another of his errors. He says that bodies which rise again are dissolved after many centuries into nothing.[65] Nor are there to be any bodies in the future, unless when souls fall from the heavenly mansions to the lower regions and need new ones, others come into being again, the first ones having been completely destroyed. Who on hearing these things does not tremble exceedingly in mind and body? For if after the resurrection bodies are reduced to nothing, the second death will be stronger than the first, because it is able to destroy the bodily substance completely. Why does Paul write: 'death no longer has dominion over him; the death he died he died to sin, once for all' (Rom. 6:9–10), if bodies are to be destroyed utterly? Or how will the expression 'once for all' carry a firm meaning, when the flesh separated from its fellowship with the soul is to be reduced to nothing? By what reason does he go on to say elsewhere: 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body' (cf. 1 Cor. 15:42–4). For if incorruption reduces bodies to nothing, it would follow that we should say that they are kept in corruption in perpetuity and that corruption is stronger than incorruption. But far be it from Paul to contradict himself and claim that incorruption and corruption are of the same nature.

Therefore, as Origen falsely thinks that the body is to be raised not only corruptible but also mortal, it follows that corruption and incorruption, life and death, are said to be one and the same; they will have the same power in resurrected bodies and corruption and

incorruption, life and death, will be differentiated not in reality but only in name. But if the body is to be raised corruptible and mortal, it would have been more logical for the Apostle to say: 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in corruption. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in weakness. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in dishonour. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a physical body.' Therefore if he removes corruption and weakness and dishonour from resurrected bodies and says, on the contrary, that bodies are to put on incorruption and power and glory and the body is to be restored as a spiritual rather than a physical body, death will have been destroyed and immortality and incorruption will reign in resurrected bodies instead of death and corruption, For the body itself will rise both immortal and incorrupt, that it might remain coeternal with the soul. Therefore since the Saviour also gives a pledge of salvation for our bodies in the resurrection of his own body, it cannot be believed that he is to die in any further sense. The Apostle agrees with this opinion: 'Christ rising from the dead will no longer die, death no longer has dominion over him' (cf. Rom. 6:9), lest if it has dominion over him it will have dominion over us too.

16. Origen is shown up shamefully among the other kinds of disgraceful things he fabricates in his also offering a defence of the magic arts. For in his treatises he says the following: 'The "art of magic" does not seem to me a term referring to anything that actually exists, but if it does, it is not to do with the working of evil, or with what could be held in contempt.'[66] In saying this he shows himself to be assuredly a supporter of Elymas the magician (cf. Acts 13:8) who contended against the apostles, and Jannes and Jambres who resisted Moses with magic arts (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8). But Origen's defence will have no validity, because Christ by his coming destroyed the magicians' trickery. Let the champion of this new impiety reply, and let him hear very plainly: if the art of magic is not an evil, neither is idolatry, which relies on the power of the art of magic. Because if idolatry is an evil, the art of magic, on which idolatry depends, is also an evil.

The fact, however, that idolatry has been destroyed by the majesty of Christ, indicates that the magic art that is related to it has been dissolved with it at the same time. On this matter the prophet clearly proclaims: 'Stand now in your enchantments and your many sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if you can find profit in them' (Isa. 47:12 LXX). Therefore since the writings of the prophets give this testimony, and no one has dared hand down the

magicians' arts to posterity as something to be highly valued, and the laws of the state also punish magicians and sorcerers, I cannot understand what motive has impelled Origen, who professes to be a Christian, to become an imitator of the false prophet Zedekiah (cf. 1 Kgs 22:11) and make himself horns of iron, armed with which he attacks the doctrines of truth, and neither perceives anything of the heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Heb. 12:22), nor imitates Moses and Daniel and Peter and other saints who, like soldiers standing in the front line, engage in an indefatigable struggle against magicians and sorcerers. With these saints let us form the choirs on the festal day, that passing through the midst of the dangers of Babylon we might avoid Origen's poison and obey the words of the prophet who commands us: 'Go forth from Babylon you that flee from the land of the Chaldaeans' (Isa. 48:20. LXX). Thus may we enter into Jerusalem, where there is the preaching of truth.

17. Notwithstanding that in resisting falsehood we have suffered somewhat like the Three Children who overcame the nature of the flames in the burning fiery furnace (cf. Dan. 3:8–30), nevertheless the Babylonian fire did not prevail against us, nor did it even singe our hair – namely, the doctrinal ends of the Church's truth. Nor was there any damage to our mantles, which Wisdom wove for us for the protection of our souls out of the testimonies of holy Scripture. Nor was there the smell of fire on us, the flame of a perverse knowledge spreading on every side. For we took no pleasure in Origen's doctrine which supposes bodies to have come into being on account of the falls of rational creatures and says that according to the etymology of the Greek word [*psychē*], souls have been called such because they have lost the heat of their intellect and their most fervent love for God, so that they have received the name from coldness [*psychos*].[67] We reject this lest we deem even the soul of the Saviour to be subject to the same fables. Moreover, we deny that the courses of the sun and the moon and the stars and the most beautiful harmony in diversity of the whole world have come about as a result of previous causes and various sins and failings of souls, or that God's goodness was delayed for a long time, in that he would not have made visible creatures unless the invisible ones had transgressed. Nor do we call corporeal substance 'emptiness', as Origen judges it to be, assenting in different words to the decrees of Mani,[68] lest even the body of Christ be subject to emptiness. Satisfied with the eating of this body, we meditate every day on the words of him who said: 'Unless a person eats my flesh and drinks my blood he will have no part with me' (cf.

Jn. 6:53). For if corporeal nature is empty and futile according to Origen's error, why has Christ risen from the dead? For what reason has he raised our bodies, as Paul teaches when he writes: 'If the dead do not rise, then Christ has not risen; if Christ has not risen, then our faith is in vain' (cf. 1 Cor. 15:13–14)?

18. From this it is evident that our corporeal nature is not empty, but that those who do not think it will rise and remain for ever believe it to be an emptiness. He also condemns honourable marriage by denying that bodies subsist unless first souls should have sinned in heaven and then been cast out and bound as if to some kind of corporeal prison-houses. Indeed, he expresses whatever opinion he wishes and speaks as if he has no fear. Let him hear us with his own ears invoking Paul: 'Marriage is honourable and the marriage bed undefiled' (cf. Hb. 13:4). And how is it undefiled if the soul, sullied by faults, has been clothed in flesh? |[69] Nor do we find fault with the request of the blessed Hannah, who prayed to receive a male offspring (cf. 1 Sam. 1:11). For in her soul's longing for a child she did not pray for a soul living in heaven to sin so that she could see her own desire fulfilled. Nor when Moses prayed over the sons of Israel, saying, 'the Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude; may the Lord, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you as he has promised you' (Deut. 1:10–11), did he wish so many souls to sin so that the sons of Israel should be multiplied a thousandfold. | What is discordant is most obvious. Would he who prayed for the people's transgression: 'But if thou wilt forgive their sin, forgive it; but if not, blot me out of the book which thou hast written' (cf. Exod. 32:31–2), have asked for the sons of Israel to be multiplied if he knew that they would increase through the fall of souls? Would he not have prayed for the contrary, lest on account of transgressions the nature of a better substance should be brought to what is worse? Why does David pray in the psalm: 'May the Lord bless you from Sion, and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life, and may you see your children's children' (Ps. 128 [127]:5–6), if the tribe of the just man increases through the sin of souls? And how does he dare to say: 'Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord' (Ps. 128 [127]:4), when he knows that delinquent souls are bound by the chains of the body and by divine judgement suffer punishment for their sins in a prison of this kind? How does God say through the prophet: 'If you had hearkened to my commandments, then your peace would have been like a river,

and your righteousness like the waves of the sea, and your seed would have been like the sand, and the offspring of your womb like the dust of the earth' (Isa. 48:18–19 LXX)? For those who keep God's commandments should not accept as a reward the fall from heaven of souls, which, tied to bodies, multiply the increase of their offspring. But if they wish to learn about the origin of the human race, let them hear Moses when he says: 'God took earth and formed man and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul' (Gen. 2:7 LXX), that is, an immortal soul. God also blessed Adam and Eve with the words: 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen. 1:28).

19. If souls are sent on earth after sin that they might be born in bodies, it was not reasonable for Adam and Eve to be blessed, when on account of sin they merited rather to be cursed. In fact, after forming them he then blessed those whom subsequently he struck with a curse because they sinned of their own volition. From this one infers that in no way does the nature of bodies exist on account of the sins of souls. Let them again hear God saying: 'I made the earth and man in it' (Jer. 27:5 [=34:4 LXX]); and David: 'The heaven of heavens belongs to the Lord, but the earth he has given to the sons of men' (Ps. 115 [113]:16 LXX), and let them henceforth cease following the errors of their own opinions and rather be led by the authority of the Scriptures. For those who have become enervated by pleasures and in whose hearts wantonness reigns, when they contemplate bodily charm they seek not moral beauty but the beauty of limbs, and their sense, weighted down with earthy dross, observes nothing higher. Similarly, |[70] those who are impressed by the ordered composition of words and are captivated by the sound of eloquence do not observe doctrinal truth, are ashamed to acknowledge their original error, and blinded by the tumour of arrogance do not wish to be disciples, nor, after having been corrected, do they see they were formerly in error.

20. And so having rejected Origen's evils and disregarded the traps of those Scriptures which are called apocrypha, | that is, secret[71] – for 'I have not spoken in secret', says the Lord (cf. Jn. 18:20) – again and again, my dearest brethren, let us celebrate the feasts of the Lord's passion. Adorning faith with practice, let us imitate God, to whom no form of corporeal nature is entirely similar,[72] by showing mercy to the poor. Let us possess the image of his goodness in every respect. Let us amend our errors by penitence. Let us pray for our

enemies. Let us beseech God for our detractors, emulating Moses, who when his sister spoke against him took away the blame through prayer (cf. Num. 12:13–15). Let us wash away the filth of sins with the oil of almsgiving. Let the chains of captives seem to bind us too, and let us implore God to be well-disposed to them. Let daily human kindness sustain those shut up in prison, and those whose bodies suffer from the royal disease and whose limbs dissolve with a living decay.[73] Let us serve them with anxious care on account of the reward stored up in heaven. If judicial responsibilities are given to us and a case comes before us of disputants who are fellow-Christians, let there not be consideration of persons but of facts. Before those who are sinking and are suffering tribulation let us too fall down with kindly feeling. Let the laws maintain the precept of truth; let charity lie prostrate before mercy, not abusing sinners but consoling them. For lapsing into vice is easy and frailty is the human condition. Whatever one discerns in someone else one should fear in oneself. When another is corrected for error, let his amendment be a warning to us. And above all things, as the summit and crown of the virtues, let us maintain devotion to God with all fear in our hearts. And abhorring the plurality of gods, let us confess the substance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be one and undivided, for having been baptized into it, we have received eternal life.

And if God grants us his mercy and we are deemed worthy to celebrate the Lord's Pascha with the angels, let us keep the beginning of Lent from the eighth day of the month which according to the Egyptians is called Phamenoth. And if God gives us the strength, let us fast more strictly during Great Week, that is, the week of the venerable Pascha, marking as the first day the thirteenth Pharmuthi, that in this way precisely we may finish the fast in accordance with the Gospel traditions in the middle of the night, on the eighteenth day of the month of Pharmuthi already mentioned. And on the next day, which is the symbol of the Lord's resurrection, that is, the nineteenth of the same month (14 April), let us celebrate the true Pascha, adding to these seven more weeks, which brings us to the feast of Pentecost, and making ourselves worthy of the communion of the body and blood of Christ. For thus we shall merit receiving the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus, our Lord, through whom and with whom be glory and sovereignty to God the Father with the Holy Spirit now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

21. Greet one another with a holy kiss (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20, etc.). The brethren who are with me greet you (cf. Phil. 4:21, etc.).[74]

SEVENTEENTH FESTAL LETTER (402)
(Jerome, *Ep.* 98, CSEL 55. 185–211)

1. The divine Word of this sacred feast, flashing from the heavenly regions and in its splendour surpassing the radiance of the sun, pours a bright light into the souls that desire it. And if they can bear its rays with the full gaze of their hearts, it draws them to the innermost parts, to the holy of holies, so to speak, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Hence if we wish to be partakers of salvation and, persevering in the pursuit of the soul's virtues, purge away transgressions and cleanse whatever is sordid in us by constant meditation on the Scriptures, let us, as if contemplating the clear knowledge of doctrines under a cloudless sky, hasten to celebrate the feast of heavenly joy and join ourselves to the choirs of angels, where there are crowns and prizes and certain victory and where the longed-for palm is offered to the victors. Liberated from the heaving waves of the flesh, among the various shipwrecks of the pleasures on this side and that, let us not postpone taking hold of the rudder of the virtues and, after the great perils of the sea, entering into the safe harbour of heaven.

2. Therefore let us address those, too, who are preoccupied with the futile concerns of this life, who are assailed by the clamour of the depths of violent passion surrounding them like a raging abyss. Let us, as if rousing them from deep sleep, summon them to the profit of wisdom. Let us show them the true riches of divine meanings and the unhoped for joys of this holy feast. This is why we accept every labour in the present age, to prepare both those who are a little negligent and ourselves for eternal glory. Hence Wisdom in the book of Proverbs summons those lacking understanding to a feast and proclaims: 'Come, eat of my bread and drink the wine that I have mixed for you' (Prov. 9:5 LXX). For these heavens that we contemplate are not so illuminated by the choirs of the stars, nor do the sun and the moon, the two bright eyes, so to speak, of the world by the course of which the year unfolds and the changing seasons succeed one another, pour such clear light on to the earth as our feast does, shining and radiant with the choir of the virtues. Those who seek its treasures and riches sing in unison with the voice of David: 'Who will give me wings like those of a dove, and I will fly away and be at rest?' (Ps. 55 [54]:6 LXX). And exulting and possessed with a kind of ecstasy, they rejoice with hearts suffused with an ineffable joy, and again cry: 'Here we have no abiding city, but we seek the

city which is to come' (Heb. 13:14), whose architect and builder is God. They know that this is the hope laid up for all their labours, by which they struggle to advance in this world. These are the prizes in store, for which they direct the course of their daily lives without fear of any danger, avoiding as much as possible the impiety and snares of the heretics, by which the blind lead the blind into the pit (cf. Mt. 15:14; Lk. 6:39) and pollute the hearts of those they have deceived as if with a kind of slothful and filthy decay. They are not content with this goal, but suck out the innermost marrow of the Scriptures, condemning what is falsely called knowledge with the truth of the Church's doctrines.

3. This is also what the patriarch Jacob understood when he dreamed of a ladder, the top of which reached up to heaven (cf. Gen. 28:12–17). By this ladder, using the different steps of the virtues, one climbs up on high, and men are called to abandon the lowly things of the world and celebrate the feast of the Lord's Passion with the Church of the first-born. 'This is none other than the house of God', Scripture says, 'and this is the gate of heaven' (Gen. 18:17). David contemplated this very acutely and investigated it with the whole desire of his mind, and meditated on the stages of this journey. And as if grinding and crumbling precious pigments, that they might scatter widely the burning of a most sweet odour, he summons those hastening to the feasts, saying: 'Open to me the gates of righteousness, and I will enter through them and give praise to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it' (Ps. 118 [117]:19–20). Therefore in no way does any feast belong to the heretics, nor can those deceived by error enjoy participation it. For it is written: 'If a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned' (Heb. 12:20). Nor can those who contradict the divine doctrines of the Church receive the mysteries of the heavenly words. Let us therefore with all our strength make our souls worthy of the coming celebration, cleansing them of all contagion, that we may be able to sing with the saints: 'The Lord is God, and he has given us light' (Ps. 118 [117]:27). Another prophet, too, of future things, testifies to this with a mystical voice: 'The Lord will appear among them, and will destroy all the gods of the nations' (Zeph. 2:11 LXX). This will occur when words have been changed into deeds, and the truth of things has been demonstrated before the eyes of the doubters, that through the coming to pass of those things which have been predicted, the truth of the words may be confirmed. Thus God will make us participants in his victory, that we may be able both to share

with the saints in the feast and to celebrate the glory of his illustrious advent. For because the whole earth had been corrupted by various allurements, taking vices for virtues, and conversely virtues for vices, while with the passage of time tyrannical pride takes custom for the law of nature, those who had gone before and strengthened falsehood by repetition were thought to be fathers and masters of truth. As a result it came about that the error of human beings grew, and not knowing what was useful, like brute beasts, they despised the true pastor, the Lord, and seized by madness venerated tyrants and princes as if they were gods, deifying their own weakness in men of the same nature as themselves.[75] Thus it turned out that they escaped imminent danger of death and conciliated those whose clemency was more savage than cruelty.

4. That is why, since everybody had been seduced by error, the living Word of God came down to earth to aid us, because the world was ignorant of the worship of God and endured the privation of truth. This is shown by him who says: 'All have sinned, together they have gone wrong' (Rom. 3:12), and the prophets pray for Christ's help: 'Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down!' (Ps. 144 [143]:5), not that he in whom everything exists might change location, but that he might on account of our salvation assume the flesh of human frailty. Paul says the same: 'Though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich' (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). And he came down to earth and was born as a man from a virgin's womb, which he sanctified, confirming by this dispensation the interpretation of his name, Emmanuel, that is, 'God with us' (cf. Mt. 1:23). He began in a wonderful manner to be what we are, yet did not cease to be what he had been, assuming our nature in such a way that he should not lose what he was in himself. For although John wrote: 'The Word became flesh', that is, in other words, 'man', nevertheless he did not turn into flesh, because he never ceased to be God. To him a saint says: 'But thou art the same' (Ps. 102 [101]:27), and the Father, witnessing from heaven, also says: 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased' (Lk. 3:22). Consequently, even though he has become man, we profess that he remained what he had been before he became man. Paul preaches the same thing as we do: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for ever' (Heb. 13:8). For when he says 'the same', he shows that Christ, who for our sake became poor and assumed the full likeness of our condition, did not change his original nature or diminish the richness of his divinity. He assumed humanity in such measure and

kind, only without sin, as the measure and kind in which we were created, not in a partial way but wholly. As the 'mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim. 2:5), he lacked nothing which belongs to our likeness except sin, which has no substance.

Nor did he dwell in inanimate flesh with God the Word himself occupying the place of a rational soul, as the dull disciples of Apollinarius imagine.[76] Nor does the Gospel saying: 'Now is my soul troubled' (Jn. 12:27), testify to his divinity being subjected to perturbation, which logically follows for those who contend that his divinity was in his body in the place of a soul. Nor again did he complete the humanity he assumed by uniting only a soul to himself. Nor should we believe that he accomplished the dispensation of a semi-incarnation out of flesh like ours but a soul unlike ours, existing as if in our flesh but with the soul of irrational beasts. If that were the case, the soul of the Saviour, in their view, would be irrational and without mind or sense, which is impious to believe and far from the faith of the Church. And, furthermore, he would be the referent of that utterance in which the prophet reproaches the sinner saying: 'Ephraim is like a senseless dove, not having a heart' (Hos. 7:11 LXX), and as if bereft of reason would hear: 'He is compared to the senseless beasts and has been made like them' (49 [48]:12 LXX). There is therefore no doubt that a soul which is irrational and without sense or mind is comparable to senseless beasts. That is why Moses also writes: 'You shall not muzzle the ox when it treads out the grain' (Deut. 25:4), and Paul commenting on this in his writings says: 'Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake?' (1 Cor 9:9–10).

5. It was therefore for our sake that the Saviour became man, not for the sake of brute and irrational beasts, that he should take on the likeness of an animal without sense and reason. For the Church does not accept that which the followers of this heresy quibble and prattle about, that it should think that the Saviour's soul should be called 'the will of the flesh' when the Apostle clearly calls the will of the flesh hostile to God and death (cf. Rom. 8:6–7). It is quite wrong to say this of the Lord, that one should believe that his soul is death and hostile to God. For if he commanded us: 'Do not fear those who can kill the body but are unable to kill the soul' (cf. Mt. 10:28), it is stupid to argue that our souls are better than the Saviour's soul, and assert that his is the will of the flesh, which is death and hostile to God, when our soul cannot die. This idea is unacceptable, my dearest brethren, when even the will of the soul cannot be called the soul

and the two differ very much from each other. For although the will of the soul is in the soul, whose will it is, nevertheless one contains it, and the other is contained by it. First the soul exists, and afterwards the will dwells in the soul. For if the will of the soul is not the soul itself, a fortiori the will of the flesh cannot be called the soul!

However much they extend the nets of their syllogisms and set traps of captious arguments, they entangle themselves in the snares. They do not know what it is in which they glory with a futile knowledge and should learn from us, whom they drive to take up an argument of this kind unwillingly, that that which knows is one thing, knowledge is another, and that which is known yet another, and that these differ among themelves not only verbally but also in meaning.[77] For that which knows is the rational soul; moreover, that which is from it and belongs to it, yet is not itself that which knows, is called knowledge; what is known, however, is the matter which is the object of its attention and this knowledge springs from the knower but is not the knower himelf or knowledge itself. Let them finally desist subverting the simple decrees of the Church's faith with the tricks of the art of dialectic, calling the Saviour's soul the 'will of the flesh', which the Apostle declares to be death and hostile to God.

6. It would appear that our argument against them should also be as follows. It is written of God's Word: 'All things were made through him' (Jn. 1:3). Is it then credible that the wisdom or will of the flesh, as they understand the Saviour's soul to be, should have been created by the Word of God, so that he should become himself the worker of death and hostility towards God, and, which is a shocking thing to say, unite them to his own person? For if it is impious to believe this, seeing that the Saviour's soul excels in all the virtues, it follows that the will of the flesh cannot be his soul, or else it would be believed that he himself united death and hostility to God to himself. Let Apollinarius' disciples cease defending on account of his other writings those things which he said against the Church's rules. For although he wrote against the Arians and the Eunomians and refuted Origen and other heretics by his arguments,[78] nevertheless he who has in mind the precept: 'Have no respect to persons in judgement' (Deut. 1:17 LXX) should always love the truth, not persons, and know that in the dispensation of the humanity, which for our salvation the Only-begotten Son of God deigned to assume, Apollinarius is not without blame, for his opinions and writings about his soul are perverse. For as the Apostle said, 'If I give away all that I have and deliver my body to be burned but

have not love, I gain nothing' (1 Cor. 13:3). So although this man of whom I am now speaking, or Origen and other heretics, might well have written other things which do not conflict with the Church's faith, nevertheless they will not be without fault if they oppose the Church's faith in the principal matters pertaining to the salvation of believers. Nor, as he and his followers have tried to prove, did our Lord and Saviour assume a soul without consciousness and mind, or half a soul, or two thirds, or else a third, that he should save the humanity he assumed imperfectly, because neither the half nor the remaining portions could be described as complete. And just as that which is perfect lacks the blemish of imperfection, so that which is imperfect cannot be said to be perfect. And if he received our likeness imperfectly or only partially, how is it said in the Gospel: 'No one takes my soul from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again' (cf. Jn 10:18)? Therefore that which is taken up and laid down cannot be said to be either irrational or without mind and intelligence, but on the contrary must be rational and intelligent and possessed of mind and feeling.

7. And indeed the order itself of the argument convinces us that nothing imperfect has been received by the Lord, but what has been assumed by him is a fully and perfectly sound humanity. For there is no doubt that the souls of irrational beasts are not laid down and taken up again, but they perish with the body and dissolve into dust. On the other hand, when the Saviour took up his soul and separated it from his body at the time of the Passion, he received it back again at the Resurrection. And long before he did this, he said in a psalm: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou let thy holy one see corruption' (Ps. 16 [15]:10 LXX). Nor is it credible that his flesh should have descended to the lower world, or that the 'will of the flesh', should the soul be called that, should have appeared in the lower world, but that his body should have been placed in a tomb. He himself would not have said of the body or of the wisdom of the flesh or of his divinity: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades' but truly of a soul of the same nature as our own, to show us that it was a perfect, rational, intelligent and sensitive soul that descended to the lower world. We exhort those who hold such opinions to abandon their heretical errors and acquiesce to the Church's truth and not make the celebration of the Lord's Passion incomplete or deny the principal and greater part of the Saviour's humanity by asserting that his body is without soul and mind. For if that were so, what did he want us to make of him when he said: 'The good shepherd lays down

his soul for his sheep' (Jn. 10:11)? And if he only assumed human flesh, why did he say in his Passion: 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Mt. 26:41)?

8. Hence it should be understood that, manifesting the mystery of the human condition put together from each of its parts, he assumed the perfect likeness of our conditon, and uniting to himself not the flesh alone, nor a soul deprived of reason and consciousness, but a complete body and a complete soul, he manifested in his own person a perfect human being, that through and in his own person he might grant perfect salvation to all people. And having fellowship with us who were created from earth (cf. Gen. 2:7), he brought down from heaven neither flesh nor a soul which existed previously and had been created before his flesh, which he then coupled with his body, as Origen's disciples try to teach. For if the Saviour's soul, before he assumed a human body, dwelt in the realm above without yet being his soul, it would be necessary to say most impiously that it existed before the Lord's body, having an activity and vigour, and was afterwards changed into his soul. It would be a different matter if they could teach from Scripture that before he was born of Mary, God the Word possessed this soul and that before the assumption of the flesh it was called his soul. Therefore if, both by the authority of the Scriptures and by reason itself, they are compelled to admit that Christ did not have a soul before he was born of Mary – for in the assumption of humanity his soul was also assumed – they are clearly proved to be saying that the same soul was both his and not his. But let these ranters cease from the impiety of novel doctrines! As for us, following the rule of the Scriptures, we preach with full boldness of heart, that neither his flesh nor his soul existed before he was born of Mary, nor did a soul previously dwell in heaven which he subsequently united to himself. For when he came down from heaven, the Lord brought nothing belonging to our condition down with him. That is why, cutting down whatever is contrary to the truth with the sickle of the Gospel, he says: 'Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up' (Mt. 15:13). He completes the word by the deed, the threat by the outcome, and proves the power of the assertions by the accomplishment of the facts themselves, that whatever the word has promised the truth of the deeds might demonstrate.

