

Clement of Alexandria

The Stromata, or Miscellanies

Book Three

CHAPTER ONE -- ON MARRIAGE

The Valentinians, who hold that the union of man and woman is derived from the divine emanation in heaven above, approve of marriage. The followers of Basilides, on the other hand, say that when the apostles asked whether it was not better not to marry, the Lord replied: "Not all can receive this saying; there are some eunuchs who are so from their birth, others are so of necessity." And their explanation of this saying is roughly as follows: Some men, from their birth, have a natural sense of repulsion from a woman; and those who are naturally so constituted do well not to marry. Those who are eunuchs of necessity are those theatrical ascetics who only control themselves because they have a passion for the limelight. [And those who have suffered accidental castration have become eunuchs of necessity.] Those, then, who are eunuchs of necessity have no sound reason for their abstinence from marriage. But those who for the sake of the eternal kingdom have made themselves eunuchs derive this idea, they say, from a wish to avoid the distractions involved in marriage, because they are afraid of having to waste time in providing for the necessities of life.

And they say that by the words "it is better to marry than to burn" the apostle means this: "Do not cast your soul into the fire, so that you have to endure night and day and go in fear lest you should fall from continence. For a soul which has to concentrate upon 'endurance has lost hope.'" In his Ethics, Isidore says in these very words: "Abstain, then, from a quarrelsome woman lest you are distracted from the grace of God. But when you have rejected the fire of the seed, then pray with an undisturbed conscience. And when your prayer of thanksgiving," he says, "descends to a prayer of request, and your request is not that in future you may do right, but that you may do no wrong, then marry. But perhaps a man is too young or poor or suffers from weak health, and has not the will to marry as the apostle's saying suggests. Such a man should not separate himself from his brother Christian. He should say, I have come into the sanctuary, I can suffer nothing. And if he has a presentiment that he may fall, he may say, Brother, lay your hand on me lest I sin, and he will receive help both spiritually and

physically. Let him only wish to accomplish what is right and he will achieve his object.

"Sometimes, however, we say with our mouth 'I wish not to sin' while our mind is really inclined towards sin. Such a man does not do what he wishes for fear lest any punishment should be in store for him. Human nature has some wants which are necessary and natural, and others which are only natural. To be clothed is necessary and natural; sexual intercourse is natural but not necessary."

I have quoted these remarks to prove in error those Basilidians who do not live purely, supposing either that they have the power even to commit sin because of their perfection, or indeed that they will be saved by nature even if they sin in this life because they possess an innate election. For the original teachers of their doctrines do not allow one to do the same as they are now doing. They ought not, therefore, to take as a covering cloak the name of Christ and, by living lewder lives than the most uncontrolled heathen, bring blasphemy upon his name. "For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers" as far as the words "whose end shall be like their works."

Continence is an ignoring of the body in accordance with the confession of faith in God. For continence is not merely a matter of sexual abstinence, but applies also to the other things for which the soul has an evil desire because it is not satisfied with the necessities of life. There is also a continence of the tongue, of money, of use, and of desire. It does not only teach us to exercise self-control; it is rather that self-control is granted to us, since it is a divine power and grace. Accordingly I must declare what is the opinion of our people about this subject. Our view is that we welcome as blessed the state of abstinence from marriage in those to whom this has been granted by God. We admire monogamy and the high standing of single marriage, holding that we ought to share suffering with another and "bear one another's burdens," lest anyone who thinks he stands securely should himself fall. It is of second marriage that the apostle says, If you burn, marry.

CHAPTER TWO

But the followers of Carpocrates and Epiphanes think that wives should be common property. Through them the worst calumny has become current against the Christian name. This fellow Epiphanes, whose writings I have at hand, was a son of Carpocrates and his mother was named Alexandria. On his father's side he was an

Alexandrine, on his mother's a Cephallenian. He lived in all only seventeen years, and at Same in Cephallenia was honoured as a god. There a temple of vast blocks of stone was erected and dedicated to him, with altars, sacred precincts, and a "museum." The Cephallenians gather at the temple every new moon and celebrate with sacrifices the day when Epiphanes became a god as his birthday; they pour libations to him, feast in his honour, and sing his praises. He was educated by his father in the general education and in Platonism, and he was instructed in the knowledge of the Monad, which is the root-origin of the Carpocratians' heresy.

This is what he says, then, in the book Concerning Righteousness: "The righteousness of God is a kind of universal fairness and equality. There is equality in the heaven which is stretched out in all directions and contains the entire earth in its circle. The night reveals equally all the stars. The light of the sun, which is the cause of the daytime and the father of light, God pours out from above upon the earth in equal measure on all who have power to see. For all see alike. There is no distinction between rich and poor, people and governor, stupid and clever, female and male, free men and slaves. Even the irrational animals are not accorded any different treatment; but in just the same way God pours out from above sunlight equally upon all the animals. He establishes his righteousness to both good and bad by seeing that none is able to get more than his share and to deprive his neighbour, so that he has twice the light his neighbour has. The sun causes food to grow for all living beings alike; the universal righteousness is given to all equally. In this respect there is no difference between the entire species of oxen and any individual oxen, between the species of pigs and particular pigs, between the species of sheep and particular sheep, and so on with all the rest. In them the universality of God's fairness is manifest. Furthermore all plants of whatever sort are sown equally in the earth. Common nourishment grows for all beasts which feed on the earth's produce; to all it is alike. It is regulated by no law, but rather is harmoniously available to all through the gift of him who gives it and makes it to grow.

"And for birth there is no written law (for otherwise it would have been transcribed). All beings beget and give birth alike, having received by God's righteousness an innate equality. The Creator and Father of all with his own righteousness appointed this, just as he gave equally the eye to all to enable them to see. He did not make a distinction between female and male, rational and irrational, nor between anything and anything else at all; rather he shared out sight equally and universally. It was given to all alike by a single command. As the laws (he says) could not punish men who were

ignorant of them, they taught men that they were transgressors. But the laws, by pre-supposing the existence of private property, cut up and destroyed the universal equality decreed by the divine law." As he does not understand the words of the apostle where he says "Through the law I knew sin," he says that the idea of Mine and Thine came into existence through the laws so that the earth and money were no longer put to common use. And so also with marriage. "For God has made vines for all to use in common, since they are not protected against sparrows and a thief; and similarly corn and the other fruits. But the abolition, contrary to divine law, of community of use and equality begat the thief of domestic animals and fruits.

He brought female to be with male and in the same way united all animals. He thus showed righteousness to be a universal fairness and equality. But those who have been born in this way have denied the universality which is the corollary of their birth and say, 'Let him who has taken one woman keep her,' whereas all alike can have her, just as the other animals do." After this, which is quoted word for word, he again continues in the same spirit as follows: "With a view to the permanence of the race, he has implanted in males a strong and ardent desire which neither law nor custom nor any other restraint is able to destroy. For it is God's decree." And how can this man still be reckoned among our number when he openly abolishes both law and gospel by these words. The one says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The other says: "Everyone who looks lustfully has already committed adultery." The saying in the law, "Thou shalt not covet," It shows that one God is proclaimed by law, prophets, and gospel; for it says: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." But for a Jew the "neighbour" is not a Jew, for he is a brother and has the same spirit. Therefore it remains that "neighbour" means one of another race. But how can he not be a neighbour who is able to share in the same spirit? For Abraham is father not only of the Hebrews, but also of the Gentiles.

If the adulteress and he who committed fornication with her are punished with death, clearly the command which says "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife" speaks of the Gen- tiles, in order that anyone who, as the law directs, abstains from his neighbour's wife and from his sister may hear clearly from the Lord, "But I say unto you, Thou shalt not lust." The addition of the word "I," however, shows the stricter force of the commandment, and that Carpocrates fights against God, and Epiphanes likewise. The latter in the same notorious book, I mean Concerning Righteousness, writes in one passage as follows: "Consequently one must understand the saying 'Thou shalt not covet' as if the lawgiver was making a jest, to which

he added the even more comic words 'thy neighbour's goods'. For he himself who gave the desire to sustain the race orders that it is to be suppressed, though he removes it from no other animals. And by the words 'thy neighbour's wife' he says something even more ludicrous, since he forces what should be common property to be treated as a private possession."

These then are the doctrines of the excellent Carpocratians. These, so they say, and certain other enthusiasts for the same wickednesses, gather together for feasts (I would not call their meeting an Agape), men and women together. After they have sated their appetites ("on repletion Cypris, the goddess of love, enters," as it is said), then they overturn the lamps and so extinguish the light that the shame of their adulterous "righteousness" is hidden, and they have intercourse where they will and with whom they will. After they have practiced community of use in this love-feast, they demand by daylight of whatever women they wish that they will be obedient to the law of Carpocrates-it would not be right to say the law of God. Such, I think, is the law that Carpocrates must have given for the copulations of dogs and pigs and goats. He seems to me to have misunderstood the saying of Plato in the Republic that the women of all are to be common. Plato means that the unmarried are common for those who wish to ask them, as also the theatre is open to the public for all who wish to see, but that when each one has chosen his wife, then the married woman is no longer common to all.

In his book entitled *Magica* Xanthus says: "The Magi think it permissible to have sexual intercourse with mothers and daughters and sisters, and that wives are to be held in common, not by force and in secret, but both parties may agree when one man wishes to marry another's wife. "Of these and other similar sects Jude, I think, spoke prophetically in his letter- "In the same way also these dreamers" (for they do not seek to find the truth in the light of day) as far as the words "and their mouth speaks arrogant things."

CHAPTER THREE

If Plato himself and the Pythagoreans, as indeed later also followers of Marcion, regard birth as something evil (though the last named was far from thinking that wives were to be held in common), yet by the Marcionites nature is regarded as evil because it was created out of evil matter and by a just Creator. On this ground, that they do not wish to fill the world made by the Creator-God, they decide to abstain from marriage. Thus they are in opposition to their Maker and hasten towards him who is called the good God, but not to the

God, as they say, of the other kind. As they wish to leave nothing of their own behind them on this earth, they are continent, not of their own free choice, but from hatred of the Creator, being unwilling to use what he has made. But these folk, who in their blasphemous fight against God have abandoned natural reasoning, and despise the long-suffering and goodness of God, even if they do not wish to marry, use the food made by the Creator and breathe his air; for they are his works and dwell in his world. They say they have received the gospel of the knowledge of the Strange God; yet at least they ought to acknowledge gratitude to the Lord of the world because they receive this gospel on this earth.

