Fragments on the Gospel of John

Origen of Alexandria (c. AD 231–250)

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Contents

Fragment 1 **1**

Fragment 2 **3**

Fragment 3 **4**

Fragment 4 **5**

Fragment 5 **6**

Fragment 6 **7**

Fragment 7 **8**

Fragment 8 **9**

Fragment 9 **10**

Fragment 10 **11**

Fragment 11 **13**

Fragment 12 **14**

Fragment 13 **15**

Fragment 14 **16**

Fragment 17 **17**

Fragment 18 **18**

Fragment 19 **19**

Fragment 20 **20**

Fragment 21 **22**

Fragment 22 **23**

Fragment 23 **24**

Fragment 24 **25**

Fragment 25 **26**

Fragment 26 **27**

Fragment 27 **28**

Fragment 28 **29**

Fragment 29 **30**

Fragment 30 **31**

Fragment 31 **32**

Fragment 32 **33**

Fragment 33 **34**

Fragment 34 **35**

Fragment 35 **36**

Fragment 36 **37**

Fragment 37 **39**

Fragment 38 **40**

Fragment 39 **41**

Fragment 40 **42**

Fragment 41 **43**

Fragment 42 **44**

Fragment 43 **46**

Fragment 44 **47**

Fragment 45 **48**

Fragment 46 **50**

Fragment 47 **51**

Fragment 48 **52**

Fragment 49 **53**

Fragment 50 **54**

Fragment 51 **55**

Fragment 52 **56**

Fragment 53 **57**

Fragment 54 **58**

Fragment 55 **59**

Fragment 56 **60**

Fragment 57 **61**

Fragment 58 **62**

Fragment 59 **63**

Fragment 60 **64**

Fragment 61 **65**

Fragment 62 **66**

Fragment 63 **67**

Fragment 64 **69**

Fragment 65 **70**

Fragment 66 **71**

Fragment 67 **72**

Fragment 68 **73**

Fragment 69 **74**

Fragment 70 **75**

Fragment 71 **76**

Fragment 72 **77**

Fragment 73 **78**

Fragment 74 **79**

Fragment 75 **80**

Fragment 76 **81**

Fragment 77 **82**

Fragment 78 **83**

Fragment 79 **84**

Fragment 79b **86**

Fragment 80 **87**

Fragment 81 **88**

Fragment 82 **89**

Fragment 83 **90**

Fragment 84 **91**

Fragment 85 **92**

Fragment 86 **93**

Fragment 87 **94**

Fragment 88 **95**

Fragment 89 **96**

Fragment 90 **97**

Fragment 91 **98**

Fragment 92 **99**

Fragment 93 **101**

Fragment 94 **102**

Fragment 95 **103**

Fragment 96 **104**

Fragment 97 **105**

Fragment 98 **106**

Fragment 99 **107**

Fragment 100 **108**

Fragment 101 **109**

Fragment 102 **110**

Fragment 103 **111**

Fragment 104 **112**

Fragment 105 **113**

Fragment 106 **114**

Fragment 110 **115**

Fragment 111 **116**

Fragment 112 **117**

Fragment 113 **118**

Fragment 114 **119**

Fragment 115 **120**

Fragment 116 **121**

Fragment 117 **122**

Fragment 118 **123**

Fragment 119 **124**

Fragment 120 **125**

Fragment 121 **126**

Fragment 121a **127**

Fragment 122 **128**

Fragment 123 **129**

Fragment 124 **130**

Fragment 125 **131**

Fragment 126 **132**

Fragment 127 **133**

Fragment 128 **134**

Fragment 129 **135**

Fragment 130 **136**

Fragment 131 **137**

Fragment 132 **138**

Fragment 133 **139**

Fragment 134 **140**

Fragment 135 **141**

Fragment 136 **142**

Fragment 137 **143**

Fragment 138 **144**

Fragment 139 **145**

Fragment 140 **146**

Fragment 1

On John 1:1. By presenting him as the Maker of all things, John names him with the title "Word." Nearly all skilled making depends on reason. So the only fitting way to show that he is the maker of all things was to call him by the name of something that belongs to those who make [than as one who has an art] (and an art is a productive state joined with sound reason). The Son of God is none other than the craftsman of wisdom and skill, so he is rightly called Word. He is not a being of some other substance, distinct from the Word, who makes things that exist through the Word. He himself is the one who makes, being God the Word. Then, because this Word, who is God by nature and by that very fact the Son of God, became a human being for the salvation of human beings, the Word was also named "Flesh." Some have fallen away from the right faith and suppose that he exists only from the time he came forth from the virgin as a man. Against such people the theologian very properly writes "In the beginning was the Word." He also chooses his verbs to fit: he uses "became" for the flesh and "was" for his divinity. It would have been more exact to say "is" of the Word of God. But the incarnation took place at a certain time, and the evangelist was showing the existence of the Word in contrast to it. So he used "was" in place of "is." We must not take the strict meanings of verbs over to things that are eternal. Sometimes the things these verbs signify have an existence measured by time: "was" refers to what no longer is, "is" to what exists now, and "will be" to what is going to exist. But the Word of God is eternal, since he is God. So the verbs used of him must not be taken as adding any notion of time, because what they signify is not under time.

We can hunt out the author's meaning from the theologian's own words. Right at the start of his writing he says "In the beginning was the Word," for in the beginning he was making heaven and earth. If "all things came to be through him," and heaven and earth were among all things, then he was their creator when they were brought into being. Next, John did not say "in the beginning of some particular thing the Word was." So we must take it in the widest sense, so that what is shown is this: the Word was in the beginning of the angels, and in the beginning of the archangels. In short, the Word was in the beginning of all created things, visible and invisible, being the beginning and the maker of them all. For in Christ "all things were created," those "in the heavens and those on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether principalities or authorities or thrones or lordships. All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." If all things hold together in him, and he is before them, being the beginning of them as the cause of their being, then it follows that we must say he was present when all things were brought into being. How could he fail to be before them, and at the beginning of their existence, if he is their creator? Then, since John said that he was in the beginning, he also had to show how, and in relation to whom, the Word was when he did the making. So to "In the beginning was the Word" he added "The Word was with God." When he came to us, born of a virgin, he had been sent by the Father. Therefore "he pitched his tent among us," and he has this very name, "God with us." But when he created, he was not sent by the Father as a man to bring all things into being. He was with God, and he was God. The Son of God is also called wisdom, "created as the beginning of the ways of God," according to the writing of Proverbs. The reason is that the wisdom of God, being with the one whose wisdom it is, had no relation to anyone else. Rather, [having come to be] by the good pleasure of God, he willed that created things should exist.

So this Wisdom chose to take on a creative relationship toward the things that were to come into being. That is what is meant by saying that she was created as "the beginning of the ways of God." On these ways he travels: ordering, providing for, doing good to, and giving favors to all beings, in this Wisdom that was created. They say, then, that the Word is the "beginning." He is not different from Wisdom in essence, but only in our way of conceiving him and in his relationship. The reality is one and the same, which the Scriptures now call "essential." In one respect it is Wisdom, belonging closely to God. In another respect, if I may put it so, it is the creative Word, who has inclined toward the things he made. And the Son of God is not called Word only here. One can set beside this sayings not only from the New Testament but from the Old: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm." Also: "He sent his word and healed them." And Luke says: "Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and became servants of the word handed them down to us."

Fragment 2

On John 1:4. “What came into being in him,” that is, in the Word, “was life.” The point is that, just as God brought all things into existence, so also those things that are made to live might be given life by sharing in him. So it is fitting that it says, “And the life was the light of men.” We should not listen to those who take this wording to mean that the Word is a created being. For what has come into being is not itself life; and this life did not come to him from outside, for the life came to be in him. Created beings could not have him as life in his essence in the way he is with the Father. For it is said to God: “With you is the fountain of life.” This life is with the Father, but it does not make the Father alive. The Father does not live by sharing in life. Rather, being God who is life, he begets life, just as one who is wise begets wisdom and one who is powerful begets power. This life, wishing to benefit rational beings, took on a relationship toward them, so that they might live by taking hold of it through sharing. And this should not be said only of their common living, but also of living according to virtue, in which they happen to live well.

This is shown by the wording itself, for it says: “And the life was the light of men.” That this is how it is here can be confirmed from another point as well. The Son of God and Word, who is God as Word, is with God, as was just said. He also comes to be with human beings, as far as they are able to receive his presence. For it is said: “The word of the Lord came to Hosea,” and “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah,” and in general: “Those to whom the word of God came he called gods.” So just as he is Word with God, yet comes to be with created beings, in the same way he is life with the Father, and gives life to those he visits. In him there arises a life-giving relationship, suited to those who are being given life. But since besides giving life he also produces knowledge of the truth, enlightening the mind of those who receive him, he is also called the light of men. And being the light of men, he clearly enlightens the rational beings above them as well. For if he is the light of the lesser rational beings, much more is he the light of those who stand higher.

Fragment 3

On John 1:5. The light that is spoken of as divine dissolves every darkness, and all ignorance and wickedness that has any existence. So when it shines in such darkness, the darkness does not "overtake" it. This light is the wisdom and righteousness of God. As wisdom, it looses the mind from ignorance. As righteousness, it sets the steps of the soul straight. That is what it means for the light to shine in the darkness: it is not hindered from sending out its own rays to the person being enlightened. So it is not overtaken by the darkness, since the darkness is dissolved and made to vanish at its coming. For the darkness does not overtake the light while it stands and is active; it is dissolved and no longer exists. Take Paul. While he did not know Christ, he persecuted him, out of the ignorance that was in him, which we have called darkness. But when the light he was persecuting shone out with its own rays, the darkness was dissolved, and in this way he was able to lay hold of the light that had been persecuted by it. In the same way the robber who repented was blinded by the darkness I described and persecuted the light. But the darkness in the robber was dissolved, and so he did lay hold of the light. To put the point more plainly: truth is light. When falsehood and all deceit, that is, the darkness, pursues the light, then it is dissolved and vanishes as it draws near the one it is pursuing. For when truth appears, falsehood and deceit are dissolved. And I will say something paradoxical: the darkness pursues the light while it is far away, but when it comes close to overtake it, it vanishes. For falsehood, so long as it stands apart from truth, holds sway and works in a person, so as to drive truth out of the mind. But when it comes near the truth, it is shown not to exist at all. This is why God, though able to prevent it, necessarily allowed evil to exist: so that the greatness of virtue might be shown.

Fragment 4

On John 1:6. [He says “a man”] not so much because of the common description of a human being as because he was made by nature in the image of God and with a likeness to God. It should be noted that “there was” (or “came to be”) does not always mean coming into existence. Here “there came to be” refers to “sent from God,” so that what is said is this: “There came to be [a man] sent from God for a witness.” If these things are rightly said about John, how much more are the things written or said about the Son of God to be taken as said or written of one who is spoken of, and written of, and who comes to be.

Fragment 5

On John 1:7. “So that all might believe.” That is, as far as it depended on him, even if not all did believe. For if not everyone receives the illumination that comes from the sun, no one would say on that account that the sun does not rise for the purpose of enlightening everyone. The purpose of the one who sent him was that all should believe.

Fragment 6

On John 1:8. “He was not the light.” That is, not the light that is spoken of as divine. Some had supposed, because of the advantages John possessed, that he himself was the Christ. For this reason the evangelist says this, to uproot such an error entirely. Even if John is a light, he is not that light about which the saints say to God, “In your light we shall see light.” So even if John was a light, in the sense of what was said to the disciples, “You are the light of the world,” he was not that true light. “True light” is not said in contrast to falsehood but to distinguish it from what is only an image. For “truth” and “true” are sometimes set against falsehood and deceit, and sometimes against an image and a copy. One may take the perceptible light, and especially the sun, as the image light, and the intelligible light as the true light. Or rather, the true light is what gives light to intelligible things, the holy powers. This, I think, is what the Scripture says: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” For the light spoken of as divine was “the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world.” But since the phrase “coming into the world” is ambiguous, and can refer sometimes to the light and sometimes to the man, it must be explained both ways. First, we should take it that the light enlightens every man as it comes, at the time of its visit, since the man is in the world: as has been said, the light comes into the world to enlighten man. Second, the true light enlightens every man who comes into the world.

Fragment 7

On John 1:12. Not everyone turned away from him, since many of them welcomed him, above all the apostles. So the evangelist adds: "But as many as received him, to them he gave authority to become children of God." Those who are being brought to faith, and perhaps also those who have already advanced, have the authority to become children of God. For the time being they have received only the authority. They will actually become children when they are made perfect in virtue, faith and knowledge. He shows why they had this authority by writing that it was given to those who believed in his name, that is, the name of the light. Believing in the name of the light is not the same as believing in the light. So authority is given to those who believed in his name. By "authority" I mean a fitness for becoming children. But if, through progress, they move from believing in his name to believing him, they would then be children of God no longer in potential but in actuality. Some give assent to the light with a simpler and not very [thorough] understanding, and they believe in his name. Others come to him with knowledgeable proof and well-ordered understanding, and they believe in him and call upon him. That is why Jesus, after the disciples had made much progress, says, "You believe in God, believe also in me." In other words: "You now have the time to pass from believing in my name, so that you may believe me and the Father." Indeed, when he had explained to them the greatest matters of theology, he added, as if speaking to all, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

Fragment 8

On John 1:13. Those who are born of God were born of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ and by doing righteousness. They are not subject to birth from bloods; that is, their origin is not from material things. Indeed, when Peter believed that the Christ is the Son of the living God, the Savior said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” Consider also, from another angle, whether a man can be a son of bloods while thinking himself devout and a son of God because he brings the perceptible [sacrifices] commanded by the law. These people suppose they please God through slaughter and the pouring out of blood. Doing this was blameless in the past, but it is no longer so for us, because the blood of Jesus, given for us, is fully sufficient for our justification. Those who do everything in order to appear righteous to men are subject to the will of the flesh and the birth from a man. These people set out to please God by the will of the flesh. They circumcise the flesh and want to live as Jews openly, while taking no care for the heart and the hidden Judaism. And those have the birth from the will of a man who, under the pretext of human philosophy, keep away from vice and take up virtue. Higher than all these, then, is the one who is born of God, because after believing in his name he has come to believe him.

