Against Bardaisan’s Domnus

Ephrem the Syrian (c. AD 306–373)

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S. Ephraim’s Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan. Transcribed from the Palimpsest B.M. Add. 14623 by the late C. W. MITCHELL, M.A., C.F., volume 2 (1921) pp. i-xxii

AGAINST BARDAISAN’S ”DOMNUS. A DISCOURSE MADE BY THE BLESSED SAINT [P. 1] EPHRAIM AGAINST THE DISCOURSE WHICH IS CALLED ”OF DOMNUS,” WHICH WAS COMPOSED BY BARDAISAN AGAINST THE PLATONISTS. KNOW, O my beloved, that in (? everything it is right for us to know the (just) Measure of everything. For by this knowledge all [advantages] are found, just as ... all injuries are produced by all arrogance. For whenever we know how to approach anything by measure there is nothing that is able to hurt us. For even those hurtful things are not able to hurt us as long as we approach them by measure. But that thou mayest know how great is the victory of correct measure, see that nowhere does it put us in the wrong ; for even in the case of fire, though it is a harmful thing, when our bodies [P. 2. approach it by measure an advantage is produced for us out of its harmfulness. And if without measure starving men make use of food death is produced for them out of its (i.e. the food’s) vital force. O correct measure, which produces out of hurtful things advantages for those who may be hurt! For as heavy burdens teach weakness to excuse itself from (lifting) any weight which it is unable to bear, so it would be right also for an uninstructed imagination to refrain from an investigation in which it is unable to speak convincingly.

For some have been found who are wise in something or other, but |ii have come near to be detected 1 in directions where they themselves are not wise. For their boldness has made them think that because they are wise in one direction, so also they are wise in all directions. But any craftsman who makes a promise about any craft which has. not been learnt by him is reproved when he approaches the work which belongs to that craft. But if a craft is able to [P.3] reprove him who does not know how to deal with it, investigation is not too feeble to reprove also by its silence the ignorant man who desires to approach it (i.e. investigation) as one who knows. For wise men, perfect and righteous, have humbled themselves that they

might be as though they were ignorant men even in that which they knew—not that they wished to destroy their knowledge, but that by making themselves needy the Fulness which is enough to fill up all our needs might incline towards them. If therefore such just men as knew were not arrogant, how shall we sinful ones be arrogant in such matters as we do not know ? For whoever comes forward humbly as a learner, that humility of his places him under the weakness of confessing that he does not know ;

but whoever comes forward with arrogance as one who knows, he is one who has exalted himself above (the limit of) moderation, because arrogance knows not how to be subject to moderation. For if arrogance allowed itself to be subject to moderation, it would not be arrogance at all. For arrogance [P.4] cannot be arrogance unless it exalts itself [above its proper measure . . . for a man is not to be blamed (by being asked) why he does not know something which he could not know] [l.10]. But if he says 'I know,' whereas it is known that he cannot know it, [then his arrogance is really arrogance, because though he does not know] he is unwilling to be humble [l.22]. . . . And if he teaches another. . . . For he who is humble and learns from a teacher, he is able . . . * * * * * * * [P.5 l.27] Thus the Greeks spoke words of knowledge and . . . they said also various things that were in [metaphor] and as if in parables, and these without the tradition (of their meaning) no one [can] know . . . * * * * * * * |iii we (? blame the speaker, because he is not able to know what he [p. 6. l.9] says.

But this which I have mentioned is found in the case of great sages, namely that one confesses 'I do not know.' For this is their great knowledge that when they do not know a thing they confess that they do not know it. For that same knowledge is able to accuse ignorance, because that ignorance cannot accuse itself. For if a man confesses about something that he knows it and again about something else that he does not know it, he gains a victory as about that which he knows. For in both these cases he has spoken the truth, and because he does not lie in either of them his truth is victorious, since it triumphs and defeats fasehood and is crowned. But thou knowest that it is said in the book (called) 'Of Domnus' that "the Platonists say that there are σώματα and also ἀσώματα," that is to say, corporeal and incorporeal things. But these inquiries do not belong to the Platonists, even if they [P. 7. are written in the writings of the Platonists ; but they are the inquiries of the Stoics which Albinus 2 introduced into his book which is called 'Concerning the Incorporeal,' according to the custom followed by sages and philosophers who in their writings set forth first the inquiries of their own party and then exert themselves to refute by their arguments the inquiries of men who are opposed to their school of thought.