9. Therefore let those who follow Origen, that hydra – to use an expression from the fables of the poets – of all the heresies, and are

proud to have him as the teacher and leader of their error, know that they are alien to this feast and cannot celebrate the Lord's Passion with us. Although he wrote countless books and left the world a heritage of his garrulity as a pernicious possession, nevertheless we know what is prescribed by the Law: 'You may not put a foreigner over you, he is not your brother' (Deut. 17:15 LXX). For anyone who strays by a different path from the rules of the apostles is excluded from Christ's feast as one who is profane and unworthy of the choir of Christ and participation in his mysteries. He is driven far from it by the Fathers and elders who founded the Saviour's Church for striving to stitch the philosopher's rags on to the new and most sound garment of the Church (cf. Mt. 9:16) and associate the false with the true, with the result that the weakness of the former is proved by the proximity of the stronger and the beauty of the latter is violated.

10. For what reasoning, what chain of argument has led him to subvert the truth of the Scriptures with the shadows of allegory and empty imaginings? What prophet has taught him to think that God was compelled to create bodies on account of souls falling from heaven?[79] Which of those who, according to blessed Luke, 'were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' (Lk. 1:2) of God handed down to him the teaching that God was provoked to create the diversity of this world by the negligence and movement and fall of rational creatures from the realm above? In his account of God's creation, Moses neither says nor even suggests that it was on account of certain antecedent causes that sensible things were produced from rational things, visible things from invisible things, and worse things from better things, as Origen most clearly preaches. For he says that the world came into being on account of the sins of intellectual creatures, thus refusing to celebrate Easter with the saints or say with Paul: 'Ever since the creation of the world the invisible things of God are clearly perceived in the things that have been made' (Rom. 1:20). Nor does he wish to exclaim with the prophet: 'I considered thy works and was amazed' (Hab. 3:2 LXX). For the beauty of the world could not have come into existence in any other way, if the attractive variety of the creatures had not filled it. In fact, the sun and the moon, the two great luminaries, and the rest of the stars, before they were what they are – for the duty of their daily course testifies that they are created – were not incorporeal, nor did they abandon their original simplicity for some cause or other and become clothed with bodies, as he imagines, constructing doctrines contrary to the faith. Nor did souls commit some sin in the realm above and were therefore

banished to bodies. If that were so, the Saviour would not have needed to assume a body himself to liberate souls from bodies. When he remits sins in baptism, he would have needed at the same time to free the baptized person from the bonds of the body, which Origen claims were fashioned on account of sins in condemnation of sin. Moreover, he also promises the resurrection of bodies in vain, if it is advantageous to souls to fly up to heaven freed from the weight of bodies. The Saviour himself when he rose again would not have needed to resuscitate his flesh, but only unite his soul to his divinity, if it is better to live without bodies than with them.

11. What does he mean by claiming that souls are repeatedly united with bodies and then divided from them, thus inflicting many deaths upon us? He ignores the fact that Christ came not to separate souls from bodies after the resurrection, or when they have been liberated to clothe them again in new bodies, having them descend from the heavenly regions and cladding them with blood and flesh, but once bodies have been raised again to grant them incorruption and eternity. For as Christ having died will never die again, neither will death have dominion over him (cf. Rom. 6:9), so when our bodies have been raised again after the resurrection, neither will they perish a second time or repeatedly, nor will death ever have dominion over them, nor will they be dissolved into nothingness, because the coming of Christ has saved the whole human person.

12. Furthermore, this, too, has excluded Origen from Christ's Paschal feast. He represents principalities, authorities, powers, thrones and dominions not as created from the beginning in this state (cf. Col. 1:16), but as becoming such after their creation because they had performed some deeds worthy of honour. When others similar to them had fallen and been demoted because of negligence, the former received their eminent names.[80] Thus – according to his error – God did not create them principalities and powers and so on, but the sins of others furnished them with the matter of their glories. Then how does the Apostle Paul write: 'In Christ all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him, and he is before all things' (cf. Col. 1:16–17)? If he had understood significance of this expression – 'through whom' it is said 'all things were created' – he would have known that they were created thus from the beginning. It was not the carelessness of others and their fall to a lower rank that gave

God the occasion for naming them principalities and authorities and powers, and so on, since beauty in the created world consists mostly in a hierarchy of dignities. For it is written of the sun and the moon and the stars: 'God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars, and set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth' (Gen. 1:16–17 LXX). They did not receive it as a reward for good works that after being placed in the firmament of heaven they should shine and that days and nights should succeed one another. Similarly, we do not suppose that the principalities and authorities, which were created in the heavenly regions, have advanced to this state after good works, but that they exist just as they were created from the beginning. Let us not then imitate the error of Origen and his disciples, who think that like demons and the devil, who on account of their own will were allotted their names and ranks, the principalities, powers, virtues, thrones and dominions should have accomplished something good after their creation, so that when others had fallen to a lower rank they should mount up to the heights and be distinguished by these titles, having afterwards what they did not have previously. In saying this they do not understand that they are going against Paul's judgement that the principalities, powers, thrones and dominions were created through Christ. For when he says 'created' there is no doubt that they were created thus from the beginning and did not afterwards receive these dignities in that way.

13. Doubtless it suffices to have touched on these things briefly. Let us turn now to another impiety of his, which he utters as if vomiting it up from the deepest darkness, and has bequeathed to the world as the worst monument to his blasphemies. For he says that the Holy Spirit does not work on those things that are inanimate nor does it reach irrational beings.[81] In asserting this he does not reflect that the mystical waters of baptism are consecrated by the coming of the Holy Spirit, or that the eucharistic bread by which the body of the Saviour is manifested and which we break for our sanctification, together with the sacred chalice – which are set on the church's altar and are certainly inanimate – are sanctified by the invocation and coming of the Holy Spirit. If the power of the Holy Spirit did not extend to irrational beings and to things without soul, why does David sing: 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?' (Ps. 139 [138]:7). He shows by these words that all things are embraced by the Holy Spirit and surrounded by his majesty. If all things are in all things,[82] then certainly so are the irrational and the inanimate. And elsewhere

we read: 'the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world' (Wisd. 1:7), which Scripture would never have mentioned unless irrational and inanimate beings were also filled with his divine majesty. Indeed, he is not content to stop at this blasphemy, but in the manner of madmen, who show evidence of their madness by gnashing their teeth and emitting foaming saliva, he again vomits forth and says that the Son of God – that is, his reason and word and virtue – extends only so far as those things that are endowed with reason. On hearing this I am amazed where he got it from. Does he not know how to read the text: 'All things were made through him' (Jn 1:3): – which proves that the power of the Word of God extends to all things – perhaps even forgetting the well-known story of Lazarus being raised by Christ's excellence? Lazarus' body, at least at the moment when he was rising from the dead into life certainly lacked soul and reason (cf. Jn 11:1–44). He also ignored this: that five thousand men, not counting the women and children, were satisfied by five loaves, and twelve baskets of broken pieces were left over, which Christ's power certainly accomplished (cf. Mt. 14:19–21). In my view, neither did he recall the famous miracle when, treading on the waves of the irrational sea with his divine foot, he made them calm again for the people in the boat (cf. Mt. 8:23–7). It was Christ's excellence, not anybody else's, that brought the waves under control. How then does he not tremble in his entire soul and body, when he says that the power of the Word of God cannot extend to irrational creatures? And let him who prides himself on his knowledge of the Scriptures, and thinks that he is more learned than anybody else, take note of the text in which they carried out the sick on pallets into the crossroads and squares, that Peter's shadow might touch them and heal them (cf. Acts 5:15). The testimony of the sacred Acts of the Apostles refutes Origen's stupidity. It proves that the Son and Word of God did by the shadow of the apostles that which Origen claims he could not do.

14. Deceived by a similar error and not knowing what he is saying, he follows the opinion of those who deny that providence descends as far as all creatures, even to the lower parts of the world, but only stays in the regions of heaven, with the result that Peter's shadow would have done that which the Saviour's power was unable to accomplish. But let us come to the most notorious points. For the Apostle clearly proclaims of the Only-begotten Son of God: 'Let us have this mind among ourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God

a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a sevant' (cf. Phil. 2:5–7). Yet Origen has dared to say that it was the Saviour's soul that emptied itself and received the form of a servant, so that John should be believed to be a liar when he says 'the Word became flesh' (Jn. 1:14).[83] He assimilates the Saviour to our own condition, so long as it is not his very self which empties itself and receives the form of a servant, but his soul, and thus dissolves the faith which has been established by the confession of all. For if it is the Saviour's soul that was in the form of God and equal to God, according to Origen's madness, yet the Son of God is equal to God and that which is equal to God must be of the same substance, we are led by the logic of the argument to believe that the soul and God are of a single nature. When he says this, it follows that he maintains that our souls, too, are not of a different nature from God, for there is no doubt that our souls and the Saviour's soul are of one substance, so that consequently the Creator and the creature would be of one substance. And how were all things created through Christ, if human souls are of the same substance as the Creator? Truly it is not so, brethren. Nor was it the Saviour's soul but the Son of God himself, since he was in the form of God and equal to God, who emptied himself and accepted the form of a servant. Sunk in the deep filth of impiety, Origen does not realize that he aligns himself with the pagans, who venerate idols instead of God: 'claiming to be wise they became fools, and transformed the glory of the immortal God into an image resembling mortal man' (Rom. 1:22–3). He, too, fell into this and was deceived by a similar error. For affirming that the Saviour's soul was in the form of God and equal to him, as we mentioned above, he puts himself on the same level as the impiety of the pagans. For as they transformed the glory of the immortal God into an image resembling mortal man by saying that those were gods which were not gods, so he, too, transformed the glory of the immortal God, by asserting that the Saviour's soul, which was created, was in the form of God and equal to him, and that it was this that emptied itself, not the Word of God who came down to earth, as the authority of the Apostle affirms.

15. Nor does he blush, unmindful of himself because of his loquaciousness, that he does not even wish the human soul to be called such from the beginning of its creation, but because it was mind and sense first and then acquired the coldness of negligence and unfaithfulness. (This etymology suits the Greek rather than the Latin language.[84]) If, however, he asserts that the Saviour's soul was equal

to God and constituted in his form,[85] it follows that it too has received this appellation from the coldness of love, and has lost the dignity of its earlier name. For his general argument is that human souls were called such because they lost the warmth of their pristine fervour. Therefore if everybody's souls are called such because of their acquired coldness, and it is admitted that the Saviour had a soul, it follows that he holds that even this soul has migrated from mind and sense to an appellation of this kind. Although he does not literally say this, and open impiety restrains his insanity, nevertheless he is compelled to say it of very necessity, because it is implied by the logic of what he has previously conceded. For either he must deny that the Saviour had a soul, which goes very clearly against the authority of the Gospels, or, if he is not to contradict himself, he must admit that even this soul is called such on account of mind and sense growing cold in love. For obviously he regards the souls of all who have withdrawn from God and lost the heat of divine love to be the result of growing cold. Who will believe him satisfied with this degree of sacrilege?

16. |[86] Indeed he does not keep silent but blasphemes again, calumniating the Son of God when he says in the following words: 'As the Son and the Father are one, so too the soul which the Son assumed and the Son himself are one.'[87] He does not understand that the Father and the Son are one on account of the one substance and the same divinity, whereas the Son and his soul are of a substance and nature | different from each other. For if the Son's soul and the Son himself are one, as the Father and the Son are one, the Father and the soul would also be one and the Son's soul could say: 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn 14:9). But this is not so – God forbid! The Son and the Father are one, because they are not different divinities. But the soul and the Son differ both in nature and in substance, because the soul too was created by him since it is of one substance with us.[88] For if the soul and the Son are one in the same way as the Father and Son are one, as Origen reckons, then the soul, like the Son, would be 'the radiance of the glory of God and the stamp of his substance' (cf. Heb. 1:3). But this is impossible. It is therefore also impossible for the Son and his soul to be one, in the way that the Father and the Son are one. Again, regardless of the fact that he is contradicting himself, he says: 'For the soul that was "troubled" and "sorrowful" (cf. Mt. 26:38) was certainly not the "Only-begotten" and the "first-born of all creation" (Col. 1:15), nor was it God the Word,[89] who is superior to his soul, as the Son of

God himself says: "I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up"' (Jn 10:8).[90] Therefore, if the Son is superior to his soul, of which there is no doubt, how could his soul be equal to God and in the form of God? When he said it was the soul that emptied itself and assumed the form of a servant, he exceeded all other heretics in the magnitude of his blasphemy, as we have already noted. For if the Word is in the form of God and equal to God, yet the Saviour's soul is thought to be in the form of God and equal to him as he has dared to write, how can what is equal be superior? For those things which transcend nature bear witness to the superiority of what lies beyond them.[91]

17. This blasphemy is not sufficient for him, but directing the course of his stupidity beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (cf. Isa. 18:1) again he raves like a madman. He says that God of his own free will created as many rational creatures as he could govern,[92] with the result that he put the power of God on the same level as the weakness of men and the rest of what has been created. For in the human body, as much strength sustains and rules its members as can be imparted to them and flourish. It provides us with that temperament which it is able to rule by its presence, and sustains it with as much strength as human members can bear. But God, who is greater than the things which he himself has made, seeing that he has granted them the measure in creation which the order of things required, more than which they could not bear, is able to go beyond what creatures are capable of attaining. But Origen, that pillar of truth, asserts that God's power is limited and inferior to human skills. Indeed, masons and those who are experienced in building houses can build greater things than they have done – if of course the foundations can support what is to be constructed on them. Nor does the construction mark the end of thinking about the design. When such works have been completed as the need required, and they have proportions beyond which, if anything were to be added, it would prove to be ugly and useless, the artist's mind contains more than has been demonstrated in the work. Nor is the limit of knowledge imposed by the end of the task, if of coure, as I have said, whatever the mind has conceived and the imagination has developed, can be sustained by what has been laid as a foundation. And how is it not impious not to place a limit on human skill or make practical knowledge co-extensive with its products, and yet say that God made only as many rational creatures as he was able to create? Therefore let the ungodly one hear and learn: the power of God is not co-extensive with as

many rational creatures as he is said to have made. Though imposing a limit to his works beyond which they could not go, and restricting the number of the things by his art, he himself is not limited by measure and number (cf. Wisd. 11:20). From this it is patently obvious that he did not make as many things as he was able, but his power made as many things as necessity required. Let us give an example, that what we have said might become clearer. If a wealthy householder wishes to invite guests to a dinner and offers sufficient food to satisfy the eager appetite of the diners, that does not mean that this rich gentleman only has as much as they would eat and as much as he has had prepared for them. He sets before them as much as the dignity of the meal demands. In a similar way almighty God, too, exceeding the example we have given as a comparison, did not make as many creatures as he was capable of making, but made as many as needed to be made. Yet Origen constructs a ragbag of verbosity,[93] and repeating himself says: 'God made as many things as he could grasp and hold in subjection to himself and control by his providence'.[94] Nor does he hear the prophet saying: 'If all the nations are counted like a drip from a bucket, and as the tipping of a balance, and shall be counted as spittle, to whom will you compare God?' (cf. Isa. 40:15–18 LXX). And again: 'Who has measured the water in his hand, and heaven with a palm, and all the earth in a handful?' (Isa. 40:12 LXX). If in comparison with the power of God water is measured in the hand and heaven in the palm and the whole earth in a handful – this, however, is said metaphorically, that the paltriness of those created things might be confirmed in relation to the magnificence of their maker, for God is not composed of a diversity of members – how is he said to have made only as many things as he could grasp with his power?

18. Let us complete what we have begun and explain our meaning more fully. If all the nations are thought of as drops from a bucket and as the tipping of a balance and will be counted as spittle – by which words the paltriness and poverty of substance of all creatures is demonstrated, so that the incomparable sublimity of God may be apparent – it follows that even God's power will be thought of as a drop from a bucket and as the tipping of a balance and human spittle, if, according to Origen, he made only as many things as he was powerful enough to grasp. It would then be necessary to equate God's power with the number and measure of the things he has made, if he was unable to make any greater things than those he made. Truly, I do not think anybody – I do not say any human being but even

indeed any demon – has dared to dream up about God what Origen has thought and written, that God has only made as much matter as he could organize and distribute among the forms of things. Since this is what he thinks, again let him learn from us: God did not make only as many things as he was able to make, but whatever number the measure of the order of things required, that is how many he created, since he possesses a far greater skill and power than is required by the number and measure of the things that he made. And let him know that this is proved by the testimonies of the prophets, one of whom says: 'His excellence covered the heavens' (Hab. 3:3 LXX) and another cries: 'he made the earth as nothing' (Isa. 40:23 LXX), thus proclaiming that the excellence of God is greater than these created things. Furthermore, the expression: 'he made the earth as nothing', the Apostle interprets as relating to the whole of creation, when he says: 'who calls those things which do not exist as if they existed' (cf. Rom. 4:17). By these words he teaches us that the power of God is greater than the things which have been made by him. But Origen does not blush to dispute the power of God by claiming that God was limited by the material available to him for the execution of his work. Nor does he understand that the nature of created things is one thing, and the nature of their maker is another. Nor can the former, from which something comes into being, be as great as he who makes something from it. For the excellence and condition of different substances differs.

19. Therefore, if they wish to celebrate the Lord's Pascha with the Church, those who prefer the ravings of Origen to the authority of the Scriptures, let them listen to God rebuking them: 'Did I not set this before you, that you should turn aside from the way?' (cf. Deut. 11:26–28). Let them also hear the prophet mournfully reminding them: 'Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for I will gather you from the four winds of heaven; escape to Sion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon' (Zech. 2:6–7 LXX), that leaving the darkness of error and the cold of ignorance they might return to the rising of the sun of righteousness (cf. Mal. 4:2) and that sharing in the researches of the Magi, and dwelling in the region of the hottest climate, which means in the fervour of the Scriptures, they might enquire of the Church's shepherds, spurning the madness of Origen, and say: 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?' (Mt. 2:2). When they found him lying in the manger, that is, in the humble eloquence of the Scriptures, they will offer him gold and frankincense and myrrh, that is, a faith proved and gleaming with

all the splendour of truth together with the ardour of a sweet-smelling manner of life and a continence that causes the wantonness of voluptuousness and the enticing movements of the flesh to wither away. For those who after repeated warnings contradict the Church's faith are afflicted by the double malady of wickedness and ignorance. Turned entirely towards earthly things and adhering to the ground just like serpents, they prefer evil to good and are unaware of the difference between vices and virtues. They despise the remedies drawn from the holy Scriptures for their correction and healing, maintaining a disgust for the truth like pregnant women who reject their accustomed food and crave whatever is noxious. Nor are they able to hold up the clear light of the soul to the rays of the truth. Disdaining the Church's discipline they wallow like pigs in the mire and despise unguents. But it is right that they should at least receive healing from the examples we have given. For just as an inflammation closes the eye, or a fever wracks the whole body, or bronze and iron are gradually consumed by rust, so the pernicious contagion of perverse doctrines injures the beauty of the souls of the negligent and fills them with the ugly pallor of lies.

I beseech you, brethren, to forgive the distress I feel at dealing with these accursed doctrines publicly. For although we have crossed the rivers of Babylon to persuade the captives dwelling there to make their way to the feast of Jerusalem, nevertheless by the mercy of God himself we have not experienced this captivity, for we have spread our sails to the favourable winds of the Scriptures. Nor have the heaving waters of heretical doctrine overwhelmed us. Nor has the tempest of lies intimidated us. Nor have the torrents of iniquity in the midst of their sea touched us, where according to the psalmist's song 'there are reptiles which are innumerable' (Ps. 104 [103]: 25 LXX), and where the dragon dwells who is the devil, that most poisonous animal, ready to sport with the saints (cf. Ps. 104 [103]: 26). Nor, to conclude all this briefly, have the blasts coming from every quarter been able to capsize the ship of the Church or overwhelm the oars of our efforts with a raging whirlwind.[95] See now, getting into the boat with the Lord our Saviour like his disciples, we have crossed over (cf. Mt. 8:23–7) and, entering the harbour of repose, have embraced the very lovely shore of the divine scrolls. Picking the various flowers of knowledge and planting fervent kisses on the white limbs of Wisdom, we hold fast to her embraces and, if the Lord grants it, living with her (cf. Wisd. 7:28) and persevering in her love, we sing: 'I become enamoured of her beauty' (Wisd. 8:2). For all those who read the sacred Scriptures more attentively, and

roam through the flowery meadows of heavenly discourses, are delighted with this beatitude. But those who abandon the lushness of the Lord's feast and pass over to desert places are subjected to the hostile attacks of demons like cities lacking a wall.

20. On this account, as we celebrate the coming feasts, let us understand both ourselves and all that is ours, and embrace knowledge and our rational soul like a mother with all zeal. Let us have as the root of speech and thought an idea of knowledge, and let us make speech, as it were, the vestibule of action. Then action arising from speech and knowledge will be the completed structure of the building, with a solid roof fixed on top. For speech, thought, knowledge and faith without action are futile and unstable. And for the sake of those who are trained in the art of dialectics let us borrow something from their field. If we join a verb to a noun, the sense is made complete, but if the verb remains on its own or the noun is pronounced without a verb, the words express nothing at all. Similarly, knowledge without action or action without faith are weak and frail, and conversely knowledge joined to action is a sign of perfect virtue. For indeed the silent thought of the soul is its hidden speech, which resounding outwardly through the tongue reveals the mind's thinking. Whenever speech is consummated by action, a term is placed on our knowledge and thought. We shall therefore give an account of our thoughts, words and actions at the judgement, with our thoughts accusing or defending each other on the day when God is to judge the hidden things of men through Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul writes (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5).

21. This being so, with the feast of the Lord approaching, let us say to those whom Origen's error has enveloped and deceit holds captive: 'Flee from the midst of Babylon and let every man save his life!' (Jer. 51 [28]:6). For although according to the prophetic oracle Babylon is said to be a golden cup (cf. Jer. 51 [28]:7), and by its style and verbal elegance displays the beauty of truth and transfigures itself into an angel of light (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14), nevertheless it should be known that all those who drink of its wine totter and fall, and brought to disaster are worthy of lamentation. Let us, however, resisting fatal disorder, fortify our soul with the wall of continence and guard its liberty by the daily practice of the virtues. For just as bought slaves are called the servants and scoundrels of those who have paid for them, so those who have sold their souls to various desires are called the servants of those to whom they have handed themselves

over, and they obey them like cruel masters. Even when people correct their error they show disdain with a stern face, and defend their stupidity with temerity. They do not know that their audacity is nothing else, at least as it seems to me, than an opinion without mind or sense that drives away from itself a soul which can control its disorder. And when it has been deprived of such help, it is carried headlong into the depths of impiety. It darkens the light of its mind as if with some very bitter phlegm and surrounds its eye, according to the eloquence of the Scriptures, with a palpable darkness (cf. Ex. 10:21).

22. Therefore those who delight in Origen's errors should not despise the preaching of the Lord's feast. Nor should they seek ointments, gold and pearls in the mire. Nor should they abuse their mother, the Church, in the great cities, for she gave them birth and nourished them. Those who were once of our family now on account of him and his disciples exceed the enmity of the pagans against us. To their delight they redouble their abuse against us, haunt the doors of the rich and are not afraid of hearing with the Jews: 'Sons I have begotten and brought up, but they have rejected me' (Isa. 1:2 LXX). These people seem to me not to know that every word lacking any basis in truth, even if it misleads the hearer for a while, making him think something to be true when it is not, is gradually dissolved and reduced to nothing. The thinking as a whole which emanates like a torrent from a depraved mind overwhelms its own author. Losing the letters and syllables with which it has been put together, it is left without sense or sound or any representation and is abandoned. Like a most poisonous snake it strikes the one that has brought it forth and at once draws back its head, and as if in a hole in the mind wastes away and is destroyed. For the end of liars is death.

Those who formerly boasted that they were lovers of solitude should at least build a little cell on the lips of their fury to hide the abuse, not with the holy stones of Jerusalem, but with the rough rocks of Babylon, which, unhewn and of different sizes, might prop up the walls of their tottering house. Although they commend themselves to the effeminate ears and hatreds of the pagans by calumniating us,[96] reviling ecclesiastical discipline and abusing our patience as if it were something kindling their temerity, nevertheless let them at last be silent and still and let them hear the prophet saying: 'Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit' (Ps. 34 [33]:13). Let them desire to hold opinions worthy of the solitary life and let them not grieve God, the ruler and master of the Church.

23. As for you, brethren, I beseech you that we should pray together for them and say with the prophet: 'Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes? Then would I weep for this my people day and night, for the wounded of the daughter of my people' (Jer. 9:1 LXX), imploring the mercy of God, that he might free them from the error that binds them, and change the hatred that rages in vain against us into love. Hence we, too, forgetful of our injuries, desire to welcome them back with a most tender embrace, and reckon their health and conversion to God as our own health and glory. And if they cannot be cured in any other way except by our showing humility, we shall satisfy them unasked. We hold nothing against them; we have done no injury to them, even though they are indignant and rage against the Church's remedies, which restore health to wounds. As for us, we speak of what we know, and we preach what we have learned, praying that those who despise the Church's rules might receive the precept of truth, and not on account of human shame – because of which it is usually difficult for those who stray to be corrected – lose the benefits conferred by penitence. And now we say what we have said before and what we frequently repeat: we do not wish them to wander about or roam through other provinces, but to these exiles raging in fury we call out, saying with the prophet: 'Escape from the land and return and do not stay; you that are far away remember the Lord, and let Jerusalem come into your heart' (Jer. 51 [28]:50 LXX).