Fragment 9

The words “as of an only-begotten from a father” lead us to understand that the Son is from the Father’s own being. For none of the created things is “from the Father.” They have their being from God through the Word. If other things also had their existence from the Father, the word “only-begotten” would have been put there for nothing, since there would be many who have their being from the Father. But this only-begotten from the Father is said to be full of grace and truth. He is not something other than the things he is said to be full of. For the only-begotten himself says of himself, “I am the truth.” What is filled by truth is receptive of truth. But truth, which in actual fact is what it is said to be, is not receptive of truth. The same could be said about grace. It is not strange to say such things of the only-begotten, since the same kind of thing is written of the Father. In the prophet he says of himself, “I am full.” It is likely that this expression was also used because of what could be observed before the Savior’s coming. The law given through Moses punished those who sinned, and showed favor to no one for what was done in breach of it. Moreover, this law handed down the rites of the mysteries through images and shadow-sketches. It led by the hand those who were guided by them and prepared them for the teaching of Christ. This is why the law is called a tutor leading to Christ. Now the Savior has come, not to punish those who have sinned but to give forgiveness for what was done in that way. He has come to put the finishing touch on the teaching, and to bring knowledge of the images of the truth, by revealing the truth himself, or rather by being himself the truth. So it is fitting that he appeared full of grace and truth to those who saw him. For if he showed favor to some and not to others, he would not be full of grace. In the same way, if he brought one part of the shadow to an end but not another, he would not be full of truth. But in fact he put an end to every shadow and image, and he grants forgiveness of all sins to those who flee to him through repentance. So he is full of truth and grace.

Fragment 10

[The text reads “Kekropes,” probably “he has cried out.”] This is said not about the sound of the voice but about the intensity of the thought. For the man who announces great teachings utters them, as he should, with a great voice that matches his thought. The word “first” must be understood as [text missing]. Still, what John says amounts to this: Jesus, who was before me and prior to me, came after me and behind me. He did not come to stay behind me but to be ahead of me. We must understand that he comes “after” John in terms of the time of birth. John was conceived six months before Jesus was conceived. In this way Jesus came after him and yet came to be ahead of him, shown to be God and John’s Maker. It could be put this way too: everyone who learns from a teacher is thought of as walking behind him, and in that sense is said to go after him. Since the Savior also came to John, who was baptizing, in order to be baptized, he is said to come after the baptizer in the sense that he was baptized by John. But in the sense that he had been made holy and had been testified to by the Father, he came to be ahead of the baptizer, shown to be more honorable and superior to him. It is also well said, “He has come to be ahead of me,” since his existence is prior to his having come to be [ahead]. And note how precisely this is said. It is not written, “He who is behind me was able to be before him.” But it is not impossible for the one who is first to come afterward. It could also be said another way. “Because,” he says, “from his fullness we all received, and grace in place of grace.” Here again John gives the reason why Jesus, who is first, has come to be ahead of him, and he adds, “Because from his fullness we all received, and grace in place of grace.”

For how is he not “before” in the sense of surpassing, and the first of those who are filled, since he is the one who fills? If he himself brings to completion, and fills with virtue and wisdom, those who come to holiness, how is he not first and far above them? Pay attention to the precision of what is written. It does not say “the fullness,” but “From his fullness we all received.” Those who share in holiness in this life, and in the knowledge of the truth, who know in part and prophesy in part, have these things from his fullness, but they do not have his fullness. They might have it in the life of the ages to come, according to the apostle: “When the perfect comes, the part will be done away.” The words in John’s catholic letter agree with this: “It has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that if it is revealed, we shall be like [him], because we shall see him as he is.” That is, as far as it is possible for created beings to know God. For it is not possible to take “as he is” to

mean as God is in himself. Still, we will have something more than our present condition, if we no longer know in part, but, stripped of ignorance, come face to face with the purest truth and see him as far as we are able. So because John has received from the fullness of Jesus, he says about himself, “He has come to be before me,” since what he had, he had from that fullness. And the fact that not one person but all the saints receive from the fullness of Jesus shows the superiority of the one who fills and perfects. For if all the saints were filled not from the whole fullness but from some part of it, those who receive from the fullness of the one who gave to them would be seen to fall far short.

Fragment 11

Some of our virtues we have from ourselves, from our own resources, and we acquire them by choice. Others come from God. We have believed the Savior and his Father as far as was open to us, from what lay in our own power. What is left for us is to ask also for what comes from God, as the disciples of Jesus say to him, “Add faith to us.” The word “Add” means that they are asking for a faith given by God, in addition to the faith they had by choice. Paul too says as much when he writes, “According to the proportion of faith,” meaning that the gifts of the Spirit are given in proportion to the faith that is already in us from what lies in our power. And again: “To another faith is given, he says, by the same Spirit.” But if faith is given to someone in proportion to the faith he has, it is clear that faith sent by God comes to the faith that we have rightly achieved ourselves. What has been said about faith must be said also about the other virtues. Virtue is a grace, making the one who has it gracious. So when we have achieved it by our own choice, then what is from God arrives. And this is what it means that grace is given by God “in place of grace.”

Fragment 12

The law was given through Moses, but not by him; it was given by God. For the law belongs to God, as it is written: “The law of the Lord is blameless, turning souls back.” But even if the law was given through Moses, “grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ.” Grace, through the forgiveness of sins, prevents the punishment that the law imposes on sinners. Truth goes beyond the shadows and the types. Consider also what follows. The law and the prophets continued until John, so that he became the end of the old Scripture, after which the coming of the Savior took place. So the statement “The one who comes after me has come to be before me” fits very well. Since the Savior’s coming was announced beforehand by the law and the prophets, he is said to have come “after.” But even if he came after, he came to be before them, because he fulfilled law and prophets by making plain what was divine in them. He was shown to be the cause of all that God-breathed Scripture, which extended as far as John the Baptist.

Fragment 13

On John 1:18. Seeing is of two kinds: by the senses and by the mind. The one grasps bodies, the other grasps things without bodies. So we call the things that lie before the mind, and are seen by it, "invisible." We do not mean that they are not seen, but that they are not made by nature to be seen. No body is invisible, even if at times it lies outside our sight and is not seen. For "invisible" does not mean "not seen." It means "not made by nature to be seen." That is why "not seen" and "invisible" cannot be exchanged for each other. What is invisible is, of course, not seen. But many bodies, though visible, are not seen, either because they are covered or because they are not [where the viewer happens to be]. With this distinction rightly made, we must take the statement as being about something invisible. Not even the highest powers see God. This is not from any weakness of their own, but because God has no body. Nor is God simply visible to the mind, but only to a mind set free from all ignorance, all evil and all matter.

"Blessed," he says, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." By "heart" he means the mind. Whoever has become pure in the way described, and has been made perfect in virtue, reaches out to God as far as that can be done. This being so, the mind that is still subject to coming-to-be, and therefore to time, does not see God [text unclear]. That is why John did not say outright, "No one has seen God," but added the word "ever." That word points to something about time, so that the meaning is this: for as long as the word "ever" can be said, as pointing to a state we are under, the mind is [caught up] in a life bound to matter. So it cannot see God by reaching out in thought. We, for our part, think of God as far as we can, from the ideas spoken about him in theology and from what we dimly have. But God himself does not understand himself through anything of that kind. He has understanding of himself through his own closeness to himself, being himself both the understanding and the one understood. Therefore only the Son knows him, since he is understood by the Father and understands the Father.

Fragment 14

On John 1:18. It fits that the word “bosom” is used of the Father, since the Son is only-begotten God and his Son. Everything about the Godhead cannot be named, and it is made known to us, who are human, through human words. So the evangelist reasonably wrote, using what we know to show the Son’s closeness to the Father: “the one who is in the bosom of the Father.” Scripture says that all who are saved and receive God’s promises will be “in the bosoms of Abraham.” That means only that Abraham is called the father of the faithful. In the same way the Son of God is said to be in the bosoms of the one who begot him. And as faithful people come to be in the bosoms of faithful Abraham, so too the Son is in the bosoms of the Father. We must understand “the Father’s bosom” as we understand the other things said about God in human terms. Scripture sometimes says that prophets, patriarchs or angels saw God. Divine Scripture does not contradict itself here. For no one sees God by reaching out with his own mind, as we are said to see visible things by directing our eyes at them. God is seen by those to whom he decides to reveal himself. If someone really saw God, he would be seeing him, so to speak, as he is and how great he is. But since it is not the person who sees, but God who shows himself, God gives himself to be understood by created beings as far as is possible for them. So the Savior also says, “And I will make myself visible to him.” He did not say, “That person will see me,” but “I will make myself visible to him.” And this is * * *

Fragment 17

The forerunner stands for the Savior in several different ways. He is a prophet of God. He is a lamp of the light, giving light beforehand to those who are in the night of ignorance and training the eye of the soul so that it can run to the great light as well. [[He is like the morning star, the herald of the sun, marking the arrival of the day that is about to dawn on us.]] He is also the voice of the Word, for a voice must come before a word. This is why he says, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” By “one crying” he means the Word, and by “wilderness” the soul that has no knowledge of the divine teaching. How could it not be a wilderness, when it is deprived of the word of God and of the voice that makes him known? The work of a voice is to make clear what is signified, so that people may grasp the word that is being declared without confusion. And what does the voice of the one crying command the wilderness? “Make straight,” he says, “the way of the Lord.” The wilderness stands for all who are ignorant of the one who comes after the voice. A man who goes ahead of a king orders those to whom the king is coming to make straight the road for those who are coming to the teaching of the word. [[So John does for the Word. For as a voice runs ahead of a word, so John, as a voice, runs ahead of Christ, who is the Word.]]

Fragment 18

What does John mean when he says, “In your midst stands one whom you do not know,” when Jesus was not yet there? For in the following verses it says, “The next day he sees Jesus coming to him,” which plainly shows that Jesus was not there when John said, “In your midst stands,” bearing witness to the light. For John knew that he was also God the Word, and the Word is present to every rational being. Some suppose that the thinking faculty, which some call the ruling faculty, is in the very middle of us. The Word, by which we are rational, is there. It is the same as the image of God, according to which man was made in the image of God. John shows that the Word of God is the one who is about to come to be baptized by him, and so he says, “In your midst stands” one who is unknown to you. He is unknown to you because, although you ought to have him in your midst doing what is fitting, you keep him idle, and, if I may put it this way, inactive within you, since you do nothing and think nothing rationally. Having said this about the being of the Word, John goes on to join to it what concerns his coming among us. He says, “The one who comes after me”, that is, after the law and the prophets; for I am a sign and the end of them.

He comes after me, fulfilling everything that was prophesied about him. For the one who is prophesied comes afterward, after what was spoken beforehand. “In your midst stands”, as we have already explained, “one whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.” You should understand “the strap of the sandal” like this. The Word of God does not carry out what he arranges for human beings with his divinity uncovered. He takes the form of a servant, so that his journey, as it works out in the plan of salvation, is veiled. This is also said of him in the Psalms: “And he bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet.” [[There is something dark about his journey, because it is unclear.]] So the strap of his sandal, that is, of the darkness around his feet, is the account of how hard it is to grasp. It binds and holds the sandal tight around his feet. Untying the strap would therefore mean making clear, and setting out in words, how God took a body, covering and hiding the power by which he travels for the plan of salvation. Since no human being can demonstrate the manner of this union, it is fitting that the man who is more than a prophet, than whom none born of women is greater, confesses that he is not fit to untie the strap of his sandal.

Fragment 19

It is also well said, “the one who takes away the sin,” and not “the one who took away” or “who will take away.” For the taking away of the sin of those who flee to him is always at work. From this we establish that he took away, takes away, and will take away, the act of taking away being applied to each time in turn.

Fragment 20

"And I did not know him." He says: I who teach did not say these things about Christ by nature, or from the common understanding of men. I did not know him. I spoke because the Holy Spirit and the Father had revealed to me the testimonies about him. I was sent to bear witness about the light, and I received the beginning of knowledge of the one I testify to when I was sent. But we must also try to explain in another way what "not knowing" means. Even when he says of the Savior, "And I did not know him," he is not contradicting what he testified. His words show that he was formerly ignorant, but now knows this very person, because God revealed him to him. This is shown by what is said immediately afterward. For John himself again says that he saw the Spirit come down on the Lord in the form of a dove. "I did not know him," he says, "but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit coming down, this is my Son.' And I have seen and have testified." Now even before the Spirit came down, John knew him as lamb, as man, as prophet, as Christ, and as the true light. Yet he still lacked the knowledge that he is the Son of God and the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. He gained that knowledge when the sign he was given was seen. Since this is so, we must ask how John says he "saw" the Spirit. It is not right to think that the Spirit, which has an intelligible existence, is seen by the senses. So we will examine together with the passage before us, treating the question in general terms, what is said in a similar way in the prophecies. For many of the prophets, and in short many of the holy men, are recorded as having beheld visions and sights.

For seeing and sight, as in other places, are divided in two ways: into perception by the senses and perception by the mind. It is impossible for the holy men to have seen God with the senses, or the Trinity altogether, or the things under it that have an intelligible existence. What remains is that they beheld the visions with the mind. They did not see them as they are in their own substance, but as they are able to see them by means of some analogy. Certainly the Holy Spirit has no shape or form or appearance of any kind, yet the mind receives the idea of a dove. And although the Holy Spirit does not move from place to place, John sees a descent taking place from heaven on Jesus as he is baptized. What follows shows that the grasp of none of these things is by the senses: "The one on whom you see it," he says, "coming down and remaining on him." The coming down of something can indeed be seen with the senses when it happens to be a body. [The text is corrupt here:] But what has come down on the one on whom it came down is seen not only by the eyes but also

by the mind. The senses, however, are not able to grasp things that remain, so as to confirm this vision. And we must also say, by another proof, that the other evangelists report that John saw the descent of the Spirit on the Son, and that he saw the heavens opened or torn apart. But the opening or tearing of the heavens cannot be seen with the senses. It cannot be seen even in the denser bodies, I mean water and air, and let us include the upper air, if that is something other than the heavens. For when things pass through continuous bodies that are not hard, they pass through them without the opening and the passage coming from anywhere else. The things passing through are themselves what open them, and after those that crossed have passed, the bodies join together again.

One cannot see water divided unless a more solid body has been put into it. If that is so, the opening of the heavens would not come under sight, since the Holy Spirit who came down from there is not a body. So the Baptist saw these things with the mind. We should also notice that the Holy Spirit remained on Jesus alone. If the Spirit had come down and stayed on someone else too, there would be no sign pointing out the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. This must be shown as follows. The Holy Spirit makes his home in undefiled and pure souls, and does not stay where there is sin. For "the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit and will depart from foolish thoughts." David, who had fallen into a sin, makes his plea to God: "Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me." Jesus alone committed no sin and had no deceit in his mouth (it is said of him alone: "him who did not know sin"). So it is fitting that the Holy Spirit, having come down on him, remained. All this, the Spirit's coming down from heaven on Jesus and remaining on him, was written for the sake of the saving plan. It is not a historical report but a vision seen by the mind, as I have already said. For the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Son. Neither the Son nor the Father is in a place, so that the Holy Spirit would have to travel from the Father to the Son by moving across. In general, what is said about the Godhead should be taken in a way the mind can grasp, even when it is put in human terms, such as standing, sitting and going up, and whatever similar things are written about the Godhead.