But we shall give a detailed answer to these people when we discuss the doctrine of First Principles. The philosophers whom we have mentioned, from whom the Marcionites blasphemously derived their doctrine that birth is evil, on which they then plumed themselves as if it were their own idea, do not hold that it is evil by nature, but only for the soul which has perceived the truth. For they think the soul is divine and has come down here to this world as a place of punishment. In their view souls which have become embodied need to be purified. But this doctrine is not that of the Marcionites, but of those who believe that the souls are enclosed in bodies and change from this prison and undergo transmigration. There will be an opportunity to reply to these when we come to speak about the soul.

It is clear that Heraclitus regards birth as something evil when he says: "When men are born they are fain to live and suffer death," or rather go to their rest, "and they leave children who also suffer death." Empedocles is obviously in agreement with him when he says:

"When I saw the place, so strange it was, I wept and wailed."
And further:
"For out of the living he made the dead, changing their forms."
And again;
"O woe, unhappy race of mortals, wretched men!
Out of what kind of dissensions and groans were you born!"
And the Sibyl also says:
"Mortal men are ye, and fleshly, being nothing," like the poet who writes:
"Earth nurtures nothing weaker than a man."

Moreover Theognis shows that birth is evil when he speaks as follows:
"For mortals best it is not to be born at all

And never to see the rays of the bright sun,
But if born to pass the gates of Hades as soon as possible."
With this agrees also the tragic poet Euripides when he writes:
"Where a man is born we ought to assemble only to bewail His lot
in coming into so much evil.
But when one dies and comes to the end of troubles
Then we should rejoice and praise his happy departure."
And again he says the same in these words:
"Who knows if life be not in truth but death
And death be life."

Herodotus, it is clear, makes Solon say the same as this: "O Croesus, every man is a misfortune." And his myth about Cleobis and Biton has obviously no other intention than to disparage birth and praise death. "As scattered leaves, so is mankind," says Homer. And in the Cratylus Plato attributes to Orpheus the doctrine that the soul in this body is suffering punishment. This is what he says: "Some say that the body is a tomb of the soul, as being buried in it for the present life. And because the soul expresses (semainei) by this body whatever it may wish to express, so it is rightly called a tomb (sema). The Orphics, in particular, seem to have given it this name, as they think the soul suffers punishment for its misdeeds,"

It is also worth mentioning the remark of Philolaus. This Pythagorean speaks as follows: "The ancient theologians and seers testify that the soul is conjoined to the body to suffer certain punishments, and is, as it were, buried in this tomb." And Pindar speaks of the Eleusinian mysteries as follows: "Blessed is he who has seen before he goes under the earth; for he knows the end of life and knows also its divine beginning. Similarly in the Phaedo Plato does not hesitate to write as follows: " And these men who established our mysteries..." down to the words "and will dwell with the gods." And what when he says, "As long as we have still the body and our soul is involved in such evil, shall we never have sufficient possession of that which we desire?" Does he not hint that birth is the cause; of the worst evils? And in the Phaedo he bears witness again: "All who have rightly been concerned with philosophy run the risk that other men will fail to notice that their sole object is to pursue death and dying."

And in another place: " Accordingly here the soul of the philosopher mostly disregards his body and flees from it, and seeks to be existent by itself." Does he not agree to some extent with the divine apostle when he says, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" unless he speaks of "body of death" in a figurative sense to refer to the agreement of those who have been

enticed into evil. And that sexual intercourse, as the cause of birth, was rejected long before Marcion by Plato is clear from the first book of the Republic. For after praising old age he continues: "Mark it well, for me the more the other pleasures of the body fade away, the more grow the desires and pleasures of rational enquiry." And with reference to sex relations: "Be silent, O man, it is with the greatest joy that I escaped from it, as if I had escaped from a wild and raging tyrant."

Again in the Phaedo he disparages birth when he writes of "the doctrine which is secretly taught about this that we men are in a sort of prison." And again, "Those who are manifestly distinguished for their holiness of life are liberated from these places on earth and are set free as if this earth were a prison, and go to the pure home above." Nevertheless, although he says this, he perceives that the administration of this world is good, and says: "One ought not to set oneself free and run away." And to sum up briefly, he has given Marcion no opening for his view that matter is evil, when he himself reverently says of the world, "All that is good the world has received from him who has composed it; but from its previous state arise all the recalcitrant and unjust things in the heaven and from this it derives these elements and causes them in living beings."

With even greater clarity he adds: "The cause of these things was the material element in the world's constitution, which was at one time bound up with its ancient nature. For before it came into its present ordered state it was in a condition of great chaos." To the same effect in the Laws he laments the of men saying: "The gods had mercy on mankind which born for trouble, and to give them rest from their labours appointed the changing cycle of feasts." And in the Epinomis discusses the causes of this pitiful condition and says this:)m the beginning birth was difficult for every human being; to get to the state of being an embryo, then to be born, and l to be nourished and educated, all this is attended by count- pains, as we all agree."

What then? Does not Heraclitus call birth death, just as Pythagoras and Socrates in the Gorgias, when he says: "Death is what we see when we are awake; and what we see in our sleep is a dream." But enough of this. When we discuss First Principles we consider the difference between the views of the philosophers and those of the Marcionites. But I think I have shown clearly enough that Marcion took from Plato the starting-point of his "strange" doctrines, without either grateful acknowledgment or understanding.

Now we may continue our discussion about continence. We were saying that from a dislike of its inconveniences the Greeks have

made many adverse observations about the birth of children, and that the Marcionites have interpreted them in a godless sense and are ungrateful to their Creator. For the tragedy says: "For mortals it is better not to be born than to be born; Children I bring to birth with bitter pains; And then when I have borne them they lack understanding. In vain I groan, that I must look on wicked offspring While I lose the good. If the good survive, My wretched heart is melted by alarm. What is this goodness then? Is it not enough That I should care for one alone And bear the pain for this one soul?"

And further to the same effect

"So now I think and have long so thought Man ought never children to beget, Seeing into what agonies we are born." But in the following verses he clearly attributes the cause of evil to the primal origins, when he speaks as follows:

"O thou who art born for misfortune and disaster, thou art born a man, and thine unhappy life thou didst receive from the place where the air of heaven, which gives breath to mortals, first began to give food for all. Complain not of thy mortal state, thou who art mortal."

Again he puts the same idea in these words: "No mortal is content and happy Nor is any born free from sorrow."

And then again: "Alas, alas, how many are the chances of mortal calamity! How many forms it takes! None can tell the end." And further likewise: "Of what is mortal there is nothing which is happy without end."

It is asserted that on this ground the Pythagoreans exercised abstinence. But to me, on the contrary, it seems that they marry for the sake of procreating children, but after they have begotten children they desire to control sexual indulgence. That is why they give the mysterious command to abstain from beans, not because pulse leads to flatulence and is indigestible and causes troubled dreams, nor because the bean is shaped like a man's head; as the verse has it, "It is alike to eat beans and the head of one's parents." The real reason is that if beans are eaten they make women barren. At any rate Theophrastus in the fifth book of his Causes of Plants relates that if the pods of beans are put round the roots of newly

planted trees the shoots dry up and that if birds that live round houses are continuously fed on beans they become unable to lay eggs.

CHAPTER FOUR

Of the heretics we mentioned Marcion of Pontus as forbidding the use of this world's goods on the ground of opposition to the Creator. The Creator himself is thus the reason for continence, if this can be called continence; for this giant o thinks he can resist God is not continent by an act of free choice, in that he attacks the creation and the process by which n is formed. If they quote the Lord's words to Philip, "Let dead bury their dead, but do thou follow me," they ought to consider that Philip's flesh is also formed in the same way; body is not a polluted corpse. How then could he have a body of flesh which is not a corpse? Because he rose from the tomb when the Lord killed his passions, and he began to live unto Christ. We also mentioned the blasphemous immorality of Carpocrates. But when we spoke about the saying of Nicolaus we omitted to say this. Nicolaus, they say, had a lovely wife. When after the Saviour's ascension he was accused before the apostles of jealousy, he brought his wife into the concourse and allowed anyone who so desired to marry her. For, they say, this action was appropriate to the saying: "One must abuse the flesh." Those who share his heresy follow both his action and his words simply and without qualification by indulging in the gravest enormity.

I am informed, however, that Nicolaus never had relations with any woman other than the wife he married, and that of his children his daughters remained virgins to their old age, and his son remained uncorrupted. In view of this it was an act of suppression of passion when he brought before the apostles the wife on whose account he was jealous. He taught what it meant to "abuse the flesh" by restraining the distracting passions. For, as the Lord commanded, he did not wish to serve two masters, pleasure and God. It is said that Matthias also taught that one should fight the flesh and abuse it, never allowing it to give way to licentious pleasure, so that the soul might grow by faith and knowledge.

There are some who call Aphrodite Pandemos [i.e., physical love] a mystical communion. This is an insult to the name of communion. To do something wrong is called an action, just as also to do right is likewise called an action. Similarly communion is good when the word refers to sharing of money and food and clothing. But they

have impiously called by the name of communion any common sexual intercourse. The story goes that one of them came to a virgin of our church who had a lovely face and said to her: "Scripture says, 'Give to everyone that asks you.'" She, however, not understanding the lascivious intention of the man gave the dignified reply: "On the subject of marriage, talk to my mother." What godlessness! Even the words of the Lord are perverted by these immoral fellows, the brethren of lust, a shame not only to philosophy but to all human life, who corrupt the truth, or rather destroy it; as far as they can. These thrice wretched men treat carnal and sexual intercourse as a sacred religious mystery, and think that it will bring them to the kingdom of God.

It is to the brothels that this "communion" leads. They can have pigs and goats as their associates. Those who have most to hope from them are the public harlots who shamelessly receive all who want to come to them. "But you have not so learned Christ, if you have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Christ Jesus; put off with the ways of your former life your old man which is corrupted by the deceitful lusts. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," so as to be made like unto God. "Be therefore imitators of God, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. But fornication and all impurity and covetousness and shamefulness and foolish talk, let them not be mentioned among you as is fitting for saints." Moreover, the apostle teaches us to be chaste in speech when he writes, "Know this well that no fornicator. ..." and so on as far as the words "but rather expose them."