24. Perhaps on hearing these things love of the Church's assembly will enter into them and they will remember the fraternal joy they shared with us, and the hymns in which with the rest of us they praised the Lord. Perhaps they will transform the coldness of hatred into the warmth of love, and understand that we are physicians, not enemies, most affectionate fathers, not opponents swelling with pride against them. For it cannot be that those we wish to be saved we would willingly allow to perish. We would rather the ecclesiastical cane be converted into a staff for them, if only they would abandon their error and follow the truth and stop behaving like insolent boys. But if they reject the truth and hold the Church's discipline in contempt, if they raise up their horn against the Church's rules and spurning sound advice thrust it behind them, let them hear the Lord warning them: 'The man who acts presumptuously, by not obeying the priest who stands to minister in the name of the Lord your God, or whatever judge presides in those days, that man shall die and you shall purge the evil from Israel and all

the people hearing shall fear and shall not act impiously again' (Deut. 17:12–13 LXX). But lest in our preoccupation with the cure of those who wound us we should be unmindful of ourselves and neglect what pertains to us, and, according to what is written, while preaching to others are ourselves disqualified (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27), let us warn those who are on their feet to be on their guard that while reaching out a hand to the prostrate they do not themselves fall. They should observe the Church's discipline and fear the judgement to come.

25. Therefore in celebrating the Lord's Pascha let us purify ourselves with the holy texts of the Scriptures, and in contemplating the Saviour's victory let us banish all the stumbling blocks by which the course of our life is impeded. Turning away from avarice as if from a ruthless usurer, let us destroy the desire for vainglory like an insatiable wild beast and avoid the fawning and slippery serpent of fornication with an anxious mind. If at any time a more prosperous breeze favours us, let us temper the swelling of the soul with humility and gentleness. If adverse winds blow upon us, let us exercise fortitude and arouse our dejected soul. Let us become ourselves accusers of our own sins and let us be assured that this is the beginning of health. For it is impossible for us to become worthy of the Lord's feast unless we reproach ourselves by constant meditation on the virtues and recover the soul's liberty, which has been suppressed by the vices.

And so, occupied in the struggle, and by the sweat and labour of our present circumstances preparing for ourselves the future glory of the heavenly feast, let us correct our past sins by penitence before we stand before the judgement seat of Christ (cf. Rom. 14:10), and by present weeping secure the joys to come (cf. Ps. 126 [125]:6). Using the sting of conscience, let us like bees drive away the harmful drones of the sins to keep our hives full of wax and honey. Let us heal the various wounds of the sins and by repeated warnings let us check the plundering of riches, to which the human race is perhaps especially addicted. And thus we shall be able to follow the journey of the coming fast, beginning Lent on the thirteenth day of the month of Mechir, and the week of the saving Pascha on the fifth day of Pharmuthi, finishing the fast according ot the traditions of the Gospels on the evening of Saturday the tenth day of Pharmuthi. And immediately at first light on Sunday let us celebrate the feasts on the eleventh day of the same month (6 April), adding too the seven following weeks of Pentecost, that with those who confess one divinity in trinity we might receive our reward in heaven in Christ

Jesus our Lord, through whom and with whom be glory and dominion to God the Father with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen (cf. 1 Pet. 4:10).

26. Greet one another with a holy kiss (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20 etc.). The brethren who are with me greet you all (cf. Phil. 4:21, etc.). And we also need to write the following that you may know who has succeeded the holy and blessed bishops who have fallen asleep in the Lord: in Limnias Mnaseas has been ordained in place of Heron,[97] in Erythrum Paul in place of Sabbatius,[98] and in Ombi[99] Verses in place of Silvanus. Therefore write to them and receive from them letters of commendation according to the Church's custom.

LETTER WRITTEN AT CONSTANTINOPLE (403)
(Richard, 'Nouveaux fragments', frags 3–11)

3. *Of the same, from another letter written at Constantinople against the Origenists, which begins: 'The wicked went to the {places} of tranquillity'.* It is commonly acknowledged that after impiously denying the most essential points of orthodox doctrine, Origen handed on to Arians and Eunomians his profane blasphemies against the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.[100] And not writing correctly about the resurrection, he attempted to upset the simplicity of the faith with his destructive notions.

4. *And shortly afterwards*: For in his books he very openly blasphemes both the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. Purporting to speak of the resurrection of the dead, he impiously denigrates it in a way that is possible even for those who dispute it to approve. For he claims that when the dead have been raised, after a certain length of time people's bodies will pass into non-existence. What he maintains amounts to making death, even when bodies have been resurrected, last for ever, with the annihilation of the departed as a consequence. For this is what he holds blessedness to be for souls: complete deliverance from the bodies attached to them. In saying this he wrongly conceives of the coming of the Saviour as ineffective and even harmful to us. For if after the resurrection, when each has paid the penalty for his transgressions for a certain length of time, corporeal nature passes into non-being, with the souls restored, as he says, to the realm of the immaterial and the spiritual, he would have the Saviour

confirm death, if after a certain length of time resurrected bodies really did end up in non-existence, having received sufficient punishment. Now Origen bequeathed to the Arians the teaching that the Son of God is a creature along with the Holy Spirit. Accordingly Eusebius, the ancient serpent of Caesarea – for let him not be called bishop, since he is infected with the Arian madness – after writing a Life of Origen[101] and thinking he has endowed him with a reputation for piety, accepts him as one of like mind with himself.

5. *And after a little*: for who does not shudder when Origen says in the *Peri archon* that Christ is truth in relation to us but not truth in relation to the Father?[102] Or again, who does not loathe him when he says that just as Christ was crucified for human beings, so he will also suffer the same for the demons?[103] For the Apostle writes about Christ risen from the dead: 'Death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God' (Rom. 6:9–10). Challenging the apostolic judgement, Origen writes that Christ will also be crucified on behalf of the demons, unaware of what his impious opinion implies. If for the sake of human salvation, the Saviour, as our blessed fathers who met at Nicaea confessed, after having become incarnate and been made man, accepted the cross for our sake, how did Origen not shudder to say that he would also be crucified on behalf of the demons, with the result that the logic of his impiety makes him say that he will become a demon? For just as he would not have been crucified if he had not assumed the likeness of human beings, so by a novel wonder, according to the logic of the Scriptures, if he is to be crucified on behalf of the demons, as it wrongly seemed to Origen, necessity will inevitably force the heretic to think that he will also become like them. But God forbid that such a thought should enter the mind of a Christian! For Christ died in the flesh and rose again on behalf of human beings, and will not be crucified on behalf of demons, as it seemed to the impious author. Consequently he hears along with those who have blasphemed greatly: 'Their throat is an open sepulchre' (Ps. 5:9; Rom. 3:13). I am also obliged, because of those who are his advocates, to mention the following: He professes to teach the resurrection of the dead and yet claims that the coming of the Saviour has become ineffective for us. For with regard to the body raised form the dead, Origen himself writes that it will not only be corruptible but also mortal.[104] And who can rightly reproach us, when his disciples dare to disseminate this foul doctrine? On bodily resurrection from the dead the Apostle says: 'For the trumpet will

sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed' (1 Cor. 15:52). But Origen, audaciously seeking to establish his loathsome doctrine, accuses even the Apostle Paul of not knowing the difference between corruptible and incorruptible. He claims that the Apostle Paul said 'it will be raised incorruptible' in a private capacity. For he does not mean, in his view, that the resurrected body is incorruptible and immortal, but corruptible and mortal, proclaiming in these very words that it will be mortal as well as corruptible. And what else? Since he, along with his disciples, has dared to raise error to the heights, like some virulent mosquitoes, we shall not rest in our efforts, in case the people's ears should be deceived through our negligence. And when this man discusses the Seraphim in the Prophet Isaiah (cf. Isa. 6:2), he has the audacity to say that these are God's Christ and the Holy Spirit.[105] How can anyone who holds orthodox opinions tolerate his saying such things?

6. *And after a little*: How can anyone not repudiate him utterly when he says, with regard to the angelic orders, that the sins later committed by them brought them into being among us, since at the beginning God had not made the angelic orders, but it was their sins that arranged them in order of rank?[106] For this is what he accuses them of in his presumptuous attack on the world above. How can anyone not shudder when he says that there would have been no archangels unless all the others had been made subject to their order on account of certain sins? The Apostle writes: 'For in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities; all things were created through him and for him; and he is before all things' (Col. 1:16–17). How is it then that Origen dared, as if gathering filth for himself from the dungheap, to say that the principalities are principalities because they exercise their rule over those who have fallen through sin, not that they are principalities from the time they were created, but from the time those ruled by them stumbled and fell? These are the absurdities he utters, that looking at the upper world of the holy angels he might say: 'How lonely sits the city that was full of people' (Lam. 1:1). He means by this that when many, or rather, all have fallen, the Jerusalem above is left alone and deserted, taking what was said with regard to the world below and transferring it to the world above.

7. *And after a little*: We have not only anathematized Origen's heresies, but also another heresy that attempted to cause serious

disturbance to the monasteries. Since certain people of the more rustic and uncultivated sort claimed that it was necessary to conceive of God in human form, we did not remain silent but also refuted this heresy, Christ having lent us vigilance, with written proofs in official ecclesiastical letters.[107]

8. *And after a little*: How was it possible for us to remain silent when the Origenists say that resurrected bodies do not have a fitting form but are spherical in shape?[108] For if we had been silent we would have confirmed the erroneous opinions they babble about as if in a dream. But if we reveal their unseemliness, we shall not share in their madness in any way. To further their deception they cobble together arguments such as the following: the best of all shapes is the spherical;[109] the best shape is fitting for resurrected bodies; therefore bodies raised from the dead are spherical. Through this supposed reasoning they have deluded the more simple. But we rightly refute them, saying that for each body its own body is best. For example, for irrational beasts a four-footed body is best, for birds a winged body, and for human beings their own form. For when Christ was raised from the dead he was not seen in spherical form by his disciples. A spherical form is appropriate to the sun to enable it to move easily and very rapidly along its course through the sky, and perform its other functions known precisely to God its creator. Fish have fins appropriate to them as well as gills and other things consistent with these. We reject as rustics those who hold the coarser ideas about the resurrection. Similarly, we refuse to praise those who subscribe to Origen's profane doctrines about the resurrection, for we have Christ, who died and rose again for our sake, as a pledge of how we are resurrected.

9. *And again*: For he also claims that the differences between bodies in the world exist for the following reason. He supposes that as the falls of spiritual beings were various, so they were combined with various bodies. He thus misrepresents the way the world came into being, even though Plato, whose student Origen became, did not venture to say with regard to the whole world that it came into being on account of sins. For in his discussion of the world, Plato himself says that it came into being for no other reason than out of the goodness of God, when he writes that he created it in his dialogues.[110] It is generally acknowledged that it was from Plato himself that Origen derived the idea that when souls fell from heaven they were sent here and became associated with bodies, but he did not follow either the

Scriptures or his own teacher in every respect. For the latter does not imagine that all bodies came about as a result of the fall of spiritual beings.[111] But let Origen and his followers hear this: 'Woe to those who prophesy from their own hearts' (Ez. 13.3 LXX). For Moses has said: 'In the beginning God created the heavens' (Gen. 1:1); he did not record that when spiritual beings fell, the sun or the moon or the stars came into being. For such are the things that Origen adumbrates as if in fables.

10. *And after a little*: For what intelligent and Godfearing person can put up with Origen writing that just as the Son transcends created things, so the Father transcends the Son?[112] For he contradicts the Son's saying: 'I and the Father are one' (Jn 10:30), when he says that the Father transcends the Son in the degree that the Son transcends the things made by him.

11. *And after a little*: Since they were disseminating Origen's doctrines very openly, they could no longer bear to live in the hermitages in solitude, loving as they do the vomit of Origen, who dared to say that the first human being would not have had a body if his mind had not fallen into sin and he had been sent into this world. For misinterpreting the text: 'God took dust from the ground and formed man' (cf. Gen. 2:7), Origen claimed that he had come into being when he fell from heaven because of sin.[113] And he says that woman would not have been created, nor would there have been any need for childbearing, if souls had not gone astray in heaven and been sent down here. And how is it written of Adam and Eve: 'Male and female he created them, and blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"' (Gen. 1:27–8)? For if souls had fallen from heaven through sin and had been combined with bodies, as he says, how was this written of Adam and Eve, through whom it was not the alleged motive of sins but the power of the blessing that bestowed on Adam and Eve the increase of childbearing? *And you will find similar arguments in what follows.*

NINETEENTH FESTAL LETTER (404)
(Jerome, *Ep.* 100, CSEL 55. 213–33)

1. Once again the living Wisdom of God summons us to celebrate the holy Pascha, desiring us all to participate in it. Therefore running towards it at a swift pace by fasting, continence and every affliction

of the body, let us reduce to nothing the pleasures that fight against the activity of the virtues. Let us rely on the help of the Saviour and simply reveal our sins to God, who is able to heal them. Let us fear the true judgement of our conscience, that crying out and saying with David: 'Remember not the sins of my youth or my sins of ignorance; according to thy mercy remember me!' (Ps. 25 [24]:7 LXX), we might consume our burgeoning sins by the fear of eternal fire. The goal of these things is to sin no more, and the beginning of salvation is forgetting what lies in the past. For just as the beginning of a good way of life is to do what is right, so the beginning of the cessation of sins is to curb their drive, until either they are reined in by reason or through fear do not bring us to disaster. As soon as remembrance of the Law comes into the soul, they immediately flee, and ceasing to advance any further, surrender to the camp of the triumphant virtues. And gradually withdrawing through penitence and shunning the judgement of the wise, they are dissolved into nothing like smoke. Evils which are not suppressed as soon as they have begun to grow are difficult to heal. Their eradication is easy when those who have sinned a short time previously are converted through penitence to prudent behaviour and gain as the reward of penitence the end of sinning. For neither can we suppress the things that incite sins, unless we begin to practise the virtues, nor will the old habits cease before we shut them out by the operation of the new. If we resist the pleasures that confront us with a resolute mind, past sins are cancelled. Similarly, if our forgetfulness of the past endures, future sins will not be able to grow any further. Indeed the workers of evil bring into their power, as it were, those who can restrain all the insanities that have a rage to sin, but fail to do so. Taking silence as consent, they strive to put into effect whatever the soul's fancy suggests. The liberty allowed to present sins breeds future sins; if you neglect the earlier ones, they are the source and seed-bed of future ones.

2. This being the case, those who are able to restrain sinners yet turn a blind eye, avoiding trouble and maintaining a passive silence, and thus allowing the evils to increase, are very rightly judged to be accomplices of the authors of the sins, and incur the punishment for negligence. For they have preferred an unreasonable ease to the sweat of punishers, choosing a culpable peace instead of a severity that cuts off vices. For if we desist from vices, they will die away completely and their fraudulent sweetness will dry up and all the onsets of pleasure grow torpid with, so to speak, a certain sluggishness, when our

mind gives hospitality to virtue. Recollection of the Law does not allow sins to be born, nor does it suffer them to grow. When it ponders the future tribunal and the dread day of judgement, it checks not only the beginning, but also the middle and the end of sin, and dries up its bitter surges and heaving waves to the very source and spring. Virtue accompanied by law checks the seeds of the vices and raises the soul from the depths to the heights. Vices, by contrast, if they are not disciplined, grow arrogant and thrust those obedient to them into hell. Once they take possession of souls they overwhelm them with the allurements of the pleasures, not allowing them to receive a dignified upright posture like the human body but bending them to the earth like the brute beasts. The psalmist witnesses to these things when he says: 'They have called their lands after their own names' (Ps. 49 [48]:11 LXX).

3. Someone might say at this point: 'If vices have such power and trip up so many people by their seductive persuasion, what should those do who, aware that they are sinning, desire to exchange sins for virtues and spurn the worse out of love for the better? Listen to Moses speaking to people of this kind:[114] 'Have you sinned? Cease doing so' (cf. Ecclus 21:1), destroying what was earlier by putting a stop to sin, and correcting vices by a most efficacious medicine, which is the cessation of vices. Shun the allurements of sweet evil and avoid the beguiling pleasures of the body like noxious poisons. Do not take the slippery and soft path of luxurious living, because the feast is attained by fasting and continence. With much effort and sweat we can exchange evil for good, and by resisting pleasures we can destroy them. Those who keep to the path of truth by trampling on the vices are few, since evil makes use of innumerable arts for causing harm and cannot be overcome unless we are supported from on high by the help of Wisdom, crying to us and saying: 'Fear not, for I am with you' (Gen. 26:24). The death of evil is to do evil no more; the root of the vices is to despise the ordinances of the Law. Just as negligence causes sins to germinate, so vigilance gives birth to virtues. When the Law is observed, it puts ignominy to flight; when it is neglected, it generates punishments. In the measure that if it is despised it resembles the harshness of a severe judge, so if it is observed, it manifests the gentleness of a most tender father.

Therefore the cessation of sin is the beginning of virtue, and the medicine of past, present and future vices is the tireless study of the Law. When such study has a secured tenant, it is free from all anxiety. Wisdom indeed works good in us after we have provided it with

purity of heart as a lodging and have turned intentions into deeds. Nor let it be doubted that in both cases, either doing or not doing good, we have the capacity to make a free choice. When what is crooked is suppressed, what is straight comes to birth. Then the choir of the virtues sings in harmony, once the soul has been deserted by the vices. When continence comes to reign in our bodies, it prevents infirmities from being born. It neither weakens nor kills those who love it, but restores past feeblenesses to pristine health. Expelling what is contrary to nature, it calls back those things that are in conformity with it, that the conduct of this life might be kept in balance. Similarly, when the soul observes the precepts of the Law in the measure in which human nature is capable, it separates itself from the contagion of evil. Wholly alert and cautious, it permits nothing to enter into it which is contrary to honourable thoughts. Indeed, turned rather into a temple of God, it enjoys the heavenly feast right away, since it has as its riches the observance of the Law, which raises up the fallen, and while punishing some corrects others, always crying: 'When shall not he that falls, rise up again, or he that turns away, shall he not return?' (Jer. 8:4 LXX). The observance of the Law bestows the hope of salvation on the penitent, for it admonishes that it might benefit, reproves that it might amend, and, being the occasion of shame for previous transgressions, makes them follow what is better, which they cannot desire unless first they condemn the wounds of conscience.

4. Now the Law hastens with excellent counsels to recall those who neglect it and are immersed in error to a better way of life, rather like a check-list of vicious works. Yet it does not allow those who obey it to be without a reward, or to be oppressed with eternal distress. Therefore let all of us who celebrate the holy Pascha, by continence and fasting make the bringer of the Law a friend of ours. The prophet promises those who celebrate the Pascha: 'You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your God' (Isa. 62:3). Let us therefore seek out the rich feast of the virtues, adorning ourselves with the knowledge of the Scriptures as if with solemn vestments. Let us prepare holy kisses for the angels rejoicing with us in heaven, banishing all negligence and removing any cause for delay, that we might press on at a rapid pace with the disciples to the Saviour and say to him: 'Where will you have us prepare the Pascha for you?' (cf. Mt. 26:17). Installed in the upper room of heaven and celebrating the mystical Pascha, let us be able to sing: 'How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts'

(Ps. 84 [83]:1). For there we shall meet the choirs of angels and, celebrating the feasts with them, shall share with them in the mysteries of God. We shall be transported with an ineffable exultation, as we study with them the mystical teachings of wisdom, where there is no trickery or deceit, where anyone who does not have a wedding garment is prohibited from joining the banquet (cf. Mt. 22:11–14), even if in the present age he boasts of his righteousness. Everyone there has grown old and is of a full and advanced age. No one there, according to the prophet, is found to lack mature wisdom: 'For the youth,' he says, 'shall be a hundred years old' (Isa. 65:20 LXX), indicating perfection of erudition in the magnitude of the number. Therefore, holy brethren and sharers in a heavenly calling, let us listen to the Saviour proclaiming through the prophet: 'I am coming to gather all the nations, and they shall come and see my glory, and I will bestow upon them a universal sign' (Isa. 66:18–19 LXX).

5. Let us hasten towards the Paschal feast and say: 'Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of Christ' (cf. Gal. 6:14). He will give, I repeat, he will give joy to those who labour. Blessing those who fast, he says; 'they shall be to the house of Judah for joy and gladness and for good feasts and you shall rejoice; you must love truth and peace' (Zech. 8:19 LXX). For the feast does not belong to all, but is for the house of Judah, that is, the Church of Christ. Now, according to the Psalmist, 'it is time for the Lord to act' (Ps. 119 [118]:126), and Paul writes: 'the night is far gone, the day is at hand; let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires' (Rom: 13:12–14). Therefore it is right that all who have been cleansed by the fear of the Lord to make a worthy celebration should redeem their chastity by continence and fasting, arouse their sleeping spiritual perception by a vigilant faith, and imitate the most wise Daniel, of whom it is written: 'There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of God, and in the days of your father vigilance and wisdom were found in him' (Dan. 5:11 LXX). For those who are careful about their conduct, that they might make good progress, have the law as their formidable commander, obey its orders and repel the sins that advance to attack them. They adorn the Paschal feast with the splendour of their deeds, disregarding the darts of the passions in the security of a good conscience, and anticipate victory by hope.

Those who are their imitators win the victor's palm by their desire for virtue even before they engage in combat, and contemplating with unveiled face the crown which those who have triumphed over seductive pleasure possess in heaven, they cry out and say: 'The Lord God is my strength, and he will perfectly strengthen my feet; he sets me up on high places that I may conquer by his song' (Hab. 3:19 LXX).

6. Nor should we think, my dearest brethren, that the contest is for ever and on that account grow weary. We should know that its end is the crown of righteousness, which no passage of time can destroy (cf. 2 Tim. 4:8). The stadium of this life and its contest is transitory. These, then, who run at a steady pace and reach the finishing line where the prizes are awarded will find new mansions and mark the victory with songs. And so, by the Lord's grace that promises us victory over the wicked demons, let us keep the fast in a fit manner, that we might also participate in the feast in a fit manner. Let us by no means in the days of Lent sigh for a cup of wine like the opulent rich are accustomed to do; nor in the preparation for combat and the battle itself, where labour and sweat are necessary, should we delight in eating meat. Indeed, dissipation and drunkenness and the other allurements of this life exhaust the very great treasure of souls and stifle the lavish sowing of knowledge and doctrine by their admixture. This is why the Lord and Saviour, summoning his disciples to the rigour of continence, said: 'take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth' (Lk. 21:34–5). 'Rise, let us go hence' (Jn 14:31). For such people punishments because of their negligence will follow immediately. Those, then, who observe the precepts of the Law abstain from wine during the fast, reject the eating of meat, and check insatiable avarice by the fear of God. That is why Scripture cries out daily to the continent: 'They do not drink wine or strong drink' (cf. Lk 1:15). And conversely the Jews hear on account of their guilt: 'You gave the consecrated ones wine to drink and commanded the prophets, saying: "You shall not prophesy"' (Am. 2:12 LXX). Those who are seduced by the delights of luxurious living cannot accept correction, nor can those who dishonour the pursuit of virtue by indolence and transitory pleasure curb the belly's gluttony by reason and advice and come to love fasting. They are not ashamed to drink wine in private and tipple honey-wine in their

bed-chambers with greedy gullets, keeping out of sight of spectators that they might exchange fasting and abstinence, which they should have sought of their own accord, for luxury and drunkenness in the time of fasting. For they do not know that even if they avoid detection and eat meat behind closed doors, and in the days of Lent, even with Easter approaching, dismember fat capons with impure hands, while giving an impression of fasting in public with long faces, the Lord rebukes people of this kind and says: 'They commit great abominations, that they should keep away from my sanctuary' (Ez. 6:8 LXX). It does not become those who fast to eat meat in the time of contest and battle, since Scripture warns: 'You shall afflict your souls' (Lev. 16:29 LXX). Nor does it become them to search diligently for pheasants and chattering birds and stuff gaping gullets with their richness, or track down expensive chefs, who soothe the ravenous appetite with complicated sauces and meat transformed by pounding and food altered in flavour, with the vapour from steaming platters caressing the craving of the gullet, while, to the detriment of continence, wines are sought of various flavours and colours.[115]

7. The account of saint Daniel and the unanimous virtue of the Three Children teaches us to yearn for and honour the fasts. To summarize a long story, when their freedom was transformed into slavery and as captives they were obliged to desire rich food, they held the Babylonian feasts in contempt and preferred simple food to the royal table (cf. Dan. 1:8–16). For King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded the chief of the eunuchs to choose some boys of royal blood from among the captive sons of Israel who were without blemish, handsome in appearance and able to acquire wisdom, and bring them into the palace, that they might be in the king's court and learn the letters and language of the Chaldaeans, and live on the left-overs of his table and drink the wine received from it (cf. Dan 1:3–5). And so there were chosen from the tribe of Judah Daniel, Ananias, Azarias and Misael, equal in birth and by faith, whose nobility had been replaced by harsh servitude. Of these Daniel, as Scripture witnesses, 'resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself from the king's table' (Dan. 1:8 LXX). The three youths also, united no less by religion than by kinship, accepted Daniel's advice and followed his wisdom. Together they petitioned the chief of the eunuchs, and with the help of God's mercy obtained what they desired, and in the land of captivity maintained the nobility of their birth. For they calmed the fear of the official in charge, that when the faces of the other youths were seen to be more joyful, he would

pay for it with his head, by reasoning with him and advising him in the following words: 'Test your servants for ten days and let us be given pulse to eat and water to drink And let our appearance be observed by you, and the appearance of the youths who eat at the king's table, and according to what you see deal with your servants' (Dan. 1:12–13 LXX). For they were confident that the desire for virtue would by God's mercy keep their appearance attractive and their bodies strong, that faith would overcome all ugliness, and that no emaciation would spoil the lustre of their beauty.