Fragment 21

It is worth asking how Andrew here, on the second day after Jesus' baptism, immediately finds his own brother Peter, while elsewhere, according to Matthew, Jesus finds Peter and his brother Andrew many days after the baptism. It is likely that Andrew first brought Peter to Jesus, and Peter was helped a little by the teacher. Then, after his brother had been helped, Andrew withdrew to attend to his own affairs. After this first calling, Jesus called them to follow him continually, giving them authority to fish for people through the teaching he gave them. "Come and see," he says. Perhaps by "Come" he urges them to the life of action. By "See" he indicates that the contemplation that follows the successful carrying out of those actions will surely come to those who want it, as they persevere in them.

Fragment 22

He said that he would be called Peter, a name taken from the rock, who is Christ. The point is that just as a wise person comes from wisdom and a holy person from holiness, so Peter comes from the rock * *. This is proved from what the Saviour said to the man so named: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."

Fragment 23

The words “The next day he wanted to go out into Galilee” are ambiguous, and show that the one who went out may be Andrew, or may be Jesus. But the statement seems rather to be about Andrew, who went out into Galilee and found Philip. To this Philip, found by Andrew, Jesus says: “Follow me.” To follow Jesus is to follow the Word, wisdom and righteousness, acting and thinking rightly. In the Greek language Bethsaida is translated “House of hunters.” To such people Jesus said: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” About hunters of this kind, as sent by God, there is a prophecy in Jeremiah, spoken in the person of God, which runs like this: “And look, I am sending to you many hunters, who will hunt you down.”

Fragment 24

He does not mean that the prophets wrote that Jesus would be the son of Joseph, from Nazareth. He means: we have found that this man is the one about whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, spoke.

Fragment 25

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He is either doubting ("Can so great a good really come out of Nazareth?") or speaking with confidence: the one who has been found is indeed from Nazareth, and is truly good. Philip answers him, "Come and see" Jesus, the one who has been found. He wants him to be convinced by sight rather than by hearing about the one found.

Fragment 26

On John 1:49. Nathanael's words to Jesus he put this way: "You are the Son of God; you are king of Israel, the [discerning] race." To look into the heart and know who has deceit in himself and who has none belongs to a son of God. It does not belong to one of the many sons, but to the only-begotten, who is king of the chosen race. This is Jesus, and that is why he was Son of God.

Fragment 27

On John 1:50. “You saw me then, when I happened to be under the fig tree, before I was called by Philip.” Jesus heard this and said: “Because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” Now that the plain sense of the text has been made clear, we must speak of the allegory. Philip, by following Jesus, who is God’s Word and God’s wisdom, became a hunter of the souls that God gives to those who are able to benefit them. For “Nathanael” is interpreted “gift of the Lord.” To this disciple, who had been given to him, Philip did not at once communicate the things about the divinity of the Son of God. He spoke instead of his coming as a man: “We have found him whom we Hebrews all read about in common, as one who was to come, in the writings of Moses and the prophets.” He meant Jesus, born of the virgin without the sowing of a man’s seed. This Jesus is called the son of Joseph, who had been betrothed to Mary, and he has his origin from Nazareth in terms of place, for Nazareth was the virgin’s city. The disciple Nathanael received this from Philip, who had by now become his teacher. He said to the one who had taught him: “If what has been found is from Nazareth, is it good?” Philip immediately called him to the very sight of the matter: “Come and see.” He did not want the disciple always to be a hearer of voices. He wanted him to be a beholder of the truth, hurrying from the hearing of words to seeing. Jesus saw Nathanael coming, not only by walking but also by progress toward the vision. He bears witness about him, who was so eager for the understanding of the truth [the text here is uncertain], and says to those with him: “Do you see this man coming?” He is an Israelite not only in the senses and according to the flesh, but also according to the spirit and the understanding. For he has a mind that beholds God. He is truly an Israelite, and not falsely so called, since he is free from all deceit and is a friend of the truth.

Fragment 28

On John 2:1. The third day had now come since Jesus was baptized. A wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus himself was invited together with his disciples. For Jesus is the maker of the man and the woman, and he does not refuse to be invited to a wedding. He is the very one who, after forming Eve, brought her to Adam. That is why he says in the gospel about this union: “What God has joined together, let no man separate.” So let the heretics who reject marriage be ashamed, when Jesus is invited to a wedding and his mother is there. The Manichaeans must also be refuted, who say that Mary is not the mother of Jesus, when the evangelist bears witness that Jesus had a mother.

Fragment 29

We can see the evangelist's precision in this very story. He knew that the willfully wicked and crafty among the Jews were ready to slander the mighty works of Jesus. So he presents Jesus giving the order about drawing the water, not to his own disciples, but to the servants of the banquet. Otherwise the slanderers would have said that if the disciples of Jesus had drawn the water, they had filled the jars with wine and only pretended to have filled them with water. In the same sequence comes the phrase "they filled the jars up to the brim." This was so that no pretext for sophistry would be left. If the jars had not been filled with water, and wine had been poured in, it might have seemed that the whole content had not come from water.

Fragment 30

The word “believed” is used in place of “were confirmed.” For the most part he uses “faith” to mean confirmation. So to these people he revealed his glory all the more. For changing a substance belongs to a creator, not to a created thing. To become wine from water is not a simple change of quality but a change of substance.

Fragment 31

"And after this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brothers and his disciples." Many people ask how Jesus had brothers, since Mary remained a virgin until her death. By nature he had no brothers, since the virgin bore no other child, and he himself was not born of Joseph. So they were called his brothers by law, being sons of Joseph by a wife who had died earlier. And this was because Mary was, by common agreement, called his wife. For the law of Moses teaches this, imposing the penalty for adultery on a man who has relations with a betrothed virgin. The text goes on: "because he humbled his neighbor's wife, he shall die." So if the law calls the virgin who was betrothed to Joseph "Joseph's wife," then, in keeping with such an arrangement, those born of Joseph are called brothers of Jesus, even though Jesus himself was not born of him.

Fragment 32

Three public feasts were handed down to the Hebrews by the great hierophant Moses. One of them was the one called Passover. It stood above the other two, since it showed forth the deliverance from Egypt and the crossing over to the holy land. So at this festival the whole nation of the Jews hurried to Jerusalem from every city and village, for the law had handed down that the Passover be sacrificed in this city alone. The three feasts were called by the name of God, who gave them as law. But the Jews no longer kept the feasts according to the ordinance, but according to their own appetites and pleasures. So the evangelist calls it not the Passover of God but "of the Jews." For they no longer came to Jerusalem for the sake of worship but for the sake of luxury. Everything was brought into the city from all the surrounding places for feasting, and it was sold in the house of God. For the evangelist said that oxen, sheep and doves were sold there as in a marketplace. But it happened that those coming to the feast did not bring enough silver with them. So some money-changers thought of setting up tables there and exchanging small coins, that is, lending, taking gold from those who needed silver. These people had come to get drunk and live luxuriously rather than to keep a feast.

So the whole nation of the Jews was there, giving itself over to drunkenness. Jesus entered the house of God and drove everyone out of it, with only a whip made of cords. This would not have succeeded if he had been an ordinary man [† who undertook to do this]. He threw out not only the rest of the crowd but even the very men who were selling goods for the feasting. Let no one think this is less than his other wonders. It was not possible, without divine working, for one man to drive out so great a crowd, especially when they were savage and murderous toward him. In fact the Jews themselves, astonished at what he had dared, say to him later on, "What sign do you show us, that you do these things?" They mean: "By what power are you so great, and what kind of godly service can you perform, that you do such things, daring to drive out a whole populous nation by yourself?"

Fragment 33

“But they believed, not in him, but in his name.” These people do not have a firm or complete knowledge, as was also said earlier about them, but a knowledge that can very easily fall away. So he did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all things, not from the surface but from the depth of the mind. For knowing people from their actions and words is possible even for a mere man. But Jesus is not a mere man. He is God who became man, and he knows everything, grasping what is hidden in the mind. For it is said of God alone: “He who knows hidden things and knows all things before they come to be.” And since Jesus is God, and knows what is hidden in the heart, he has no need to receive testimony from a man, because he knows what is in the man. For it is not said simply that he knows the man, but what is in the man. And since he knew that they would not remain in the faith they had in his name, he did not entrust himself to them. For they had believed because of signs, not from an understanding about God. That is why they could quickly fall away, being deceived by themselves or by others who reasoned that perhaps the signs had not truly or rightly happened. But the one who believes in him, having his understanding from God, is not easily deceived.

Fragment 34

Nicodemus must be counted among the many who had believed in the name of Jesus. He was one of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews. He plainly thought that Jesus was a teacher who had God with him, but he did not think that Jesus was God. His own words show this, when he said, “You have come from God as a teacher.” And as if adding proof for his judgment about Jesus as teacher, he goes on: “For no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” So the evangelist fittingly recorded that his approach took place at night. He came at a time when he was likely to escape the notice of the many Pharisees, of whom he was one. Or rather, and this is beyond dispute, he came at night because he was in ignorance about the God to whom he was coming and had not yet been enlightened. The sun of righteousness, who makes the intelligible day, had not yet risen for him. Abraham was seized with love for that day, prepared himself to see it, and rejoiced when he saw it. Pharisees are men who follow the leading rank and sect in Judaism. They profess a strenuous way of life and exactness in the law and the prophets. For this reason they are, for the most part, bold and proud. This is also how they got their name. For “Pharez” among the Hebrews [means “divided”]. Since these men separate themselves from every nation of the Jews, as though they surpassed them in wisdom and way of life, they want to be called by the name from “Pharez.”

Fragment 35

The word “from above” is sometimes [understood from places and ...], as in “The one who comes from above is above all.” At other times it means [from the beginning], as in “To which you want to be slaves again from above,” that is, [again from the beginning]. The birth from above, which the Savior teaches about, comes about from taking up virtue and keeping his commandments. For he says to the disciples: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens.” Even if Nicodemus responded wrongly to what was said, what he said still holds something true, even though he did not mean it that way. For truly, no one who stays in being human, in the sense of growing old in the human condition, can receive the birth that is of the Spirit and from above. Just as no unjust and unbelieving person, while remaining so, can be born according to righteousness and faith, so no one who stays in human ways and grows old in them can receive the birth that makes new.

So the teacher of truth writes to those who are eager to come to the divine birth that they must strip off the old man with his deeds. Once he is cast off, they put on the new man, “created according to God in righteousness.” Because such a person has been born from above, it follows that he will walk in newness of life. Urging his disciples toward this birth, Jesus said, “Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Pay close attention to this as well. Children do not avenge themselves on those who wrong them. They do not grieve when pleasant things are taken away. They do not feel any firm attachment to the things that are agreeable to them. So he wants us to be, by our disposition, what children are by their age. For they are like this without reason, but those who become like them at Jesus’ command do so by reason and by the best settled character, and they strive to be found in that state. So even if Nicodemus spoke these words in ignorance, there was still something true lying in his words that he did not understand.

Fragment 36

The Savior explains the manner in which one can "be born from above." Since the aim is to enter the kingdom of God, and it is impossible to attain this without being born of water and spirit, being born from above goes together with being born of water and spirit. A person is born of the Spirit when he is made according to the Spirit, becoming holy and spiritual by him. Then, since the one who enters the kingdom of God is born not of the Spirit alone but also of water, it follows that we should look in the Scripture for something about the water too. And consider whether the water differs from the Spirit only in concept and not in substance. For the Savior says elsewhere, "The one who believes in me, as the Scripture said, rivers of living water will flow from his belly. But he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive." If it is said of the Spirit that he is living water, flowing like rivers out of the believer, then the water will differ from the Spirit only in concept. So just as someone is born of the Savior as wise from wisdom, so also he is born of the Spirit as holy and spiritual. And one who is cleansed by the water and watered so as to bear fruit is born of water and spirit. Someone else will say that "water" here means the teaching that cleanses the soul, which also contributes to being born from above. Concerning this cleansing, which comes about through divine discipline, the psalmist said to God, "You will wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." [[And to the multitude of Israel he says, "Wash your heart from wickedness, Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long will thoughts of your troubles remain in you?" By "thoughts of her troubles" he means the things done out of wickedness, for which she is going to be punished unless she washes herself by the instruction of the Scriptures.]] Then, since not the soul alone is called to salvation but also the body itself, the instrument the soul uses for its own activities, it is fitting that this too be sanctified through what the divine teaching calls the "washing of regeneration." This is also named divine baptism, which is no longer simply water, for it is sanctified by a certain mystical invocation.

And notice how great and powerful is the rite that the Savior handed down to his disciples. For he says, "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep" and so on. A person must first be made a disciple by receiving the teachings of the truth. Then he must keep what Jesus commanded them about the moral virtues. Only then is he baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So how can the water that is received

along with these things still be mere water? It shares, as far as it can, in the power of the holy Trinity, and it is joined to moral and intellectual virtue. Consider also how great it is, by asking why it is received. If it is received in order to enter the kingdom of God, and that kingdom surpasses everything, how can the cause of entering it not be great? By the kingdom of God we should mean the settled state of those who live in orderly obedience to his laws. This kingdom will also have its dwelling in its own place, I mean in the heavens. But here it is called the kingdom of God, while in Matthew it is called the kingdom of the heavens. We must say that Matthew named it from those who are ruled, or from the places where they are, while John and Luke named it from God who rules. It is the same when we ourselves speak of the kingdom of the Romans: we point to it through those who are ruled, showing it either by its place [the text is corrupt here], or by announcing it as the whole inhabited world.