But in the writings of the Stoics and the Platonists this took place, for the Platonists say that there are σώματα and ἀσώματα, and the Stoics too (say) the same thing.

But they do not agree in opinion as they agree in terms. For the Platonists say that corporeal and incorporeal things exist in nature and substance, whereas the Stoics say that all that exists in nature and substance is corporeal (lit. is a body), but that which does not exist in nature, though it is perceived by the mind, they call incorporeal. But the Philosopher of the Syrians (i.e. Bardaisan) made himself a laughing-stock among Syrians and Greeks, not only in that he [P. 8. was unable to state but also in that he did not really know the |iv teaching of Plato ; and in (his) simplicity he hastened to calumniate Plato by (ascribing to him) the inquiries of others, though Plato had a great struggle against these (very) inquiries, which Bardaisan thinks belong to Plato. But these inquiries (were conducted) according as the Stoics invented names for things, and because they (were expressed) as in parables . . . * * * * * * * [l.24] [as I have said above, Bardaisan accepts (as literal fact) the parables of the Stoics.] * * * * * * * [l.38] When [a man sees] a fire [burning] in a Temple or a [Palace] the sight [compels] him to be confused, and he will run in every direction, because he cannot extinguish that great fire . . .

that [P.9] weakness hastens to contend for great things, and though it knows that its insignificance cannot produce conviction it is no longer able to remain quiet: lo, our insignificance also [is stirred up by the hearing of these errors, and though our insignificance knows] that it can[not] produce conviction about these things, yet it cannot refrain from argument about them. [l.21] But see . . . "for they have not the three dimensions (τὸ τριχῆ διαστατον)," namely length and breadth and height, nor do they [have] colour (?) 1 " . . . " and time and place . . . and outline and length and breadth and the [marks] that things are known [by]. But . . . that a man should say concerning the sun that it is mortal, . . . it is on account of the appearance which he sees in the sun that he says this concerning it ; for it is produced (lit. born) in the East and ... in the South . . . and extends (its rays) as far as the West . . . and called the sun mortal, he [P.10] hastens to blame (it) ; for he who blames is himself blameworthy. The fact therefore that the Stoics have called these things incorporeal I [admit] that I may say how and why and wherefore. [l.19] . . . but they are names applied to (? corporeal things and substances.

For they have begun by saying concerning Space, namely (that) this Space exists in name and in meaning, as.I have said ; for because it has a name (lit. by reason of its name) |v it is expressed by a sound and because it has a meaning it is perceived by the mind. And, because it is perceived by the mind, if thou, O hearer, dost not hear (at all) with the mind thou canst not hear it. For consider that it is a necessary result that Space should both exist and not exist. And if these two (possibilities) cannot (both) be, Space cannot exist and receive a name, that is to say, exist in name, though it has no body or substance. [P. 11] For all things, whether they be substances or bodies, can exist in this thing (i.e. Space) which is incorporeal. But if Space likewise has a body and substance, it is found that it is not Space but

something which is in the midst of Space ; so that the truth is found (to be) that the Space in which all bodies exist has no body or substance. For if it is a body it is limited somewhere ; but if it is limited it touches upon some body and is (thereby) limited. And again, what is that thing in the midst of which it is placed, so that it is a companion and a limiter for it (i.e. for Space) ?

But if that body is an impediment to it, then also again something surrounds that body ; that is to say, that Space which belongs to it (i.e. the aforesaid "something ") cannot be surrounded by anything. And on this account note carefully with thy mind, 0 hearer, and see that necessity compels (us) to say that that Space will not have a body.3 For as long as we say that Space is some kind of body by that (statement) the [P.12] former reasoning continues to be overthrown and built up (afresh). And again let us turn back to the truth concerning it, namely to say that it (i.e. Space) is incorporeal and also that on account of this it is not in a place, as the Stoics have said. For that which can dwell in the midst of a place 4 is not (itself) a place, for one place cannot dwell in the midst of (another) place ; and if it be not so, all those things which were said above have been confuted. For if one corporeal Space be discovered which has substance and another Space be discovered which is incorporeal, then the corporeal may dwell in the midst of the incorporeal—this is a thing which can be stated indeed, but cannot be (in reality). But I venture to say ... as many have thought, even though |vi they were unable to demonstrate (it) in practice. But that two places exist (? in one another one cannot even . . . assert . . .