They derived their doctrines from an apocryphal work. I will quote the text which is the mother of their licentiousness. And whether they themselves, I mean the authors of the book, bare responsible (see their madness, for by their licence they do grievous wrong to God) or whether they derived their ideas from some others whom they fell in with, they have taken a sound doctrine and perversely misapplied it. The passage reads as follows: "All things were one; but as it seemed good to its f unity not to be alone, an idea came forth from it, and it had intercourse with it and made the beloved. In consequence of this there came forth from him an idea with which he had intercourse and made powers which cannot be seen or heard..." ; down to the words "each by her own name." If these people spoke of acts of spiritual union like the Valentinians, perhaps one could accept their view. But to suppose that the holy prophets

spoke of carnal and wanton intercourse is the way of a man who has renounced salvation.

These are also the doctrines of the adherents of Prodicus, who falsely entitle themselves gnostics, asserting that they are by nature sons of the first God. But they misuse their noble birth and freedom and life as they desire. And their desire is for pleasure, thinking that no one is superior to them, as they are lords of the sabbath and are royal sons far above the rest of mankind. To a king, they say, there is no law prescribed. But in the first place they cannot do all they desire since there is much to prevent them, however much they desire and essay to do it. And even what they can do, they do not like kings, but like cringing slaves. For it is only in secret that they commit adultery, as they are scared of being caught. They want to avoid condemnation and are afraid of punishment. What freedom is there in their license and filthy talk? "Everyone who sins is a slave," says the apostle.

The Lord has said: "But I say unto you, you shall not lust." How then can he live according to God's will who surrenders himself to every desire? And is a man to decide of his own free will that he can sin, and lay it down as a principle that one may commit adultery and revel in sin and break up other men's marriages, when we even take pity on others if they fall into sin against their will? And if they regard the world into which they have come as an alien country they will not possess the truth if they have not been faithful in that which is another's. Does a foreign visitor insult the citizens and do them injury? Does he not rather behave as a guest and conform to the necessary rules, living without causing offence to the citizens? And how can they say that they alone know God when they do the same things as those who are loathed by the heathen because they do not do what the laws direct, that is, as the wicked and incontinent and covetous and adulterous? They ought to live good lives even while they are dwelling in an alien country, to manifest their truly kingly nature.

But because they have chosen to disobey the laws, they make themselves objects of hatred both to human lawgivers and to the law of God. At any rate in Numbers the man who thrust his spear into the fornicator is evidently blessed by God. And John says in his epistle: "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from sin."

How then are they who do these things superior to worldly men when they behave like the very worst men of this world? Those whose actions are alike are in my opinion of like nature. Those who think they are superior to others by their nobility of birth ought to be superior to them also in their moral characters, that they may escape incarceration in the prison. For indeed as the Lord said: "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of God." However, abstinence from food is exemplified in the book of Daniel. And to sum up in a word, concerning obedience David speaks in the Psalms: "How shall a young man correct his way?" And at once he hears "by keeping thy word with his whole heart." And Jeremiah says: "Thus saith the Lord, You shall not walk in the ways of the heathen."

Because of this certain other depraved and worthless fellows have been impelled to assert that man was formed by various powers, and that down as far as the navel his body shows the work of godlike craftsmanship, but his lower parts indicate inferior workmanship. In consequence of the latter man has a sexual impulse. They fail to observe that the upper parts also want food and in some men are lustful. And they contradict Christ when he said to the Pharisees that the same God made both our outer and our inner man. Moreover, desire is not a bodily thing, though it occurs because of the body. Certain others, whom we may call Antitactae [i.e., opponents], assert that the God of the universe is our Father by nature, and all that he has made is good. But one of the beings made by him sowed tares and so caused the origin of evils. He involved us all in them and so made us opponents of the Father. Therefore even we ourselves are set in opposition to him to avenge the Father, and act contrary to the will of the second. Since, then, the latter has said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," Let us, say they, commit adultery to abolish his commandment.

To them we would say: We have been taught to recognize by their works false prophets and all who merely pretend to the truth. And your works tell against you. How can you still assert that you adhere to the truth? For either nothing evil exists, in which case there is no question of finding fault with him whom you attack as being in opposition to God, and he is not the originator of anything evil (both the fruit and the tree are done away together), or, if wickedness really does exist, let them tell us what they have to say of the commandments given to us about righteousness, self-control, patience, long suffering, and other such virtues, whether they think them bad or good? If the command is bad which forbids one to do almost all that is disgraceful, then evil must enact laws against itself in order to destroy its own fruit, which is impossible. If it is good,

by opposing good commandments they must confess that they are opposing what is right and doing wrong.

But the Saviour himself, whom alone they think one should obey, has forbidden hatred and reviling and says: "When you go with your adversary to court, try to achieve a friendly reconciliation with him." Accordingly, they will either refuse to accept Christ's exhortation, in that they are in opposition to the adversary, or they will become his friends and cease to oppose him. What then? Do you not realize, my worthy friends (I speak as if you were present with me) that by conflict with these excellent commandments you fight against your own salvation? You overturn yourselves, not these beneficial instructions. The Lord said, "Let your good works shine out." But you make your licentiousness manifest to all. Besides, if your aim is to destroy the lawgiver's commands, why is it the commands "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not corrupt boys," and all the commandments enjoining purity, which through your incontinence you seek to destroy? Why do you not abolish winter, which he made, and make it summer when it is still midwinter, and make dry land navigable and the sea pass- able on foot, as the historians say Xerxes the barbarian desired to do?

Why do you not oppose all the commandments? For he says, "Increase and multiply." you who are opposed to him ought to abstain from sexual relations altogether. And if he says, "I have given you all things for food and enjoyment," you ought to enjoy nothing at all. Moreover, he says, "An eye for an eye." you ought not, therefore, to repay opposition with opposition. If he tells the thief to restore fourfold, you ought even to give something to the thief. Similarly again, you who oppose the command "Thou shalt love the Lord" ought not to love the God of the universe at all. And if he says, "Thou shalt not make any graven or molten image," it follows that you ought to bow down to graven images. Are you not blasphemous, therefore, when you oppose, as you say, the Creator, and endeavour to do the same as fornicators and adulterers? Do you not perceive that you make him all the greater whom you regard as weak if what is taking place is what he wishes and not what the good God wills? For, on the contrary, your father, as you call him, is shown to be weak by you yourselves.

These folk also collect extracts from the prophets, making a selection and mischievously stringing them together. They interpret in a literal sense sayings intended to be understood allegorically. It is written, they say, "They resisted God and were saved." But they add the "shameless" God, and interpret this saying as if it gave them

advice, thinking it will bring them salvation if they resist the Creator. In fact, scripture does not mention the "shameless" God. And if it did, you fools, you should have understood the word "shameless" to refer to him who is called the devil, either because he slanders men, or because he accuses sinners, or because he is an apostate. The people to whom the passage refers were unwilling to be punished for their sins, and they spoke the words quoted in a spirit of complaining and grumbling, on the ground that other nations were not punished when they transgressed, and that on every occasion they alone were humiliated, so that even Jeremiah said, "Why is the way of the ungodly easy?" Similar in sense to this is the saying in Malachi which has been quoted: "They resisted God and were saved." In uttering their oracles the prophets do not only say that they have heard some message from God; it is also evident that they take up phrases in common use among the people and reply to them, as if they were reporting certain questions raised by them. The saying under discussion is an instance of this.

Perhaps it is such people that the apostle attacks in the epistle to the Romans when he writes: "And not as we are blasphemously accused and some assert that we say, Let us do evil that good may come, an argument which is rightly condemned." These are they who when reading the Bible pervert the sense to their own desires by their tone of voice, and by changing certain accents and marks of punctuation twist words that are wise and useful to conform to their own lusts. "You who provoke God with your words," says Malachi, "have even said Wherein have we provoked him? In this, that you have said, Anyone who does evil is good in the Lord's sight, and he is well pleased with them; and, Where is the God of righteousness?"

CHAPTER FIVE

It is not our aim to pursue this subject in further detail and to mention further senseless heresies. To put them to shame we should be forced to deal with each one, and to state our objections to each point, which would extend these notes to an unconscionable length. Accordingly we may divide all the heresies into two groups in making answer to them. Either they teach that one ought to live on the principle that it is a matter of indifference whether one does right or wrong, or they set a too ascetic tone and proclaim the necessity of continence on the ground of opinions which are godless and arise from hatred of what God has created. First we may discuss the former group. If it is lawful to live any sort of life one likes, obviously one may live in continence; or if any kind of life has no

dangers for the elect, obviously one of virtue and self-control is far less dangerous. If the "lord of the sabbath" has been given the right to pass uncorrected if he lives an immoral life, a fortiori there will be no correction for him who behaves decently. "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient," says the apostle. If all things are lawful, obviously this includes self-control.

Therefore if one who uses his power to live a virtuous life receives praise, then much more worthy of reverence and honour is he who has given us this free and sovereign power and has allowed us to live as we choose, not allowing us to become enslaved and subjected to necessity by our acts of choice and rejection. But if both can have no anxiety, he who chooses incontinence and he who chooses abstinence, yet the honour is not equal. He who indulges his pleasures gratifies his body; but he who is controlled liberates from its passions his soul which is master of the body. And if they tell us that we are called to freedom, only let us not use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, as the apostle says. If lust is to be gratified and a life of sin regarded as morally neutral, as they say, either we ought to indulge our desires in every direction and, if this is our desire, do the most lascivious and immoral acts, in that we are following our instincts in every way; or we may suppress certain desires and live no longer a life which recognizes no distinction of right and wrong, nor be absolute slaves to our most dishonourable members, the stomach and the private parts, gratifying our carcase for the sake of desire. For desire is nourished and invigorated if it is encouraged in indulgence, just as, on the other hand, it loses strength if it is kept in check.

