

Some time after, Origen conceived an ardent desire to visit Rome, on which ancient city he looked with great veneration. Having resigned the care of the Catechumens to St. Heraclius he set forward, and in his journey met with a version of the Scriptures which never yet were published. Upon this discovery he determined to collect as many versions of the sacred books as practical, and to publish them together in one volume. After visiting the "eternal city," at which he made no delay, he returned directly to Alexandria and resumed his usual position. The number of converts becoming every day greater and greater, he soon found it impossible to discharge the duties of his chair together with the work in contemplation; he, therefore, again called upon the assistance of St. Heraclius, who might instruct the younger Catechumens, and then he began his labours of collecting the Scriptures. This was to be a great work. After much labour, and extensive research, he at length completed the task which was subsequently given to the world under the title of the "Hexaply." This volume was executed with so much precision—with so strict an adherence to the Hebrew letter, that it was pronounced, even by the inimical Jews, as the most excellent edition that could be produced. Not excepting his direct enemies, the highest encomiums were passed upon Origen by all parties, for the superior merits of this work. It was looked upon by the Church as a most invaluable acquisition, and what was most wonderful, it was adopted by the heads of the Synagogue itself.

About this period Origen drew to the faith by his forcible defence of Catholicism one of the most learned and most opulent of the followers of the Marcian heresy. His name was Ambrose. It is owing to this convert principally that the world derived so much intelligence in the multitudinous writings of Origen. By him the learned Egyptian was induced to begin various works on both sacred and profane subjects, which otherwise would never have had existence.

Influenced, perhaps, by the example of this remarkable personage, numerous others of as high standing sought out the abode of Origen, in order that they might ascertain by hearing all that by sword was attributed to Origen's genius. Now began, with lightning rapidity, to spread the same

of the resistless defender of the Faith. 'Twere difficult to state with language, adequate, how great was the wonderment and reverence in which, by the literary world, the name of Origen was held. It far surpassed that of the most renowned men of the age. From every quarter of civilization, philosophers and sages were seen coming to enjoy his conversation. By the Christians he was regarded almost as a prophet, and by the philosophers he was considered as an honour to their body. His reputation penetrated even to the Emperor's palaces, and Origen, in one word, was the sun of the literary system round which all the other lights in faintish lustre rolled.

Seeing the vast number of erudite by which he began to be surrounded, Origen was convinced of the necessity of preparing himself for every species of opponent; but conscious to himself of his deep knowledge in ecclesiastical matter, he thought that his best course would be to apply himself to the acquirement of Philosophy, and thus render himself enabled to defy the most sophisticated and consummate of his adversaries.

He soon met them fearlessly, and always returned victorious. So ably did he defend himself upon every occasion, that he gained their best affections, and had several of them dedicating to him their writings. His disputes, however, with the Philosophers, were nothing when compared to those of the heretics. To acquire a knowledge of their opinions was no easy labour. He was consequently forced to travel through various parts for the purpose of conversing with the leaders, and of accumulating their manuscripts. His greatest delight was in combatting the Valentiniens, Marcionites, Basilidians, the whole of whom he attacked together. Nor were these all. The Jews were his darkest foes, and were terribly envious of his great superiority. He, notwithstanding, entered the lists with them also—showed clearly their misrepresentations of the prophecies, and proved most solidly that Christ was the true "expected of the everlasting hills!"

He was engaged in matters of this kind for a considerable time, when a war, breaking out in Alexandria, compelled him to take shelter in Cæsaria. The Bishops here, entertaining a most extraordinary esteem for his character, requested of him to give instruction in their churches. This