Fragment 37

These words show the following meaning. The Holy Spirit comes only to the earnest, and stays far from the wicked. But “far” and “near” should not be understood in terms of place. They should be understood as one can understand them of things without bodies. For such expressions, often written even about God, do not mean distances in space. Since the Spirit, withdrawing from the wicked, fills those who have faith and virtue, it is rightly said, “The Spirit blows where he wills.” This also shows that the Spirit is a substance. He is not, as some suppose, an activity of God that has no distinct existence of its own. The apostle, too, after listing the gifts of the Spirit, immediately added, “All these things are worked by one and the same Spirit, who divides to each one individually as he wills.” But if he wills, and works, and divides, then he is an active substance, not an activity. Moreover, the saying in Acts, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,” is not far from willing and wishing. Besides this, words of the Spirit are recorded in the divine Scriptures, especially in the Acts of the Apostles: “While they were fasting and serving the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.’ ”

And again in the same book a prophet named Agabus says, “The Holy Spirit says this: The man whose belt this is, the Jews will bind in this way,” and so on. Even so, though the Spirit blows where he wills, Nicodemus does not have him in himself, because he has not believed Jesus as he should. He hears only his voice, and does not know where he goes or where he comes from. A person hears only the Spirit’s voice when he reads the writings of the Spirit without understanding them. But everyone who pays attention to the reading and searches the Scriptures, by understanding them, knows where the Spirit comes from and where the Spirit’s way ends, the way he travels through the instruction of the divine oracles. For whoever knows the reason for which the Spirit’s teaching has been given to people knows where he comes from. And whoever has seen for what purpose and to what end it has been given knows where he is going and comes to rest.

Fragment 38

It is worth asking how the Savior could say that he had spoken of earthly things, when he had been teaching about the kingdom of God, about birth from above, about the Spirit [[and about being born of him]]. None of these things is earthly; each one is heavenly. One could answer that Jesus did not say, “If I spoke of things of the earth,” but “the earthly things.” By “earthly” he means things that can exist and be understood among people who are still living on earth. For these things are not earthly or heavenly by their own nature; though heavenly, they have been given to people by God’s gift. [[That what is given to people on earth is from above and heavenly, James writes: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” He said this because he had learned it from the Savior, who said: “The Father will give good things from heaven to those who ask him.”]] Next, some of the things God supplies can be brought to those who know in part, while others are for those who have reached perfection in the age to come, when what is partial will be done away once the perfect has come. So it was said, very fittingly: “How, if I tell you the heavenly things, will you believe?” For the one who does not believe in part will not believe the perfect things either.

Fragment 39

The matter of the serpent was commanded by God so that those led by Moses might know this: just as they were being destroyed by the venomous beasts because they had not believed God, who had promised them the land, so they would be saved by gazing at the raised-up serpent, because of God who commanded it to be done. It was not the nature of the thing made, but the one who ordered it to be made, who provided the cause of their salvation. And the spiritual serpents likewise subjected people to death through sins, injecting into them the venom of their own wickedness. Now when death had become widespread against souls (this is the death that follows sin), God was moved by entreaty and was pleased to have his own Son lifted up, so that all who look to him by faith may be freed from the harm of the spiritual serpents and have eternal life. Eternal life is not the common life that other living creatures also have, but the life that comes about through faith and the rest of virtue.

Fragment 40

From the present saying one can also refute those who say that the title “Son” applies only to the one born of Mary, and not to God the Word. [[For see: the Son of God is the one in whom people are to believe, the one who was sent. But what was sent into the world was not what was taken from the virgin (for that came into being there, born of her), but God the Word, who is truly the true light. For concerning the same one, those who say, “Send out your light and your truth,” are making a petition to God; and again it is written, “God sent out his Word and healed them.”]]

Fragment 41

Someone will say that what has been explained is not very sensibly understood, as though Jesus had not come to judge the world now. He will point to what follows next: “And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world.” And in this same Gospel Jesus says, “I have come into the world for judgment.” So the difficulty raised must be resolved. Even if Jesus does both things by coming, judging the world and saving it, one is for the sake of the other. He came into the world for judgment in order to save it (for he does not save in order to judge). It is like a physician who comes to a sick person in order to heal him. This is the purpose of the physician’s coming, even if other things happen, such as cutting or burning. For the first aim is not to cut [[text defective]] but to heal. Next after this comes: “The one who believes in him is not judged.” For the one who through faith has reached complete salvation is not subject to judgment. But the one who has not believed, being self-condemned, has already been judged.

Fragment 42

On John 3:19. “This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light.” If the light had not come into the world, those who had not done good could have pleaded ignorance of what is good. Those who practice wickedness would likewise have had grounds for a defense, claiming they had not known these things were evil. But the light has come into the world, and every misguided excuse is driven away. So there will be a judgment that examines the actions and the mind of each person. It will then be shown that those who loved the light obtain the kingdom of God. Through their love for the light they have themselves become light, by good works and a true mind, so that they hated the darkness (that is, wickedness and ungodliness). Those who turned away from virtue, and from God who supplies it, will be tested by eternal punishments. They were eager to have evil works, so they hated the light, because by making things plain it exposed their worthless works. “For everyone who practices worthless things [hates] the light.” He does not want to come near it at all, so that his works will not be exposed as evil. He wants to hide them so that he will not be condemned before others. But even if this man hates the light, the worker of the truth still comes to the light. He wants the works he does to be made plain, because they are being accomplished in God. It was well said: “the one who practices worthless things” and “the one who does the truth.” [The next clause is corrupt in the Greek. Its sense seems to be that] it is neither the case that one who [practices evil] withdraws from wickedness [and] looks toward the good, nor that one who professes to rejoice in the truth ever inclines toward the worse.

This is why he said “practices” and “does.” For it is not possible for someone disposed toward wickedness to rejoice in the good. And the lover of truth is altogether a desirer of good things. Coming or not coming to the light must be understood not as a matter of place but of action. Everyone who acts according to virtue is coming to it. The worthless person, who works wickedness, refuses to be with the light. For good and evil, light and darkness, cannot exist together. (In these passages light and the good mean the same thing, and darkness and evil mean the same thing.) But those from the heresies think that some people are in darkness by nature and love it. Notice what has been said: each of them is in darkness by choice and loves it. “People loved,” he says, “the darkness rather than the light,” for their works were evil. They do not have evil works because of the darkness. Rather, because they have evil works, they love the darkness. And again, they do not do worthless things because they fail

to come to the light. Rather, because they do worthless things, they do not come to the light. It is up to us either to do worthless things or [to come to] the light and do the truth.

Fragment 43

On John 3:19. Since it is written, “People loved the darkness rather than the light,” we should ask whether they loved both, but loved the darkness more and the light less. That would seem to fit people who are neither very worthless nor perfect in virtue. But I think this is not what is meant, that they loved both and loved the darkness more, or the light more. The thought is rather this: human beings are self-determining, because they have free choice. They ought to have welcomed the light and fled the darkness. Those who have evil works did the reverse, so that they loved the darkness and in no way the light. “More than” should not be heard as a comparison, as if they loved the darkness more than the light. They did not love the light at all, for they hated it. That this understanding is right is shown by the passage itself. He says they loved the darkness rather than the light because, practicing worthless things, they hate the light. If they hate it, they do not love the darkness by comparison. Take in the same way what the apostle writes about wicked people, that they are “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” In that phrase too it is made clear that they love only pleasure and do not love God at all. They are called lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God in that sense. And in the Psalms it is written about a certain worthless person: “You loved evil more than goodness.” He did not love both and love evil more.

Fragment 44

We must listen with a generous mind to the words “All are coming to him,” taken in the sense of [“many”]. We must do the same with “A man can receive nothing of himself unless it has been given him from heaven.” That means: a man cannot have any divine gift unless it has been given him from heaven. God’s gifts are given to those who have prepared themselves to receive them by faith and virtue. So learn this. Even if I have received from the Son of God the power to baptize with water for repentance, I fall far short of the one who gave it to me. I do not say this only now. I say it because I said it before, and I have you as witnesses of what I told those who asked whether I was the Christ. You were present [when I said] that I am the forerunner of the Christ and not the Christ himself. Let no one stumble as if the words “A man can receive nothing” had been wrongly said.

Fragment 45

The rational being, of which the human soul is a part, cannot of itself bring forth any good thing, though it is able to receive good things. So, like a woman, it is made by nature to bear from another the virtues it is able to give birth to, both those of action and those of understanding. That is why I call it a bride, and the bride not of just anyone but only of the one who sows good things. That one is none other than Jesus. You say he baptizes. I have testified to him, and you say all are going to him. If you too want to bear good things, go away to him. You are part of the bride, since you belong to the rational beings. Even if he is the bridegroom, I am his friend and a servant of his purpose, and my aim is to present to him those whom I teach. Though you have become my disciples, I am not the bridegroom. That is, I am not the perfect teacher. So I urge you, who are still [pale], to be joined to the perfect teacher and to go to him. I myself pray to be his hearer, for I rejoice to hear his voice. So it is our joy when those who first came to me gain such a state of understanding that they can take in the wisdom he teaches the worthy. For you know that he comes from above, that he is over all, and that he is king and almighty. If he is over all, he is clearly over me as well. So it is right that he increase and I decrease. Take in this sense also what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, which runs like this: “I joined you to one husband, to present a pure virgin to Christ.” By “bride” he means the whole church, which is a pure virgin through the soundness of its teachings and its conduct.

The same apostle, writing to another church, mentions Adam and the woman and adds: “This mystery is great, but I speak of Christ and the church.” The point is that as those two became the parents of all human beings, so Christ and the church are the begetters of all good works, thoughts and words. John, then, is the friend of the bridegroom, as the word is interpreted. He stands beside him in firm agreement, because his faith in him is settled. Standing so, he rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom’s speaking. So he goes on to add, “This joy of mine is fulfilled,” as all go away to Jesus. For he says, I have come to testify to him, so that all may believe in him through me. So he must increase and I must decrease. We must also observe this with wisdom. The Savior does not increase by taking on something, and John does not decrease by losing something. Each remains the same. What is said is to be understood like this. The morning star rises before the sun, so that the eyes may grow used to meeting a greater light, and it has a fixed size. At the first glance it looks larger than the sun. But as the sun gradually appears, the morning

star grows smaller. It has lost nothing of its own size. It is simply being compared with the sunlight now revealed. So John too is great in the fullness of his holiness. As said before, Jesus came after him, was baptized, and was testified to by him. After the dispensation concerning these things, when the divinity of Jesus was made plain, the one was shown to be the servant and the other the master.

Fragment 46

For if he comes from above, from the Father, as the Almighty, it is clear that he is above all. But those who have a material mind wear the image of the man of dust, and they speak from the earth. So whenever they set themselves up to teach, the wisdom they have is the kind James writes about: earthly, soulish, demonic. Isaiah also writes about such people, as being from the earth and speaking from it. The Word of God, by contrast, comes from above, is above all, and speaks what he has seen and heard. The prophets too, since the Word came to them from above, speak heavenly and divine things, what they saw with the mind and heard with the ears of the inner man. For each of them will say, “Thus says the Lord,” and, “The word of the Lord came to me.” Solomon speaks of this more plainly when he says, “My words have been spoken by God.” So it is written: “In many parts and in many ways God spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days he has spoken to us, to those living at the time of his visit, in a Son.” Certainly, then, what he had seen and heard he spoke to people as a teacher. But this applies to the saving plan [the incarnate economy]; it would not be fitting to take these words as being about his divinity.

Fragment 47

“And no one receives his testimony.” Yet many had received his testimony, as John himself says again: “The one who has received his testimony has set his seal that God is true.” How, then, can it be true that “no one receives his testimony” if some are receiving it? The difficulty is to be resolved this way. Jesus, who has come from above and speaks what he has heard and seen, gives a testimony about the Father and himself that is exalted and very great. No one receives this testimony as he himself delivers it, because the hearers, who are only at the beginning of receiving, fall far short of the greatness of the testimony. Still, even if no one is able to receive his testimony in that full way, it can be received as far as those who are just now coming to faith are able to take it in. So the words “the one who has received his testimony” do not contradict the statement that no one has received it. It is not received in the other, full way, [text missing here] but those who have received the testimony of Jesus, as far as they can, seal with firm assent that God is true. They have learned that the one sent from him speaks the words of God, since he is not from the earth and does not speak from it. For God does not give the Spirit by measure [or: in part].

Fragment 48

For even if wise men who had God spoke the words of God, they still had the Spirit of God only in part, since God says, “I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh.” But the Savior, sent to speak the words of God, does not give the Spirit in part. He does not give to others something he himself received; he was sent from above, is above all, and gives the Spirit as its source. We will also explain in another way the words “no one receives his testimony.” One who searches the Scriptures finds that they testify about Christ. None of the Jews who read the Scriptures without examining them received the testimony about him. Only the one who can say, “We have found Jesus, the one of whom Moses wrote in the law, and the prophets,” receives the testimony and seals that God is true, because he promised the gospel beforehand through the prophets. In other copies the text reads, “For he does not give the Spirit in part.” This reading also shows that the one who was sent does not attend to measures, so as to give sparingly, in part, and to a few who could be easily counted. Instead he gives lavishly and richly to all who are found worthy to receive.

Fragment 49

On John 3:31, 34. There are heretics who twist their own minds in every way. They divide the Godhead. For that reason they say the old Scripture belongs to one God and set the new covenant under another. They claim that John said "He who is from the earth speaks from the earth" about himself and the other prophets, and said "For the one whom God sent speaks his words" about Christ and his apostles. They must be refuted, because what they teach is false, or rather impious. For the Baptist himself says of himself: "The one who sent me to baptize in water, that one said to me: 'On whomever you see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, that one is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." If the one who sent him to baptize is the Father, who told him about the descent of the Spirit and that the Christ is his Son, how can John, when he says what he heard from the Father of Christ, be speaking from the earth? The evangelist writes of him in the same way: "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light." Even if the prophets before John did speak from the earth, how could they testify about Christ? Yet the Savior said of their writings: "These are the ones that bear witness about me."

Fragment 50

On John 3:35. How could God not love, when he hates all wickedness? It is written of him: "I am God, who loves righteousness and hates robbery that comes from injustice." God hates the kinds of wickedness in which the sinner delights. So he loves the Son as the one who supplies virtue, and who removes and destroys wickedness. This is why it is said, "The Father loves the Son." The word "loves" is heard here in a rather human way, though it is not to be understood that way. For if God, who loves righteousness, does not love it as a righteous man does, by having it in himself and being shaped according to it, then in the same way he longs for the Son, who is Word, truth, wisdom and holiness. But the word can also show the Father's close kinship with the Son. For it is a natural law that parents love their offspring. Among human beings, the feeling toward children is natural, and the feeling toward other people they love arises in some other way. In the same way God loves the world as God, but loves the Son as Father. This is why it is not said "God loves the Son," but "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand."