8. Therefore, my dearest brethren, we have repeated these things, that acknowledging the words of the Apostle Paul in his preaching on the virtues of the saints, where he says: 'Consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith' (Heb. 13:7), we might persuade those who in the time of fasting enjoy eating meat to imitate the continence of the saints. No force could overcome them and make them let slip the rigour of virtue, so that fearing the power of the Babylonians they should show themselves captives of pleasure. No, they remained free. They overcame by reason the desires of the belly and conquered the titillating luxury of the gullet. And they left us examples of their fortitude, dwelling in Babylon corporeally, but living with the angels in the heavenly Jerusalem in disposition and faith (cf. Heb. 12:22), that henceforth they might teach every age in the time of fasting to abstain from wine and meat, and prefer the products of the earth and water to drink, which are the companions chastity enjoys.

9. What should I say about the famous victories of the Maccabees (cf. 2 Macc. 7:1–42)? Rather than eat unlawful meat and touch common food, they offered their bodies to torture. In the Churches of Christ throughout the world they are praised and commended as stronger than the punishments inflicted on them and more ardent than the fire with which they were burned. All the devices of cruelty were conquered in them, and whatever the anger of their persecutor could invent the fortitude of their sufferings overcame. In the midst of torture they were more mindful of their ancestral law than their suffering. Their bodies were mangled, their limbs flowed with blood and gore, but nevertheless their determination did not waver. Their souls were free and despised present evils in the hope of future rewards. Their torturers grew weary, but their faith did not. Their bones were broken and on the turning wheel every fastening of their sinews and limbs was torn apart; flames rose to an immense height

emitting death; pans were filled with boiling oil and sang out with incredible terror to fry the bodies of the saints. Nevertheless, in the midst of all these things, they walked in Paradise in their soul; they did not feel what they suffered but were aware only of what they desired to see. For their mind, walled round by the fear of God, overcame the flames, despised the different torments inflicted by the torturers, and since it had given itself once and for all to virtue, trod underfoot and spurned whatever calamity occurred. Such was Paul when he wrote: 'in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us' (Rom. 8:37). For what the weakness of the flesh, conquered by natural infirmity, cannot bear the soul overcomes when it converses with God in faith.

10. Therefore those who fast, that is, who imitate the angelic mode of life on earth and are mindful of the saying: 'the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and joy and peace and rejoicing' (cf. Rom. 14:17), gain through continence, by a brief and modest effort, great and eternal rewards for themselves. They receive much more than they give and mitigate present hardship with the glory of the age to come, because for those in this stadium who fight for virtue the end of the contest will come at last. But those who engage in the battle against vices and dedicate their souls to the disciplines of wisdom, and, so far as the human condition allows, strive for the wisdom of the things to come, discerning the kingdom of heaven in a mirror and image (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12) through insight and faith, attain rewards that are eternal and not terminated by any end of the age.

Day and night succeed each other at the fixed intervals of the hours. Gradually decreasing, what they lose they receive, and what they receive they give up, coinciding in length twice a year. They do not remain in the same state, but determine their movements by the shortening or lengthening of the hours, in order to effect the changes in the seasons that are useful to the world.[116] For the day in its series and circuit borrows from the times of the night, and the night in turn receives what it has granted: And since they mutually give and receive, and in following a certain cycle what they gradually lose they receive by slowly decreasing and increasing, they express the wisdom of God the Creator. And as a result of this alternation of intervals both the monthly circuit of the moon is accomplished, and by the sun going back upon its track, the year is completed. Since they increase and decrease, and as the past slips away the future succeeds, the seasons, always the same and yet

different, are interchanged. Hence too the moon, created by God's most providential art, changes the varieties of its forms. It tends to fullness and hastens to diminution, that what it acquires as it waxes, it loses and gives up as it wanes. Nor does it remain in the same state, but rising and descending by certain steps passes from poverty to richness and from richness returns to poverty, by its very diversity of forms showing itself to be created and mutable. Who indeed can find words worthy to describe the course of the sun and the annual cycle coinciding with the reckoning of the months, as it revolves through the four seasons and always returns to itself, and ascends and descends in the same measure, and runs smoothly in an eternal order that what the lunar interval accomplishes in thirty days and nights, the course of the sun effects in the recurring cycle of the year? And when it arrives at an equality of day and night, and for a brief while its course stands in perfect balance, it hastens to inequality, abandoning the point where it had arrived. This is what I think Ecclesiastes refers to, not to draw from sources alien to our own, when he says in his book: 'Round and round goes the spirit and on its circuits the spirit returns' (Eccl. 1:6 LXX), signifying the annual course of the sun which by this seasonal rotation comes back to itself, returning to the point from which it started.

11. But the holy and heavenly feast which sends out its ray of splendour to us is not bounded by any intervals; and when the contests of the saints and the work of this present age come to an end, perpetual joy and eternal festivity follow. Hence the perfect, who have separated their souls from all darkness of error, already sing of the feasts now: 'Let us enter into his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with hymns' (cf. Ps. 100 [99]:4 LXX), proclaiming aloud the coming of the Saviour with joyful voices. For when evil was reigning over the whole world, and the demons had spread darkness over people's eyes, nor could anyone help them according to the text: 'I looked, but there was no one to help; I observed, but there was no one to uphold' (Isa. 63:5 LXX), so that impiety should be brought to an end at last and the fraud of idolatry be destroyed, the living Word of God, omitting nothing that belongs to our likeness except sin alone, which has no substance, deigned to come to us in a new way, that he might become the son of man while remaining the Son of God. Born indeed of a virgin (what stupid minds believe is only what they can see with their own eyes), he is discerned by the intelligent from his works and the greatness of his miracles to be truly the invisible God. He whose external appearance demonstrated that

he was a man, was shown by his virtues to be God covered by the vileness of a servant's form. For although the Jews betrayed him and with impious voices called for him to be crucified, blaspheming God by killing his body, and indeed by slaying the Lord's flesh making themselves servants of impiety, nevertheless by going fearlessly to his death, that he might provide us with an example of virtue, he was shown to be the Lord of glory in his very passion. For he remained impassible in the majesty of his divinity and yet proved to be passible in his flesh, according to the saying of blessed Peter (cf. 1 Pet. 3:18). That is why suffering for us he did not evade death, lest we who struggle for piety should lose the victory through his fear of death. For if he had been afraid of the cross, acting in a way contrary to what he had taught, which of his disciples would have been willing to fight for the faith? Accordingly, he who subjected the whole universe to his faith and granted to the saints the dignity of the name of Christians is derided by the stupid and unbelieving. And although the greatness of his virtues is evident to all, they do not cease to blaspheme. Indeed he who is derided has been shown to be God by his works, in that he overthrew the temples of the demons, in that he refuted the impiety of the Origenists, whose teacher Origen, deceived the ears of the simple and the insignificant by his persuasive arguments, like the towering waves that usually come crashing down on the shore and break on themselves in a mass of spray.[117]

12. Therefore, fired by zeal for the faith, we say to him who has dared to write that created bodies are the ruin of rational creatures: If this kind of impiety pleases you, how is it that the Apostle Paul writes: 'I would have young women marry, bear children' (1 Tim. 5:14)? Did he enjoin marriage so that when angels fall from heaven and (as you say) are transformed into souls, bodies born from women should provide prisons for them? Or was it so that the marriage union, in compliance with God's judgement, should maintain the human race? For if he would have young women marry and bear children, so that through them human bodies are born, yet erring souls are clothed with bodies on account of sins and the ensuing penalties, there is no doubt that the bonds of marriage would be laid on young women for the punishment of souls rather than for procreation. But God forbid that we should believe this to be so and suppose that the bond between husband and wife has been instituted not as a blessing but on account of sin. Nor when he made Adam and Eve did God unite them with a blessing because of souls falling

from heaven or the lapsing of rational creatures, saying: 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' (Gen. 1:28). For if souls were sent down to earth because of sins previously committed in heaven to be bound to bodies, Paul is lying when he writes: 'Let marriage be held in honour and let the marriage bed be undefiled' (cf. Heb. 13:4). But he is certainly not lying. Therefore bodies are created not because of the fall of the souls, but so that by a succession of births and deaths the world should make good the loss and overcome the shortness of human life through a perpetual succession. For if after falling and being bound to bodies souls are blessed by God, they would be in a better state after having received bodies. If they are consequently expelled on that account, so that they receive bodies as a punishment for sins, how can they be blessed in the bodies they have acquired because of sins? For one of two things must follow: either they had been blessed before the Fall, or bound to bodies after the Fall in no way could they be blessed. For if a blessing followed the first life, it forsook this one; if it was transferred to this life, it is proved not to have existed in the first one. Suppose for the sake of argument that before they fell and were not yet clothed in human bodies, they enjoyed a blessing and once they had fallen and had bodies they were again blessed, the life before and the life after would be the same as regards the state of being blessed. But this is not at all logical, because souls that have sinned deserve punishment, those that have not sinned deserve a blessing. Whichever of the two they say is the right response, they will be at fault because they are unwilling to observe the rule of the Church's teaching. For if they reply that souls fell from heaven because of sins and were bound to bodies as if chained up in a prison, how is it that Adam and Eve, male and female, were blessed when living in the body – for according to their madness naked souls were not called man and woman, but it was bodies that distinguished the sex of each. Or if before they had bodies they dwelt in heaven and their manner of life at that time was happy and worthy of benediction, for what reason were they either blessed before they fell, or, after they fell and as a punishment for lapsing were joined to dense bodies, were they granted a blessing once again? For blessing and punishment are not the same thing. In name and effect they stand very much apart, nor can there be any kind of relationship between them when so great an incompatibility divides them. Moreover, how is a multitude of children promised to the righteous as a blessing, when the prophet says: 'And the smallest shall become thousands, and the least a great nation' (Isa. 60:22 LXX)?

13. Therefore those who wish to celebrate the Lord's feasts should condemn Origen's idols and vanquish the foulness of his doctrines by the use of reason. For the most impious of the pagans prefer their error and custom to the truth, and make idols in the form of men and blaspheme the invisible God, when they fashion them with shapes and limbs and sexual organs, making them sometimes male and sometimes female, 'and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man' and various other forms (Rom 1:23). Similarly, by the fickleness and impiety of his beliefs, Origen left the memorials of his treatises like the shrines of idols, which we (to continue the analogy) by the authority of the Scriptures and the zeal of faith demolish. For when builders wish to construct a square house, they measure out walls of equal length on each side, setting the line by rule and plumb line, and what they have conceived mentally, they raise up in deed, and join the four sides by a square of the same measure, keeping the initial equality by going up and down gradually by increments at the corners, that the beauty of the construction might unite the diversity of materials and the skilled structure might maintain its angular lines. Similarly, the Church's teachers, using the testimonies of the Scriptures, lay down strong foundations of doctrine and remain undaunted, offering their works to Christ and saying: 'Strengthen me according to thy word' (Ps. 119 [118]:28). For he it is of whom it is written: 'the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner' (Mt. 21:42). He joins us and the other Church leaders in a single celebration. Sailing towards it on a swift course, let us have very little fear of the anger against us of the waves of heresy which are soon to be destroyed.

14. For when the helmsmen of large ships see an immense swell bearing down on them they receive the foaming waves like huntsmen do a ferocious beast and ride them with the bow presented towards them, turning the rudders in a different direction, and, as the strength of the wind and necessity dictates, tightening the cables or loosening them. And when the swell has subsided, they loosen the ropes operating the rudders on either side of the ship, that for a while they might prepare calmly for the next swell. When it comes, they tighten the heads of the rudders and extend the blades, that with the winds parting this way and that the work of each side might be equal, and that which could not be sustained simultaneously, might become more tolerable when divided.[118] Similarly, those who are careful about themselves follow the example of this analogy. Using

the dispensation of the divine words like a rudder, they meet the tempest and the waves of the heretics head-on, using God's law in the place of technical skill, so that those who fall get up again, while those who are on their feet persevere with a firm step, that all might be kept unharmed as a body with the help of doctrine. For what the rudder is to the helmsman, God's law is to the soul. By keeping the Lord's Pascha in accordance with it, let us value nothing in the world above the love of God and one's neighbour. Nor let us alter our opinion in accordance with the vagaries of human chance which turn this way and that, so that with those whom a little while before we served with shameful adulation because they were powerful, if the winds blow strongly in the opposite quarter and riches are changed into poverty, high standing into humiliation, glory into ignominy, we turn suddenly into enemies, and resist to their face, though we used to hold them worthy of honour, weighing friendship by circumstances not by faith, or indeed even demonstrating hidden enmities in time of need like snakes coming out of their holes. We are not only ungrateful towards those whose generosity sustained us when we were happy to be known as their clients, but like traitors we hunt them down even to the point of bloodshed. We trample upon them cast down and prostrate, when a little before we looked up to them because of their riches. We call them the worst of all, after they have changed their wealth into poverty. We praise power and decry misfortune, honouring people or despising them not because of what they really are but because of the vagaries of fortune, so that those we formerly called lords and patrons, we now address as if they were scoundrels and worthless slaves. Our iniquity appears on every side, whether we praise the unworthy or pursue the worthy with belittlement, imitating that which the accusers said to blessed Job: 'You have been scourged for only a few of your sins' (Job 15:11 LXX).

15. Let us therefore love not uncertain riches, but most steadfast virtue. Let us not allow the hardness of poverty to humiliate us, or riches to puff us up. These things are wont to depress or exhilarate only the very stupid. Let us instead temper both of them for the sake of our integrity and bear sadness or joy with equanimity. Concern for riches disturbs the sweetest slumbers, raises calumnies against the innocent, and when it has gathered together infinite supplies of wealth, prepares material for the eternal fires. Indeed, after an insatiable passion has brooded over the acquisition of wealth, avarice is still not satisfied, but defies the laws, despises the flames of Gehenna, and reckons the tribunal of the judgement to come as nothing. Nor

do adversaries fight against their enemies with as much passion as riches contend against the virtues, unless they are moderated by reason and generosity towards others. In the cities riches are preferred to noble birth. They confer ancient lineage on self-made men. Never has the desire for riches been capable of being satiated by yet more riches. An avaricious person is always in need. A person for whom what he has seems as lacking as what he does not have knows no measure. Hell is not satiated with the dead, but the more it receives the more it wants. Avarice therefore imitates it. It cannot be satisfied, but the more it has the more it wants. It thinks all that it has is less than what it desires. Always boundless, always excessive, the magnitude of its wealth does not extinguish the fire in its breast. At dinner parties it greedily devours not food but injustice. Mixing disputes and dissensions in legal cases, it gives birth to envy, through which it arrives at murder. It has no stability of mind, but vacillates as if inebriated, its only measure being always to seek what is beyond measure. The sea is hemmed in by the shore; the strongest harbours, either man-made or natural, check the waves crashing down from a height and the fury of the swelling rollers. The lust for riches, unless restrained by reason, can neither be tempered by discretion nor mitigated by the law. Nor does any abundance satiate it. It does not blush, it does not fear the judgement to come, but in its craving for having more – just as those living in luxury and dedicated to pleasure generally long for caresses and are smitten with lust – it fills towns, villages and farms with malicious chicanery and dissension. Islands, seas, lands, shores, roads, river crossings, all are the object of avarice's zeal for possession, while in its desire to have more it exchanges goods from far and wide through trade and by fraud and perjury lays the insatiable foundations of its riches.[119]

16. Therefore despising madness of this sort, let us seek to make our riches the worship of God and our most solid possessions the holiness of chastity. Let us adore the one divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and believe the resurrection of the dead to be incorruptible and permanent. For it cannot be that death is triumphant, when the resurrection has been confirmed by the passion of Christ, who raised the temple of his body incorrupt and lasting forever. Let us pray for the most pious emperors.[120] And by observing the divine law let us honour the precepts of fasting. For virtue guards her followers without any constraint. She elevates the mind, which vacillates amongst various thoughts, from earthly matters to the heights, contemplating not the beauty of bodies but right order in

life and conduct. She shows it the choirs of angels rejoicing in heaven and teaches it the brilliance of splendid disciplines, that in the present age like a very strong athlete it may take the blows aimed at it and expect future glory in exchange. By no means does it give way to vices, but sustains the inner man by its desire for eternal things. Checking every attack of pleasure by reason, it ponders what belongs to the future, and, so far as human frailty can bear, withdraws from concern for bodily things, preferring the spiritual to the carnal. As a result it even despises the body itself and the cultivation of the pleasures of this life. It persuades it to embark on a harder but better life, so that he who a little while previously used to serve wantonness should serve chastity in perfect freedom, and drawing back from the precipice, should accept the gentle restraints of fasting. For indeed, if the weak nature of bodies were to be without a ruler and master, and did not wish to obey the spirit that commands it, it would be the occasion of countless shipwrecks to both itself and its ruler, and would drag it down to the foulest lusts, to a cesspit of pleasures. Then it would in no way ponder what is honourable, but fleeing what is good would wallow in filth and mire. But when virtue rules the spirit in the manner of a charioteer, and standing in the chariot, so to speak, checks its impetus and various appetites with the reins of doctrine, she raises it up from lowly things to the heights,[121] and showing it what is invisible and eternal in place of what is visible, she prepares a resting place in heaven and makes her friends those who dedicated to God's service enjoy spiritual delights. Thus what she discerned here in a mirror dimly she sees there in truth (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12). And she sees a clarity brighter than the sun's rays that descends to us here in part. Therefore let us reach out from the lesser to the greater just as we advance through knowing letters and syllables to proficiency in reading, because the greater need the lesser elements and vice versa. When we arrive there and are joined in communion with the blessed, we shall hear: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master' (Mt. 25:23).

17. Beginning the fast of holy Lent from the eleventh day of the month of Phamenoth and the week of the Lord's passion on the sixteenth day of the month of Pharmuthi, we should end the fast on Saturday evening the twenty-first day of the same month of Pharmuthi, and we should celebrate Easter on the following day, which is Sunday, the twenty-second of the same month (17 April). After

which we should add the seven weeks of holy Pentecost, mindful of the poor, loving God and our neighbour, praying for our enemies, mollifying our persecutors, raising up the weak from their falls with consolation and mercy, that the tongue may always be sounding the praises of God, that the just judgements of the Church might in no way be destroyed by unreasonable clemency, nor human opinions be preferred to the law of God. If we have desired his friendship, we shall arrive at the glory of heaven in Christ Jesus, our Lord, through whom and with whom be splendour and dominion to God the Father with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

18. Greet one another with a holy kiss (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20). The brethren who are with me greet you (cf. Phil. 4:21). And you should know this, that the following have been appointed in each place respectively to replace the bishops who have died: in the city of Nikiu for Theopemtus, Theodosius;[122] in Terenuthis, Arsintheus;[123] in the town of Gerae for Eudemon, Pisozus;[124] in Achaeus for Apollo, Museus;[125] in Athribis for Isidore, Albanasius;[126] in Cleopatris, Ophelius;[127] in the town of Laton for Timothy, Appelles.[128] Therefore write letters to them and receive them from them according to the Church's custom.

TRACTATE ON ISAIAH 6: 1–7
(Morin, *Anecdota Maredsolana* III. 3, 103–22)

'And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord Sabaoth sitting upon a throne high and lifted up: and Seraphim stood around him: one had six wings and the other had six wings' (cf. Isa. 6:1–2 LXX). Let us see what Isaiah the prophet, who is reckoned to be a most learned man, understood at this point. The sacred Scriptures record that Uzziah was king of Judah. But Origen says: 'It was not possible that Isaiah the prophet saw a vision unless King Uzziah had already died',[129] which we can in no way accept. For in fact we read before this section that Isaiah saw many things while Uzziah was alive, as the prophet himself testifies at the beginning, saying: 'The vision which Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos saw, which he saw against Judah and against Jerusalem in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah' (Isa. 1:1). How therefore does Origen assert that Isaiah could not have seen the vision unless King Uzziah was already dead, when clearly Isaiah began to prophesy before Uzziah died? And he goes on to say: 'Hear,

O heaven, and give ear O earth, for the Lord has spoken' (Isa. 1:2), setting forth what things the Lord said after the vision. Nor is it denied that King Uzziah was a sinner: but the question we are trying to resolve is how is it that the holy prophet could not see a vision of God on account of the king's being a sinner? Therefore Origen in consequence, interpreting King Uzziah allegorically, amongst other things adduces the following: 'It is necessary that such a king and prince of the soul should die, that we might be able to perceive the vision of God. For it is not written without reason: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord Sabaoth" (cf. Isa. 6:1). For everyone of us, as Uzziah lives so lives Pharaoh, but as long as we do the tasks of Egypt, we do not groan: but if Pharaoh should die to us, at once we declare our pain with groaning, as it is written in Exodus (cf. Ex. 2:23). In this way as long as Uzziah lives, we cannot see the vision of God.'[130]

Since he interprets the text in this way, we are not so obstinate that we should reckon to refute an allegory if it is pious and imbibes from the fountain of truth; but only in so far as it is not contrary to the truth, does not distort the factual record, follows the sense of sacred Scripture, and does not prefer the will of a perverse interpreter of the Scriptures to authority.[131] Therefore we, too, should say to Origen, who confuses everything in the fog of allegory: Not so your divination, not so. For the factual narrative relates what was done in accordance with the conditions of the times, and reading it rouses us by its example to follow the best and avoid what is contrary to it. Moreover allegory, as if by a series of steps, ascends through the factual narrative to the heights, and so should be more sublime, not contrary. Indeed blessed Paul, in expounding the mystery of Adam and Eve, did not deny their creation, but building the spiritual understanding on the foundation of the factual narrative, says: 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church' (Eph. 5:31–2; cf. Gen. 2:24). And elsewhere, when he brings forward an example from very ancient history, in which it is written how water burst out of the rock struck by Moses' rod, that a thirsty people should drink, he applies the spiritual sense thus: 'For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ' (1 Cor. 10:4). In no way does he deny the very clear factual record, but drawing what was actually done to a higher sense, he thus erects the roof without taking away the foundations. If Origen had looked for allegories of this sort, we would have accepted them willingly.

But because he constructs a lie in such a way as to destroy the truth, we reject his explanation.

Let us therefore examine what he means when he says: 'The prophet could not have seen a vision so long as Uzziah was still alive.' And immediately applying an allegorical interpretation he adds: 'It was necessary for Uzziah, the prince of the soul, to die first, so that the prophet could thus see a vision.' What then should we say about Isaiah's words: 'Woe is me! For I am pricked to the heart; for although I am a man and have unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of Hosts' (Isa. 6:5 LXX)? For if he had unclean lips, how should King Uzziah have died in his soul for him to see a vision? He admits that his own lips and those of the people were impure to such a degree that afterwards he can say that he arrived at the grace of purification. For there follows: 'And there was sent to me one of the Seraphim, and he had in his hand a coal, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: "Behold this has touched your lips and will take away your iniquities, and will purge away your sins"' (Isa. 6:6–7 LXX). It was not before his iniquities were taken away and his sins purified that he saw the vision. How then, according to Origen's allegory, had Uzziah, the prince of the soul, died, when Isaiah had impure lips until after the vision, indeed when his iniquities were taken away and his sins purified after it? For the Lord appears even to sinners, to draw them away from sin. For even Saint Paul, when he was a young man and was devastating the Church, and after receiving letters against the apostles was raging for their blood – the Saviour appeared to him and said: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9:4). Nebuchadnezzar, too, the Chaldaean king, when the three youths were walking about in the furnace of fire, saw a fourth amongst them and said: 'Did we not cast three men bound into the fire? How then do I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the appearance of the fourth is like the son of God?' (Dan. 3:24–5 LXX). Moses also, who was brought up in Egypt and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, saw the vision of the burning bush which was not consumed; and when he had said: 'I will turn aside and see this great sight', God first said to him: 'Moses, Moses, do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground' (Ex. 3:4–5). He is then instructed so that after the vision of God he says that he is weak in speech and very slow-tongued (cf. Ex. 4:10 LXX), that is, unworthy to be a minister of the word of God, on behalf of which he was being sent to the people.

Therefore this is how God in his great mercy also revealed himself to Isaiah, in so far as a human being can see him; and for that reason the prophet says after the vision: 'Woe is me! For I am pricked to the heart, for although I am a man and have unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips and have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of Hosts' (Isa. 6:5 LXX). What the prophet is relating is simply this: Although I am a sinner and full of iniquities, I have seen the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne. The facts prove that Origen's allegory possesses neither elegance nor truth: for it is not, as he has testified, that the prince of his soul has died, and it was thus that he saw the vision of God, since after the vision he testified that he had impure lips. Whether according to the literal sense or according to the allegorical sense, he is convicted of falsehood. For while Uzziah was still alive Isaiah saw a vision against Judah and Jerusalem, as we read in the text; and in the same year that Uzziah died, he saw another vision. Moreover, he is discovered to be in error even according to the allegorical sense. For how was Uzziah, the prince of his soul, dead when as yet he still had unclean lips? If he was not dead to him who had unclean lips, how does he also die to us when we see a vision, if after the vision we still have unclean lips? But the sense is obvious, for as Paul has written: 'While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8). Similarly we say of Isaiah: if he still had unclean lips, and Uzziah, whom Origen interprets as the prince of the prophet's soul, was not yet dead to him, Isaiah saw the vision not as a result of his own merit, but as a result of the Saviour's mercy. And although unclean lips prohibited him from seeing the divine grandeur, nevertheless the Creator's compassion bestowed on him the ability to see him. This vision therefore appeared to sinners to take away their sins.