But how is it possible to become like the Lord and have knowledge of God if one is subject to physical pleasures? Every pleasure is the consequence of an appetite, and an appetite is a certain pain and anxiety, caused by need, which requires some object. In my opinion those who choose this kind of life are simply "suffering pain to their shame," as the well-known verse puts it, choosing evil which they bring upon themselves, now and hereafter. If, then, all things were lawful and one need have no fear that because of one's wicked deeds one's hope of salvation would be lost, perhaps they might have some excuse for living this wicked and wretched life. But through the commandments a life of blessedness is shown to us. We must all keep to them without misinterpreting any of the words or neglecting any of our duties, however minute. We must follow where the word leads; and if we depart from it, we must fall into "endless evil." And by following the divine scripture, the path by which believers travel, we are to be made like unto the Lord as far as possible. We must not live as if there were no difference between right and wrong, but, to

the best of our power, must purify ourselves from indulgence and lust and take care for our soul which must continually be devoted to the Deity alone. For when it is pure and set free from all evil the mind is somehow capable of receiving the power of God and the divine image is set up in it. "And everyone who has this hope in the Lord purifies himself," says the Scripture, "even as he is pure."

To attain the knowledge of God is impossible for those who are still under the control of their passions. Therefore they cannot attain the salvation they hope for as they have not obtained any knowledge of God. He who fails to attain this end is clearly subject to the charge of being ignorant of God, and ignorance of God is shown by a man's manner of life. It is absolutely impossible at the same time to be a man of understanding and not to be ashamed to gratify the body. Nor can the view that pleasure is the supreme Good be reconciled with the view that only the beautiful is good, or that only the Lord is beautiful, and God alone is good and is alone to be loved. "You are circumcised in Christ with a circumcision not done with hands, which consists rather in the putting away of the carnal body, in the circumcision of Christ." "If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above; have in mind higher things, not earthly things. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" -- but not the fornication which they practice. "Mortify therefore your earthly members, fornication, uncleanness, passion, lust; for on account of these wrath is coming." Let them also therefore "put away anger, wrath, wickedness, blasphemy, filthy talk from their mouth, putting off the old man with its lusts, and putting on the new man which is renewed to possess full knowledge according to the image of him who created it."

It is the manner of life which shows up those who know the commandments; for as a man's word is, so is his life. The tree is known by its fruit, not by its blossom and leaves. Knowledge, then, comes from the fruit and from behaviour, not from talk and from blossom. We say that knowledge is not mere talk, but a certain divine knowledge, that light which is kindled in the soul as a result of obedience to the commandments, and which reveals all that is in a state of becoming, enables man to know himself and teaches him to become possessed of God. What the eye is in the body, knowledge is in the mind. Let them not call bondage to pleasure freedom, as if bitterness were sweet. We have learnt to recognize as freedom that which the Lord alone confers on us when he liberates us from lusts and desires and the other passions. "He who says, I know the Lord, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him," says John.

CHAPTER SIX

To those, on the other hand, who under a pious cloak blaspheme by their continence both the creation and the holy Creator, the almighty, only God, and teach that one must reject marriage and begetting of children, and should not bring others in their place to live in this wretched world, nor give any sustenance to death, our reply is as follows. We may first quote the word of the apostle John: "And now are many antichrists come, whence we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have remained with US." Next we may destroy their case on the ground that they pervert the sense of the books they quote, as follows. When Salome asked the Lord: "How long shall death hold sway?" he answered: "As long as you women bear children." Her words do not imply that this life is evil and the' creation bad, and his reply only teaches the ordinary course of nature. For birth is invariably followed by death.

The task of the law is to deliver us from a dissolute life and all disorderly ways. Its purpose is to lead us from unrighteousness to righteousness, so that it would have us self-controlled in marriage, in begetting children, and in general behavior. The Lord is not "come to destroy the law but to fulfill it." "To fulfill" does not imply that it was defective, but that by his coming the prophecies of the law are accomplished, since before the law the demand for right conduct was proclaimed by the Logos to those also who lived good lives. The multitude who know nothing of continence live for the body, not for the spirit. But the body without spirit is "earth and ashes." Now the Lord judges adultery which is only committed in thought. What then? Is it not possible to remain continent even in the married state and not to seek to "put asunder what God has joined together" For such is the teaching of those who divide the yoke of marriage, by reason of whom the Christian name is blasphemed. If it is the view of these people who themselves owe their existence to sexual relations that such relations are impure, must not they be impure? But I hold that even the seed of the sanctified is holy.

In us it is not only the spirit which ought to be sanctified, but also our behaviour, manner of life, and our body. What does the apostle Paul mean when he says that the wife is sanctified by the husband and the husband by the wife? And what is the meaning of the Lord's words to those who asked concerning divorce whether it is lawful to put away one's wife as Moses commanded? "Because of the hardness of your hearts," he says, "Moses wrote this; but have you not read that God said to the first man, You two shall be one flesh? Therefore he who divorces his wife except for fornication makes her

an adulteress." But "after the resurrection," he says, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Moreover, concerning the belly and its food it is written: "Food is for the belly and the belly for food; but God shall destroy both the one and the other." In this saying he attacks those who think they can live like wild pigs and goats, lest they should indulge their physical appetites without restraint.

If, as they say, they have already attained the state of resurrection, and on this account reject marriage let them neither eat nor drink. For the apostle says that in the resurrection the belly and food shall be destroyed. Why then do they hunger and thirst and suffer the weaknesses of the flesh and all the other needs which will not affect the man who through Christ has attained to the hoped for resurrection? Furthermore those who worship idols abstain both from food and from sexual intercourse. "But the kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking," he says. And indeed the Magi make a point of abstaining from wine and the meat of animals and from sexual intercourse while they are worshipping angels and daemons. But just as humility consists in meekness and not in treating one's body roughly, so also continence is a virtue of the soul which is not manifest to others, but is in secret.

There are some who say outright that marriage is fornication and teach that it was introduced by the devil. They proudly say that they are imitating the Lord who neither married nor had any possession in this world, boasting that they understand the gospel better than anyone else. The Scripture says to them: "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." Further, they do not know the reason why the Lord did not marry. In the first place he had his own bride, the Church; and in the next place he was no ordinary man that he should also be in need of some helpmeet after the flesh. Nor was it necessary for him to beget children since he abides eternally and was born the only Son of God. It is the Lord himself who says: "That which God has joined together, let no man put asunder." And again: "As it was in the days of Noah, they were marrying, and giving in marriage, building and planting, and as it was in the days of Lot, so shall be the coming of the Son of man." And to show that he is not referring to the heathen he adds: "When the Son of man is come, shall he find faith on the earth?" And again: "Woe to those who are with child and are giving suck in those days," a saying, I admit, to be understood allegorically. The reason why he did not determine "the times which the Father has appointed by his own power" was that the world might continue from generation to generation.

Concerning the words, "Not all can receive this saying. There are some eunuchs who were born so, and some who were made eunuchs

by men, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; let him receive it who can receive it," they do not realize the context. After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to woman, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: "Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted." What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man's wife has been condemned for fornication, it is allowable for him to marry another.

It is said, however, that several athletes abstained from sexual intercourse, exercising continence to keep their bodies in training, as Astylos of Croton and Crison of Himera. Even the cithara-player, Amoebeus, though newly married, kept away from his bride. And Aristotle of Cyrene was the only man to disdain the love of Lais when she fell for him.

As he had sworn to the courtesan that he would take her to his home country if she rendered him some assistance against his antagonists, when she had rendered it, he kept his oath in an amusing manner by painting the closest possible likeness of her and setting it up in Cyrene. The story is told by Istros in his book on The Peculiarity of Athletic Contests. Therefore there is nothing meritorious about abstinence from marriage unless it arises from love to God. At any rate the blessed Paul says of those who revile marriage: "In the last times some shall depart from the faith, turning to spirits of error and doctrines inspired by daemons, forbidding to marry and commanding abstinence from food." And again he says: "Let no one disqualify you by demanding self-imposed ascetic practices and severe treatment of the body." And the same writer has this also: "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be separated from her? Are you free from any wife? Do not seek to find one." And again: "Let every man have his own wife lest Satan tempt you."

How then? Did not the righteous in ancient times partake of what God made with thanksgiving? Some begat children and lived chastely in the married state. To Elijah the ravens brought bread and meat for food. And Samuel the prophet brought as food for Saul the remnant of the thigh, of which he had already eaten. But whereas they say that they are superior to them in behaviour and conduct, they cannot even be compared with them in their deeds. "He who does not eat," then, "let him not despise him who eats; and he who eats let him not judge him who does not eat; for God has accepted him." Moreover, the Lord says of himself: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and a sinner."

Or do they also scorn the apostles? Peter and Philip had children, and Philip gave his daughters in marriage.

Even Paul did not hesitate in one letter to address his consort. The only reason why he did not take her about with him was that it would have been an inconvenience for his ministry. Accordingly he says in a letter: "Have we not a right to take about with us a wife that is a sister like the other apostles?" But the latter, in accordance with their particular ministry, devoted themselves to preaching without any distraction, and took their wives with them not as women with whom they had marriage relations, but as sisters, that they might be their fellow-ministers in dealing with housewives. It was through them that the Lord's teaching penetrated also the women's quarters without any scandal being aroused. We also know the directions about women deacons which are given by the noble Paul in his second letter to Timothy. Furthermore, the selfsame man cried aloud that "the kingdom of God does not consist in food and drink," not indeed in abstinence from wine and meat, "but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Which of them goes about like Elijah clad in a sheepskin and a leather girdle? Which of them goes about like Isaiah, naked except for a piece of sacking and without shoes? Or clothed merely in a linen loincloth like Jeremiah? Which of them will imitate John's gnostic way of life? The blessed prophets also lived in this manner and were thankful to the Creator.

The "righteousness" of Carpocrates, however, and those like him who pursue immoral "communion" is to be refuted by an argument along the following lines. Immediately after the words "Give to him that asks you," he continues: "And do not turn away from him who wishes to borrow." Thus it is this kind of communion which he is teaching, not the immoral kind. How can there be one who asks and receives and borrows unless there is someone who possesses and gives and lends? What, then, is the position when the Lord says, "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me," after which he adds "inasmuch as you did it to one of these little ones, you did it to me"? And does he not lay down the same principle in the Old Testament? "He who gives to the poor lends to God," and "Do not avoid giving to the needy," he says.

And again: "Let not your almsgiving and faithfulness lapse." And: "Poverty brings a man low, but the hands of the energetic are made rich." And he adds: "Behold the man who has not given his money on usury is accepted." And does he not declare expressly, "A man's wealth is judged to be his soul's ransom"? Just as the world is composed of opposites, of heat and cold, dry and wet, so also is it

made up of givers and receivers. Again when he says, "If you would be perfect, sell your possessions and give to the poor," he convicts the man who boasts that he has kept all the commandments, from his youth up. For he had not fulfilled "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Only then was he taught by the Lord who wished to make him perfect, to give for love's sake.