This must be understood with faith and good sense. If "all things came into being through him," then all things are under his hand according to the principle of creation and providence. But through sin they have wandered off, outside the hand that covered them. So for the sake of their salvation the Father gives them into the Son's hand. He does not grant the Son an addition, but grants them an improvement. For he gives them to the Son as to a teacher and physician, so that the Son may make them free of ignorance and disease (that is, of wickedness) and may have them sheltered and ruled by him, holding them now under his active and caring hand. What follows shows the truth of this thought: "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life." For if the one who believes in the Son has eternal life, then being given into his hand is given for that person's own salvation and improvement, not so that the Son may have something more. And when is it fulfilled that all things have been given into the Son's hand? It is when every knee of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth bows to him.

Fragment 51

In many places in the Scriptures, the punishments that fall on the wicked are called the wrath of God. An example is what Moses said about the Egyptians: "You sent out your wrath, and it consumed them like stubble." Paul also writes about the Jews: "But the wrath has come upon them to the end." By wrath he means the God-sent punishments that came upon them. He says it too to the one who despises God's kindness and patience: "By your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath." But we must not suppose that what is called God's wrath is a passion in him. How could a passion belong to one who is beyond passion? Since God does not suffer, and does not change, we must interpret what is called his wrath in the way I have described.

Fragment 52

Since he had a real body, made up of the same things as all human bodies, his body was necessarily subject to the common sufferings of the body. I do not mean only wounds and the like, but also the weariness that comes from strong and continuous movement. He had made a long journey at midday, when the sun is at its fiercest, and he took on greater weariness, because the moisture of his body was used up by the burning heat. For it was the sixth hour of the day. Wanting to rest from this weariness, he sat down by the spring in the place of Joseph mentioned earlier. At the same time he was looking ahead to the benefit that would come when a woman came to draw water from the spring.

Fragment 53

Perhaps someone will ask the reason why Jews do not deal with Samaritans. It can be found in the third and fourth books of Kingdoms, and also in the second of Chronicles. The law said, “Do not touch what is unclean,” so they did not dare even to touch the flesh of foreigners, supposing that they would be defiled by it. Perhaps someone will also raise an objection to the words, “His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.” He will say: if Jesus fed five thousand in the wilderness, and four thousand, along with a crowd of women and a great number of children, sometimes from five loaves and sometimes from seven, what great thing would it have been for the disciples to be supplied with food without going into the city to buy it, since Jesus could have provided it by his own power? To this we must answer that Jesus had become man. If he had done everything as God in truth, it would have gone unnoticed that he had become man. If he had acted in everything that way, his divinity would have overshadowed his humanity. So whenever there was need of a miracle, he fed many from a little, not so much to satisfy hunger as to reveal his divine power. But when there was no urgent need to supply food out of nothing, the disciples went off to buy bread. For even though Jesus did these things to show his humanity and reveal his divinity, many stumbled over the gospel. Some declared that he had become man only in appearance and not in truth; others supposed he was only a man. How much more would those who read this history without care and understanding have been deceived, if nothing had been done and written with exactness about the revealing of his divinity and his humanity?

Fragment 54

On John 4:12. The Samaritan woman worked as hard as she could to remove the Jewish customs and teachings and to put the glory of the Samaritans above them. That is why, when the Saviour promised to give living water, she answered, “Are you greater than our father Jacob?” The Saviour knew how to order everything wisely. He knew it would be easy to strike down the Jewish claims on the spot, and to say “I am greater.” But the woman’s mind could picture nothing higher than what the senses can perceive. So he let that remark go by in silence. He chose other words, which could establish the same point just as well but would soften her hearing, and so he made her mind more ready. He did not bring in a comparison or a difference in glory himself. He left the poor woman to work out for herself, from what he was about to say, how great his superiority was. For he said, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst, ever.” Notice the wisdom and force of these words. The statement “he will thirst again” needed no support from anywhere else, since the woman herself stood there as an unasked witness to it. But the statement “he will never thirst, ever” [was raised] by the greatness of its promise, rousing her by the promise itself.

By both statements he was bringing her to stop and consider a more divine view of him. It is almost as if he were saying: “If you hold Jacob in great honour and think his deed marvellous, because he gave you water from which the drinker returns again to the same thirst, what must you think of me? I can give water that does not merely quiet bodily thirst for a short time. It can become for the one who drinks a spring of ever-flowing water. It offers streams of salvation, which water those who draw from them and win for them life.” [The text is damaged here.] Water cures thirst and cleans away the dirt on the outside of the body. In the same way the spiritual and heavenly streams of Jesus’ teaching, and the more divine understanding of him, heal the thirst that comes from unbelief. They also cleanse the soul from its filth, which the pollution of sins and the dark reasoning of ungodly opinions had made foul.

Fragment 55

On John 4:12. By way of allegory we must say that Jacob's well is the writing of Moses. From it Jacob drank spiritually together with his sons, and the livestock that belonged to Jacob drank from it as well. In the allegory, "livestock" means those who are steady and gentle but without reason. These, properly speaking, we must call the herds and sheep of Jacob.

Fragment 56

On John 4:13. The law given through Moses is the water. So how could Jesus say that the one who drinks from it will thirst again? We must say that the law was given to people not so that they should live by it forever, but only until a certain time. In the same way, drinking from the well, as it is interpreted, was to last only until a greater water was shown. For the commands of the law were laid down until the time of setting things right. So whoever drinks from the water of the law will thirst again, because he longs for the drink of the gospel. Take in this sense what was said in Isaiah: “Drink this first; do it quickly.” If there were not another drink after that one, it would not have been said, “Drink this first.” And since the gospel succeeds the law, whoever drinks the teaching of the law will thirst again so that he may also drink the teaching of the gospel. But the gospel has no successor, so whoever drinks from it will never thirst, ever. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” For he says that the one who drinks this water gets in himself a spring, and not of just any water, but of water leaping up to eternal life. This water, leaping up to life, lifts up the one who has it, as a spring within him, and carries him upward to life.

Fragment 57

When the woman said she wanted to receive water from Jesus so that her thirst would stop, since she would have the water as a spring within herself, she showed that this is what she wanted. By these words she admitted that drawing the earlier water was very wearisome, and in this she spoke truly. For keeping the Law according to the letter is very wearisome. The Savior then fittingly says to her: since you still cling to the one to whom you have devoted yourself, living with him as with a husband (the Law), go and call him, so that what is written in him may be compared with what I say and do. In this way you will be able to find that the one who drinks from the earlier water will look for another, because he will thirst again. When she denied that she had a husband, the Savior, gently exposing her Samaritan way of thinking, says: "You are right to say, 'I have no husband.'" For you did not agree with the whole of the Old Testament, which is the Law, about which it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." Not having this husband, you had five, because you agreed only with what is perceptible in the Scripture. For if you had lived with the whole of the Old Testament, you would have been able to recognize God the Word, whom it expected after the Law and the Prophets. The words "For you have had five husbands" must be referred to the five books of Moses, for these alone the Samaritans accept. But who is the sixth, whom she has besides the five husbands, and who is not even her husband? We must say it is the teaching that there is a prophet. For she had already agreed to this, under compulsion from what was said, but not with true agreement. So it was fittingly said: "And the one you now have is not your husband," for you have not come to him sincerely. And since her five husbands were also said to be the senses, after she had agreed, without precise understanding by any spiritual reasoning, to what she learned from Jesus' teaching, it was said most exactly to the mark: "And the one you now think you have, a spiritual word, is not your husband."

Fragment 58

When you hear that salvation is from the Jews, listen to what is said about the one who says this. For he himself was the expectation of the nations, the one born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Fragment 59

The question “Surely no one has brought him anything to eat?” shows that he accepted the services of those who offered them, although he was able to feed others and not be fed himself. Yet feeding Christ is a work of the greatest effect, and he did not begrudge it to those who wished to do it. That is why he assigned the same to the disciples. Being men trained in the Law and fond of learning, they considered that it was now time for a meal. They guessed that perhaps, as a meal had been brought to Daniel in Babylon by Habakkuk at God’s command, and as food was given to Elijah on his journey by an angel and by ravens, so food had been brought to Jesus. Yet even if the disciples supposed this about physical food, he himself makes clear what kind of food he had told them about. They said it was the time for his meal for this reason: it was the sixth hour of the day, and Jesus had sat down at the well and talked with the Samaritan woman, while the disciples had gone off to buy food, so that one could reasonably guess it was now evening of the day. But this time for food belongs especially to those who do not chiefly pursue food, but the benefit of those who come to them.

Fragment 60

He calls Judea his homeland, and for this reason he had left it. For the evangelist, giving the reason for his coming to Galilee, writes that “a prophet has no honor in his own homeland.” This testimony is also found in the other Gospels. For the Savior says: “A prophet is not without honor except in his own homeland, and among his relatives, and in his own house.” Indeed, all those before his coming were dishonored in Jerusalem and Judea, for this was their land and homeland, so that the Savior said in general: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her.”

Fragment 61

"Now there is," he says, "in Jerusalem..." and so on. He did not think it necessary to go around healing every sick person, whoever they were, so that he would not gain a reputation for self-love. Instead he healed one person and made himself known to everyone through him. For this reason he goes to the sheep pool, which had five porches. Besides the four around it, it had another in the middle. It was called the sheep pool because the sheep brought for the feasts were gathered there. It was also called that because, when the sheep were sacrificed, their entrails were washed in that water. So a great crowd of people with all kinds of illnesses had gathered in the place, hoping to be healed. They supposed the water itself could do something, since the entrails of animals offered and sacrificed to God were thrown into it. God worked along with this belief of theirs. At certain unknown times he caused the water to be stirred. They believed this happened by some divine working, and so they went down into it and received healing. Many went down at the same moment without being healed, but the first to go down enjoyed the grace, so that the ease of the cure would not lessen the wonder. Because they were more sober, and waited for the stirring of the water with great earnestness, they were taught from this to keep a fitting attitude even after being healed. Although there were many sick people, he did not heal them all. To show his own power he chose one, who was held by a very heavy affliction and, because of the length of time, had no hope of recovery. For there was a paralytic among them who had been held by his illness for thirty-eight years. When he came to him, he did not say at once, "Take up your bed and walk." He began instead with words that followed on from the man's own situation. This is also what he did with the Samaritan woman.

Fragment 62

“What Spirit was not yet?” ... [the Spirit] was not seen in any of the prophets; they were working wonders.

Fragment 63

I think this was said to show that the spittle of Christ had the quality of a healing power. The blind man himself did not ask to see. Even so, he will be found praiseworthy, both for offering himself to Jesus as he smeared mud on his eyes, and for doing what he was told without hesitation, though Jesus had not even said that he would see. Perhaps the Lord's spittle was a symbol of a [summit], the furthest point in words, beyond which human nature cannot take in anything greater. But such a word does not come to people stripped of matter and bodily illustrations. This is why Jesus spits on the ground and makes mud. So see whether you can explain the whole Scripture, and the manner in which it speaks, and say this. On account of its divine thoughts, it is made up of the spittle of Christ. On account of its account of events and human affairs, it is made up of earth from the ground. So the whole letter of the law, the prophets and the other Scriptures comes from such mud. With this the eyes of those who do not see must be smeared. After that they must go away to Siloam, "of the one sent" by God. By this is shown a kind of swimming in inquiries and in the perplexities of seeking the truth. For Job also says somewhere, "But a mortal swims otherwise in words." So let us wash the mud smeared on our eyes in the water of the pool "of the one sent," so that after this we may be able to see.

Take the clay to be the beginning of the elements of God's oracles. By these we are fed with milk, as infants. But when the ways of the infant are done away and we take solid food, we throw off the clay, so that we may come back to Jesus with our sight. All of this turns on the Son of God, for under different aspects he is also "the one who was sent." Take the human matters as belonging to the time before Siloam. But apply the water that was sent, and Siloam, to his more divine aspects. In Isaiah, too, you will understand the divine and steady word to be signified by these waters. The words of [Mnon?] and of those who hold other doctrines are signified by Raasson and the son of Romelias. For how is it that the people wanted kings in place of the water of Siloam? And how is the water of the river strong and abundant, namely the king of the Assyrians and all his power, unless he too is some opposing power? Such a power floods with the multitude of its persuasive arguments the Judea that does not want the water of Siloam, and [it prevails over it]. Jesus did not heal the man while he was present. He told him to go and wash, and gave the healing once he had washed. This was part of his careful ordering, so that the miracle would not go unnoticed by anyone. In the same way he told the paralytic to take up his bed on a day when

it was not permitted to do so. Each person who accused him of breaking the law would then learn how great the miracle was. So also here, the man was far from the pool, and Jesus told him to go there and wash.

Fragment 64

A beggar begs because he lacks the necessities and cannot provide for himself in a more respectable way. You could find such people among the Greeks and barbarians who profess the truth. They are, as it were, asking for help because they lack a fitting supply [. . .], though the rational side of truth has an abundance of riches without any anxiety. But the word forbids this kind of search when it says somewhere, “Child, do not live the life of begging, for it is better to die than to beg.” The steward of unrighteousness in the Gospels is ashamed to beg. For that reason he said to the man who owed a hundred measures of wheat, “Take your bill and write sixty,” and to the one who owed a hundred measures of oil, “Take your bill and make it eighty.” He preferred to receive from his master’s debtors rather than to beg in shame, and for this he was praised. So Jesus freed the man born blind not only from blindness but also from begging. Along with sight he gave him the insight to see how he would provide for himself what is necessary for the salvation of the soul. Here, then, blindness is the cause of begging. In the Acts it is lameness, and the person set free from it will no longer beg.

Fragment 65

The Pharisees supposed that a man who does not keep what they thought was the Sabbath is not from God. But the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and they were from God. So it was not clear at all that a man who does not keep their Sabbath is not from God. It follows that the statement was not made by all the Pharisees of that time. As the evangelist says, it was some of the Pharisees who said this. Pay attention also to the words "such signs," which are not put there for nothing. There are different kinds of signs. According to the apostle, the man in the law does them, and so does the lawless one whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth, with all power, signs and wonders of falsehood. God also does them through the prophets. By "such" it is said that the signs done through Christ surpass the others, because they are true and great on earth. Someone may say that the words "How can a sinful man do such signs?" are not soundly spoken [. . .]. Reading the deeds of Samson, he will say that what Samson did, for example with women, was not even sin, but that what is shown there is a matter of God's ordering. For it is not added that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord."

