

church ; and the synod issued against him a violent invective. To this document Origen alludes, when, in commencing once more at Cæsarea the continuation of his commentary on the gospel of John, he says, " That God who once led his people out of Egypt, had also delivered him from that land ; but his enemy, in this recent letter truly at variance with the spirit of the gospel, had assailed him with the utmost virulence, and roused against him all the winds of malice in Egypt."

This personal quarrel became now a conflict between the opposite doctrinal parties. The churches in Palestine, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Achaia, took the side of Origen ; the church of Rome declared against him. How Origen judged of those who stigmatized him as a heretic, appears from a remark, which he makes after citing 1 Cor. 1, 25 : " If *I* had said," he observes, " the foolishness of God, how would the lovers of censure accuse me ! How should I be accused by them, even though I had said a thousand times what they themselves hold to be true, yet had not rightly said this single thing, — how should I be accused by them for saying, ' the foolishness of God ' ! " In his letter of vindication against the synod which had excommunicated him, he quotes some of the denunciations of the prophets against wicked priests and potentates, and then adds : " But we should far rather pity than hate them, far rather pray for them than curse them : for we are made to bless, and not to curse."

The efforts of Origen's enemies only contributed to extend the sphere of his activity. His removal to Palestine was certainly important in its consequences, an opportunity being thus given him of laboring also from that point, for the diffusion of a liberal scientific spirit in the church ;