Therefore let these little snares of Origen cease, and let truth prevail. Against which he says again: 'I saw two Seraphim. Each of them had six wings: With two they covered their face, not their own but God's, and with two they covered their feet, not their own but God's, and with two they flew.'[132] In this passage, too, it is clear that he has set down his own sense; he always takes pleasure in novelties, and blushes to say what is obvious to everyone. For it was not God's face – that which enables God to be seen – that the Seraphim covered with their two wings, as he imagined, but their own, since the prophets showed that God's face – that which God is – cannot be seen by mortal eyes. Hence when Moses said to the Lord: 'Reveal thyself to me clearly that I may see thee' (Ex. 33:13 LXX), he heard from him: 'No one shall see my face and live' (Ex. 33:20 LXX). By these words he

is taught to place a limit on his desire, and to understand the extent of his own weakness. John, too, cries: 'No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he had made him known' (Jn 1:18). The explanation of this saying teaches that not only human beings but rational creatures as a whole and whatever is outside God cannot see God as he really is, but only as he has deigned to reveal himself to his creatures. This is also why Saint Paul says: 'To the king of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory' (1 Tim. 1:17). When he calls God 'invisible' he does not mean that he is visible to some and invisible to others: for whatever is invisible is seen by nobody, but is invisible to all, that the invisibility of God's nature might be preserved. The following testimony also supports this sense: 'who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see' (1 Tim. 6:16). The unapproachable Word [. . .].[133]Therefore the Seraphim covered their own face, not God's: for no creature, whether visible or invisible, can apprehend the divine greatness.

In consequence Origen also asserts wrongly: 'Two Seraphim covered God's feet.' But if the Seraphim cover his face and his feet, they would be greater than God, in that, so to speak, they cover him from head to toe. This is totally unacceptable, otherwise we would believe that the Seraphim are greater than God; which, although Origen does not state it explicitly, is a consequence of what he says.[134] For everything that covers something else is greater than that which it covers; and whatever is covered is less than that by which it is covered. Origen, not realizing what he is saying, impiously arrives at this conclusion. David, too, asserting that God is uncircumscribed, sings with mystical voice: 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I go down to hell, thou art there! If I take up my wings in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me and thy right hand shall hold me' (Ps. 139 [138]:7–10). Hence, too, Saint Paul says of Moses: 'he endured as seeing him who is invisible' (Heb. 11:27). According to this sense even the Seraphim do not cover the uttermost parts of God, which are called spiritually his 'feet'; but they place a restraint on their steps and prophetic desire, that they should not wish to reach out beyond that which the weakness of creatures can bear. And so they cover their feet, that they should not desire to know God more than he wishes himself to be understood.

It also says: 'Seraphim stood around him' (Isa. 6:2). To 'stand' means to remain in their measure and not to hasten to greater things.

That is why they flew with their middle wings, as if content with the middle state of the flying which is added; that leaving behind lowly things, they should meditate on matters concerning God which are more exalted. That God who holds together all things in his majesty is omnipotent, is both commonly said by mortals and is witnessed to by the prophet, who says: 'His excellence covered the heavens' (Hab. 3:3 LXX). Before him Solomon expressed the same sense in different words: 'The glory of God conceals a word' (Prov. 25:2 LXX). David also declares something similar about God: 'He made darkness,' he says, 'his secret place' (Ps. 18 [17]:11 LXX). This demonstrates that God is incomprehensible and invisible. Isaiah, too, who before had said 'I saw the Lord of hosts sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up' (Isa. 6:1), says in what follows: 'and the house was filled with smoke' (Isa. 6:4), that he might demonstrate the incomprehensibility and inaccessibility of God. Certainly all things around God are wrapped in darkness and cloud, although he appears to those whom he wishes to instruct, as Isaiah himself was deemed worthy to experience. This is what Paul, too, understands when he says: 'O the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things' (Rom: 11: 33–6). Therefore if all things are in him, so are the Seraphim; and although they seem to be greater than other creatures, nevertheless God cannot be covered by them, but the divine splendour surrounds these and all other creatures. For where it is said 'O the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!' (Rom. 11:33) his incomprehensibility is indicated. And since the same Apostle Paul writes in another place: 'Whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists' (Heb. 11:6), he does not set down that one must know who and of what nature God is, but simply that he exists.

For we know that God exists, and we know what he is not; but what he is, and of what nature, we cannot know. Because it belongs to his goodness and mercy descending upon us that we may be capable of determining something about him, we perceive him to exist through benefits he confers. But what his nature is, on account of the gulf separating us from him, no creature can comprehend; and, to put it succinctly, we know what God is not, but we cannot know what he is. Not by reason of his having something which afterwards he ceased to have, but by reason of that which is joined to us through the weakness of our nature which he does not have; for example, that

he should have a mutable body,[135] or that he should be in need of anything, or that he should be accessible to human vision or subject to anything else that pertains to the creature. Though since the creature has been made by God, it has been perfected by his wisdom and rationality. Nor have all things begun to exist by chance without providence, as some philosophers think: for whatever happens by chance lacks order and purpose.[136] What is produced by art, which is evident in all things, also declares the intelligence of its maker, when considered not only in relation to its activity but also in relation to the purpose and rationality of its activity.

Thus the wisdom of God shines in every creature, and nothing that has been made, has been made without cause and utility. Utility itself also possesses beauty and beauty is adorned with utility; and the single material of the elements receives different forms, that the providence of God might be recognized in the particular species. Contemplating this, the psalmist breaks out in praises, saying: 'Wonderful are thy works; and my soul knows it well' (Ps. 139 [138]: 14 LXX). And the prophet says in agreement: 'I considered thy works and was amazed' (Hab. 3:2 LXX). Also the text: 'And behold, everything was very good' (Gen. 1:31) signifies not that the creature came into being by chance, but that all things were made by the purpose and wisdom of God, so that splendour and beauty and incredible harmony should be made known in the diversity of all creatures. The blessed prophet says: 'The heavens are telling the glory of God' (Ps. 19 [18]:1), not because the heavens use mouth and tongue and windpipe for crying out; but because by their harmony and perpetual service they indicate the will of the Creator. For from the magnitude and beauty of creatures we consequently understand their Creator, and 'ever since the creation of the world we perceive mentally the invisible things of God in the things that have been made' (cf. Rom. 1:20).

What then, as we have said, is God, that we cannot know him? That he exists we understand, not through our senses but by his mercy, as we contemplate the prudence of the Creator through the things he has made. In a ship or building do we not ponder the skill of the shipwrights or builders, seeing their art in the work, and in the individual things which have been perfected by reason do we not discern the invisible rationality? So, too, God is perceived through his creatures, and his invisibility is made in some way visible. For neither does heaven cover God and make him invisible, nor do the Seraphim and the other creatures, as if he could be seen or cease to be visible thanks to their service and covering of him. But he is in

all things, and is everywhere, and is above all things, and surveys all things visible and invisible, ruling all things and sustaining them, not changing from place to place, but ordering all things through reason; that the earth's mass should be made firm by his will, and again be shaken at his nod, striking fear into the hearts of mortals when we stand in need of correction; that the seas should be spread out as a free-flowing liquid, and when they come to their appointed boundaries that they should beat against them with the dashing of the waves; that the year's cycle should be divided into four seasons,[137] and that by the decreasing and increasing movements in the variation of weather they should germinate seeds, nourish shoots, and parch them by the heat of the sun; and that illuminated with his light, both rational and invisible creatures might be sustained always by the love of God and in no way turn away to earthly things.

Indeed, it is shown by these things that the Seraphim do not cover God's face and feet, as Origen imagines, wishing to prove him invisible not as a property of his nature, but by the ministry of creatures. For when the prophet says: 'I saw the Lord of hosts sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up' (Isa. 6:1), again the Seraphim are seen to cover their face and their feet, that they might show the prophet that the magnificence of God is not seen, but that as a favour he offers himself to the sight of mortals, in such a way, however, that he remains invisible. Hence Moses, too, when he was instructing the people that God is invisible, says: 'You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; there was only a voice' (Deut. 4:12). For indeed the Lord and Saviour also says of the Holy Spirit: 'The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes' (Jn 3:8), insisting that the Spirit, too, is invisible and beyond human understanding. On which the learned Apostle Paul bursts out with these words: 'For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God' (2 Cor. 2:11). And since God is invisible, consequently the Spirit who is in God is also called invisible, containing all things and penetrating them, in accordance with that which is written elsewhere: 'the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world' (Wisd. 1:7). We read of almighty God: 'Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord' (Jer. 23:24). And of the Saviour, who assumed a human body, the Apostle says with faith: 'He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things' (Eph. 4:10). By participation in him the Seraphim, too, share in the fullness, and by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit all the holy powers receive sanctity.

Let us turn to Ezekiel to show how he, too, experiences similar things. In his description of the vision of the Cherubim, and the four living symbols, he adduces the following: 'And the four had their wings spread out above; each had two joined to one another, and two covered their bodies' (Ez. 1:11 LXX). Let us examine what he says: they veiled their own bodies, not that of God; that by these words we might learn that every creature, although it might be rational and transcend earthly things, nevertheless in the condition of its weakness it cannot see God as he is, nor can it look at his clear light with its dim eyes. Which sense the same prophet conveys in different words in a mystical narration: 'And behold, a voice from above the firmament that was over their head, looking as it were like a stone, in the likeness of a throne; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as it were of a human form. And I saw the appearance as it were of amber from the loins and above; and from the kidneys and below the appearance, as it were, of fire, and brightness round about, like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain. This was the appearance of the brightness round about, and this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord' (Ez. 1:25–2:l LXX). By this description he demonstrates that he saw not God himself but the likeness of the glory of the Lord; that from the likeness which he could not bear to experience he could guess how great the reality is, the likeness of which is granted to each of the saints: because the creature cannot see the nature of the divine majesty. Hence the same prophet says further on: 'And I arose and went forth into the plain; and lo, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I had seen by the river Chebar, and I fell on my face' (Ez. 3:23); that he may show that God is invisible, and that no created thing can see its Creator. We read in the Gospel, that when the Lord was transfigured on the mountain the apostles fell on their faces (cf. Mt. 17:6) because their countenances could not bear the glory. For not only God the almighty Father, but also the Son, that is the Word of God, is by his nature invisible. On account of which he assumed a visible human body, that through that which could be seen the invisible God could speak in person.

Although nobody doubts this, once again in discussing the Seraphim, Origen praises them so much above their measure that he blasphemes the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. For he says in what follows: 'But this is about the Seraphim who are around God and only rationally and intelligently say "Holy, Holy, Holy". They therefore praise him intelligently and wisely because they are holy.'[138] We cannot deny that the Seraphim say 'Holy, Holy, Holy' rationally and

intelligently: but I ask the distinguished doctor where in the holy Scriptures do we read that only the Seraphim praise God intelligently; since all rational creatures and the first-born of the heavenly Church know God? The thrones, and dominions and principalities, and authorities, and powers, which Paul lists (cf. Col. 1:16), proclaim God intelligently as holy. For Isaiah cries: 'God who dwells on high is holy' (Isa. 33:5 LXX). And before him, David: 'Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy' (Ps. 99 [98]:5). Daniel also says of the host of angels: 'a thousand thousands served him' (Dan. 7:10). For all the ministers of the Spirit intelligently and rationally proclaim God as holy; so, too, we read that the four youths in the fiery furnace sang: 'Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord, praise him and exalt him for ever' (Dan. 3:58 LXX). And not only do the Seraphim, as Origen audaciously declares, intelligently and learnedly praise God, saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy'; but also every creature, according to Ananias and Azarias and Misael, is attested worthily to praise God. For there follows: 'Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord, praise him and exalt him for ever' (Dan. 3:57 LXX). And in the psalms every creature is called upon to praise the Lord, as David says: 'Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him all his angels, praise him all his hosts!' (Ps. 148:1–2). And assuredly if they praise God, they know him to be holy; and not only the Seraphim, as we have already said, but all things that praise God know him whom they praise to be holy.

We know, for example, that with the Father there are many mansions (cf. Jn. 14:2) but the holiness of God is proclaimed in each mansion individually according to the measure of those who dwell in the various mansions. Thus as the Seraphim praise God in accordance with the manner of their faith, so they also know his holiness, in accordance with which both the archangels and the angels and all the ministers of the Spirit praise God as holy. If this is only allowed to the Seraphim, in accordance with Origen's error, it follows that knowledge of God and the grounds for praising him are taken away from the Archangels Gabriel and Michael and the rest who occupy the same rank in God's service. For Paul says: 'But you have come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven' (cf. Heb. 12: 22–3). If, according to Origen, only the Seraphim praise God intelligently, it follows that all these should be believed to praise him foolishly and irrationally. Yet how does the psalmist say: 'A hymn for all his saints' (Ps. 148:14)? Or by what confidence does Isaiah

exhort us who are human beings to praise God, saying: 'Sing to the Lord, call upon his name' (Isa. 12:3 LXX)? And again in the same volume, censuring the impiety of the Jews, he says: 'Ah, sinful nation, a people full of sins, a seed of sin, unjust sons; you have forsaken the Lord, and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger' (Isa. 1:4 LXX). When he said 'the Holy One of Israel', did he speak intelligently or unintelligently? I do not think there is anyone so unsound of mind that he should dare to say that the prophet stupidly proclaimed God to be holy. And in another place in the same prophet we read: 'Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, "When you return and mourn, then you shall be saved" ' (Isa. 30:15 LXX).

If only the Seraphim praise God as holy, it follows that the angels and all rational creatures and even the prophet himself, are excluded from intelligent praise, which says 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. Hannah, too, when she had weaned Samuel, broke out in these words, giving thanks to God: 'I have rejoiced in thy salvation, because there is none holy like the Lord, and there is no one holy like our God' (cf. 1 Sam. 2:1–2 LXX). It would follow that in saying this she spoke unintelligently. But Isaiah, too, in predicting the coming of the Lord in the flesh, writes: 'Sanctify him who despises his life, who is abhorred by the nations that serve the princes' (Isa. 49:7 LXX). How ought we, who belong to the nations, praise him? Intelligently or unintelligently? If we praise him intelligently, we, too, are worthy of praise; but if stupidly, then stupidity is applicable to us too. When he said: 'who despises his life', we must accept that he disparages it, and considers it negligible, and disregards it for that which it is; which is what the Saviour did when he said: 'Now is my soul troubled' (Jn. 12:27), and: 'My soul is sorrowful, even to death' (Mt. 26:38). Doubtless he said this because of the lowliness of the body he assumed. We have said these things to prove that not only the Seraphim but also the angels and other rational creatures praise God intelligently as holy.

Furthermore, in his discussion of the celestial beings, Origen makes himself a judge of the holiness of each of the spiritual beings, and says rashly of the Seraphim: 'We know that there is nothing more holy than these among existent things.' So says he, but we for our part know that the Seraphim, and thrones, and principalities, and authorities and powers and dominions, which according to the Apostle Paul serve God, and all the angels and archangels which serve in their turn, are all holy, leaving to the mind of God alone which is more holy than which. For we do not know which archangels are holier than which, nor which angels seem to be better

than which. 'For star differs from star in glory' (1 Cor. 15:41). Gazing at them with our eyes, we can judge which star is bigger than another; but with regard to the angels, whom we do not see, and the archangels, principalities, thrones and dominions, authorities and powers, and the other spiritual ministers, we cannot judge. For an inferior and more humble nature cannot express an opinion about natures which are superior, so as to say: this angel is better than that angel, and this dominion and authority is more sublime than that dominion and power and authority.

But Origen audaciously pronounces on the Seraphim, saying that 'among those things which are holy, nothing is holier than the Seraphim'. Since David says: 'Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou who leadest Joseph like a flock, thou who sittest upon the Cherubim, manifest thyself' (Ps. 80 [79]:1–2), do you think that anyone of us can know whether the Cherubim are holier than the Seraphim, when they too are holy, and God alone and those to whom he himself has deigned to reveal it, have knowledge of this matter, which are holier than which? For even the apostles, since they were ignorant of their own measure, and did not know who was greater than whom, were judged by the Lord; and thus Peter was given the first place, that each of them should have his order (cf. Mt. 18:1; 16:18; 10:2–4). And David sings: 'Lord thou hast searched me and known me' (Ps. 13 [138]:1). For if 'no one knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him' (Cor. 2:11), by what temerity does Origen dare to say that he knows which is more holy than which in heaven, and that nothing seems to him to be holier than the Seraphim? Who gave him the power of this judgement, that he should judge between Cherubim and Seraphim?

When Ezekiel says of the Cherubim: 'And the sound of the wings of the Cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Shaddai when he speaks' (Ez. 10:5), it belongs to stupid temerity for anyone to wish to discern what the difference may be between the Cherubim and the Seraphim, since this is reserved to the knowledge of God alone. And again as the same prophet says about the Cherubim: 'And the glory of the Lord departed from the vestibule of the house, and went up on the Cherubim: and the Cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight' (Ez. 10:18). What human being, then, will boast that he knows the measure of their holiness, and that by a comparison of glory the Seraphim occupy a lesser position, or venture to pronounce on celestial beings when he does not know the terrestrial? For who knows clearly which men are more holy than which others, unless

perhaps the Holy Spirit reveals it to us? Ignorant of this, Origen did not place any restraint on his tongue.

The same Ezekiel, again describing the Cherubim says: 'And the glory of the God of Israel was over them. This is the living creature that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were Cherubim. Each had four faces, and each had eight wings, and underneath their wings was the semblance of human hands. These were the faces I had seen under the glory of the Lord by the river Chebar; and they went everyone straight forward' (Ez. 10:19–22). We know from Isaiah's teaching that the Seraphim each have six wings. Furthermore, Ezekiel informs us that one of the Cherubim has four faces and eight wings. If one is going to pronounce on comparative greatness, what do you think is greater, a being that has a single face and six wings, or one that has four faces and eight wings? But it is presumptuous not only to speak of these things but even to think of them, especially when we are ignorant even of the principle by which we ourselves are made, since David says of God: 'For it is he who knows our frame' (Ps. 103 [102]:14). Both are holy, but which is greater God sees.

For if we cannot know the measure of the sea and the sand, and also of the stars and clouds and rain, nor the depth of the earth, nor the magnitude of the ocean, nor the number of the plants which grow in the mountains and the valleys, nor by what principle we ourselves have been put together, why should we know those things that exceed the mode of human knowledge? Origen in his raving is so audacious that while amongst the inexperienced and simple he seeks to win glory by the novelty of his words, he does not know that he is a man. In the Gospel the Saviour says of John the Baptist: 'What did you go out into the desert to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet' (Mt. 11:7–9). And at once he adds: 'among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist' (Mt. 11:11). And the Lord said the same about Job: 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is none like him on earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God, turning away from evil and still holds fast to his integrity' (Job 2:3).

Let Origen therefore reply to us if he has heard the Lord speaking, as he did of John and Job, of the Seraphim too, that nothing is holier than they. But if he has not heard him, let him be silent, and leave the art of judging his creatures to God. For since David says of God:

'He mounted on a cherub and flew' (Ps. 18 [17]:10), and Saint Paul to the Hebrews says of the tabernacle as a ty[pe of the Lord's body, in whose likeness that Jewish tent][139] had been made: 'And above the ark were the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat' (Heb. 9:5); it is dangerous to say that the Seraphim are more holy than the Cherubim, and exceed the measure of human humility. The Lord says to Jeremiah: 'I have made you an assayer among the people that you may assay them' (Jer. 6:27 LXX); and Origen, as if appointed an assayer of heavenly and invisible things, dares to say of the Seraphim that nothing among rational creatures is holier than they.

If his temerity had advanced only to this point, we could in some way or other have put up with his madness. But now he embarks on greater blasphemies, and his impiety reaches God himself. For like a maker of idols and creator of new images,[140] he calls the Son and the Holy Spirit two Seraphim; and in this vomiting forth of sacrilege breaks out with: 'from that which is primarily holy the Seraphim receive a participation in holiness, and one calls to another: "Holy, holy, holy"' (lsa. 6:3). And again: 'What are,' he says, 'these Seraphim? My Lord and the Holy Spirit.'[141] That the Seraphim receive their holiness from God, who is the source of all holiness, and one cries to another, 'Holy, holy, holy' we cannot deny. But that these are reckoned to be the Son and the Holy Spirit, we utterly reject. For whatever possesses holiness by participation in another, is not called holy in the proper sense, nor is it of the same holiness as that from which it receives holiness; but the Son and the Holy Spirit [are holy] not in an improper sense, by participation in another, but by nature[. Indeed the creature][142] which receives the name of holy through sanctification by God, either remains in holiness and is called holy, or through negligence loses what it has received and ceases to be holy.

On the other hand, the Son and the Holy Spirit do not possess holiness through participation in another, nor do they seem to be like creatures and receive what they do not have from elsewhere, and are inferior to him from whom they possess holiness. For a body which has colour is not itself what colour is. It is either white or red or black by participation in colour; although it cannot be without colour, it is not the same kind of thing as colour itself. Similarly, if the Son has holiness from another, as Origen would have it, he is not holy by nature. And what we have said of the Son we should understand, too, of the Holy Spirit. For it is one thing to be holy by nature and another by participation: because in the one what always exists

cannot be lost, whereas in the other it can be taken away because it has been received. Let us take another example. Fire is hot by nature, but it also makes other things hot which receive its heat by participation; and they are said to be hot not so much by nature, as by participation in heat. Similarly with the Son and the Spirit, if they possess holiness from another, they are to be believed to possess holiness not according to nature but according to grace.

But what shall we say to Origen, who has dared to call the Son and the Holy Spirit holy not by nature but by participation, with the result that they are not very different from us, who merit having a share in holiness from another? Even though he does not put it in so many words, this is the logical consequence of what he says. He does not know that although colour cannot be separated from a body, nevertheless every participation that descends from another is of inferior merit to that which sanctifies through participation in it. For it is one thing to possess something by nature, and another to possess it by accident. Therefore if the Son and the Holy Spirit receive their holiness from some principal source, they are not holy by nature but in an improper sense. For whatever is holy by participation receives what it did not have from that in which it begins to have a share. God forbid that we should think this of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and break out into such lunacy that, in accordance with Origen's ravings, we say the two Seraphim are the Son and the Holy Spirit. Why not rather say to him with the zeal of the Apostle: 'To which of the Seraphim and the other creatures did God say, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"? And again: "Let all his angels worship him". For he says of the angels: "Who makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire". And of the Son indeed: "Thy throne is for ever and ever, the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of thy kingdom"' (cf. Heb. 1:5–8). And again of the Son, certainly not of the Seraphim, the psalmist sings: 'In the beginning thou, O Lord, didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands' (Ps. 102 [101]:25 LXX). For these things are not said of the Seraphim, but of the Son; nor did the Seraphim lay the foundation of the earth, nor are the heavens the work of their hands, as we should believe the Son and the Holy Spirit are, according to Origen's madness.

For to which of the Seraphim, or 'to what angel did God say: "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?' (Heb. 1:13–14). That is why Isaiah cries out concerning the Seraphim: 'One of the seraphim was

sent to me' (Isa. 6:6 LXX); it can hardly be doubted that it was as a minister serving the commands of God that the Seraph was sent. For he was sent on account of those who are pursuing salvation. On this point, too, we evidently do not know, according to Origen's argument, that the Seraphim are not the Son and the Holy Spirit, because they cry: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; and the whole earth is full of his glory' (Isa. 6:3). If they had not been ministering spirits prophesying the coming of our Lord and Saviour, they would no doubt have said: 'Heaven and earth are full of my glory.' Isaiah says: 'There was sent to me one of the Seraphim, and he had in his hand a coal, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold this has touched your lips, and takes away your iniquities, and purifies your sins"' (Isa. 6: 6–7). Therefore it was not one of the Seraphim, but the coal which he had taken from the altar, that is, the fiery word and teaching of God, which took way the prophet's iniquities and purified his sins. If the Son of God, who took away iniquities and purified sins, were the Seraph, he would have said: 'Behold, I have taken away your iniquities and purified your sins.' Therefore it was the word of God seized from the spiritual altar that took away the prophet's iniquities and purified his sins. Which, if it is kept in the hearts of believers, even today takes away iniquities and purifies sins, as David says: 'I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee' (Ps 118 [119]:11).

NOTES

1 THE LIFE OF THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA

1 This development has been brilliantly sketched by Peter Brown (1992, 1995 and 2002). See now also Rapp (2005).

2 Favale (1958) 48. Favale calculates Theophilus' approximate date of birth from a letter of Synesius (*Ep.* 9, PG 66. 1345) in which, writing in 407 or later, he wishes Theophilus a long and happy old age. The date fits in well with Theophilus' description of himself as wizened and bent in the *Homily on the Mystical Supper*.

3 John of Nikiu's *Chronicle* was written, probably originally in Greek, at the end of the seventh century. At some date it was translated into Arabic, and in 1602 from Arabic into Ethiopic. Only the Ethiopic version survives.

4 Jerome, *Com. in Ezek.* 9. 30 (PL 25. 289B). Memphis was the birthplace of the cult of Serapis. The Serapeum there was second only to that of Alexandria. See further, Bell (1953) 19–21.

5 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 79.