Fragment 66

Note the person of the evangelist: he says both that the blind man's eyes were opened and that he had received sight. They were opened, in the words, "Now it was a Sabbath on the day when he made the clay and opened his eyes." He had received sight, in the words, "And he washed and came seeing." We can bring in a parallel for the difference between these expressions from Tobit. Since white films had formed on his eyes, the book does not record that his eyes were opened, but that he looked up and saw. Throughout the whole passage about the blind man you will notice both expressions, some people saying one thing and some another, and a division arising among them. You will notice also that Isaiah, prophesying about the coming of Christ, says that he comes to open the eyes of the blind. Next you can see how the man who was answering replies, and how differently he answers the first group and the second. To the first he answers more exactly, since they were neighbors and had formerly seen that he was a beggar. To the Pharisees he told nothing about Siloam, nor that the Savior made the clay, nor that he had commanded him anything. Perhaps the man who had been healed saw that the first group's questioning was honest and the second group's malicious, and so answered each as he did.

Fragment 67

Besides lying, they committed another sin, by exposing their own son to an obvious evil. I think this too has a reason: when Christ opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not open those of a child but of one of full age, so that he might see as a man. The other blind people who regained their sight were of this kind too. It is true also that, being of age, he could speak for himself, and above all when Jesus is the one who makes him see. For this man needs no other to plead on his behalf.

Fragment 68

Now “You did not listen” is equal to “You did not accept it, you did not want it.” And “Why then do you want to hear again?” has the force of: “Why, you people, would you now hear? You want to hear in vain, if you do not believe me when I tell the truth. I summoned everyone who would learn what had happened to me, to become his disciple, since he taught things more divine than any human teaching.”

Fragment 69

"In this is a marvel" carries a significant implication. It is indeed marvelous if people of no account know where Jesus is from, for they do not see his root and his source, the Father.

Fragment 70

If this had been true, so weighty a doctrine, that God does not hear a sinner, would not have been passed over in silence. It would have been stated by someone worthy of belief, say by the servant or by one of the prophets. And if God did not hear a sinner, how were sinners taught to say, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive our debtors”? Whom then does God hear? Those who incline toward repentance, even if they have not yet stopped being sinners. If God did not hear sinners, our Savior would not have eaten and drunk with tax collectors and sinners. And if the physicians whom the sick need were not heard, they would not have healed them. This is why the saying, “If you keep watch on lawless deeds, Lord, Lord, who will stand?” is spoken as of a prayer that is not heard, coming from those who have sinned but not wholly still in unbelief. But perhaps he is speaking not of whatever the sinner happens to ask in prayer, but of works as great as the works of Jesus were. For when sinners ask God for works of that kind, he does not hear.

Fragment 71

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him he said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of man?” The Jews threw him out, away from themselves, because he spoke so boldly about the Savior. For that reason Jesus found him. The Savior came to seek and to save the lost. The goal of anyone who seeks is to find what he seeks. So the words “when he found him” clearly should not be taken in a simple way. This man most of all needed to be found at the moment when he was thrown out by those who would not accept the testimony about Jesus. Once he was outside them, he had become fit to be found. The words “Jesus heard that they had thrown him out” also call for a more thoughtful reading. Having heard such a thing, Jesus finds the one he had heard about to be worthy of his hearing. When he found him, he asked the man who was found, “Do you believe in the Son of man who has found you?” Perhaps the one who is only beginning believes in the Son of man, but the one who crosses over goes up further, to believe in the Son of God. Such a man could then say, “Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him only according to the flesh, but also as the Son of God.”

But how can he ask a question, when he knows everything? And consider whether you would answer this by setting beside it the words “The Lord knew those who are his” and “I do not know you.” For a person is not worthy to be known at the very moment he is found. The saying is, “But now that you have known God, or rather have been known by him.” After the introduction, progress is needed, so that a person may be seen and known by God. This is why the Savior asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of man?” But the man could not yet say “I believe.” He answered like someone who did not know: “Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?” So he stood on the border, so to speak, between unbelief and faith. For this reason the Savior says to him, “You have both seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”

Fragment 72

For such a tradition and opinion prevailed among the Jews. That is why the disciples asked Jesus, “Did this man sin, or his parents?” But the Lord declared, “Neither this man nor his parents.” This was discussed earlier.

Fragment 73

We must not hear this carelessly. “You have seen” refers to past time, but “the one speaking with you” refers to the present. The one who was seen is the same as the one now speaking with him. Set beside this the words, “Have I been with you so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father.” For many who saw him did not know him. So the one who has truly seen him is the one whose eyes of the soul are enlightened by God himself. The man who was once blind was helped by both, by the seeing and by the word. He not only said, “I believe, Lord,” but also worshiped him. Not least, he looks at the drama of the stoning, since he (that is, Origen) tries to interpret this too as an allegory, and so he falsifies the gospel text. He says, “We did not find at all, though we searched in the passages before this, that the Jews picked up stones to stone him.” Then a little later he says, “For if they picked them up again, they had picked them up before.”

Fragment 74

"If 'again' they picked up stones, then they had picked them up before." So if we do not miss that this is written, we must ask why the word "again" was added. I think that a person who speaks evil of someone is throwing a kind of stone at the one he slanders. They had spoken evil of him earlier, when a division arose among the Jews because of his words. So now they had again taken up the weight of abusive words, like stones to be hurled at him, and rushed to [strike] him with their slander. This is why Wisdom says, "He who throws a stone high throws it on his own head." A man is said to throw a stone high when he speaks injustice against what is on high. In divine Scripture you will find a mixture of what is, so to speak, historical with what is meant for training the mind, and especially in John. Notice in the conversation with the Samaritan woman how "Jesus sat down at the spring" is a report about a physical spring and a physical body. But it is no longer possible to understand a physical drink when "Jesus answered and said to her: If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

And there are similar sayings: "I have shown you many works; for which of them do you stone me?" Suppose someone went back to the beginning of the Gospel and collected the works of Jesus, and then carried them up to their spiritual workings. He would see best what many works Jesus showed to those who picked up stones to stone him. One of the good works, for example, was the sign at Cana, when the former wine ran short. This was because of the saying, "The law and the prophets were until John." The good thing is that we have been supplied with wine, we with whom Jesus sits at table. This was the beginning of his signs, in the calling of the people from the [nations]. For it is also written, "Jesus did this as the beginning of the signs." The next work after this was his restoring of his own house, which had become a house of merchandise, so that it would again be the house of his Father. And why must I tell all the good works he has done from his Father?

Fragment 75

He did this so as not to make his divinity too plainly visible. If he stayed on longer with those who were eager to seize him and yet was not seized, he would also falsify the rhythm of the human order. Consider also whether there is some reason why it is not written simply, "He went away to the [Jordan]," but "beyond" it, "on the other side." In the same way, those who received the land as an inheritance through Moses were lesser than those who receive it through Jesus, and they were allotted their portion on the far side of the Jordan. There they built an altar, a symbol of the altar in the holy land, but they offered no sacrifice or whole burnt offerings on it. But now we hear the words more figuratively: "He went away across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first." Moreover, Joshua son of Nun brings the people across from the far side of the Jordan with marvelous powers. And Elijah, when he was about to be taken up, as it were to heaven, in a chariot of fire with horses of fire, divided the stream of the river with his mantle and crossed over from the far side of the Jordan.

Fragment 76

"They sought again to seize him; and he went out of their hand." In the higher sense, there are some who want to hunt down the word of Christianity, to overturn and destroy it. These could now be said to be seeking to seize Jesus. But "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul," and "Power that is tested in the word convicts the foolish." Therefore he goes out. When the word of truth seems to those who hold it to be in their hand, it is in fact outside their hand, since they cannot keep hold of it. So even when they think they are overturning it, they are not overturning the truth, for they themselves do not understand. Having gone out of their hand, he comes to the river Jordan, whose name is interpreted [the meaning is missing in the text]. There the heavens are opened and bear witness to the Word: "This is the Son of God, in whom the Father was well pleased." Even if someone is on the far side of the river, if he draws near he will find Jesus baptizing better than John. For John baptized first with the perceptible baptism, but Jesus with the intelligible one, since he baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. This is rather like the fire seen at the bush, which did not burn it up.

Look carefully at the words "where John was at first baptizing." They are ambiguous. Once you see both meanings the wording allows, judge which one should be accepted. John baptized first beyond the Jordan, and second at Aenon, near Salim. So either Jesus went away beyond the Jordan, where John had earlier baptized, with the baptism that John gave at Aenon. Or it runs like this: John gave the first baptism beyond the Jordan, and Jesus the Christ gave the second where John had given the first. The second reading seems to me more reasonable than the first. Someone might also say the following about the first reading. John gives the first baptism beyond the Jordan, which is interpreted ["descent"]. He gives the second at Aenon, near Salim. Aenon is interpreted "Eye," and Salim, "He himself the [...]." So those who receive the second [washing] (the Greek reads "ransom") already see more clearly. They have won the eye of the soul through much testing and toil. And it was fitting that the first baptism should belong to one going down, and the second to one going up.

Fragment 77

We find the name of Lazarus twice in the Gospels. The first is in Luke, in the parable of the rich man and the man called Lazarus, when he died and went away into Abraham's bosom. The second is in the passage before us. Is this a shared name belonging to two different Lazaruses, or is the one the same as the other? Someone who wants both evangelists to be speaking of one man will say this. In the three days between (for Lazarus rose on the fourth day), he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom and found rest. And because of what the rich man said, "I ask you, father, to send him to my father's house, so that they too may not come to this place of torment," Abraham did not send him, saying, "They have Moses and the prophets." But our Savior and Lord raised him up. Perhaps, in what is left unsaid, it was so that he might report what he had seen, and the arrangements made concerning souls. But this is nonsense. The one beside the rich man was destitute and thrown down at the gate. The other had sisters, Mary and Martha, who were well off and well known among the Jews, so that they could even receive Jesus. And hear what the evangelist John himself says: "Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with ointment." Would she, who had ointment and was loved by Jesus, have had no pity on her brother, who longed to be filled with the crumbs falling from the rich man's table? That could not make sense. He was from Bethany, which is interpreted "House [of obedience]." Perhaps everyone from Bethany, being at home in obedience, is a friend of Jesus. But human nature is changeable. So even a friend of Jesus may sometimes fall sick. He may fall sick when Jesus is not present to him, and not only fall sick but even die.

Fragment 78

It is clear that this Mary is also the one in Luke who anointed the Lord with ointment. But Luke kept her name silent, and John supplied what he had left out. Who would not be turned aside by such a testimony of Jesus about Mary, so that he does not despair of himself because of his former sins, but comes and sits at Jesus' feet and becomes his disciple? For she, he says, "was a woman in the city, a sinner." She "learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, and brought an alabaster flask of ointment. Standing behind, at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears." Someone might say that Mary is a symbol of those from [the Gentiles], and Martha of those from the circumcision. Their brother, who rises from the dead, would then stand for those who have gone down to Hades because of certain sins, in line with the words, "Let sinners be turned back into Hades." And he could say, not implausibly, that it was because of the way of life under the law of Moses that it was said to Martha, "Martha, Martha, you are troubled and distracted about many things, but few things are needed." For salvation does not need the many commandments of the law according to the letter. It needs the few on which the whole law and the prophets hang, the commands laid down about love.

Fragment 79

On John 11:4. Taken as a symbol, let it point to the death in the historical sense. Taken as a lifting of the mind to a higher meaning, let it present the death into which people sometimes fall asleep when God has not enlightened the eyes of their soul. Not everyone who is unenlightened falls asleep into death; it is only one of the possibilities. [text missing] For this reason the psalmist says, “Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep into death.” Pay careful attention to the word “lest.” So Jesus told the disciples plainly, since the first time he had spoken in figures: “Lazarus has fallen asleep,” and “I rejoice for your sake that I was not there.” If he had been there, Lazarus would not have died, for it is impossible for anyone to die when Jesus is present. But for the dead man to rise from the dead, Jesus must come to him. “For your sake,” he says, “I rejoice.” He rejoices for them because they believe once they learn that Lazarus died while he was not with him, and so that they may be strengthened in faith. He alone, then, wakes Lazarus from sleep. The work of the disciples was to loose the dead man, who was bound hand and foot with grave-bands and had his face wrapped in a cloth, bound with the bonds of the dead, and to let him go where Jesus commanded. Thomas says, “Let us go, that we may die with him.” Thomas had read the prophecies about the Saviour. It is likely too that he had heard there remained for the Son of God a dispensation concerning souls. He was going to carry it out by going down into their place, to preach to the spirits in prison, going to those who had once been disobedient. When he heard, “I am going to wake him,” he supposed that Lazarus could be woken and raised from the dead in no other way than by Jesus going down into the place of souls. The Saviour had also said, “No one takes my soul from me, but I lay it down of myself,” and similar things. So Thomas, as his true disciple, resolved to follow him wherever he might go. He wanted the other disciples also, by the grace of Jesus, to lay aside the body together with him.

Perhaps he also knew that it would not be possible to live together with Jesus unless one had died together with him, as Paul also seems to hold. But those who do not want to say that he spoke for this reason will say that he suspected the coming envy of the Jews because of Lazarus’s rising, and the danger that would follow, and so said this. “Jesus therefore came and found him having been four days in the tomb.” The number four is material and bodily, and it is harmful, since the general kinds of body are four. Hence those who are enslaved and ill-treated suffer for four hundred years, according to what is said: “They will ill-treat them and humble them four hundred years.” Perhaps for this reason, to cleanse away the

sins that follow the nature of the body, Moses fasts forty days, and Elijah likewise, and the Saviour on behalf of our sins. And so now Jesus came and found Lazarus already four days in the tomb, which is the dwelling-place of the dead. For to sinners tombs are houses. That is why the demon-possessed flee to the tombs as to a place of their own. As long as they are inside, no one has the strength to pass by that road. But when they come out and put off their nakedness, they are clothed and in their right mind, and they sit at the feet of Jesus. Jesus, however, is laid in a new tomb and wrapped in clean linen, and he does not reach the fourth day among the dead. Therefore he was also "free among the dead," and he is raised in the free and holy number, three. In that number he also sanctifies us by the washing of water, saying that we must be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

Fragment 79b

On John 11:14. Beginning: “The slowness of the removal of the one lying upon . . .” Ending: “. . . they took away the stone.” Catena of Nicetas (manuscripts B and C); see above, Z. XXVIII, 3, p. 391, line 13.

