

small party who still adhered to the old opinion, appeared to be heretical ; if the case really was, that the prevailing voice had expressed itself thus early against them. Hence it is explained how the convention of a *great synod* came to be thought necessary for the purpose of settling these disputes. As they could not come to an agreement, Origen was sent for ; and it was brought about by his influence, that the opponents of the soul's natural immortality confessed and renounced their error.

Origen, who, on account of some particular opinions, was by a great part of the church stigmatized as a heretic and enemy to the evangelical scheme of faith, is said in the last days of a life consecrated to labor and conflict in behalf of that which he considered to be the cause of Christ, to have refuted by his conduct the accusations of his adversaries, and shown how he was ready to sacrifice all for the faith,—how he belonged to that number who are willing to hate even their own life for the Lord's sake.

As the fury of the enemies of Christianity, in the Decian persecution, was directed particularly against *those* men who were distinguished among the Christians for their station, their wealth, or their knowledge, and their activity in promulgating the faith, it was natural that such a man as Origen should become a shining mark for fanatical cruelty. After a steadfast confession, he was thrown into prison, and here it was attempted, in conformity with the plan of the Decian persecution, to overcome the infirmity of age, by exquisite and gradually increasing tortures. But the faith which he bore at heart, sustained the weakness of old age, and gave him power to withstand every trial. After having suffered so much, he wrote from his prison a letter full of consolation, of en-