6 Favale (1958) 44.

7 Favale draws his conclusion from Bishop Ammon's letter to Theophilus on Pachomius and Theodore (*CPG* ii 2378). In this letter, Ammon mentions that Theophilus was present when Athanasius delivered his panegyric on Theodore (F. Halkin, *Pachomii vitae graecae*, 119. 23). On the basis of Ammon's references to the date of Easter, Favale dates the delivery of the panegyric to 366, 368 or 371 ([1958] 46–7). Halkin doubts the genuineness of the letter. For a defence see Favale (1958) 11.

8 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 79. 13–16; *Historia acephala* 19. The *Historia acephala* in its original form was compiled in Athanasius' lifetime. The postscript in which Theophilus is mentioned dates the final revision to between 385 and 412 (Barnes [1993] 4).

9 The sources all agree that Timothy died on 26 Epiphi (= 20 July). Socrates, *HE* 5. 12, gives the most likely year: the consulate of Arcadius and Baudon (= 385). Theophanes (*Chronographia* 1. 70) gives the year of creation 5879 (= 387). Favale ([1958] 50) thinks it likely Theophilus was enthroned on the following Sunday, 26 July 385.

10 Jerome, *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 3. 18 (PL 23. 470C). We have no information about the studies Theophilus pursued, but his homilies and letters bear witness to an impressive rhetorical education. Theophilus' use

of oratory is the subject of current research for a Cambridge Ph.D. thesis by Krastu Banev.
11 Haas (1997) 46–7.
12 See the list in Martin (1996) 141–53; cf. Haas (1997) 208–14. None of these churches long survived the Arab conquest. All the Coptic churches in modern Alexandria were built in the twentieth century (see Meinardus [1999] 146–8).
13 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62. 2 and 4 (GCS 37. 153).
14 Philostorgius, *HE* 2. 11.
15 Martin (1996) 151.
16 After Arius no presbyter was allowed to preach in Alexandria (Socrates, *HE* 5. 22).
17 Jerome says 'until Heraclas and Dionysius,' who died in 264/5 (Jerome, *Ep.* 146. 6 [CSEL 56. 310]). Cf. Martin (1996) 187.
18 On the later titles 'archbishop' and 'patriarch' see Bagnall (1993) 285.
19 Martin says that this was the basis of power of Athanasius' two great successors, Theophilus and Cyril ([1996] 2).
20 Martin (1996) 23.
21 Sozomen, *HE* 2. 17. 4. Libya is not mentioned.
22 Martin (1996) 98.
23 Wipszycka (1996) 147.
24 Wipszycka (1996) 148, n. 21, 203–4. See also Acerbi (1997), esp. 378–81, on Palladius' presentation of Theophilus as a simoniacal bishop. Antoninus of Ephesus is reported to have said at the Synod of The Oak: 'We made our offerings, certainly, in the usual manner of municipal offices.'
25 Inferred from Paphnutius, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 72.
26 Bagnall (1993) 289–93.
27 Bagnall (1993) 290–1.
28 The account which follows relies on Schwartz (1966) and Orlandi (1968).
29 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 23–30; Socrates, *HE* 5. 16–17; Sozomen, *HE* 7. 15; Theodoret, *HE* 5. 22; Eunapius, *Vita sophistarum*, LCL, 420 ff.
30 Socrates, *HE* 5. 16.
31 For some reason Rufinus does not mention Theophilus by name.
32 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 23; trans. Amidon. Cf. Thelamon (1981) 165–73.
33 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 24.
34 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 29.
35 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 27, 28.
36 Theodoret, *HE* 5. 22.
37 Eunapius, *Vita sophistarum* 472, LCL 420–2.
38 *Cod. Th.* 16. 10. 11.
39 *Cod. Th.* 16. 10. 10.
40 Frankfurter (1998a) 24.
41 Frankfurter (1998a) 24, 52–8.
42 Cf. how Porphyrius of Gaza destroyed the Marneion in 402 by a pious ruse (Mark the Deacon, *V. Porph.* 64–9) having first obtained imperial authorization to close the temples of Gaza which the Marneion had been able to circumvent (*V. Porph.* 26–7).
43 In Russell (2003b) I suggested that Theophilus destroyed the Serapeum on his own initiative. I no longer believe this was so, especially in view of Theophilus' evident regard for legal niceties at other stages in his career.

44 Schwartz (1966); Orlandi (1968). Cf. Wipszycka (1996) 77–9.
45 Orlandi (1968) 303–4; Thelamon (1981) 256.
46 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 22–3.
47 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 26–8.
48 Orlandi (1968) 301–3. A Coptic fragment of this text has been published by Orlandi (1970). Traces also survive in the Coptic *History of the Church of Alexandria*.
49 The *termini* are provided by Libanius, who assumes in his *Pro Templis* (not before 390) that the Serapeum was still standing, and Rufinus, who was writing in 402.
50 Martin (1996) 149–50. Whether it was actually used for liturgical worship is doubtful. On the conversion of temples into churches see Hanson (1978), who finds no firm evidence for conversion, as opposed to destruction and rebuilding, before the mid-fifth century.
51 Martin ([1996] 148–9) says that Athanasius completed the work without imperial permission.
52 Sozomen, *HE* 7. 15. We do not know where it was located.
53 Palladius, *Dial.* 6. 62–3; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1. 152 (PG 78. 285). Both sources are partisans of John Chrysostom. On the broader context of episcopal building activity in the Roman Empire see Rapp (2005) 220–3.
54 Sophronius, *Life and Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John*, PG 77. 1101; Monserrat (1998) 261–2. On the transfer of the relics of Cyrus and John to this church by Theophilus' nephew, Cyril, in pursuit of his own Christianizing policy, see McGuckin (1995).
55 On this theme see Brakke (1998).
56 Cf. Athanasius, *FL* 41; quoted by Brakke (1998) 464–5.
57 On 'neutralization' by demolition see Frankfurter (1998a) 277–84.
58 Brakke (1998) 467.
59 So could the prayers of living holy men. Cf. the confrontation between the monk Apollo and a pagan procession, *Hist. Mon.* 8. 24–9.
60 Rufinus, *HE* 11. 28. Rufinus says that Athanasius hid them in the sacristy wall, thus enabling them to be discovered by the next generation.
61 *Life of John the Little* 75; see further Russell (2003a) 100.
62 Theophilus appointed Dioscorus, one of the Tall Brothers, bishop of Hermopolis Minor near Alexandria in the Delta. According to the Coptic *Life of Aphou*, he made Aphou bishop of the important Christian city of Oxyrhynchus in the Heptanomia (the lower Nile valley). He also tried unsuccessfully to make Evagrius of Pontus a bishop (Socrates, *HE* 4. 23). Cf. also the story of Nilammon, an anchorite of Gerae in the Delta, who shut himself up in his cell and contrived to expire before Theophilus could consecrate him bishop of the city (Sozomen, *HE* 8. 19).
63 A long extract from the letter is preserved by Theodoret, *HE* 4. 22.
64 Twenty-two years later Theophilus was accompanied to the Synod of The Oak by his nephew and successor Cyril, but we only know of this from a chance remark in one of Cyril's letters (*Ep.* 33.7; PG 77. 159C).
65 The fundamental study of the relations between Constantinople and Alexandria from 381 to 451 is Baynes (1926).
66 Libanius, *Pro Templis*; Wipszycka (1996) 76–7.
67 Socrates, *HE* 6. 2.
68 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 2.

69 Favale (1958) 59–60.
70 The fullest account in still Cavallera (1905). For Theophilus' role see Favale (1958) 72–7.
71 Ambrose, *Ep*. 56. 4 (PL 16. 1171).
72 Ambrose, *Ep*. 56. 2 (PL 16. 1170).
73 Ambrose, *Ep.* 56. 6 (PL 16. 1171–2).
74 Brooks, *Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch* ii. 223. These disturbances (393) perhaps serve to date the destruction of the image of Serapis in Alexandria.
75 Favale (1958) 75–6.
76 There are two fragments in Brooks, *Select Letters of Severus* (trans: ii. 2. 303–4, 307–8).
77 Modern Busra in Syria. It was the capital of the Roman province of Arabia. On the dispute see Favale (1958) 77–80.
78 Translated above, pp. 84–8.
79 Favale (1958) 79.
80 There is a lively account in Kelly (1975) 195–209.
81 Jerome, *Against John* 11.
82 Jerome, *Ep.* 57. 2.
83 Jerome, *Ep.* 82. 10.
84 Jerome, *Against John* 39.
85 Cf. Jerome, *Ep*. 82. It was not until the Council of Chalcedon (451) that Jerusalem became an independent patriarchate.
86 Jerome, *Against John* 37. Jerome quotes John's letter to Theophilus: 'you have the care of all the churches'.
87 See Nautin (1974) for a reconstruction of events. Nautin thinks that Jerome, informed of Isidore's impending mission, wrote to Theophilus twice to alert him to suspicions about John's orthodoxy, perhaps enclosing Epiphanius' letter. This in Nautin's view accounts for a cooler tone in Theophilus' letter after Isidore's mission. Jerome gives his own account in *Against John* 37.
88 Quoted by Jerome, *Against John* 37. Nautin ([1974] 367) thinks that this letter was addressed to Rufinus of Aquileia.
89 Jerome, *Apologia* 3.16. This letter was also diverted. Epiphanius refers to Rufinus as one of the brothers infected along with John by the heresy of Origen (Jerome, *Ep*. 51. 6).
90 Jerome, *Against John* 39.
91 John's *Apologia*; critical text and French translation in Nautin (1974) 370–3).
92 Jerome, *Against John* 39, 40.
93 Jerome, *Ep*. 63. 1.
94 Jerome, *Ep*. 82. 1. Theophilus' letter has not survived.
95 Socrates, *HE* 6. 2.
96 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 2.
97 Theodoret, *HE* 5. 27.
98 I do not share Nautin's assumption ([1974] 381) that Isidore must have consulted Theophilus before writing his letter to Rufinus/John.
99 Second Synodal Letter, translated above, pp. 93–9. Stephen Davis sees the war against 'the so-called "Origenists"', following upon the violent onslaught on paganism, as two campaigns 'in many ways at cross-purposes theologically' (2004: 63). Elsewhere I have suggested that Theophilus was

theologically consistent in both campaigns (Russell 2003b). It may perhaps be argued that I have simply accepted Theophilus' rhetorical construction of the anti-Origenist campaign. But even so, he presents his anti-Origenism as an attack on false images/erroneous ideas of God in a manner perfectly consistent with his anti-paganism. This is also of a piece with his casting himself in the role of an OT prophet or a second Moses (cf. Davis 2004:64).

100 Palladius, *Dialogue* 6.
101 Socrates, *HE* 6. 7.
102 Socrates, *HE* 6. 9.
103 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 11, 12.
104 As we shall see, the Nitrians had to concentrate on proving personal enmity as the best legal defence against their condemnation. The only alternatives were to abjure their errors (which they tried) or mount a theological defence (which had no chance of success).
105 Socrates, *HE* 6. 7; Sozomen, *HE* 8. 11.
106 Theophilus, *Letter written at Constantinople*, frag. 7; cf. *Tractate on Isaiah 6: 1–7*.
107 Summarized by Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 34.
108 Cassian, *Conferences* 10. 2.
109 Socrates, *HE* 6. 7; Sozomen, *HE* 8. 11.
110 Cassian, *Conferences* 10. 2.
111 Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 3.
112 Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 3; Palladius, *Dialogue* 6.
113 Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 3.
114 Socrates, *HE* 6. 7.
115 See Elm (1998) for reasons why it was not expedient for the pro-Origenists to raise theological issues.
116 Palladius, *Dialogue* 6 (CN 36. 6).
117 Theophilus, *Letter written at Constantinople*, frag. 7.
118 Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 34.
119 Cf. Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* 41; *De Incarnatione* 54; Anatolios (2004) 37.
120 Cassian, *Conferences* 10. 2; cf. Stewart (1998) 86–9, 95–6. Stewart's analysis of Cassian's motives in telling the Sarapion story is illuminating.
121 Text and French trans. of the relevant part of the *Life of Aphou* in Drioton (1915–17) 95–115; Eng. trans. in Florovsky (1965) 112–17. For a recent discussion, which sets the *Life* in a convincing historical setting, see Bumazhnov (2003).
122 Florovsky (1958); Gould (1992).
123 Golitzin (2003).
124 For recent studies see Bammel (1996); Frank (1998) and (2000).
125 *Hist. Mon.* 8. 33.
126 *Hist. Mon.* 10. 20.
127 *Hist. Mon.* 11. 5.
128 See esp. the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Apocalypse of Paul*.
129 *FL* 16 (Jerome, *Ep*. 96. 20).
130 Stroumsa (1996) 45.
131 Cyril, *Answers to Tiberius* 1; *Questions and Answers* 1; *Letter to Calosirius*. See McGuckin (2003) 211–22, who warns against taking Cyril's construction of 'Anthropomorphite heresy' at face value.

132 Palladius, *Laus. Hist.* 1. 1; on Isidore see Dechow (1988) 161–4.
133 Palladius, *Laus. Hist.* 1. 3. He was one of Palladius' teachers (1. 5).
134 Palladius, *Laus. Hist.* 11. 5; on Ammonius see Dechow (1988) 166–8.
135 *Hist. Mon.* 20. 9.
136 Rufinus' Latin version of *Hist. Mon.* (PL 21. 448); on Origen the Priest see Dechow (1988) 169–71.
137 Palladius, *Laus. Hist.* 12. 1; on Dioscorus see Dechow (1988) 168–9.
138 Evagrius of Pontus, *Gnostikos* 4. 8.
139 For a brief account of Didymus' spirituality see Russell (2004) 154–61.
140 There is a summary of Evagrius' teaching in Russell (2004) 238–41. For good introductions to Evagrian spirituality see Stewart (2001) and (2003); Sinkewicz (2003) xvii–xl.
141 Trans. of the anathemas may be found in Dechow (1988) 449–60.
142 *Panarion* 64 and *Letter to John*.
143 This is no longer extant, but is described by Photius, *Bibliotheca* 117; for an analysis see Dechow (1988) 254–8.
144 On Theophilus' anti-Origenist arguments see Dechow (1988) 436–48; Clark (1992) 105–21. We also know from Theophilus' own statement that he had read Eusebius' *Apologia* for Origen (*Letter written at Constantinople*, frag. 4).
145 See, for example, Crouzel (1989) 169–79: 'Causes of the misunderstandings between Origen and posterity'.
146 Crouzel (1989) 169–70.
147 Passages from the Greek of Theophilus and other writers hostile to Origen were incorporated (controversially) by Koetschau into his GCS edition of the *De principiis*, even though unsupported by Rufinus' Latin, and as a result of Butterworth's English translation continue to be influential. See further Edwards (2002) 90–1.
148 *Letter written at Constantinople*, frag. 9.
149 Edwards (2002). Edwards argues that Origen used the language of contemporary philosophy without taking over its ideas uncritically. 'Often,' he observes, 'it is those who are most conversant with the fashions of the age who are least enslaved to them' (p. 161).
150 PG 77. 1028D.
151 Clark (1992) 121.
152 Cf. his instructions to Ammon at Lycopolis and to his agents at Constantinople (trans. above, pp. 85–7, 100–1).
153 On the dating see Liebeschuetz (1986) 180–3.
154 *Ep.* 105, PG 66. 1484C–1488B; cf. Liebeschuetz (1986) 183–6.
155 *Ep.* 105, PG 66. 1488A.
156 The case of Alexander, a Johnite bishop who had fled from his see in Bithynia, is instructive. Alexander was by origin a fellow-countryman of the same senatorial class as Synesius. Synesius had given him hospitality in his house, but had not acknowledged him in public or received him in his church. Yet he still wrote to Theophilus for advice on the line he should take (*Ep.* 66; PG 66. 1408C-1409D). For a summary of Synesius' relations with Theophilus, see Liebeschuetz (1986) 186–95.
157 Mansi 3. 852C.
158 This section is based on J. N. D. Kelly's study of John Chrysostom (1995). The primary sources are mostly hostile to Theophilus. They are (1)

Palladius, who was a participant in the events he describes in his *Dialogue*; (2) John Chrysostom, whose letters are quoted or summarized by Palladius (John's letter to Pope Innocent giving his version of events has been transmitted as Book II of the *Dialogue*); (3) the Synodal *Acts* transmitted by Photius; (4) 'Martyrius', who composed a *Life*, or more properly a funerary oration, on John; (5) Socrates (*HE* 6. 9–21); and (6) Sozomen (*HE* 8. 13–28), who had access to valuable information of his own. They are nevertheless sufficiently revealing for a narrative of the events to be presented from Theophilus' standpoint. On the sources as rhetorically constructed pictures of the protagonists see Elm (1998) 71–8; see also Acerbi (1997).

159 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 13.

160 Palladius, *Dial.* 7 (SC 341. 152) and Sozomen *HE* 8. 13.

161 For an account of John's activities in Ephesus see Kelly (1995) 161–80; and for Theophilus' response, Kelly (1995) 198. Elm (1998) rightly sees John's expansionist policy, especially his intervention in Ephesus, as an important factor in the clash between John and Theophilus.

162 Socrates, *HE* 6. 9; cf. Sozomen *HE* 8. 13.

163 Jerome, *Ep.* 90 (CSEL 55. 143–6; Eng. trans. NPNF 6. 184). The more synodal condemnations there were, the less easy it would be for the defendants to mount a defence.

164 Socrates, *HE* 6. 10.

165 The first delegation is mentioned by Sozomen, *HE* 8. 13, the second by Palladius, *Dial.* 7 (SC 341. 152). On regarding them as two separate delegations, see Kelly (1995) 198, n. 43.

166 Palladius, *Dial*. 7 (SC 341. 154). According to Canon 5 of Nicaea, the sole defence against excommunication is to prove a personal motive on the part of the excommunicating bishop. On the failure of the Nitrians' attempted abjuration (see Theophilus' *Third Letter to the Dissidents*), this was their only recourse.

167 I follow Kelly's chronology ([1995] 199–200), though Kelly, it should be noted, proposes it tentatively.

168 *Dial.* 7 (SC 341. 154); trans. Kelly (1995) 199–200. The reference to the Nicene canons is to Canon 5, expanded as Canon 2 of Constantinople (381).

169 Kelly (1995) 204–5. The information is from Palladius (*Dial*. 6 [SC 341. 128]), who says, however, that it was the Syrians who took the initiative.

170 Kelly (1995) 2005. The second letter and its content are inferred from Epiphanius' behaviour in Constantinople.

171 Socrates, *HE* 6. 14; Sozomen, *HE* 8. 15.

172 Sozomen (*HE* 8. 16) says he was related to Theophilus.

173 Socrates, *HE* 6. 15; Sozomen, *HE* 8. 17.

174 Kelly (1995) 215.

175 *Ep. 1 ad Innocentium* (= Palladius, *Dial*. 2, SC 342. 72); trans. Kelly (1995) 215.

176 Kelly (1995) 217.

177 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 17. As Susanna Elm observes ([1998] 82:3), modern scholars tend to assume that doctrinal issues are more important than matters of governance. The primacy of doctrine over authority is what Palladius would have us believe. But this is not how it appeared to Theophilus or even John Chrysostom. Neither could have accused the other of heresy (Origenism having not yet been universally proscribed) but the boundaries of ecclesiastical authority had already been defined by law.

178 Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 1.
179 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 17.
180 Byzantium had been a suffragan see to Heraclea before Constantinople was founded. It would have been improper for Theophilus to have presided, though he was effectively in control of the proceedings.
181 The acts of the synod have not survived but a resumé is given by Photius, *Bibliotheca* 59. For a list of the charges see Kelly (1995) Appendix C.
182 *Ep. 1 ad Innocentium* (= Palladius, *Dial*. 2, SC 342. 74–6); Kelly (1995) 220.
183 Theodoret, *HE* 5. 34.
184 Palladius, *Dial*. 9 (SC 341. 180); Kelly (1995) 232.
185 John Chrysostom, *Sermo post reditum 2* (PG 52. 444); *Ep. 1 ad Innocentium* (= Palladius, *Dial*. 2, SC 342. 78); Zosimus, *Hist. nova*. 5. 23. 4–5; cf. Kelly (1995) 233–5.
186 Sermo *Post reditum* (PG 52. 443–8). As Theophilus was nicknamed 'the Egyptian Pharaoh' and a bishop was regarded as married to his church, the application of the comparison (cf. Gen. 12: 10–20) would not have been lost on the audience.
187 John Chrysostom, *Ep. 1 ad Innocentium* (= Palladius, *Dial*. 7, SC 342. 80).
188 Socrates, *HE* 6. 18; Sozomen, *HE* 8. 20. The sermon has not survived but both Socrates and Sozomen report its opening: 'Again Herodias raves, again she dances, again she seeks to have John's head on a platter.'
189 Socrates, *HE* 6. 18.
190 This is the letter incorporated into Palladius' *Dialogue* as Book II. See Kelly's comments ([1995] 246–7). It was now Chrysostom who was appealing against a synodal condemnation on the grounds of personal animosity in his judges.
191 Palladius, *Dial*. 3 (SC 341. 62–4); Kelly (1995) 273–4.
192 Palladius, *Dial*. 3 (SC 341. 64).
193 Palladius, *Dial*. 3 (SC 341. 66–8).
194 Innocent, *Ep*. 7. 4 (PL 20. 506–8).
195 Palladius, *Dial.* 3 (SC 341. 70–2).
196 The *libellus* does not survive but is reported by Facundus of Ermiane, PL 67. 677A-678B. See Favale ([1958] 155), who also reproduces the text. It seems to have portrayed John in much the same terms as Palladius portrays Theophilus in *Dial*. 6–8. These texts are not objective character studies but rhetorical constructions portraying the protagonists according to 'the standard typologies of the good and the evil administrator' (Elm [1998] 73).
197 Kelly (1995) 278.
198 Innocent, *Ep.* 7 (PL 20. 502–7); the Greek translation of the lost original Latin text is preserved by Sozomen, *HE* 8. 26.
199 *Collectio Avellana* 38 (CSEL 35. 85–8).
200 Sozomen, *HE* 8. 24; Palladius, *Dial.* 20 (SC 341. 430–2).
201 Cyril, *Ep.* 76 (Schwartz [1927] 25–8). Cyril delayed recognizing John for as long as he could, in spite of pressure from Atticus of Constantinople and an outspoken ascetic of his own church, Isidore of Pelusium.
202 Favale (1958) 161–2. Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch from c. 260, was condemned and deposed by an Antiochene Council in 268 for holding Adoptionist views. He seems to have held that the man Jesus became the Son of God when the Word descended upon him.
203 Mansi 9. 251D.

204 Mansi 9. 252B.
205 Mansi 9. 251C. Theodore became bishop of Mopsuestia in 392. On Diodore's death shortly afterwards, he attempted to transfer to Tarsus 'but this was frustrated by Theophilus of Alexandria, who insisted upon the observance of the law forbidding the translation of bishops' (Raven [1923] 276, citing Leontius of Byzantium, *Adversus Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 3. 8). The context of the citations at the Fifth Ecumenical Council suggest that Theophilus was objecting to Theodore's Christology 'from below'.
206 See further Russell (2000) 56–7.
207 Maximus' letter is discussed by Morin (1894) and Favale (1958) 162–3. Morin draws attention to a letter addressed by Pope Celestine in 428 to the bishops of the districts of Vienne and Narbonne, warning them against a cleric called Daniel who had been expelled from the East for serious misconduct. It is difficult, he says, not to identify this Daniel with the young man who had been welcomed by Theophilus some twenty years earlier ([1894] 276–7).
208 Young (1997) 43.
209 Theophilus, *On Isaiah 6: 1–7* (Morin, *Anecdota Mavedsolana* 3. 3, p. 104. 18–22). Cf. *FL* 17. 10 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 98. 10).
210 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1021D.
211 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper,* PG 77. 1024A-D.
212 Theophilus, *FL* 1 (SC 197. 257); *FL* 10 (SC 197. 257–9); *FL* 19. 4 (= Jerome, *Ep* 100. 4, CSEL 55. 217. 4–5).
213 Theophilus, *FL* 17. 3 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 98–3, CSEL 55. 187. 8–9).
214 Theophilus, *FL* 17. 9 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 98–9, CSEL 55. 193. 32 – 194. 2); cf. Mt. 9: 16, reversing the image.
215 For a succinct statement of this Christology see Anatolios (2004) 43–4.
216 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1021 BC.
217 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1024A.
218 Theophilus, *FL* 5 (ACO I. 1. 2. 41).
219 Theophilus, *FL* 6 (ACO I. 1. 2. 42).
220 Theophilus *FL* 5 (ACO I. 1. 2. 41).
221 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1024 CD.
222 Theophilus' homiletic style is rich in the use of rhetorical figures. Anaphora (repetitio) is the repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive sentences. Antithesis (comparatio) is the comparison of contraries. Hypozeuxis (disjunctio) is the beginning or (as here) conclusion of a series of sentences with different words that have the same meaning.
223 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 87).
224 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 89).
225 Theophilus, *FL* 16. 7 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 96. 7, CSEL 55. 164. 28–9).
226 Theophilus, *On the Woman Suffering from a Flow of Blood* (= 'On Repentance') (Diekamp [1907] 120).
227 Theophilus, *Letter to Monks* (Schwartz [1927] 36).
228 Theophilus here gives us a deductive exegesis of the text.
229 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 85).
230 Theophilus, *On the Woman Suffering from a Flow of Blood* (= 'On Repentance') (Diekamp [1907] 120).
231 Ibid.