Fragment 80

Bethany is translated “House of obedience,” and [Jerusalem . . . the text is broken here]. So it lies near, at a distance of fifteen stades, the same as the number of the temple’s steps. The number fifteen divides into seven, for the sabbath, and eight, for circumcision. The Preacher advises giving a portion to these two alone: “Give a portion,” he says, “to seven, and also to eight.” Suppose Mary is a symbol of the contemplative life, Martha of the active life, and Lazarus of the person who has fallen into sins after coming to faith. Then it is fitting that Mary and Martha mourn Lazarus, and that in their mourning they need comfort about their brother. The Jews want to bring them this comfort, but they are only words belonging to the time before the fullness of time. They also despair of being able to stop the dead man’s sister [from grieving] over the dead man. Martha now seems more zealous than Mary, since Martha ran to Jesus while Mary stayed at home, sitting. Some people, like the centurion, are not fit to receive Jesus; others are worthy, like the synagogue ruler. So Martha, as the lesser of the two, ran to Jesus, while Mary waits at home to receive him, as one able to take in his coming. She would not have gone out of her own house unless she had heard her sister say, “The Teacher is here and is calling you.” And when she got up, she did not simply get up but did so quickly. She fell at Jesus’ feet and said what she said, though her sister had not fallen down.

Fragment 81

The Saviour was not ignorant whether Martha believed what was being said. He asks, “Do you believe this?” so that we, or those who were present then, might learn her state of mind from her answer. Someone else will say that he is not asking at all but declaring, “You believe this.” Then Martha completes the Saviour’s declaration and says, “Yes, Lord.” It is as if she said: “I do not believe only what you are saying. As for your being the Christ, I do not believe it only now, but I have believed it already. And I believe that you are the Son of God who comes into the world,” pointing this out for all who believe in you.

Fragment 82

Someone examining the matter at the higher, allegorical level might ask why she says, “If you had been here.” Is there some place where Jesus is not? Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them. But he also stands in the midst of others who do not know him. So he was present to Mary and Martha. They had not yet advanced far enough to know him as present.

Fragment 83

Do not be surprised that “Where have you laid him?” is said as if by someone who does not know. Scripture says that not only the Saviour but the Father too is ignorant, in a certain sense, as in the words: “If anyone among you is spiritual, let him recognize what I write to you, that it is from God; but if anyone is ignorant, he is ignored.” He asks, “Where have you laid him?” in the same way that he commands the disciples to leave the dead. And Jesus weeps if any of his friends ends up in a tomb.

Fragment 84

While he was still far from the tomb, he was deeply moved in spirit. But when he comes near the dead man, he no longer shows his indignation in spirit but holds it in within himself. That is why it says, “Being indignant within himself, he comes to the tomb.” Then again he rebukes the emotion, so that we may learn that he became man, without changing, as we are. “Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.” He was not laid in a built tomb but in one cut out of rock. Perhaps that is why there is a woe on those who build graves or tombs. What should be built are houses, a temple, and whatever is useful to the living. Then he says, “Take away the stone.” Since the cave was a tomb, he did not touch the stone himself but entrusted its removal to others suited to the task. But in Genesis there was a stone lying on the mouth of the well and keeping the sheep from drinking, the sheep from which the marked animals and Jacob’s portion were to come. There Jacob himself had to take hold of it, go up to the stone and roll it away. So at the well it was necessary for Jacob himself to come forward, but at the cave Jesus was to stand outside.

Fragment 85

On John 11:51. It is not true that whoever prophesies is a prophet. Rather, whoever is a prophet prophesies. Balaam, for example, was a diviner, and yet he prophesies. Someone who does one medical thing is not thereby a physician, and someone who does one piece of building is not thereby a builder. Some want to say that Caiaphas did not speak by the Holy Spirit. They point to David, who after sinning says, “Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.” The Spirit, they say, does not dwell in a body burdened with sin, so Caiaphas spoke by the working of evil spirits. For they say demons can sometimes foretell things. An example is the spirit of Python in the case of Paul, and in the case of the Savior the words, “Ha, what have we to do with you, Son of God?” We learn, then, that people do not say everything from themselves. Some things they say while moved by a power, either a better one or a worse one. Still, just as some of the heterodox [distort] the sense of Scripture, so the Pharisees take what Caiaphas said according to their own way of thinking.

Fragment 86

On John 11:54. The Word wishes to turn us back from throwing ourselves at dangers too thoughtlessly and hotly, even when the danger is for the truth's sake. If we are overtaken, we should stand firm; if we are only about to be caught, we should withdraw, because the outcome is uncertain. As for the higher meaning, we must say this. Long ago Jesus walked openly among the Jews through the prophets, but now he no longer does. The word of God is not in them, and he has gone away from them into the wilderness. Of that wilderness it is said, "Many are the children of the desolate, more than of her who has the husband." He went near Ephraim, a name that is interpreted [as follows: being the brother of Manasseh, the elder, whose name means "from forgetfulness"]. For after the people "from forgetfulness" comes the "fruitfulness" of the nations. There he stayed with his disciples, and so he is present with "fruitfulness." At the birth of Ephraim, the Lord himself, [our] dispenser of grain, who humbled himself and became obedient to death, could say: "God has made me grow in the land of my humbling."

Fragment 87

On John 12:26. The one who follows him serves him by that very following. The one who serves him is his servant. For this reason, where the Word is, there the servant is too. But this announcement must not be understood in a bodily or local sense. Still, suppose there is, as among bodily places, a region of the upper air among the purest places, brighter with the fineness of light. Then someone would not be wrong to say that those who are in the body and who receive at the resurrection, each according to his worth, a body of surpassing and distinct glory, will be in those regions. Those regions are the most suitable for leisure spent in contemplating the things of God the Word. In thought, "where God the Word is, there his servant will be" is one thing. In fact it is the same as being honored by the Father. For through the honor that comes from the Father, the one honored comes to be where God the Word is.

Fragment 88

On John 12:27. At the time of the saving passion, all the powers of Satan together with their leader [alone] marched out against the Savior. When the Savior's soul saw them, it was troubled in a human way. It did not shrink from death, though even that would be human. What it feared was being defeated. For Christ allowed his soul at times to suffer what was its own. And since he was going to become the cause of eternal salvation for those who obey him, his soul was grieved and troubled on their account. Nor was it overpowered by the trouble, as someone might suppose. It was troubled only for an instant, and that is what the word "now" means. As soon as the trouble began it also ceased, and, so to speak, it was a mere point of time. Notice also that he himself prays that the contest against the evil powers arrayed against him might take place not over a stretch of time but in the "now." That was enough for the soul of Jesus to conquer the whole power of the evil one.

Fragment 89

His suffering on the cross was the judgment of this whole world. He “made peace through the blood of his cross, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.” With a triumph on the wood he stripped off the rulers and authorities, and he sat down in the heavenly places, restoring all things to the end that suits and fits each one. The plan worked out on the cross held together the judgment of every single being. So when the time of his suffering drew near, he said, “Now is the judgment of this world.”

Fragment 90

The suffering of our Savior took place for the cleansing of [those foreknown], among whom the world was about to be judged. That is why it was said, “Now is the judgment of this world.” It is as if he were saying: “This is the time when those who judge the world will be shown.” Or, since the tyrant was about to be cast down at the time of the saving passion, the words were spoken, “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out,” or perhaps this refers to the outer darkness. They convict him [that is, the crowd] of ignorance about the prophets, and they show that their knowledge of the Scriptures is not exact. They have taken from such words the idea that the Christ remains forever. But the mystery of death that comes in between, and the brief separation of the soul from the body, they neither understood nor examined closely. They ought to have known the reason. Two comings of Christ were prophesied. The crowd of the Jews hoped for the more glorious one, which will happen at the end of the age. The one that comes before it they did not understand at all. This is why their house is left to them.

Fragment 91

To everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance. So also from the one who does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away. Suppose someone receives the mina and wraps it up in a napkin. He will hear, “The light is among you for a little while longer.” For the words “Take the mina from him” are just about to be spoken, since “the one who is unrighteous in little is unrighteous also in much.” One might also explain the passage in this way. As the kingdom of God was among the Jews, so the light was also among them. They did not render the fruits that belong to the kingdom of God, and so they heard, “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that produces its fruits.” In the same way, the light was among them, but they did not walk in it so as to avoid being overtaken by darkness. So after a short time the light that was in them was taken away from them. It was given to the nation that produces the fruits of the light, which has become like the stars of heaven and is called the light of the world. That nation has received this from the one who said, “I am the light of the world.”

Fragment 92

On John 12:39–40. Holy Scripture knows that we have free will. It blames sinners as people who are at fault through their own doing, and it praises those who keep the divine commandment as people who deserve praise through their own doing. Listen to what it says in Deuteronomy: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you, except to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and his ordinances, all that I command you today, so that it may be well with you?" And in Micah: "Has it been told you, O man, what is good? Or what does the Lord seek from you, except to do justice and love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God?" As far as these texts go, then, each of us can become righteous or unrighteous. So you will understand "He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts" as referring to the evil one, as was said before: he blinded the eyes of some and crippled their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes, and would not understand with their heart, and would not turn, and the Lord would not heal them. For the text does not say "that they might not turn and he might heal them" in the same way it says "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart." So the one who blinds the eyes and hardens the heart is one person, and the one who heals those who turn, and those who are broken in heart, and the blind, is another.

The apostle says the same thing in the second letter to the Corinthians: "And if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled among those among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine through." It is no surprise that people who have given themselves over to the evil one through their sins are blinded in their eyes by him, and have their own hearts hardened at his will, since he does everything so that they will not see with their eyes, understand with their heart, and turn. As for the words "For this reason they could not believe," we must say the following. Take the man blind from birth, whom our Savior later healed. If someone said of him, "He cannot see, because he is blind," he would not mean that it was impossible for him ever to see. It was possible, since Jesus, who opens the eyes of the blind, grants sight to the blind, so that those who until then could not see would see later. In the same way, those who at one time could not believe because their eyes had been blinded by the evil one were not unable to believe if they came to Jesus, said "Son of David, have mercy on us," and asked to receive their sight. As for the fact that the

passage in the Gospel is not worded exactly as it stands in the prophet, that is no surprise. The writers who served the words of the New Covenant did this in many places, as we have observed elsewhere. In any case, the words of Isaiah carry the same force as those set down in the Gospel.

Fragment 93

On John 12:44. In the passage before us we should notice that two things are said about the Savior. The first is what comes first: believing in him comes first. The second is what comes second, and it follows along the way: this goes beyond believing. It is to behold the Word, and in beholding the Word to behold the Father. Believing reaches the whole multitude of those who come to him in godliness. But beholding the Word, and perceiving the Father in him, no longer reaches all who believe, but only the pure in heart. This is how I understand the saying, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father." The person who turns the power of sight in his bodily eyes on the body of Jesus has not thereby seen the Father, who is Jesus' God. I think a person also needed time and training together with him in order to see Jesus in this way, and in seeing the Son to behold the Father as well. That is why, when Philip said, "Show us the Father, and that is enough for us," Jesus said, "I have been with you so long a time, and you have not known me? The one who has seen me has seen the Father." Now consider, if you can, the difference between believing and beholding, and look closely enough to grasp why the saying "The one who believes in me does not believe in me but in the one who sent me" is not worded like the saying "And the one who beholds me beholds the one who sent me," and why the second is not put in a way similar to the first, "The one who believes in me does not believe in me but in the one who sent me."

For the one who believes in the Son believes not in the Son only but in the Father of all, who is God. But the one who beholds the Word, the Wisdom and the Truth does not behold this alone but the Father also. I think that the mystery being made known is great. It involves first believing in the Son and second beholding him. To show this, the words "Jesus cried out and said" were set before "The one who believes in me and beholds me," for the voice that spoke of these things was a great and mysterious one. That it is possible to believe the truth and yet not to behold it, the evangelist will make clear when he says, "Jesus was saying to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you remain in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" Notice carefully that he says to those who had believed, "If you remain in my word, you will know the truth," as to people who had not yet come to know the truth but had only believed it.

Fragment 94

On John 12:46. The true light shone, for the Savior of the world had come. But they were unwilling to look steadily at it or to walk in the radiance that shines from his teachings. So the darkness, as one would expect, overtook them, exacting a penalty for the wickedness that already held them. This may fittingly be called being blinded and hardened. And just as the one who is willing to walk in the light also comes to know where he is going, so the one who is unwilling to walk in the light finds himself going on in the dark, and wretchedly finishes the road of the blind and hardened. It was said earlier that the lightning flash of the Lord's saving teaching branded the Jews as blind and hardened. It made the damage and the blindness that were already in the eyes of their souls more evident and plain. For just as the visible sun, sending out its bright rays, exposes those whose eyes are diseased, so too the sun of the mind, having marked out for the world the light that never sets and knows no evening, and having flashed the brightness of his own deity through miracles worthy of God and beyond words, exposed even more fully the darkness that had already seized the eyes of the souls of the senseless Jews, and their blindness.

Fragment 95

After this you will ask, because the words were spoken together, “What shall I say and what shall I speak?”, whether saying and speaking differ, or whether they are the same thing, stated in parallel. So set out the passages where “He said” is recorded, and examine them alongside those where “He spoke” is used. It may also help the inquiry that throughout the whole account of creation God is never recorded as having “spoken,” while “He said” is written of him. Consider too what is said again and again in Leviticus: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying.” See whether you can claim that “said” signifies a command given from authority, and “spoke” signifies teaching. “And I know that his commandment is eternal life.” One might ask here why it is not said that God’s commandment secures eternal life, but that it is, in its very substance, eternal life itself. It is like knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent. So each of these is eternal life. But if God’s commandment is eternal life, and God’s commandment is in the righteous person, who lives blessedly because of it, then that life is worth choosing.

Fragment 96

The first one, the one before the consummation, is indeed best … he himself will wash them.

Fragment 97

But he did not begin with Peter … to remain in what was wrongly judged.

Fragment 98

The words of the prophecy have been paraphrased … because this is what a person does who lashes out at someone with his heel.

Fragment 99

For he says that this is what is going to happen … and through this the knowledge about me.

Fragment 100

Note in what way, among the matters under examination … is blameworthy when done with deceit.

Fragment 101

The morsel given by Jesus … Satan entered into him.

Fragment 102

Not only in the simpler sense did he go out … But let us, being people of the day, be sober.

Fragment 103

It is written: No one knew the Son … beholding as in a mirror, they are transformed into the same image.

Fragment 104

From this one can see also the similar sayings … the wisdom of God from such a teacher.