Accordingly he has not forbidden us to be rich in the right way, but only a wrongful and insatiable grasping of money. For "property gained unlawfully is diminished." "There are some who sow much and gain the more, and those who hoard become impoverished." Of them it is written: "He distributed, he gave to the poor, his righteousness endures for ever." For he who sows and gathers more is the man who by giving away his earthly and temporal goods has obtained a heavenly and eternal prize; the other is he who gives to no one, but vainly "lays up treasure on earth where moth and rust corrupt"; of him it is written: "In gathering motley, he has gathered it into a condemned cell." Of his land the Lord says in the gospel that it produced plentifully; then wishing to store the fruits he built larger store-houses, saying to himself in the words dramatically put into his mouth "You have many good things laid up for many years to come, eat, drink, and be merry. You fool," says the Lord, "this night your soul shall be required of you. Whose then shall be the things you have prepared?"

CHAPTER SEVEN

The human ideal of continence, I mean that which is set forth by Greek philosophers, teaches that one should fight desire and not be subservient to it so as to bring it to practical effect. But our ideal is not to experience desire at all. Our aim is not that while a man feels desire he should get the better of it, but that he should be continent even respecting desire itself. This chastity cannot be attained in any other way except by God's grace. That was why he said "Ask and it shall be given you." This grace was received even by Moses, though clothed in his needy body, so that for forty days he felt neither thirst nor hunger. Just as it is better to be in good health than for a sick man to talk about health, so to be light is better than to discuss light, and true chastity is better than that taught by the philosophers. Where there is light there is no darkness. But where there is inward desire, even if it goes no further than desire and is quiescent so far as bodily action is concerned, union takes place in thought with the object of desire, although that object is not present.

Our general argument concerning marriage, food, and other matters, may proceed to show that we should do nothing '- from desire. Our will is to be directed only towards that which is necessary. For we are children not of desire but of will. A man who marries for the sake of begetting children must practise continence so that it is not desire he feels for his wife, whom he ought to love, and that he may beget children with a chaste and controlled will. For we have learnt not to "have thought for the flesh to fulfil its desires." We are to "walk honourably as in the way", that is in Christ and in the enlightened conduct of the Lord's way, "not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and lasciviousness, not in strife and envy."

However, one ought to consider continence not merely in relation to one form of it, that is, sexual relations, but in relation to all the other indulgences for which the soul craves when it is ill content with what is necessary and seeks for luxury. It is continence to despise money, softness, property, to hold in small esteem outward appearance, to control one's tongue, to master evil thoughts. In the past certain angels became incontinent and were seized by desire so that they fell from heaven to earth. And Valentine says in the letter .to Agathopus: "Jesus endured" all things and was continent; It was his endeavour to earn a divine nature; he ate and drank in a manner peculiar to him- self, and the food did not pass out of his body. Such was the power of his continence that food was not corrupted within him; for he himself was not subject to the process of corruption." As for ourselves, we set high value on continence which arises from love to the Lord and seeks that which is good for its own sake, sanctifying the temple of the Spirit. It is good if for the sake of the kingdom of heaven a man emasculates himself from all desire, and "purifies his conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

But those who from a hatred for the flesh ungratefully long .to have nothing to do with the marriage union and the eating of reasonable food, are both blockheads and atheists, and exercise an irrational chastity like the other heathen. For ex- ample, the Brahmans neither eat animal flesh nor drink wine. But some of them take food every way, as we do, while others do so only on every third day, as Alexander Polyhistor says in his Indian History. They despise deaths and reckon life of no account. For they are persuaded that there is a regeneration. The gods they worship are Heracles and Pan. And the Indians who are called Holy Men go naked throughout their entire life. They seek for the truth, and predict the future, and reverence a certain pyramid beneath which, they think, lie the bones of a certain god. Neither the Gymnosophists nor the so-called Holy Men have wives. They think sexual relations are unnatural and contrary to law.

For this cause they keep themselves chaste. The Holy Women are also virgins. They observe, it seems, the heavenly bodies and from what they indicate foretell future events.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Those who hold that for them there is no difference between right and wrong force a few passages of Scripture and think they favour their own immoral opinions. In particular they quote the saying: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law but under grace," and others of this sort, which there is no reason to add, for I am not proposing to fit out a pirate ship. Let us then briefly put a stop to their argument. The noble apostle himself refutes the charge against him implied in their false exegesis by the words with which he continues after the saying just quoted: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." In this inspired and prophetic way he at once destroys the device of these licentious sophists.

They fail to understand, it seems, that "we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that each man may be rewarded for what he has done with his body, whether it is good or bad," that is, in order that a man may receive his reward for what he has done by means of his body. So then, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creation," no longer inclined to sin; "old things are passed away," we have washed off the old life; "behold new things have happened," there is chastity instead of fornication, continence instead of incontinence; righteousness instead of unrighteousness. "What is there in common between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship between light and darkness? Or what harmony between Christ and Belial? What community is there between a believer and an unbeliever? What agreement between the temple of God and idols? Having then these promises let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

CHAPTER NINE

Those who are opposed to God's creation, disparaging it under the fair name of continence, also quote the words to Salome which we mentioned earlier. They are found, I believe, in the Gospel according to the Egyptians. They say that the Saviour himself said "came to destroy the works of the female," meaning by "female"

desire, and by "works" birth and corruption. What then would they say? Has this destruction in fact been accomplished? They could not say so, for the world continues exactly as before. Yet the Lord did not lie. For in truth he did destroy the works of desire, love of money, contentiousness, vanity, mad lust for women, paederasty, gluttony, licentiousness, and similar vices. Their birth is the soul's corruption, since then we are "dead in sins." And this is the incontinence referred to as "female." Birth and the corruption chiefly involved in the creation must necessarily continue until the achievement of complete separation and the restoration of the elect, on whose account even the beings mingled with this world are restored to their proper condition. It is probably therefore with reference to the consummation that Salome says: "Until when shall men die?" The Scripture uses the word "man" in two senses, the outward man and the soul, and again of him who is being saved and him who is not; and sin is said to be the death of the soul. That is why the Lord gave a cautious answer: "As long as women bear children," that is, as long as the desires are active. "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death came to all men, in that all sinned, and death reigned from Adam to Moses," says the apostle. By natural necessity in the divine plan death follows birth, and the coming together of soul and body is followed by their dissolution. If birth exists for the sake of learning and knowledge, dissolution leads to the final restoration. As woman is regarded as the cause of death because she brings to birth, so also for the same reason she may be called the originator of life.

In fact the woman who first began transgression was named "Life" because she became responsible for the succession of those who were born and fell into sin, the mother of righteous and unrighteous alike, since each one of us makes himself either righteous or disobedient. On this account I for my part do not think the apostle was expressing disgust at life in the flesh when he said: "But with all boldness both now and ever Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If, however, it is to be life in the flesh, that also means for me fruitful work. I do not know which I prefer. I am constrained on both sides: I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sakes." Here he showed clearly, I think, that the perfect reason for departing from the body is love for God, and that if one is to be in the flesh one should thankfully remain here for the sake of those who need salvation.

But why do they not go on to quote the words after those spoken to Salome, these people who do anything rather than walk according to the truly evangelical rule? For when she says, "I would have done better had I never given birth to a child," suggesting that she might not have been right in giving birth to a child, the Lord replies to her saying: "Eat of every plant, but eat not of that which has bitterness in it." For by this saying also he indicates that whether we are continent or married is a matter for our free choice and that there is no absolute prohibition which would impose continence upon us as a necessity. And he further makes it clear that marriage is co-operation with the work of creation.

Therefore a man ought not to think that marriage on rational principles is a sin, supposing that he does not look on the bringing up of children as being bitter (on the contrary to many childlessness is most grievous); but if a man regards the rearing of children as bitter because it distracts him from the things of God on account of the time it takes up, he may yet desire to marry because he does not take easily to a bachelor's life. What he wants to do is not harmful if it is done with self-control; and each one of us is master of his own will in deciding whether to beget children. But I am aware that because of marriage there are some who have kept clear of it and against the principles of holy knowledge have lapsed into hatred of humanity so that the spirit of charity has departed from them. There are others who have become absorbed by marriage and fulfil their desires in the indulgence which the law permits, and, as the prophet says, "have become like beasts."

CHAPTER TEN

But who are the two or three gathered in the name of Christ in whose midst the Lord is? Does he not by the "three" mean husband, wife, and child? For a wife is bound to her husband by God. If, however, a man wishes to be undistracted, and prefers to avoid begetting children because of the business it involves, "let him remain unmarried," says the apostle, "even as I am." They explain that what the Lord meant was this. By the plurality he means the Creator, the God who is the cause of the world's existence; and by the one, the elect, he meant the Saviour who is Son of another God, the good God. But this is not correct. Through his Son, God is with those who are soberly married and have children. By the same mediation the same God is also with the man who exercises continence on rational grounds. According to another view the three may be passion, desire, and thought; another interpretation makes them flesh, soul, and spirit.

Perhaps the triad mentioned refers to the called, and in the second place to the chosen, and in the third place to the race appointed to receive the greatest honour. With them is the power of God watching over all things which is indivisibly divided among them. He, then, who uses the soul's natural powers as is right, desires those things which are appropriate, and hates what is harmful, as the commandments prescribe: "Thou shalt bless him who blesses thee and curse him who curses thee." But when he has risen above these, passion and desire, and in very deed has begun to love the creation of the God and Creator of all things, then he will live a gnostic life, as he has become like the Saviour and has attained to a state of continence no longer maintained with difficulty. He has united knowledge, faith, and love. Thenceforth he is one in his judgment and truly spiritual, wholly incapable of thoughts arising from passion and desire, one who is to be made perfect after the image of the Lord by the artist himself, a perfect man, already worthy to be called a brother to the Lord as well as his friend and son. Thus the "two" and the "three" come together into one and the same thing --
a gnostic man.