232 Theophilus, *On the Woman Suffering from a Flow of Blood* (Mansi 10. 1092 CD).
233 Gregory of Nyssa, *To Theophilus Against the Apollinarians* (GNO III. 1. 119–28).
234 Theophilus, *FL* 17. 4–6 (= Jerome, *Ep. 98. 4–6,* CSEL 55. 188–91).
235 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 85).
236 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 99a col. 2–fol. 99b. col. 1.
237 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 100a col. 2; fol. 100b col. 1.
238 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1028 B. cf. *FL* 19.1: 'if we resist supervening pleasures with a resolute mind, past sins are cancelled'.
239 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 84–5).
240 Theophilus, *FL* 17.1 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 98.1, CSEL 55. 185); cf *FL* 19. 14.
241 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 104a col. 2.
242 The Palestinian Synod of Diospolis acquitted Pelagius in 415. Cyril of Alexandria seems to have been the first Easterner to appreciate the issues. See further, Wickham (1989).
243 Theophilus, *FL* 17. 1 (= Jerome, *Ep*. 98.1, CSEL 55. 185).
244 Theophilus, *On Death and Judgement* (PG 65. 200B); *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1984] 86); *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 94b col. 1-fol. 95a col. 2; fol. 991 col. 2; fol. 99b col. 2. The Christian imagination on judgement and hell was fed by the Apocalyptic literature that was much in vogue in this period. Two of the most popular texts were the *Apocalypse of Peter*, dating from the second century, and the *Apocalypse of Paul*, compiled in the late fourth century. Theophilus draws on these traditions. On their development see Bernstein (1993).
245 Theophilus, *On the Cruxifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 86).
246 Ibid. 85.
247 Ibid. 86.
248 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 87a col. 2–fol. 87b col. 1.
249 Ibid. fol. 100a col. 2.
250 Ibid. fol. 88b cols 1 and 2.
251 Ibid. fol. 103b cols 1 and 2.
252 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1020C, 1029A.
253 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 89).
254 Theophilus, *On the Mystical Supper*, PG 77. 1021B.
255 Ibid.
256 Theophilus, *FL* 17. 12 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 98. 12, CSEL 55. 195).
257 Theophilus, Canon 7, PG 65. 41A.
258 Theophilus *FL* 16. 2 (= Jerome, *Ep.* 96. 2, CSEL 55. 160).
259 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 108b col. 2; *FL* 19.4 (= Jerome, *Ep*. 100. 4).
260 Theophilus, *On the Crucifixion and the Good Thief* (Rossi [1884] 86).
261 Theophilus, *On Repentance and Self-control*, fol. 104b col. 2.
262 Cyril, *FL* 1. 2 (SC 372. 148. 32–3). For a lively discussion of Cyril's pastoral strategies, which show how closely he followed in Theophilus' footsteps, see McGuckin (2003).
263 Synesius, *Ep.* 12 (PG 66. 1349A).
264 Cyril, *Ep. 75* (PG 77. 349AB).
265 Vincent, *Commonitorium* 30 (PL 50. 680).
266 Leo, *Ep.* 102 (ACO 2. 4. 54).

267 ACO I. 1. 4. 11–12.
268 On Theophilus' Coptic reputation see Orlandi (1985). Favale ([1958] 214) sees in Theophilus' career the seeds of Egypt's secession from the imperial church after the Council of Chalcedon.

2 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXTS

1 For a complete list of Theophilus' works see *CPG* 2 (1974), nos. 2580–2684, and the additions in the supplementary volume, *CPG* 6 (1998) nos. 2585–2681. See also the lists in Opitz (1934), Richard (1939), and especially Favale (1958), 5–24.
2 Richard (1939) 33.
3 Palladius calls him *lathrodaktēs kyōn*, 'a stealthily-biting dog' (*Dial.* 6, PG 47. 22; CN, 36. 6).
4 New frags have been published by Mai, *Patrum Nova Bibliotheca* 6. 164, Diekamp (1907), Schwartz (1927), Richard (1938), and Declerck (1984). For the reallocation of the *Homily on the Mystical Supper* see Richard (1937).
5 *Letters* 86–100, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 55. 138–232.
6 On the Coptic tradition see Orlandi (1985).
7 Orlandi (1985) 102.
8 Orlandi (1985) 103.
9 On the Armenian tradition see Der Nersessian (1970).
10 'Original' from the modern viewpoint, of course. Like all the Fathers, Theophilus considered himself simply an exponent of the apostolic tradition. Innovators were by definition heretics.

3 THE EARLIER FESTAL LETTERS

1 Eusebius, *HE* 7. 20.
2 Favale (1958) 7, no. 5. It is accepted as coming from *FL* 10 by W. Wolska-Conus, SC 197. 257.
3 Favale (1958) 6, no. 2.
4 Favale (1958) 6–7, nos 3 and 4.
5 *Cosmas Indicopleustès. Topographie chrétienne*, vol. 3 (SC 197, 257–8 [= PG 65. 53–6]).
6 ACO I. 1. 2. 41–2 (= ACO I. 7. 91 and PG 65. 60). Schwartz also gives the Greek text of the first passage in his important study of the anti-Chalcedonian florilegium contained in Vaticanus gr. 1431, and comments on both passages in the Armenian version ([1927] 30; 107nn. 191, 192; 114 n. 336).
7 *aristotechnas*: Pindar, frg. 57. Clement of Alexandria also quotes this fragment (*Prot*. 10.78) in order to contrast God with the puniness of the human artist. Theophilus is possibly echoing Clement, but develops the point in a different way.
8 *to parapetasma kai kalymma tēs lexeōs*. That the literal meaning is a veil obscuring the spiritual sense of Scripture is an exegetical principle central to the Alexandrian tradition. Theophilus draws the veil aside to pass to the symbolic meaning, which can be Christological or pertain to the spiritual life – or, as in this passage, both simultaneously.

4 HOMILIES

1 E.g. Crouzel (1991) 529.
2 The fourth and fifth centuries were the great age of Christian rhetoric. See esp. Kennedy (1983) and Cameron (1991).
3 Favale (1958) 15, no. 50.
4 Richard (1937); cf. Aubineau (1983).
5 Richard (1937) 53–4.
6 Aubert (PG 77. 1016, n.1) says that he transcribed the text from a very defective manuscript in the French royal collection but before publication was able to emend it from a superior but incomplete exemplar in the Vatican Library. Richard identified the Paris manuscript used by Aubert as Paris. gr. 1173 (olim Reg. 1820), of the eleventh century ([1937] 47 n.1). Aubineau has also been able to identify Aubert's Vatican manuscript as Vat. Palat. gr. 325, of the tenth century ([1983] 28). In improving the text of the peroration (the only part of the homily he studies), Richard makes use of variant readings furnished by Vat. Ottob. gr. 14 (tenth to eleventh century) and Paris. gr. 771 (fourteenth century) ([1937] 47 n.l).
7 Text: PG 65. 200A–2001A. Studies: Richard (1939) 41–2; Favale (1958) 16, no.53; Der Nersessian (1963) 222–3. Versions exist in Syriac, Arabic and Armenian. The Syriac has been published, together with a French translation, by Brière (1913).
8 PG 96. 156BD. Migne joins the two texts and attributes them both to Cyril of Alexandria.
9 Der Nersessian (1963) 223.
10 PG 77. 1072–89. Theophilus' sermon occupies 1077A to 1080C.
11 *CPG* 2. 2618. The Arabic version is a translation of 'Cyril's' Homily 14 (Banev [2005] 3). The Armenian and Syriac versions agree with the Greek of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Brière [1913]; Der Nersessian [1970] 391).
12 Banev (2005), where the Slavonic text is edited with an English translation.
13 Brière based his translation on Vat. syr. 142, which he collated (through the good offices of E. W. Brooks) with Brit. Mus. Add. 14612, dating from the sixth or seventh century (Brière [1913] 79).
14 A. Mai (ed.), *Patrum Nova Bibliotheca* 6. 164.
15 J. D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* 10. 1092 CD.
16 F. Diekamp (1907) 120.
17 Richard (1938) 391–2 (no.10). Richard is able to make some minor improvements on Gallandi's text (PG 65. 65A).
18 Severus of Antioch, *Antiiulianistica*: ed. R. Hespel, CSCO 244 (1964) 296 (text); CSCO 245 (1964) 228 (translation); CSCO 295 (1968) 120 (text); CSCO 296 (1968) 99–100 (translation).
19 *Memorie della regia Accademia delle scienze di Torino,* 2nd series, 35. 170–243 (text), 244–50 (translation); and again in *I papiri coptici del Museo egizio di Torino* (Turin 1887) 64–85 (text), 86–90 (translation).
20 E. A. W. Budge, *Coptic Homilies in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1910, 65–79 (text), 212–25 (translation). Budge's title is *Homily on Penitence and Abstinence*.
21 Opitz (1934) 1264 n.46.

22 Favale (1958), 15.
23 Orlandi (1985) 102.
24 *tais theiais autou epanapauesthai mnēmais* (1016C): i.e. meditate on the Scriptures; cf. *FL* 17. 1 (Jerome, *Ep*. 98. 1).
25 Or: 'all who delight in ineffable things' (*hosoi tryphate tōn aporrhētōn* [1016D]. The *aporrhēta* are things not to be spoken of to the uninitiated, and hence signify the sacraments.
26 Solomon was the traditional author of the Book of Proverbs.
27 *enhypostatos sophia* (1017C), 'enhypostatic wisdom', i.e. divine wisdom subsisting as a Person of the Trinity (cf. *PGL*, s.v. *enhypostatos* B.1.a). As 'wisdom' in Greek is feminine, it is 'her' body and blood that the faithful receive.
28 *charactēr enhypostatos* (1020A), 'enhypostatic stamp' or 'impress', i.e. the perfect image of the Father subsisting as a Person of the Trinity.
29 Cf. 1 Cor. 15:53. Theophilus presents Adam's fall in Pauline language as the reverse of Christ's exaltation of human nature.
30 A fundamental principle of Aristotle's *Categories* 6 (cf. $6^{a}1$), though Aristotle demonstrated how contrary relatives *could* co-exist (i.e. something can be simultaneously both large and small, depending on what it was compared to).
31 This is the Irenaean 'exchange principle' as enunciated by Athanasius: God became human that we might become divine (*De Inc.* 54). On Athanasius' approach to deification see Russell (2004) 169–88.
32 If Theophilus was born around 345, he would have been in his late fifties when he uttered these words. On the age structure of fourth-century Egypt see Bagnall (1993) 183–4. According to Bagnall, sixty was considered old.
33 The words 'acknowledges his own type, how he who was mystically sacrificed in Egypt' are from Vaticanus Palat. gr. 325, noted by Aubert/Migne as a variant reading (1024A).
34 From here to the end of the paragraph the translation is based on the improved text established by Richard (1937) 47–8.
35 *theosynapton agapēsin* (1028B). *Theosynaptos*, 'uniting to God', seems to have been coined by Theophilus. *PGL* (s.v.) records no other instance in this sense – perhaps because in the next generation, with the Nestorian controversy, *synaptō*, 'unite', came to have undesirable connotations in Christological debate.
36 At this point Theophilus begins his denunciation of the Origenists.
37 Theophilus is alluding to the monks' sheepskin mantles (melotes), tying this in with the biblical warning against wolves in sheep's clothing.
38 The text printed by Migne omits the vital words 'one of'. The true reading was restored by Richard (1937) 49, who notes that the error was the result of an editorial oversight.
39 The superscription of the Syriac version is 'Catechetical homily of Saint Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria' (Brière [1913] 82).
40 These introductory words are from the Syriac. The Greek text begins: 'The same Abba Theophilus said: What fear . . .'
41 For a contemporary account of judgement upon death, with opposing powers present at the heavenly tribunal, see *The Apocalypse of Paul* 11–12; cf. Bernstein (1993) 293–4.

42 The usual peroration is missing from the Greek. The last sentence is from the Syriac.
43 *Genikē diaphora*. Cf. Aristotle, *Categories* 3 (1^b10–24).
44 The definition of man as a 'mortal, rational animal' was drawn from Aristotle by his commentators. See e.g. Porphyry, *On Aristotle. Categories* 63. 1. 10–14.
45 This is the title in the MS.
46 The homily was probably delivered on Good Friday.
47 The *Apocalypse of Paul* (42a) also describes a punishment in which sinners are devoured by worms in intense cold. These are people who denied the resurrection of Christ and the flesh, which fits the homily's unrepentant thief.
48 Here and below where square brackets enclose dots the papyrus is damaged.
49 This is a unique attempt by Theophilus at etymological exegesis. His source may be Melito of Sardis (d. c. 190), who interpreted *sabek* (Hebrew: 'thicket') as a type of the cross (PG 5. 1217A, 1220).
50 The sentence in square brackets is difficult to read because the papyrus has been erased and corrected. The translation is of Rossi's suggested transcription.
51 On the cross closing the temples cf. the inscription said by Socrates to have been found during the demolition of the Serapeum: 'The temple of Serapis will come to an end when the cruciform figure appears' (*HE* 5. 17). Cf. also the procession with the cross at its head that made its way to the Marneion in Gaza to begin the construction of a church in the ruins of the temple (Mark the Deacon, *V. Porph.* 77).
52 The MS breaks off here. The five days and nights presumably refer to the services of Holy Week.
53 'Self-control': reading *egrateia* for *tekratia* of the MS (CD).
54 'pampered living': Budge's emendation to *spatalia* is probably right (CD).
55 As it stands in the text, this passage is all in the perfect tense, not the future. Is Theophilus imagining a scene which occurs when it is too late? Or is the perfect a scribal mistake for the habitual? (CD).
56 'raw': reading *pzoole* (with Budge) (= 'worn out') for the text's *zōōle* (= 'plucked') (CD).
57 The Coptic uses the word *parresia* (CD).
58 The text is a little uncertain here. Literally: the bond (*cheirographon*) to (against?) him will be torn up and again that which is to (against?) him for/of everyone else (sc. will be torn up). But the 'to him' is spelt differently each time suggesting an ellipse, though perhaps this could be put down to a variation of dialect (CD).
59 Literally: IC XC through whom is the glory of the Father with him and the Holy Spirit, etc. (CD).

5 ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION

1 For a convenient summary and bibliography see 'Paschal Controversies' *ODCC*^{3}, 1226. On the history of computing the date of Easter see Loi (1992).
2 In Greek, Easter and Passover are not distinguished verbally: both are *Pascha*.

3 Announcing the dates of the liturgical calendar was an important duty of the Jewish Patriarch, which, as Günter Stemberger says, bound the Diaspora congregations to the central leadership in Palestine ([2000] 250). In the fourth century, a fixed calendar seems to have been adopted, an innovation which, according to one theory, was introduced under government pressure to thwart the Quartodecimans. The traditional date for the introduction of the fixed calendar is 358. For a detailed discussion see Stemberger (2000) 249–58.

4 *Cod. Th.* 2. 8. 19. The seven days before Easter and the seven days following it, together with Christmas, Epiphany and all Sundays, were made legal holidays when the courts could not sit. Pagan festivals were explicitly (though ineffectively) abolished by a law of 3 July 395 (*Cod. Th.* 2. 8. 22). On the Christianization of the calendar see Salzman (1990) 236–40.

5 Cyril of Alexandria, *Ep.* 87. 2 (PG 77. 385B).

6 I.e. from 380 to 480 CE. The 'holy books' consulted by Theophilus would have included *The Canons of Anatolius on the Pascha*, excerpts from which are given by Eusebius in *HE* 7. 32. 14–19. Theophilus, however, has improved on Anatolius, who wrongly places the spring equinox on 19 March. (It should be noted that the 'Paschal Canon of Anatolius of Alexandria' translated by S. Salmond in ANF 6. 146–53 is a spurious work produced in Britain in the sixth century.)

7 In the Hebrew of Deut. 16:1, Nisan is called by its older name, 'the month of Abib'. In the LXX version used by Theophilus, it is 'the month of the new [corn]'. Theophilus refers to the fourteenth Nisan as the fourteenth of the moon of the first month, or simply the fourteenth of the moon.

8 Theophilus correctly connects the old poetic word for moon (*mēnē*) with the word for month (*mēn*). The same relationship between 'moon' and 'month' exists in English.

9 Again, Theophilus is correct in his information. The Egyptian 'civil calendar', based on the solar cycle, went back to the Second Dynasty (before 2773 BCE). The Roman Julian calendar, a modified form of which we use today, was based on the Egyptian calendar of 238 BCE. See further Parker (1971).

10 Krusch's text (pp. 222–3) has the moon following the outer (*exōtaton*) course, while the sun runs a shorter (*brachyteron*) one. I have preferred to translate Gallandi's text, reproduced in Migne (PG 65. 49B), in which the moon's course is faster (*oxytaton*), and the sun's slower (*bradyteron*), because it seems to tally better with ancient (and modern) astronomy. The only surviving Latin rendering is the one reproduced by Gallandi, which translates his (or rather, his source's, Petau's) version of the Greek.

11 There is a lacuna in the Greek at this point (going back to the copy on which both Krusch's and Gallandi's exemplars were based) which I have made good from the Latin.

12 Here we come to the core of Theophilus' argument. Twelve kalends April is equivalent to 21 March, the correct date of the spring equinox. The Roman Church, by taking the spring equinox to fall on 18 March, exposed itself to the danger of determining the date of Easter in relation to the full moon of the month preceding Nisan, i.e. of the last month of winter, as happened in 387. Because the Egyptians used a solar calendar (twelve months of 30 days, with a year-end period of five days), their dates could

be correlated precisely with the empire's official Julian calendar. Except in leap years, the spring equinox always fell on Phamenoth 25.

13 The table is no longer extant.

14 The four rulings and ten 'canons' that follow (nos 3–7) were appended to Theophilus' reply at the Constantinopolitan council of 394 on the deposition of bishops (Favale [1958] 78–9). Our source for them, Theodore Balsamon, supplies a brief commentary correlating them with the conciliar canons of the fourth and fifth centuries (PG 65. 34–45).

15 The day of the resurrection is called the first day in all four canonical Gospels (Mt. 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1) but its designation as the eighth day is not attested until the late first or early second century *Epistle of Barnabas* (15.8. 9). Theophilus' reference here suggests that, like Origen and the Codex Sinaiticus, he regarded the *Epistle of Barnabas* as canonical.

16 The holy Theophany (in Greek a plural: *ta Theophania*) celebrated several manifestations of Christ's glory, principally his nativity and his baptism. Since the early third century the feast had been kept on 6 January. The celebration of Christmas on 25 December began in Rome in the first half of the fourth century and did not reach Alexandria until 430.

17 This Ammon is assumed by Wipszycka ([1996] 51, n. 110) to be the bishop of Lycopolis. If so, he has asked Theophilus for instructions regarding appeals against decisions of his immediate predecessor, Bishop Apollo. But Apollo, esp. in Canons 3 and 9, still seems to be the incumbent bishop. Ammon may simply be Theophilus' agent in the Thebaid. We know of an Ammon, a Pachomian monk who became bishop of Adrianople in Thrace, who was present with Theophilus at Constantinople in 394 and corresponded with him on his reminiscences of Pachomius and Theodore (Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii vitae graecae*, 97–121; Halkin doubted the authenticity of Theophilus' reply; for a defence see Favale [1958] 11). Could the two be the same man? The story of Isidore suggests that Theophilus was willing to find suitable sees with which to reward his senior agents. Ammon of Adrianople was the author of an anti-Origenist work, *On the Resurrection* (*CPG* 2. 2540).

18 Lycopolis (modern Asyut) was, until Diocletian's reforms in 297, the capital of the Lycopolite nome in the Thebaid. It was a long-established and important episcopal see, the second after Alexandria. In Theophilus' time it was famous as the residence of the spiritual father, John of Lycopolis (*Hist. Mon.* 1).

19 I.e. the decisions of the Alexandrian synod of 362 should be applied. These required that priests who communicated with Arians in ignorance or under pressure should be received back into the clergy, but those who voluntarily embraced their doctrines should be reduced to the lay state.

20 Apollo appears to be the bishop of Lycopolis at the time these instructions were issued. He is not otherwise known.

21 Probably the village of Herba in the Great Oasis of the Thebaid; cf. Jones (1937) 347.

22 On the deposition and excommunication of clerics Balsamon refers to Canon 25 of the Apostolic Canons, Canon 32 of Basil the Great, and Canon 22 of the Council of Carthage, pointing out that Theophilus' ruling is more severe, since it lays down excommunication as well as deposition. But the crime was one of rape. Cf. Favale (1958) 80.

23 Brother–sister marriage was no longer practised in the fourth century in pagan Egyptian society (Bagnall [1993] 2003) but, as this canon shows, uncle–niece marriage was still possible.
24 On the reader's role in Egypt in this period see Wipszycka (1996) 238–48.
25 The priesthood (*hierateion*) includes all the higher grades of the clergy: the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate.
26 Wipszycka has recently drawn attention to this neglected but important text ([1996] 191–2). On the examination of candidates for ordination see further Patsavos (1973), esp. 122–3, 178–84.
27 This distribution of the remainder of the (unconsecrated) offering is still the practice in Orthodox churches today. In the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom it is called the *antidōron*. Balsamon refers to the third Apostolic Canon and Canon 28 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the Council in Trullo. 'The faithful brethren' means baptized Christians.
28 Balsamon comments that charges could not be brought indiscriminately against clerics, and refers to Canon 6 of the Second Ecumenical Council (381) and Canon 21 of the Fourth (451) on the preliminary examination of accusers and informants.
29 The control of diocesan finances is not to be left wholly in the hands of the bishop. The word translated by 'steward' is *oikonomos*. Canon 26 of Chalcedon (451) was to make it obligatory for each church with a bishop to have an *oikonomos*, chosen from the local clergy, who should 'manage the ecclesiastical revenues at the direction of his bishop'.
30 Canon 25 of Antioch (341) had already made bishops answerable to their provincial synod if they were suspected of diverting church revenue to private use.
31 The *Katharoi* were the followers of Novatian, a Roman presbyter who was elected rival pope to Cornelius in 251 by the rigorist party on the grounds that those who had lapsed during the Decian persecution were being received back on too lenient terms. A Novatianist church survived until the fifth century.
32 Theophilus refers to Canon 8 of Nicaea, interpreting it to mean that Novatianist clergy returning to the catholic communion should be re-ordained. The more natural sense of the canon (as also understood by Balsamon) is that Novatianists who were already ordained should remain in the clergy. The second half of the canon specifies that if there is already a catholic bishop in a city, the corresponding Novatianist bishop should be re-admitted as a presbyter.
33 Bishop Agathon is not otherwise known.
34 A Menas is attested in 362 as bishop of Antiphrae in Libya (Martin [1996] 92) but although there were bishops of extraordinary longevity (such as Epiphanius of Constantia and Acacius of Beroea), he cannot certainly be identified as the one addressed here, some twenty-five years later.

6 THE ORIGENIST CONTROVERSY

1 Jerome, *Epp.* 87 and 89, from Theophilus to Jerome (*CPG* 2597, 2598), and *Ep*. 90, from Theophilus to Epiphanius (*CPG* 2599) (NPNF 6. 183–4).
2 For the dating, see Declerck (1984) 496.
3 PG 86. 969C–971B; critical edition by Schwartz in ACO 3. 202. 20–203.2.

4 Declerck (1984): Greek text and French translation, 503–6. Declerck notes the variants recorded by Schwartz in the MSS of *Adversus Origenem*.
5 A Greek fragment of a letter from Theophilus to the bishops of Palestine (*CPG* 2600) is preserved by Palladius in *Dial*. 7 (CN 40. 2–6). Favale believes that this is part of the Second Synodal letter ([1958] 14 n. 100) but it does not correspond to anything in Jerome's Latin version.
6 Schwartz (1927) 36. Richard thinks that this is from *FL* 16 (401) ([1939] no. 22).
7 PG 86. 967BCD.
8 Richard (1975) 61. Richard prints two fragments (frags 1 and 2), the second corresponding to the first of Justinian's.
9 Jerome, *Ep.* 96, ed. Hilberg, CSEL 55. 159–81. On the Coptic version, embedded in Shenute's *Catechesis*, see Orlandi (1985) 101–2, and Emmel (1995) 94.
10 Cyril of Alexandria quotes a passage in *De recta fide ad reginas* (ed. Schwartz, ACO 1. 1. 5. 68 = PG 76. 1217 = PG 65. 56BC), corresponding to CSEL 55. 161. 3–20; and again in *Contra Diodorum et Theodorum* (ed. Pusey, *In D. Ioannis Evangelium* 3. 511a). Theodoret quotes a brief passage in *Eranistes*, Dial. 2, flor. 2, no. 57 (ed. Ettlinger 171 = PG 83. 197A = PG 65. 56D), corresponding to CSEL 55. 162. 7–10. Four substantial passages have been edited by Diekamp ([1907] 180–3), corresponding to CSEL 55. 165. 15–166.10; 169.1–170.1; 172. 22–7; 178. 7–15. The fragment edited by Schwartz from Vaticanus gr. 1431 ([1927] 37) is, according to Richard ([1939] 37 n. 18), a retro-translation from Jerome's Latin.
11 Ed. Hilberg, CSEL 55. 185–211.
12 *Eranistes*, *Dial* 3, flor. 3, no. 58 (ed. Ettlinger 244. 18–24 = PG 83. 304D–305A = PG 65. 57A), corresponding to CSEL 55. 191. 31–192.6; *Dial*. 2, flor. 2, no. 58 (ed. Ettlinger 171. 30–172.32 = PG 83. 197 = PG 65. 57B–60A), corresponding to CSEL 55. 200. 4–201.8.
13 Richard (1975) 61–5.
14 Ed. Hilberg, CSEL 55. 213–32.
15 This is the introduction to the passage from the Vatopedi MS. Justinian's wording differs slightly: 'From the synodal letter against the opinions of Origen published by the bishops of Egypt and Alexandria' (PG 86. 969C).
16 The text from here to 'he would not have been expelled from the Church –' is the passage linking Justinian's first two fragments that has been recovered from Vatopedi gr. 236.
17 This is incorrect. It was Demetrius, Heraclas' predecessor, who deposed Origen and banished him from Alexandria in 231, though Heraclas (a former pupil) was also hostile to Origen. The immediate cause of Demetrius' anger was a matter of church discipline, Origen's ordination in Palestine without his bishop's consent (Eusebius, *HE* 6. 8. 4–5; Pamphilus, *Apol*. in Photius, *Bibl*. 118). Doctrinal matters, however, also seem to have been raised. Rome confirmed Origen's condemnation, but the rest of the Greek world on the whole did not (Jerome, *Ep.* 33. 4; Pamphilus, *Apol*. in Photius, *Bibl*. 118). Origen settled in Caesarea, where he taught and wrote for a further twenty-three years. For a discussion see Crouzel (1989) 17–24.
18 In fact, two of Theophilus' principal sources for Origen's 'errors', the *De principiis* and the *De resurrectione*, were written in Alexandria (Eusebius, *HE* 6. 24. 2–3).

