

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

“Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than the truth itself.”

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Preface, 2

“In his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is.”

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*

“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 50

“...The mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 2

“What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?”

Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*, 7

The earliest reference to all 27 books of the New Testament canon:

“But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing “trumpets hammered thin,” the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles [and Revelation], and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, “I think God displays us apostles last,” and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations.”

Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, 7.1

The literal and allegorical meaning of Scripture:

“The particular points that have been clearly delivered in the apostolic teaching include the oneness of God ... and, finally, the fact that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, and have such meaning, not only that which is apparent at first sight [the *literal* meaning], but also another [the *spiritual* or *allegorical* meaning], which escapes the notice of most people. For the scriptural words are written down as the forms of certain mysteries and icons of divine things. In relation to this, there is one opinion that prevails throughout the church, namely that the whole law is indeed spiritual; but that the spiritual meaning which the law conveys is not known to all, but only to those on whom the grace of the Holy Spirit has been gifted in the word of wisdom and knowledge.”

—Origen, *On First Principles*, Preface 4, 8

On The Incarnation of Christ:

“Now, if our having shown above that Christ possessed a rational soul should cause a difficulty to any one, seeing we have frequently proved throughout all our discussions that the nature of souls is capable both of good and evil, the difficulty will be explained in the following way. That the nature, indeed, of His soul was the same as that of all others cannot be doubted, otherwise it could not be called a soul were it not truly one. But since the power of choosing good and evil is within the reach of all, this soul which belonged to Christ elected to love righteousness, so that in proportion to the immensity of its love it clung to it unchangeably and inseparably, so that firmness of purpose, and immensity of affection, and an inextinguishable warmth of love, destroyed all susceptibility for alteration and change; and that which formerly depended upon the will was changed by the power of long custom into nature; and so we must believe that there existed in Christ a human and rational soul, without supposing that it had any feeling or possibility of sin. To explain the matter more fully, it will not appear absurd to make use of an illustration, although on a subject of so much difficulty it is not easy to obtain suitable illustrations. However, if we may speak without offense, the metal iron is capable of cold and heat. If, then, a mass of iron be kept constantly in the fire, receiving the heat through all its pores and veins, and the fire being continuous and the iron never removed from it, it become wholly converted into the latter; could we at all say of this, which is by nature a mass of iron, that when placed in the fire, and incessantly burning, it was at any time capable of admitting cold? On the contrary, because it is more consistent with truth, do we not rather say, what we often see happening in furnaces, that it has become wholly fire, seeing nothing but fire is visible in it? And if any one were to attempt to touch or handle it, he would experience the action not of iron, but of fire. In this way, then, that soul which, like an iron in the fire, has been perpetually placed in the Word, and perpetually in the Wisdom, and perpetually in God, is God in all that it does, feels, and understands, and therefore can be called neither convertible nor mutable, inasmuch as, being incessantly heated, it possessed immutability from its union with the Word of God.”

—Origen, *On First Principles*, 2.6.5-6