The agreement of many, which is indicated by the number "three," with whom the Lord is present, might also be the one Church, the one man, and the one race. Or could it mean this? The Lord when he gave the law was with the one, that is the Jew. Later when he inspired the prophets and sent Jeremiah to Babylon and, moreover, called believers from the Gentiles by the teaching of the prophets, he brought the two peoples together. And was not the third the one which is made out of the two into a new man in which he walks and dwells, in the Church itself? And the law, the prophets, and also the gospel were brought together in Christ's name into a single knowledge. Accordingly, those who from hatred do not marry or from desire use the flesh as if it were not a matter of right and wrong, are not in the number of the saved with whom the Lord is present.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The demonstration of these matters being concluded, let us - now quote all the Scriptures which oppose these heretical sophists, and show the right rule of continence that is preserved on grounds of reason. The man of understanding will find out the particular Scripture which deals with each individual heresy, and at the right time will quote it to refute those who teach doctrines contrary to the commandments. Right from the beginning the law, as we have already said, lays down the command, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," long before the Lord's closely similar

utterance in the New Testament, -- where the same idea is expressed in his own mouth: "You have heard that the law commanded, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say, Thou shalt not lust." That the law intended husbands to cohabit with their wives with self-control and only for the purpose of begetting children is evident from the prohibition which forbids the unmarried man from having immediate sexual relations with a captive woman. If the man has conceived a desire for her, he is directed to mourn for thirty days while she is to have her hair cut; if after this the desire has not passed off, then they may proceed to beget children, because the appointed period enables the overwhelming impulse to be tested and to become a rational act of will.

For this reason you could not point to any place in Scripture where one of the ancients approached a pregnant woman; later, after the child is born and weaned, you might find that marriage relations of husbands and wives were resumed. You will find that Moses' father kept this principle in mind. After Aaron's birth three years passed before Moses was born. Again, the tribe of Levi observed this law of nature given by God, although they were fewer in number than any others which came into the promised land. For a tribe does not easily grow to great numbers if their men have intercourse only within the legal marriage relationship and then wait until the end not only of pregnancy but also of breast-feeding.

It was, therefore, reasonable when Moses in his attempt to bring the Jews to continence by degrees, directed that after sexual intercourse they must abstain for three days before they heard the divine words. "We are God's temples; as the prophet said, I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," if our behaviour conforms to the commandments both as individuals and also as a society, as the Church. "Wherefore come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and be to you a Father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Is He prophetically commands us to be separate not from those who are married, as they assert, but from the heathen who are still living in immorality, and also from the heretics we have mentioned, as unclean and godless persons.

Hence Paul speaks against people who are like those I have mentioned, saying: "You have then these promises, beloved; let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "For I am jealous for you with a divine jealousy, for I betrothed you to one husband to present a pure virgin to Christ." The Church cannot marry another, having obtained a

bridegroom; but each of us individually has the right to marry the woman he wishes according to the law; I mean here first marriage. "am afraid lest, as the serpent in his craftiness deceived Eve, so also your thoughts may be corrupted from the simplicity which is toward Christ," said the apostle as a very careful and conscientious teacher .

So also the admirable Peter says: "Beloved, I exhort you as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from carnal lusts, which war against the soul, and conduct yourselves well among the heathen; for this is the will of God that by doing good you should put to silence the activity of foolish men, as free and not using your freedom as a covering for evil, but as God's slaves." Likewise also Paul in the Epistle to the Romans writes: "We who are dead to sin, how shall we any longer live in it? Because our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," down to the words, "do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin."

While on this point I think I must not commit mention of the fact that the apostle declares that the same God is the God of the law, the prophets, and the gospel. In the Epistle to the Romans he quotes the gospel saying "Thou shalt not lust" as if it were from the law, knowing that it is the one Father who is preached by the law and the prophets. For he says: "What shall we say? Is the law sin? God forbid. I had not known sin except through the law; and I had not known lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust." Even if the heretics who are opposed to the Creator suppose that in the next sentence Paul was speaking against him when he says, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing," yet let them read what precedes and follows this. For before it he says, "But sin which dwells in me," which explains why it was appropriate for him to say, "in my flesh dwells no good thing."

In what follows he continues, "But if I do that which I do not wish to do, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me," which being at war with the law of God and "of my mind," he says, "makes me captive by the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death." And again (for he does not become in the least weary of being helpful) he does not hesitate to add, "For the law of the Spirit has set me free from the law of sin and death," since by his Son "God condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." In addition to this he makes the point still clearer by saying emphatically, "The body is dead because of sin," indicating that if it is not the temple, it

is still the tomb of the soul. For when it is dedicated to God, he adds, "the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, who shall also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwelling in you."

Again his remarks are directed against libertines when he continues as follows: "The mind of the flesh is death because those who live according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God," not in the sense in which some teach, but in the sense which we have already explained. Then by contrast to this he says to the Church: "But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. If any man has not Christ's Spirit, he is none of his. But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. So then, brethren, we are under an obligation, not to the flesh to live after the flesh. If you live after the flesh you shall die. But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." And against the "nobility of birth" and the "freedom" abominably taught by the heretics who make a boast of their licentiousness, he goes on to say: "You have not received the spirit of bondage that you should again be in fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship by which we cry, Abba, Father." That is, we have received the Spirit for this purpose, that we may know him to whom we pray, the true Father, the only Father of all that is, him who like a father educates us for salvation and destroys fear.

CHAPTER TWELVE

If by agreement marriage relations are suspended for a time to give opportunity for prayer, this teaches continence. He adds the words "by agreement" lest anyone should dissolve his marriage, and the words "for a time" lest a married man, brought to continence by force, should then fall into sin; for if he spares his own wife he may fall into desire for another woman. On this principle he said that the man who thinks he is not behaving properly if he brings up his daughter to be unmarried, does right to give her in marriage. Whether a man becomes a celibate or whether he joins himself in marriage with a woman for the sake of having children, his purpose ought to be to remain unyielding to what is inferior. If he can live a life of intense devotion, he will gain to himself great merit with God, since his continence is both pure and reasonable. But if he goes beyond the rule he has chosen to gain greater glory, there is a

danger that he may lose hope. Both celibacy and marriage have their own different forms of service and ministry to the Lord; I have in mind the caring for one's wife and children. For it seems that the particular characteristic of the married state is that it gives the man who desires a perfect marriage an opportunity to take responsibility for everything in the home which he shares with his wife. The apostle says that one should appoint bishops who by their oversight over their own house have learned to be in charge of the whole church. Let each man therefore fulfill his ministry by the work in which he was called, that he may be free in Christ and receive the proper reward of his ministry.

Again when speaking about the law he makes use of an illustration saying: "The married woman is by law bound to her husband while he is alive" and the following words. And again: "The wife is bound to her husband so long as he is alive, but if he dies, she is free to marry, only in the Lord. But she is happier in my judgment if she remains as she is." Moreover in the former passage he says, "You are dead to the law," not to marriage, "that you may belong to another who was raised from the dead," as Bride and Church. The Church must be chaste, both from inward thoughts contrary to the truth and from outward tempters, that is the adherents of the sects who would persuade her to commit fornication against her one husband, Almighty God, lest as the serpent deceived Eve, who is called Life, we too should be led to transgress the commandments by the lewd craftiness of the sects. The second passage teaches single marriage. One should not suppose, as some have expounded the text, that when Paul says the wife is bound to her husband he means that flesh is involved in corruption. He is attacking the notion of the godless men who attribute the invention of marriage directly to the devil, a notion which dangerously blasphemes the lawgiver.

I believe Tatian the Syrian made bold to teach these doctrines. At any rate he writes these words in his book *On Perfection According to the Saviour*: "While agreement to be continent makes prayer possible, intercourse of corruption destroys it. By the very disparaging way in which he allows it, he forbids it. For although he allowed them to come together again because of Satan and the temptation to incontinence, he indicated that the man who takes advantage of this permission will be serving two masters, God if there is 'agreement,' but, if there is no such agreement, incontinence, fornication, and the devil." This he says in expounding the apostle. But he falsifies the truth in that by means of what is true he tries to prove what is untrue. We too confess that incontinence and fornication are diabolical passions, but the agreement of a controlled marriage occupies a middle position. If the married couple agree to

be .continent, it helps them to pray; if they agree with reverence to have sexual relations it leads them to beget children. In fact the right time to procreate is said in Scripture to be knowledge since it says: "And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore a son, and they called him by the name of Seth. For God has raised up for me other seed instead of Abel." You see who is the object of the blasphemy of those who abuse sober marriage and attribute birth to the devil? The Scripture here does not speak simply of a God, but of the God, indicating the Almighty by the addition of the definite article.

The point of the apostle's addition "And then come together again because of Satan" is to stop the husband from ever turning aside after other women. A temporary agreement, although for the moment intercourse is not approved, does not mean that the natural instincts are completely removed. Because of them he again restores the marriage bond, not so that husband and wife may be incontinent and fornicate and do the devil's work, but to prevent them from falling into incontinence, fornication, and the devil. Tatian also separates the old man and the new, but not as we understand it. We agree with him that the law is the old man and the gospel the new, and say the same ourselves, but not in the sense in which he takes it since he would do away with the law as originating from another God. But it is the same man and Lord who makes the old new, by no longer allowing several marriages (for at that time God required it when men had to increase and multiply), and by teaching single marriage for the sake of begetting children and looking after domestic affairs, for which purpose woman was given as a "helpmeet." And if from sympathy the apostle allows a man a second marriage because he cannot control himself and burns with passion, he also does not commit any sin according to the Old Testament (for it was not forbidden by the Law), but he does not fulfil the heightened perfection of the gospel ethic. But he gains heavenly glory for himself if he remains as he is, and keeps undefiled the marriage yoke broken by death, and willingly accepts God's purpose for him, by which he has become free from distraction for the service of the Lord. But the providence of God as revealed by the Lord does not order now, as it did in ancient times, that after sexual intercourse a man should wash. For there is no need for the Lord to make believers do this after intercourse since by one Baptism he has washed them clean for every such occasion, as also he has comprehended in one Baptism the many washings of Moses. In ancient times the law directed washing after the emission of the generative seed because it was foretelling our regeneration by speaking of fleshly birth, not because it held human birth to be a defilement. For that which after birth appears as a man is effected

by the emission of the seed. It is not frequent intercourse of the parents which produces birth, but the reception of the seed in the womb. In the workshop of nature the seed is transformed into an embryo. How then can marriage be a state only intended for ancient times and an invention of the law, and marriage on Christian principles of a different nature, if we hold that the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the same God? "For what God has joined together no man may ever put asunder" for any good reason; if the Father commanded this, so much the more also will the Son keep it. If the author of the law and the gospel is the same, he never contradicts himself. For there is life in the law in that it is spiritual and is to be gnostically understood. But "we are dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead" and was prophesied by the law: "that we might bear fruit unto God."