19 Cf. Origen, *De principiis*. 1. 8. A Greek fragment preserved by Leontius of Byzantium (*De Sectis* 10. 5; PG 86. 1264–5) says: 'before the ages minds were all pure, both daemons and souls and angels, offering service to God and keeping his commandments. But the devil, who was one of them, since he possessed free-will, desired to resist God . . . With him revolted all the other powers. Some sinned deeply and became daemons, others less and became angels; others still less and became archangels; and thus each in turn received the reward for his individual sin. But there remained some souls who had not sinned so greatly as to become daemons, nor on the other hand so very lightly as to become angels. God therefore made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment . . . For if this were not so, and souls had not pre-existence, why do we find some new-born babes to be blind, when they have committed no sin, while others are born with no defect at all?' (trans. Butterworth [1973] 67).

20 This last sentence is only in Justinian's fragment.

21 The editorial insertion is from Justinian. The text translated below is from the Vatopedi MS.

22 Eulogius of Caesarea is listed before John of Jerusalem, as Caesarea until 451 was the metropolitan see of Palestine.

23 Dionysius of Lydda responded warmly to Theophilus' appeal with a personal letter (Jerome, *Ep*. 94).

24 Porphyrius of Gaza (bishop 395–420), the most prominent figure after John of Jerusalem, is the subject of the life by Mark the Deacon already referred to. According to Mark, he had been a monk for five years at Scetis, forty miles south of Nitria (*V. Porph.* 4). His destruction of the Marneion, Gaza's great temple of Zeus Marnas, in 402 was a parallel act to Theophilus' destruction of the Serapeum a few years earlier. Like Theophilus, he afterwards built a church on the site (named after the empress, Eudoxia, just as Theophilus' church was named after the emperor). The church of Eudoxia, renamed after St Porphyrius when his relics were buried there in 420, still stands in Gaza, where it serves as the church of the Orthodox community.

25 Aelia was Jerusalem, renamed Aelia Capitolina by Hadrian when he restored the city in 135 after its destruction in 70 CE. The Dedication Feast was the annual celebration on the 14 September of Constantine's dedication of the Church of the Anastasis on the site of Golgotha in 335. In time the Dedication Feast became 'Holy Cross Day'.

26 Epiphanius of Constantia in Cyprus, formerly Salamis (bishop 365–403) was by this time about eighty-five years old. A veteran of the campaign against Origenism, he was not only metropolitan of Cyprus but revered throughout the East as a heresiologist and spiritual father. Like Porphyrius, in his early youth he had spent some time in an Egyptian monastery. For further details see Dechow (1988) 31–43.

27 Nitria, nine miles south-west of Hermopolis Minor (modern Damanhur), was a day's journey from Alexandria. The monasteries were a series of cells and small settlements scattered over a wide area. For a contemporary description see the *Hist. Mon.* 20. 5–17, and for a modern discussion Chitty (1966) 11–13, 29–34.

28 'Very lofty' is my rendering of Jerome's 'maximos'. Theophilus is probably punning here on the name of the Tall Brothers, in Greek *Makraioi*.

29 Ammonius, one of the Tall Brothers, cut off his left ear with a pair of scissors to avoid being made a bishop by Theophilus (Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 11. 2). This was presumably to put himself under the ban in Leviticus on priests making 'any cuttings in their flesh' (Lev. 21:5). But Theophilus is reputed to have said that this law only had validity for Jews: 'So far as I am concerned, even if you bring me someone with a mutilated nose, if he is worthy in his moral life I will ordain him' (Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 11. 3). This remark is in accord with Canon 77 of the *Apostolic Church Order* (an Egyptian compilation of c. 300) which rules that 'it is not a bodily defect that defiles [a man] but a pollution of the soul' (Patsavos [1973] 233).

30 Elizabeth Clark suggests that this may be a reference to Evagrius of Pontus, who, according to Socrates (*HE* 4. 23), was told by Ammonius that he had metaphorically cut out his tongue because he had refused to use his intellectual gifts in the Church's service as a bishop (Clark [1992] 107). But I am not persuaded. Theophilus' following remarks make it clear that he has a physical biting out of the tongue in mind.

31 Dioscorus, Ammonius and about eighty monks had settled in Scythopolis (Bethshan) in Galilee, where there were palm trees that enabled them to support themselves by the traditional monastic handicrafts of rope-making and basket-weaving (Sozomen, *HE* 8. 13). Theophilus, however, describes them as 'pecuniis inescatos' – 'enticed by money' (not 'rich in money', as in Clark [1992] 107).

32 'quod e vicino episcopis congregates, qui proprie inplerent numerum synodi'. The neighbouring bishops would have included those of Andropolis, Mareotis, Nikiu, Onouphis, Sais and Schedia (without Hermopolis Parva, whose bishop was Dioscorus) making up the provincial synod of Aegyptus I. (For a list of the episcopal sees of the period see Martin [1996] 99–112.) The monastic superiors were drawn from a wider region, 'almost the whole of Egypt' probably referring to the provinces of Lower Egypt (Aegyptus I and II, Augustamnica I and II, and Arcadia) without Libya or the Thebaid, which would have been mentioned separately.

33 The words in brackets are Jerome's own comment for the benefit of his Latin-speaking readers. The Latin translation of the *Peri archon* that we have was made by Rufinus shortly after his return to Italy and published in 398. Jerome later made his own translation, which he claimed was more literal, but it has not survived.

34 Cf. Rufinus' rendering of this passage in *De principiis* 1. 2. 6, and Jerome's in *Ep.* 124 (*ad Avitum*) 2. (Eng. trans. of both in Butterworth [1973] 19–20.)

35 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 2. 6.

36 Omitted by Rufinus. But cf. *De principiis* 3. 6. 5. See also Butterworth's note ([1973] 251, n. 1) drawing attention to the reports in Theophilus and Jerome.

37 Cf. Origen, *De oratione* 15 and 16. 1.

38 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 10. 1–3 and 3. 6. 5. Theophilus quotes the same statement again in his *Letter written at Constantinople*, frag. 5.

39 Origen, *De principiis* 1. 8. 1 (inserted by Koetschau from Theophilus, but without any corresponding Latin translation from Rufinus).

40 For other versions of the Isidore affair see Palladius, *Dialogue* 6; Socrates, *HE* 6. 7, 9; Sozomen *HE* 8. 12.

41 The Genius district has not been identified.
42 Reading 'Sarapis' with Jacques Schwartz instead of 'Sarapii'. It was the cult statue, not the temple that was destroyed (Schwartz [1966] 100).
43 'non sunt in iura tempulorum in Nitriae monasteriis'. Hilberg notes: locus graviter corruptus. I am indebted to Richard Price of Heythrop College for the translation offered here.
44 Origen, *De resurrectione*, frag.
45 *Theēgorountes*. These are theologians in the modern sense, people who speculate or teach about God. *Theologoi* could mean this, too, but usually implied an experiential or mystical knowledge of God.
46 Anastasius (pope 399–402) had been totally unaware of Origen until Rufinus' translations were brought to his notice (*Ep. Ad. Johan. Hierosol*. 3; PL 21. 629). He was shocked by what he heard and co-operated readily with Theophilus, calling a local synod which condemned Origen and informing Simplicianus of Milan (d. 15 August 400) of his action (*Ep. Ad Simp. Mediol.* = Jerome, *Ep.* 95). Theophilus' implication that the Western bishops as a whole had condemned Origen is an exaggeration, but does not seriously misrepresent the facts. In spite of the ancient editor's introductory remarks, the Tall Brothers were probably in Constantinople by this time. This fragment is perhaps from Theophilus' reply to their offer to abjure their errors.
47 To judge from Cassian's report of the reception of Theophilus' 'anti-Anthropomorphite' Festal Letter of 399 (*Conf*. 10.2), Scetis was hardly a hotbed of Origenism. But the one priest who welcomed the letter, Paphnutius, had become the 'Father of Scetis' after the death of Macarius the Great in 390. It was perhaps he who regarded Origen as a doctor of the Church. On Paphnutius see Dechow (1988) 172–6.
48 The 'you' is plural. This letter seems addressed to Theophilus' agents in Constantinople, instructing them on how to flush out the Nitrians' true theological opinions.
49 The 'de altero ad alterum transmigratio', here translated as 'deportations from one place to another', may refer to metempsychosis, the Platonic and Origenist teaching that souls were reborn in another body after death.
50 'et pauperes intellegentiae adquiescentes magistris'. Labourt prefers an alternative reading: 'ad pauperis . . . magistros' ('being satisfied with teachers of poor intelligence').
51 From 'so that he' to 'operation of the Godhead' is translated from a Greek fragment in Cyril, *De recta fide* ACO I. 1. 5. 68; PG 65. 56BC.
52 Reading *anousiou kakias* for *anosiou kakias*, as Jerome himself clearly did ('quae nullam habet substantiam') representing evil as the privation of good. The same expression occurs in *FL* 17. 4 (Jerome, *Ep*. 98. 4 [CSEL 55. 188. 28–189. 1]).
53 From 'Because the one Son' to 'changed into our likeness' is translated from a Greek fragment in Cod. Vat. Gr. 1431, no. 28 (Schwartz [1927] 37). The same fragment is found in the florilegium attached to Leo's *Ep*. 165, however, which suggests that it is probably a retranslation into Greek.
54 From 'Nor was our likeness' to 'within himself' is translated from a Greek fragment in Theodoret, *Eranistes*, Flor, 2. 57 (Ettlinger, 171).
55 A long Coptic fragment is extant from 'be no more' at the end of *FL* 16. 5 to near the end of 16. 13. See Emmel (1995) 93–4.

56 From 'Let these madmen' to 'ceases to exist' is translated from a Greek fragment in the *Doctrina Patrum* (Diekamp [1907] 180–1).
57 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 3. 6. 7. Butterworth ([1973] 251, n. 1) believes that Theophilus here gives a more accurate report than Rufinus, who has perhaps modified his translation to protect Origen's reputation. But cf. Edwards (2002) 5, 91: 'Rufinus is a discreet translator rather than a dishonest one.'
58 Theophilus connects the idea of cyclical rebirth ('reincarnation') with the Stoic doctrine of periodical world conflagration.
59 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 4. 3. 13, esp. the Greek frag. preserved by Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Koetschau, frag. 30).
60 From 'On the contrary' to 'table of the Lord' is translated from a Greek fragment in the *Doctrina Patrum* (Diekamp [1907] 181–2).
61 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 3. 3, esp. the Greek frag. preserved by Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam* (Koetschau, frag. 19).
62 From 'But even if' to 'death and corruption' is translated from a Greek fragment in the *Doctrina Patrum* (Diekamp [1907] 182).
63 Cf. Origen, *De oratione* 15 and 16. 1. In the *Second Synodal Letter* Theophilus mentions the *De oratione* explicitly (Jerome, *Ep.* 92.2).
64 For Origen the Father is the ultimate recipient of all prayer; cf. *De oratione* 15. 4.
65 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 3. 3.
66 Origen, *De resurrectione*, frag.
67 Origen, *De principiis* 2. 8. 3; cf. Aristotle, *De anima* 405^{b} 29–30.
68 Mani (216–74 CE) founded the Manichaean religious movement under Christian, Zoroastrian and Buddhist influences. Originating in Mesopotamia, it established itself in Egypt in the third century, and by the fourth century had spread throughout the world. It had a negative view of corporeal existence. Ascetic and spiritual practice was directed towards the release of divine light from its entrapment in matter. On created things as 'emptiness' or 'vanity' (on the basis of Eccl. 1:2) see Origen, *De principiis* 1. 7. 5. Theophilus connects the expression with what is perhaps a Buddhist strand in Manichaeism
69 From 'Nor do we find fault' to 'multiplied a thousandfold' is translated from a Greek fragment in the *Doctrina Patrum* (Diekamp [1907] 182–3).
70 From 'those who are impressed' to 'apocrypha' also survives in a Coptic fragment: Emmel (1995) 95 (with Eng. trans.).
71 Theophilus uses 'apocrypha' in its primary sense of esoteric writings that require special initiation, thus implying a connection between Origenism and Gnosticism.
72 Theophilus' hostility to Origenism does not make him a proponent of anthropomorphism. Cf. his *Letter from Constantinople*, frag. 7, and the *Tractate on Isaiah 6: 1–7*.
73 The Latin 'royal disease' ('morbus regius') was jaundice, but leprosy, in Greek the 'sacred disease' (*nosos hiera*), would fit the sense better.
74 The notice of episcopal appointments has been lost.
75 Theophilus adopts a Euhemeristic view of the origin of pagan religion, which he would have found in Clement and Athanasius (esp. *Contra Gentes* 9, 45, 47 and 49). Euhemerus had suggested in the third century BCE that

all the gods of popular belief had been rulers and heroes who were treated as superhuman after their death. See further Russell (2004) 17–18, 168–9.

76 Apollinarius (c. 310 – c. 390) was bishop of Laodicea (modern Lattakiya) on the Syrian coast. His solution to the Christological problem of how the divine and the human are united in Christ was to posit the replacement of the highest part of Christ's human soul (the *nous*) by the divine Word. Apollinarius' teaching was first censured officially in Rome in 377. In 379 it was condemned by an Antiochene synod, and in 381 by the Council of Constantinople. If Theophilus was present at Constantinople with Timothy of Alexandria, he would have been alerted to Apollinarianism even before the beginning of his episcopacy. In 385 or 386 Gregory of Nyssa wrote to him, denouncing the heresy. The Apollinarian community in Antioch was not received back into the catholic fold until 425, but what prompted Theophilus to attack its teaching in 402 is difficult to say.

77 Theophilus draws on Aristotle or, more probably, one of his commentators for his analysis of knowledge. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6. 3, 1139^{b} 19 ff.

78 Eunomius, bishop of Cyzicus (modern Erdek on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmora) from 360 to c. 394, was the most consistent exponent of radical Arianism. His 'anomoean' Christology was diametrically opposed to Apollinarius' understanding of the *homoousion*.

79 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 8. 1: 'But when they had revolted from their former blessedness they were endowed with bodies in consequence of the fall from their first estate which had taken place in them, and allotted to various ranks' (trans. Butterworth [1973] 67–8). As Butterworth notes, Koetschau has constructed this sentence out of two passages from the sixth-century Antipater of Bostra.

80 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 8. 4.

81 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 3. 5: 'but the activity of the Holy Spirit does not extend at all either to lifeless things, or to things that have life but yet are dumb, nor is it to be found in those who, though rational, still lie in wickeness and are not wholly converted to better things' (trans. Butterworth [1973] 34, from Rufinus).

82 This dictum, derived from Anaxagoras' statement that a portion of everything is in everything, was current in Theophilus' time among commentators on Aristotle. See e.g. Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics 4* 291. 15–19 (Eng. trans. A. Madigan [London: Duckworth, 1993] 76).

83 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 6. 3.

84 The words in brackets are Jerome's editorial comment, referring to the supposed etymological connection between coldness (*psychos*) and soul (*psychē*).

85 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 6. 3: 'It is therefore right that this soul, either because it was wholly in the Son of God, or because it received the Son of God wholly into itself, should itself be called, along with that flesh which it has taken, the Son of God and the power of God, Christ and the wisdom of God' (trans. Butterworth [1973] 111).

86 From 'Indeed he' to 'substance and nature' is translated from a Greek fragment preserved by Theodoret, *Eranistes*, Flor. 2. 58 (Ettlinger, 171–2). In the Greek, Origen is addressed directly in the second person, giving the text a forensic flavour.

87 Origen, *De principiis* 4. 4. 4 (Koetschau, frag. 37).
88 I.e. Christ's soul is part of his humanity, *homoousios* with us, not with the Word.
89 I have adopted Koetschau's amendment, 'nor God the Word' (*oude Theos Logos*), which agrees with Jerome's Latin, in preference to Theodoret's 'for God the Word' (*ho gar Theos Logos*).
90 Origen, *De principiis* 4. 4. 4 (Koetschau, frag. 36).
91 Jerome, who seems to have read *hypobebēkota* for *hyperbebēkota*, translates the last sentence as follows: 'For those things which are of an inferior nature bear witness by their lower status to the existence of a more sublime nature and substance.' Ettlinger adopts this reading in his English translation of Theodoret's *Eranistes*, though not in his critical Greek text.
92 Origen, *De principiis* 2. 9. 1. The Greek text (Koetschau, frag. 24) is preserved by Justinian, *Ep. ad Mennam*, PG 86. 947CD. Butterworth translates the Greek and Latin side by side, pointing out that 'Rufinus has toned down Origen's daring assertion that God's power has limits' ([1973] 129).
93 'verbositatis seminarium'. As Labourt points out (*Jerome, Lettres* v. 56), this is a calque, clearly from the Greek *spermologia*.
94 Origen, *De principiis* 2. 9. 1.
95 'studiorum . . . remigium'. Labourt notes (*Jerome, Lettres* v. 60) that the 'studia' (here translated as 'efforts') can refer to actual studies or to pastoral care.
96 Cf. Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 3 (Jerome, *Ep*. 92. 3), where the Nitrian Origenists are also represented as enlisting the support of the pagans.
97 Limnias was a village in the Pentapolis (Libya).
98 Erythrum too was a village in the Pentapolis. Paul proved a popular bishop. Theophilus later was unable to persuade the village of Palaebisca (which had previously detached itself from Erythrum and under Paul wished to return) to accept his nominee as a continuing separate diocese (Synesius, *Ep.* 67, PG 66. 1412–24; cf. Liebeschuetz [1986] 187).
99 Ombi (modern Embo), an important metropolis in Thebais II, was formerly the southernmost nome capital of the Thebaid.
100 Rowan Williams notes that perhaps the earliest such accusation comes from Marcellus of Ancyra (d. c. 375), and remarks: 'The relation of Origen to Arianism continues to generate much dispute among scholars' ([1987] 131).
101 Eusebius' *Apologia pro Origene* is no longer extant. Only a Latin trans. of Book I by Rufinus (PG 17. 541–616) and some Syriac fragments survive.
102 Origen, *De principiis* 1. 2. 6. Cf. Theophilus, Second Synodal Letter 2 (Jerome, *Ep.* 92. 2) and note 34 above.
103 Origen, *De principiis* 4. 3. 13. Cf. Theophilus, *FL* 16. 10 (Jerome, *Ep.* 96. 10) and note 59 above.
104 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 10. 1–3 and 3. 6. 5. Rufinus admits, however, that he has altered the passages on the resurrection in the *De principiis* in the interests of orthodoxy (*Apol. in Hieronymum* 2. 4). Theophilus has previously quoted this statement in his Second Synodal Letter 2. Cf. also *FL* 16. 15.
105 See further the *Tractate on Isaiah 6: 1–7*, translated above.
106 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 5. 3.
107 Theophilus is referring to the Festal Letter of 399, against anthropomorphism.

108 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2. 10. 3. Rufinus appears to have omitted some material; cf. Justinian, *Ep. ad Menam*, PG 86, 989C. See also Origen, *De oratione* 31. 3, on the spherical shape of heavenly bodies.
109 This idea comes from Plato; cf. *Timaeus* 32d-34a.
110 Plato, *Timaeus* 30a.
111 This is correct; cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 41d-42e. The fall into materiality as a disaster comes from Numenius of Apamea (second century CE). Numenius' Pythagorizing Platonism may have influenced Origen through his teacher, Ammonius Saccas.
112 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 2. 6 (esp. Koetschau, frag. 4).
113 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 8. 1.
114 The following does not correspond to any passage in the Pentateuch. Built out of biblical phrases and motifs, it takes the form of a soliloquy put into Moses' mouth to express the sense of Scripture, rather like the soliloquies attributed to Christ or Peter in the homilies.
115 Jerome has borrowed the phrase 'rabies ventris' for 'ravenous appetite' from Virgil, *Aeneid* 2. 357.
116 The Roman day was divided into twelve hours from dawn to dusk. The hours were therefore longer in the summer and shorter in the winter.
117 Theophilus casts himself as God's agent, destroying the pagan temples and suppressing Christian heresy. In paragraph 13 he connects these two activities in his reference to Origen's 'idols'. The vivid image of the breakers here and in paragraph 14 (recalling the long sandy shoreline, regularly pounded by heavy seas that stretched westwards from Alexandria) cleverly conveys how the Origenist case collapsed on itself the previous year in Constantinople.
118 When he wrote this letter in early 404, Theophilus had not long returned from Constantinople – a voyage undertaken at the beginning of winter. According to Sozomen, his vessel had encountered very heavy seas and had been driven ashore at Gerae, at the NE end of the Delta (*HE* 8. 19). It is tempting to think that Theophilus was drawing on this experience.
119 Alexandria was a great commercial port, its mercantile activity providing Theophilus with abundant material for the denunciation of avarice from direct experience. On the complex reality of Alexandria's economic life see Bagnall (1993). 'River crossings' is a particularly Egyptian detail, the operation of ferries being an important source of wealth (Bagnall [1993] 38, 89).
120 Favale describes this as a *captatio benevolentiae* ([1958] 150). Only in this letter are the emperors prayed for, in the East, Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia (who died in October 404) and in the West Arcadius' brother, Honorius. It will be appreciated, however, that Theophilus had recently had good cause to be grateful to Arcadius and Eudoxia.
121 Theophilus is adapting here Plato's famous image of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* (246ab, 253c–254e).
122 Nikiu, the capital of the former Prosopite nome, was an important city of Aegyptus I. It had been an episcopal see from before 325.
123 Terenuthis, on the western edge of the upper Delta in Aegyptus I, was perhaps made an episcopal see by Theophilus. Arsintheus seems to have been its first bishop (Jones [1937] 347).
124 Gerae was a station on the Pelusium–Gaza road that became a separate municipality at the end of the third century (Jones [1937] 344). Sozomen

tells the story that when Theophilus was driven ashore there on his return from the Synod of The Oak, he attempted to ordain an anchorite called Nilammon, whom the citizens had elected as their bishop. Nilammon was unwilling to be ordained, and managed to die before he was made bishop by force (*HE* 8.19). Theophilus' appointment of Pisozus in that year lends support to the story.

125 Achaeus is not otherwise known.

126 Athribis, one of the six cities of Augustamnica II (Jones [1937] 345), was the only city in the Delta apart from Alexandria endowed with urban monasteries (Wipszycka [1996] 313).

127 Cleopatris was another city in Aegyptus I.

128 Wipszycka takes Laton to be a village in the Delta ([1996] 141). Martin identifies it with Latopolis (modern Esna) in Thebais II, first mentioned as an episcopal see in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* (Martin [1996] 777; cf. Wipszycka [1996] 150).

129 Cf. Origen, *Hom. I in Isaiam*, PG 24. 937A. Origen's commentary on Isaiah has perished, but we have for comparison nine homilies translated into Latin by Jerome. On the commentary and the homilies see Hollerich (1999) 50–4.

130 Origen, *Hom. I in Isaiam*, PG 24. 937AB.

131 The 'factual record' = 'historia'. This is one of the clearest statements in patristic literature on the relationships of allegory to the literal sense.

132 Cf. Origen, *Hom. I in Isaiam*, PG 24. 939B. On Origen's interpretation of the vision of the Seraphim see Hollerich (1992) 543–5; (1999) 51–2.

133 There is a lacuna here in the text.

134 Cf. Hollerich (1992) 544: 'Origen had interpreted the wings of the seraphim allegorically, in terms of the limits of our knowledge of God.'

135 Accepting Morin's conjectural reading (*Anecdota Maredsolana* 3. 3, 110).

136 These philosophers were the Epicureans, who accepted the atomist theories of Democritus.

137 Cf. *FL*. 19. 10.

138 Cf. Origen, *Hom. I in Isaiam*, PG 24. 934B.

139 There is a lacuna here the text of which has been supplied by Morin (*Anecdota Maredsolana* 3. 3, 119).

140 Cf. the charges of idolatry in the Second Synodal Letter 5 (Jerome, *Ep.* 92. 5), *FL* 16. 16 (Jerome, *Ep*. 16), *FL* 17. 14 (Jerome, *Ep*. 98. 14), *FL* 19. 13 (Jerome, *Ep.* 100. 13).

141 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 1. 3. 4 and 4. 3. 14, where Origen refers to a symbolic trinitarian interpretation which he got from his 'Hebrew master' – no doubt, a learned Jewish Christian. See also Hollenrich (1992) 543–4.

142 Accepting Morin's conjecture to supply the lacuna (Morin, *Anecdota Maredsolana* 3. 3, 120).

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