Fragment 105

This seems to contradict what was said earlier. Above he says that there is no need to prepare, but here he says, "If I go, I will prepare a place for you." What he means is this: as far as the abundance of good things is concerned, which the Father prepared by his foreknowledge so that those who live well and with complete care may dwell continually in the good things prepared, there is no need for them to be made ready by me. What is needed is that you show the fitting disposition. Nevertheless, I become the one who prepares these things for you and secures them for you. For what is "I am coming again and will take you to myself"? He says, in effect: when I have given you the way up into the heavens and the opportunity to enjoy the same good things, so that the one who established the cause of these things is revealed to you, I myself will come again. (He means his second coming from heaven.) Then I will take you and go up into the heavens, where I myself am, so that you may be with me and enjoy the same things as I do. For as Paul says, "If we endure, we shall also reign with him."

Fragment 106

Thomas seems to have had something exact and carefully tested about him. This is shown by what he says. I think he said it not because he distrusted those who claimed to have seen the Lord, but because he was on guard in case it was a phantom. He was remembering the words, "Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he.'" I think the other apostles felt the same, but Thomas most of all. That the other apostles also had a similar thought when they saw Jesus is clear from what is written: "They thought it was a phantom." He answered and said to them, "Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have bones and flesh, as you see that I have." As for how it is said to him, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing," and as for the name Thomas, this could be said. Of those who would be counted worthy of a greater vision from the Savior, at his transfiguration on the mountain and of those seen in glory, Moses and Elijah, he changed the names. The names of the rest he did not change, because their own names were enough in themselves to show each one's character. It is not our purpose now to speak of the other apostles. We speak of Thomas, whose name is translated "Didymus" (Twin). The reason is that he was a kind of twin in the word, setting down divine things in two ways. He was an imitator of Christ, who spoke to those outside in parables, but privately explained everything to his own disciples. It is not out of place to say that the true disciples of Christ succeed in this twofold preparation in speaking, and perhaps Thomas already had it then in an outstanding degree. One might also say that the translation of this name alone is recorded because the evangelist wanted Greeks who read the Gospel to notice the particular meaning of the name. It is the only name interpreted in this special way, so that they might find the reason why his name is also given in Greek.

Fragment 110

It would have been more proper to say “is” of God the Word. But since he wanted to show the existence of the Word as distinct from the incarnation, which happened at a certain time, he put “was” in place of “is.” We must understand that the strict time-meanings of verbs should not be applied to eternal things. That is, “was,” “is,” and “will be” are not to be taken that way. For God the Word is the Son of the Father and is eternal God. The verbs used of him must not be taken as indicating time, since he himself is not under time. A verb, as Aristotle says, is that which indicates time besides its meaning.

Fragment 111

He used fitting verbs: “became” for the flesh, and “was” for the deity. The phrase “through him” is used not to suggest service, but to show his working together with the Father. It also shows that nothing that exists is excluded from being made through him.

Fragment 112

For the life-giving power in him is not only able to give life. It is also able to fill human souls with knowledge and to drive out ignorance. Paul was ignorant of Christ when he was persecuting him, but when he was lit up by the light of life he knew the one he was persecuting. And the robber, suffering on the cross, was enlightened and knew the life. For the Savior says, “No one can come to me unless the Father draws him.”

Fragment 113

The purpose of the one who sent him was that all should believe. If not all believed, and did not receive the illumination, [still no one could say that the light did not rise for this purpose]. For the prophets before John became witnesses of the light so that the Hebrews would believe through them. But John, who came after them, bears witness to the Savior's coming so that not only the Hebrews would believe but also all those from the nations. As the prophet says, "I will pour out from my Spirit on all flesh." And David says, "All the nations will serve him."

Fragment 114

"Of bloods" means that they have their birth from material things. To Peter, for example, the Savior says, "Flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in the heavens." (And in another way:) Those are called sons of God who do not offer the sacrifices of the law "from bloods". That is, they do not please God through slaughter and the pouring out of blood. "From the will of the flesh" refers to those who do everything in order to appear righteous to men. These people are set forth as pleasing God "by the will of flesh". They circumcise the flesh and openly want to live as Jews, but they do not care for the heart or for the hidden Judaism. "From the will of a man" refers to those who, under the pretext of human philosophy, keep away from evil and take up virtue.

Fragment 115

When he says “He has cried out,” he means that he proclaimed the coming with boldness and freedom, and without any holding back. The “cry” is not a matter of how loudly he spoke, but of the intensity of his understanding. For the one who announces great teachings, as he should, in keeping with his understanding, speaks them out in a loud voice.

Fragment 116

"Has come to be" must be taken to mean "will come to be." For this is the habit of Scripture, as we have said. And "did not lay hold of [or: overcome]" must be taken to mean "will not lay hold of [or: overcome]."

Fragment 117

John is a prophet and a lamp of the light, training beforehand and accustoming the eye of the soul of the one who wants to be enlightened. In the same way he is also “the voice of one crying.” The text calls the Word the one who cries, and John the voice. It is necessary for a voice to come before the word. The work of a voice is to make clear what is signified. He calls “wilderness” the soul that has been deprived of divine teaching. What, then, does the voice of the one who cries command to the deserted souls? “Make straight the way of the Lord,” so that it may be ready to receive him.

Fragment 118

When John bore witness about the light, he knew that the light was also God the Word. And this Word is present to every rational being. The thinking [part] of us, which is also called the ruling faculty, is the most central part of us. For there is the inner word, by which we are rational. Christ oversees it as God and Word, he who was about to come to be baptized. "This one, whom you do not know, stands in the midst of you," entering into the hearts and the kidneys of all.

Fragment 119

All who were present saw, but not all believed. Some say that not everyone beheld the Spirit, but only John and those who were more reasonably disposed. For even if they saw with their physical eyes, it was not for that reason altogether plain to everyone. The prophets and Moses beheld many other things. At the transfiguration on the mountain, not all the disciples had the benefit of the sight. Nor did all share in the appearance after the resurrection. Much more, then, the Jews at the baptism did not all see.

Fragment 120

It is not possible to see this with the senses, but only with a mind that looks at the angels approaching in order to serve Jesus, ascending and descending. The word “Amen” can be found sometimes single and sometimes doubled. The word is Hebrew, signifying [text missing]. For “Amen” is the same as “truly” and [text missing]. Many Psalms that have at the end “Let it be, let it be” have “Amen, Amen” in the Hebrew. So it is likely that the Savior says, as a prayer, “Let it be, let it be,” that you be found faithful enough to see “the heaven opened,” and the rest of the promise. “Amen” is also equal to [text missing]. In Matthew, for example, Jesus says, “Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here.” In Luke it reads, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing there who will not taste death.” That is, “Amen” is equal to [text missing] and to [text missing], as in “Truly I say to you” that this will happen.

Fragment 121

The whip made of rope by Jesus stood for the sins of the lawbreakers. By these sins they were driven out, beaten by Jesus. Scripture names sins "rope" in many places: "Ropes of sinners have wound around me, and their hands weave injustice together." And in Proverbs: "Each one is bound tight by the cords of his own sins," that is, he is punished. So they were whipped by Jesus and driven out of the temple with the rope they had plaited themselves. The just judge could not weave the punishment against the ungodly from anywhere else. He could only bring it from the very things by which they themselves had sinned and acted lawlessly.

Fragment 121a

It must be said that water differs from the Spirit only in concept, not in substance. The Savior says, “He who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from his belly.” He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive. If this was said of the Spirit as water flowing out like rivers, then the water will differ from the Spirit only in concept. So, just as someone is begotten from the Savior (wise from wisdom, true from truth, and life from life, since the source and begetting of all is one), so also from the Holy Spirit one is begotten holy and spiritual. He is cleansed by the water, and watered so that he bears fruit. In this way he is born of water and Spirit.

Fragment 122

Matthew spoke of the place which is ruled, in which these people receive their inheritance. John and Luke named it from God who rules. Even in our ordinary usage a kingdom is sometimes indicated by the one who rules, and sometimes by the place. So we say, “the kingdom of the Romans,” and “the king of Egypt.”

Fragment 123

The Spirit visits only those who are earnest and have faith and virtue. From the worthless, who have made themselves strangers to him, he stays far away. “Far” and “near” should not be understood in terms of place. They refer to the vessels [that have been cleansed] to receive his illuminations, or have not been. The words “Where it wills it blows” show that the Spirit is a substance. Some suppose that he is an activity of God, without a subsistence of his own. That is why the apostle, after listing the gifts of the Spirit, added, “But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one as he wills.” There is also the saying in Acts, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” And again: “As they were fasting,” it says, “and ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.” And the prophet Agabus says, “The Holy Spirit says this: They will bind the man whose belt this is,” and so on.

Fragment 124

This seems to be true of people who are neither exceedingly wicked nor perfect in virtue. Because they are deceived in both directions, one can see from their doing the works of darkness that they love the darkness. Human beings have free will, and ought to welcome the light; but they do the opposite and welcome the darkness, while fleeing the light. The statement that they loved the darkness more than the light should not be taken as a comparison. They did not love the light at all, since they hated it, because their understanding of it is correct. Those who do wicked things hate the light, and if they hate the light, they do not love the darkness merely in comparison. The apostle's saying about wicked people is similar: that they are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." And in the Psalms: "The worthless man has loved evil more than goodness, and injustice more than speaking righteousness."

Fragment 125

The bride is the human soul. Of itself it is not able to bring forth any good thing. But since it is by nature receptive from another, in the manner of a woman, it brings forth the virtues, both practical and intellectual. The bridegroom, the one who sows these good things in her, is none other than Christ Jesus, to whom I bear witness and whom I baptize. The friend is the one who stands beside him with firm agreement and steady faith in him. For none of those who are with Jesus himself is shaken. So also Moses, living in virtue, heard God say, "But you yourself stand with me." For God does not stand with us; rather we stand with him, as he offers us from himself an immovable standing.

Fragment 126

Whoever does not have a heavenly mind but is earthly is called “made of dust,” and is said to bear the image of the one made of dust. So even if he ever claims to have wisdom, it is earthly, soulish, and demonic, as the apostle James says.

Fragment 127

On John 3:35. Again we hear “loves” in a rather human sense. But there is a natural law: one kind of love goes toward what is begotten, and another goes toward what is loved in a different way. If God loves righteousness, he loves it as God, as in the words, “I am God, who loves righteousness and hates robbery that comes from injustice.” He does not love it as a man does, in order to have it in himself and to do something in keeping with it. The Father also loves the Son as truth, wisdom and holiness, as David says, “For behold, you have loved truth.” He loves the Son as Father, not as God. But he loves the world as God and as its Creator, not as Father.

Fragment 128

On John 4:10. It is also possible to speak allegorically. Jacob's well is the teaching of Moses given through the law. His sons and his flocks drank from it: the twelve patriarchs and the peoples born from them. Those who drink from this spring thirst again. That is, as time goes on they thirst, and they come to the teaching of the gospel, which saves and which has no successor. "For heaven and earth will pass away," as the Savior says, "but my words will never pass away."

Fragment 129

On John 5:13. For even the mere sight of the one who is envied knows how to throw no small spark among those who begrudge him.

Fragment 130

On John 6:51. For this reason he would have mixed with us . . . . and with those [who are] becoming [companions] of the demons.

Fragment 131

On John 9:8. He was a beggar because he lacked the necessities of life and was weak. Such people you could also find among Greeks and barbarians, begging for the benefit and provision of Christ's truth and for knowledge of his rich insights. Jesus freed this man not only from blindness but also from begging. For along with sight he gave him whatever was necessary for the salvation of his soul. Here blindness is the cause of begging; in the Acts it is lameness.

Fragment 132

On John 9:16. If the one who does not keep the sabbath is not from God, then neither are your priests, who profane the sabbath by circumcision, from God.

Fragment 133

On John 9:21. By making him a credible witness, they [thus set him forward, so that they themselves might be shown to have been mistaken]. When Christ opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not open those of a small child but of one of full age, so that he could both see and, as a man, speak in his own defense. The other blind people who received their sight were of the same kind.

Fragment 134

On John 9:27. “You did not hear” stands for “You were unwilling to accept what was said.” And “Why do you want to hear again?” amounts to this: “If you do not accept what has been said, why do you want it reported to you again, to no purpose?”

Fragment 135

On John 9:31. If God does not hear sinners, how did Christ teach sinners to pray, saying, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive our debtors"? God hears those who are inclining toward repentance, even if they have not yet stopped sinning. And if God did not hear sinners, he would not have eaten and drunk with tax collectors and prostitutes. Or else it is the case that God does not hear the person who prays that God would accomplish works like the works of Jesus [if that person is a sinner].

Fragment 136

On John 10:31. If they had picked up stones before, they picked them up again. And I think that whoever speaks evil of someone is throwing stones at him. They spoke evil of him, and a division arose among the Jews because of him. So once again these people, having carried the weight of their slanderous words, threw stones at him, real stones. That is why Wisdom says, “The one who throws a stone up high throws it on his own head.” And the psalmist says, “His injustice will come down on his own head.” The unjust man who speaks against the heights is throwing at the heights.

Fragment 137

On John 11:9. Just as the day is divided into twelve hours, so the twelve patriarchs and the company of the apostles match the hours of the day in number. They have Christ, our God, as their sun. He is also the day that the mind perceives, and from him come the words and the illumination of the knowledge of them.

Fragment 138

And again they were seeking to kill him, as has often been said. Now they had confirmed their decision and [were treating it as a deed already done]. Again he saves himself in a human way, and he does this continually. The reason he gave was that his hour had not yet come. So now he stays in the wilderness, in a city called Ephraim. He remained there with his disciples, waiting for the right moment and sparing them from destruction.

Fragment 139

The one who follows him serves him, and in this way is his servant. For this reason, wherever the Word is, there too is that person. The promise must not be understood in a bodily or local sense. Yet if someone does take it to mean a place, he would not be wrong. For in the resurrection, those who excel in brightness receive, each according to his worth, places in the purest regions of the upper air, clearer than the fineness of light itself. These are the places best suited for leisure to contemplate the truths of God the Word.

Fragment 140

“That…” The word “one” is used in many ways: by likeness and in many other ways. It is used of agreement, when Scripture says, “the multitude of those who believed had one heart and one soul.” It is used of likeness, as when it says, “For we were all baptized in one Spirit into one body.” This is by likeness of nature. We have Adam as our beginning and head by the natural origin of our birth, and so we are all said to have one body. In the same way we also give Christ the title of head, through the divine new birth. That new birth became for us a pattern of his death and resurrection, since he rose as firstborn from the dead. We give him the title of head as a foreshadowing of his resurrection. “Of him we are members in part, and body,” being born again through the Spirit into incorruption.

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