Therefore "the law is holy and the commandment holy, righteous, and good." We, then, are dead to the law, that is to sin of which the law makes us aware; the law indicates it, it does not give rise to it; by telling us what we ought to do and prohibiting what we ought not to do, the law shows up the sin which lies underneath "that sin may be manifest." But if marriage according to the law is sin, I do not know how anyone can say he knows God when he asserts that the command of God is sin. If the law is holy, marriage is holy. This mystery the apostle refers to Christ and the Church. Just as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so that which is born of the spirit is spirit" not only in respect of its birth but also of what is acquired by learning. Thus "the children also are holy," they are well-pleasing to God, in that the Lord's words bring the soul as a bride to God. Fornication and marriage are therefore different things, as far apart as God is from the devil. "And you are dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead." It is to be understood here that you become closely obedient, since it is also according to the truth of the law that we obey the same Lord whose commands are given to us from a distance.

And no doubt of such people it is reasonable when, "the Spirit says expressly that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and the teaching inspired by demons, through hypocritical sophists who are seated in conscience and forbid marriage, and demand abstinence from foods which God created to be eaten with thanksgiving by believers who know the truth. Everything created by God is good, and none is to be rejected but accepted with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer." It necessarily follows, then, that it is wrong to

forbid marriage and indeed eating meat or drinking wine. For it is written: "It is good to eat no meat and to drink no wine" if it causes offence to do so, and that it is "good to remain as I am." But both he who eats with thanksgiving and he who does not eat, who also offers thanksgiving and has a continent enjoyment, should live in accordance with reason.

In general all the epistles of the apostle teach self-control and continence and contain numerous instructions about marriage, begetting children, and domestic life. But they nowhere rule out self-controlled marriage. Rather they preserve the harmony of the law and the gospel and approve both the man who with thanks to God enters upon marriage with sobriety and the man who in accordance with the Lord's will lives as a celibate, even as each individual is called, making his choice without blemish and in perfection. "And the land of Jacob was praised above another lands," says the prophet, glorifying the vessel of his Spirit. But a certain man who disparages birth, speaking of it as corrupt and destined for abolition, and does violence to the Scripture, saying that the Lord was referring to procreation in the words that on earth one ought not to "lay up treasure where moth and rust corrupt." And he is not ashamed to add to this the quotation from the prophet: "You all shall wax old like a garment and moth shall eat you." But we do not contradict the Scripture. Our bodies are corruptible and by nature subject to continual change. Perhaps the prophet was foretelling destruction to those whom he was addressing because they were sinners. But the Saviour did not refer to begetting children, but was exhorting those who wished only to possess large wealth and not to help the needy, to share their goods with others.

That is why he says: "Work not for the food which perishes, but for that which abides unto eternal life." Similarly they quote the saying: "The children of the age to come neither marry nor are given in marriage." But if anyone thinks carefully about this question concerning the resurrection of the dead and those who asked it, he will find that the Lord is not rejecting marriage, but ridding their minds of the expectation that in the resurrection there will be carnal desire. The phrase "the children of this age" is not meant to make a contrast with the children of some other age, but is equivalent to saying "those who are born in this age," who are children because of birth; they beget and are begotten since without birth no one will come into this life. But this birth, which must expect a corresponding corruption, no longer awaits him who has once departed from this life. "Your father in heaven is one," but he is also father of all men by creation. "Therefore call no man your father on earth," which is as if he said: Do not reckon him who begat you by

fleshly generation to be the cause of your being, but as the one who co-operated in causing your birth, or rather as a subordinate helper to that end.

He thus wishes us to turn ourselves again and become as children who have come to know the true Father and are reborn through water by a generation different from birth in the created world. Yes, he says, "the unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, but he who is married how he can please his wife." What then? Is it not lawful also for those who wish to please their wives according to the will of God to give thanks to God? Is it not allowable for both the married man and his wife to care for things of the Lord together? But just as "the unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit," so also the married woman cares in the Lord for the things of her husband and the things of the Lord, the one as a wife, the other as a virgin. But to put to shame and to discourage those inclined to contract a second marriage the apostle appropriately uses strong language and says at once: "Every other sin is external to the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body."

But if anyone dares to call marriage fornication, he again falls into blasphemy against the law and the Lord. For as covetousness is called fornication because it is opposed to contentment with what one possesses, and as idolatry is an abandonment of the one God to embrace many gods, so fornication is apostasy from single marriage to several. For, as we have remarked, the apostle uses the words fornication and adultery in three senses. On this matter the prophet says: "You were sold to your sins." And again: "You were defiled in a foreign land." Here he regards as defilement an association which is bound up with a strange body and not with that which in marriage is bestowed for the purpose of procreation. That is why the apostle also says: "I wish then that the younger women marry, bear children, look after their houses, and give the adversary no occasion for abuse; for some have already turned aside after Satan."

And indeed he entirely approves of the man who is husband of one wife, whether he be presbyter, deacon, or layman, if he conducts his marriage unblameably. "For he shall be saved by child-bearing." Again when the Saviour calls the Jews "a wicked and adulterous generation" he teaches that they did not know the law as the law intended; by following the tradition of the elders and the commandments of men, they were committing adultery against the law, as they did not accept "the husband and lord of their virginity." But perhaps he also knew that they were enslaved by alien desires,

on account of which they were in continual bondage to their sins and were sold to foreigners, since among the Jews at least no public harlots existed and adultery was forbidden. But he who said, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come" to the divine supper was an example to convict those who for pleasure's sake were abandoning the divine command; for if this saying is taken otherwise, neither the righteous before the coming of Christ nor those who have married since his coming, even if they be apostles, will be saved. And if they again bring forward the point that the prophet also said, "I have become old among all my enemies," by "enemies" they ought to understand sins. It is not marriage that is a sin but fornication, since otherwise they must say that birth and the creation of birth are sinful.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Such are the arguments of Julius Casinos, the originator of deceits. At any rate in his book Concerning Continence and Celibacy he says these words: "And let no one say that because we have these parts, that the female body is shaped this way and the male that way, the one to receive, the other to give seed, sexual intercourse is allowed by God. For if this arrangement had been made by God, to whom we seek to attain, he would not have pronounced eunuchs blessed; nor would the prophet have said that they are 'not an unfruitful tree,' using the tree as an illustration of the man who chooses to emasculate himself of any such notion."

And striving still further to support his godless opinion he adds: "Could not one rightly find fault with the Saviour if he was responsible for our formation and then delivered us from error and from this use of the generative organs?" In this respect his teaching is the same as Titian's. But he departed from the school of Valentine. On this account he says: "When Salome ' asked when she would know the answer to her questions, the Lord said, When you trample on the robe of shame, and when the two shall be one, and the male with the female, and there is neither male nor female."

In the first place we have not got the saying in the four Gospels that have been handed down to us, but in the Gospel according to the Egyptians. Secondly Cassia seems to me not to know that it refers to wrath in speaking of and to desire in speaking of the female. When these operate, there follow repentance and shame. But when a man gives in neither to wrath nor to desire, both of which increase in consequence of evil habit and upbringing so as to cloud and

obscure rational thought, but puts off from him the darkness they cause with penitence and shame, uniting spirit and soul in obedience to the Word, then, as Paul also says, "there is among you neither male nor female." For the soul leaves this physical form in which male and female are distinguished, and being neither the one nor the other changes to unity. But this worthy fellow thinks in Platonic fashion that the soul is of divine origin and, having become female by desire, has come down here from above to birth and corruption.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

He then does violence to Paul, making him hold that birth originated from deceit because he says: "I am afraid lest, as the serpent deceived Eve, your thoughts should be corrupted from the simplicity which is towards Christ." But the Lord, as all agree, came to that which was astray, but it had not strayed from above into earthly birth (for birth is created and the creation of the Almighty who would never bring the soul down from what is good to what is bad). The Saviour came to men who were astray in their thoughts, to us whose minds were corrupted as a result of our disobeying the commandments because we were lovers of pleasure, and perhaps also because the first man of our race did not bide his time, desired the favor of marriage before the proper hour, and fell into sin by not waiting for the time of God's will; "for everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her."

It was the same Lord who at that time also condemned the desire which preceded marriage. When, therefore, the apostle says, "Put on the new man which is created after God," he speaks to us who were formed as we are by the will of the Almighty. In speaking of the old man and the new he is not referring to birth and rebirth respectively, but to manner of life, the one being disobedient, the other obedient. The "coats of skins" in Cassia's view are bodies. That both he and those who teach the same as he does are wrong here we will show when we undertake an explanation of the birth of man the necessary preliminary discussion. He further says: The subjects of earthly kings both beget and are born, 'but our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior. That this remark also is right we recognize, since ought to behave as strangers and pilgrims, if married as though we were not married, if possessing wealth as though we not possess it, if procreating children as giving birth to mortals , as those who are ready to abandon their property, as men) would even live without a wife if need be, as people who not passionately attached to the created world, but use it with all gratitude and with a sense of exaltation beyond it.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

And again when the apostle says, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman; but because of the risk of immorality let man have his own wife," he explains it, as it were, by the further words "lest Satan tempt you." In the phrase "because of continence" he speaks not to

those who chastely use marriage for procreation alone, but to those who were desiring to beyond procreation, lest the adversary should raise a stormy and arouse desire for alien pleasures. But perhaps because Satan is zealously hostile to those who live rightly and contends against them, and wishes to bring them over to his own side, he aims to give them occasions for falling by making it difficult for to be continent.

Accordingly the apostle rightly says, "It is better to marry than to burn," that the husband may give to the wife her due he wife to the husband, and that they should not deprive another of help given by divine providence for the purpose of generation. "But whosoever shall not hate father or mother or wife or children," they quote, "cannot be my disciple." This a command to hate one's family. For he says: "Honour thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee." But what he means is this: Do not let yourself be led astray by irrational impulses and have nothing to do with the city customs. For a household consists of a family, and cities of households, as Paul also says of those who are absorbed in marriage that they aim to "please the world." Again the Lord says, "Let not the married person seek a divorce, nor the unmarried person marriage," that is, he who has confessed his intention of being celibate, let him remain unmarried.

To both the same Lord gives the corresponding promises by the prophet Isaiah in the following words: "Let not the eunuch say, I am dry wood. To eunuchs the Lord says this, If you keep my sabbaths and do all that I command you, I will give you a place better than sons and daughters." For a eunuch is not justified merely because he is a eunuch, and certainly not because he observes the sabbath, if he does not keep the commandments. And for the married he goes on to say, "My elect shall not labour in vain nor bear children to be accursed; for they are a seed blessed by the Lord." For him who begets children and brings them up and educates them in the Lord, just as for him who begets children by means of the true teaching, a reward is laid up, as also for the elect seed. But others hold that procreation is a curse and do not understand that the Scripture speaks against them. Those who are in truth the Lord's elect neither teach doctrines nor beget children to be accursed, as the sects do.

A eunuch, then, does not mean a man who has been castrated, nor even an unmarried man, but a man who is un-productive of truth. Formerly he was "dry wood," but if he obeys the word and observes the sabbaths by abstaining from sins and keeps the commandments, he will be in higher honour than those who are educated in word alone and fail to do what is right. "Little children," says our teacher,

"a little while longer I am with you." That is why Paul also instructs the Galatians in these words: "My little children, with whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." And again he writes to the Corinthians: "For though you may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ I have begotten you through the gospel." On this account a eunuch shall not enter into God's assembly," that is, the man who is unproductive and unfruitful both in conduct and in word; but blessed are those who have made themselves eunuchs, free from all sin, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven by their abstinence from the world.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

When Jeremiah says, "Cursed be the day in which I was born, and let it not be longed for," he is not saying simply that birth is accursed, but is in despair at the sins and disobedience of the people. In fact he goes on, "Why was I born to see labour and pain and my days accomplished in shame?" All those who preach the truth are persecuted and in danger because of the disobedience of their hearers. "Why did not my mother's womb become my tomb, that I might not see the distress of Jacob and the toil of the nation of Israel?" says Esdras the prophet. "No one is pure from defilement," says Job, "not even if his life last but one day." Let them tell us how the newly born child could commit fornication, or how that which has done nothing has fallen under the curse of Adam. The only consistent answer for them, it seems, is to say that birth is an evil, not only for the body, but also for the soul for the sake of which the body itself exists. And when David says: "In sin I was born and in unrighteousness my mother conceived me," he says in prophetic manner that Eve is his mother. For Eve became the mother of the living." But if he was conceived in sin, yet he was not himself in sin, nor is he himself sin.

But on the question whether everyone who turns from I sin to faith turns from sinful habits to life as though born of a mother, I may call as witness one of the twelve prophets who said, "Am I to give my firstborn for my impiety, the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul?" This is not an attack on him who said: "Increase and multiply." Rather he calls the first impulses resulting from birth, by which we do not know God, "impiety." If on this basis anyone maintains that birth is evil, let him also on the same ground hold that it is good, since in it we recognize the truth. "Be sober as is right, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God," that is, those who sin. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

spiritual powers." But "the rulers of darkness" have power to tempt us. That is why concessions are made. Therefore also Paul says: "I buffet my body and bring it into subjection." "For everyone who wishes to take part in a contest is continent in all things" (the words "he is continent in all things" really mean that, though he does not abstain from everything, yet he is self-controlled on such things as he thinks fit). "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible," as if we conquer in the struggle, though there is no crown for us if we do not put up any fight at all. There are also some now who rank the widow higher than the virgin in the matter of continence, on the ground that she scorns pleasure of which she has had experience.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

If birth is something evil, let the blasphemers say that the Lord who shared in birth was born in evil, and that the virgin gave birth to him in evil. Woe to these wicked fellows! They blaspheme against the will of God and the mystery of creation in speaking evil of birth. This is the ground upon which Docetism is held by Cassian and by Marcion also, and on which even Valentine indeed teaches that Christ's body was "psychic." They say: Man became like the beasts when he came to practice sexual intercourse. But it is when a man in his passion really wants to go to bed with a strange woman that in truth such a man has become a wild beast. "Wild horses were they become, each man whinnied after his neighbour's wife." And if the serpent took the use of intercourse from the irrational animals and persuaded Adam to agree to have sexual union with Eve, as though the couple first created did not have such union by nature, as some think, this again is blasphemy against the creation. For it makes human nature weaker than that of the brute beasts if in this matter those who were first created by God copied them. But if nature led them, like the irrational animals, to procreation, yet they were impelled to do it more quickly than was proper because they were still young and had been led away by deceit. Thus God's judgment against them was just, because they did not wait for his will. But birth is holy. By it were made the world, the existences, the natures, the angels, powers, souls, the commandments, the law, the gospel, the knowledge of God. And "all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls; but the word of the Lord abides" which anoints the soul and unites it with the spirit. Without the body how could the divine plan for us in the Church achieve its end? Surely the Lord himself, the head of the Church, came in the flesh, though without form and

beauty, to teach us to look upon the formless and incorporeal nature of the divine Cause. "For a tree of life" says the prophet, "grows by a good desire," teaching that desires which are in the living Lord are good and pure.

Furthermore they wish to maintain that the intercourse of man and wife in marriage, which is called knowledge, is a sin; this sin is referred to as eating of the tree of good and evil, and the phrase "he knew" signifies transgression of the commandment. But if this is so, even knowledge of the truth is eating of the tree of life. It is possible for a sober-minded marriage to partake of that tree. We have already observed that marriage may be used rightly or wrongly; and this is the tree of knowledge, if we do not transgress in marriage. What then? Does not the Saviour who heals the soul also heal the body of its passions? But if the flesh were hostile to the soul, he would not have raised an obstacle to the soul by strengthening with good health the hostile flesh. "This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor corruption incorruption." For sin being corruption cannot have fellowship with incorruption which is righteousness. "Are you so foolish?" he says; "having begun in the Spirit are you now to be made perfect by the flesh."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Some, then, as we have shown, have tried to go beyond what is right and the concord that marks salvation which is holy and established. They have blasphemously accepted the ideal of continence for reasons entirely godless. Celibacy may lawfully be chosen according to the sound rule with godly reasons, provided that the person gives thanks for the grace God has granted, and does not hate the creation or reckon married people to be of no account. For the world is created: celibacy is also created. Let both give thanks for their appointed state, if they know to what state they are appointed. But others have kicked over the traces and waxed wanton, having become indeed "wild horses who whinny after their neighbour's wives." They have abandoned themselves to lust without restraint and persuade their neighbours to live licentiously; as wretches they follow the Scripture: "Cast your lot in with us; let us all have a common purse and let our moneybag be one."

On account of them the same prophet gives us advice saying: "Go not in the way with them, withdraw thy foot from their steps. For not unjustly are nets spread out to catch birds; for they are guilty of bloodshed and treasure up evil for themselves" -that is, they seek for immorality and teach their neighbours to do the same. According

to the prophet they are "fighters struck with their own tails" (ourai), to which the Greeks give the name kerkoi. Those to whom the prophecy refers might well be lustful, incontinent, men who fight with their tails, children of darkness and wrath, bloodstained suicides and murderers of their neighbours. "Purify out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump," cries the apostle to us. And again in anger at such people he directs that we should "have no fellowship with anyone called a brother if he is a fornicator or covetous man or idolater or reviler or drunkard or robber; with such a man one ought not even to eat." "For I through the law am dead to the law," he says, "that I may live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I that live," meaning that I used to live according to my lusts, "but Christ lives in me," and I am pure and blessed by obeying the commandments; so that whereas at one time I lived in the flesh carnally, "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."

"Go into no way of the heathen and enter no city of the Samaritans," says the Lord, to keep us away from society contrary to his will. "For the end of the lawless man is evil. And these are the ways of all those who do lawless deeds." "Woe to that man," the Lord says, "it were well for him if he had never been born, than that he should cause one of my little ones to stumble. It were better for him that a millstone were hung about him and he cast into the sea than that he should pervert one of my elect." "For the name of God is blasphemed because of them." Therefore the apostle nobly says, "wrote to you in my letter to have no company with fornicators," as far as the words "but the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." And to show that he does not regard marriage as fornication he goes on: "Do you not know that he Who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?" Or who will assert that before she is married a virgin is a harlot? "And do not deprive one another," he says, "except by agreement for a time," indicating by the word "deprive" the obligation of marriage, procreation, which he has set forth in the preceding passage where he says: "Let the husband give the wife her due and likewise also the wife to the husband."

In fulfilling this obligation she is a helpmeet in the house and in Christian faith. And the apostle expresses the same point even more clearly as follows: "To the married I direct, yet not I but the Lord, that the wife be not separated from her husband (and if she is separated, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband) and that the husband should not leave his wife. But to the rest I say, not the Lord: If any brother. ..." 'down to the words "but now are they holy." What have they to say to these words, these people who

disparage the law and speak as if marriage were only conceded by the law and is not in accord with the New Testament? What reply to these directions have those who recoil from intercourse and birth? For he also lays down that the bishop who is to rule the Church must be a man who governs his own household well. A household pleasing to the Lord consists of a marriage with one wife..."To the pure," he says, "all things are pure: but to the defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but their mind and conscience are polluted." With reference to illicit indulgence he says: "Make no mistake: neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate men nor homosexuals nor covetous men nor robbers nor drunkards nor revilers nor thieves shall inherit the kingdom of God. And we," who used to indulge in such practices, "have washed ourselves." "But they have a purification, with a view to committing this immorality; their baptism means passing from self-control to fornication. They maintain that one should gratify the lusts and passions, teaching that one must turn from sobriety to be incontinent. They set their hope on their private parts. Thus they shut themselves out of God's kingdom and deprive themselves of enrolment as disciples, and under the name of knowledge, falsely so called, they have taken the road to outer darkness. "For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is holy, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is attractive, whatever is well spoken of, whatever is virtuous, and whatever is praiseworthy, think on these things. And whatever you have learnt and received and heard and seen in me, this do. And the God of peace shall be with you."

And Peter in his epistle says the same: "So that your faith and hope may be in God, because you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth," "as obedient children, not behaving after the fashion of the lusts in which in your ignorance you formerly indulged; but as he who has called you is holy, so also must you be holy in all your conduct; as it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy." But our polemic, though necessary against those who masquerade under the false name of knowledge, has carried us beyond the limit and made our discussion lengthy. Accordingly this is the end of our third miscellany of gnostic notes in accordance with the true philosophy.