[P.13] For because a single entity is found . . . * * * * * * * [l.17] which is also a substance, from that substance there is produced in us a likeness to this (substance) . . . * * * * * * * we cannot produce out of a shadow another shadow. No other Space can exist besides this, though, because of the heaven and earth that came into being, in the midst of the created things that came into being inside the world distinctions have arisen that are called 'Places,' either [North] or [West].5 Now these are names of lands or habitations ; but the Place in the midst of which these places are, that is what we say is incorporeal. [P.14] Can it be therefore that because this place has no substance it is not (really) a place ? . . . we are not able to demonstrate. Both things therefore have been found to be true, (namely) that it exists and that it does not exist, that is to say, that it exists in name and meaning, but that it does not exist in body and substance. And a thing which does not exist in substance is a thing to which these three dimensions do not belong. For everything which is a substance or a body has three dimensions (?).

And on this account also they have not wished [to reckon] God Who [is above all] with the things they call incorporeal, nor can they (do so), because of that which they were saying, that ... is a body. Now this Space also has neither length nor breadth ; for these are names of measurements (which belong) to bodies [P.15] that

exist in the midst of it. ... it is necessary that these three dimensions (? should be found (to belong) to them. But just as that Space includes (lit. has received) all bodies, though it has no body, so it includes all measurements though it cannot be subject to measurement. For see that Height and Depth also are (so) named on account of the heavens. But store up (? these things in thy mind, |vii and see that there is not any other body in the middle but only Space, which is incorporeal. And when thou hast considered (the matter) thus, create in thy mind height and depth—art thou able (to do so) ? For which of the directions wilt thou call Height, and which again wilt thou name Depth, seeing that height is called Height on account of the heavens above thee ? When therefore the cause on account of which it has been called Height is removed it is clear that the Space which remains has neither height nor depth. And so also (it may be said of) Length and Breadth—they have arisen and exist through corporeal causes.

And when those causes are removed it is clear that these [P. 16. names likewise do not exist. For (in the case of) that Space of which we are speaking, through what (i.e. in relation to what) does its height become high, and through what does its length become long, seeing that these measurements belong to substances, so that when the extent and dimension of a substance is long it is called the Length ? And because one side is shorter in its measurement it is called the Breadth, while also (in the case of) a Round it is likewise clear for what reasons it is (called) a round. But that thou mayest know that the Bardesanists have not even heard that Philosophers have . . . seeing that this length and breadth is placed by Bardaisan in that measurement of Space, when he says that "Space also has been measured that it holds so much (i.e. a definite quantity). For if he supposes that Space is measurable it is necessary that length and breadth also should belong (? to Space, a statement which I have contradicted above. [This] same length and breadth therefore the Philosophers have there also [perhaps] called incorporeal, and just as Space is measured in virtue of what it is (?), so they reckon them (i.e. [p. 17. length and breadth) in virtue of what they are, so that thou mayest know that they also are things distinct from Space, that is to say, they are names and notions, but not bodies and |viii substances.

For thou measurest a body which has length, but length itself, which is produced by a name and is called Length, thou canst not measure (and) ascribe to it three dimensions, for this Length is produced by the conjunction of body and speech.6 For the body produced the measure, and speech produced this name which is called Length. Thou art able therefore to measure the extent and width of that body, and when thou hast measured (it) thou givest the name of Length to that which thou hast measured. But thou canst not turn round (and) measure the name which is called Length, because it is not a substance at all; for it is a bare name whereby the notion of that which thou hast measured is perceived (by the mind). [P. 18. Since then this name has no substance, let us say therefore that it does not exist. And how

does it not exist, seeing that apart from this name no creature can be measured ? Therefore also this name which is called Length both exists and does not exist. And so also all words both exist and do not exist, but they exist (as) signs by means of which we understand everything {that} has body and substance, whereas they (i.e. words) have no body, and though by means of them we speak about all substances they themselves have no substance. For I say that I buy and I sell;

but the thing which I buy or sell is some substance, whereas these verbs7 and the nouns called 'buying' and 'selling' have no substance. Therefore substances which are bought or sold have these three dimensions, but these nouns have them not, for they are incorporeal. And that I may not write to thee at great length (it is enough to say that) thou hast often heard this with respect to Time and Number [P. 19. and with respect to everything which is incorporeal. For with regard to everything which is like these or similar to these, (we may say that) its branches divide there, for these (i.e. Time and Number) are the roots from which all the branches shoot forth. And though it would suffice that thou shouldst know all of them by means of a single one nevertheless they (i.e. philosophers) |ix have abundantly demonstrated these things to him who seeks them, in order to assist the weakness of the seeker. Hear therefore with respect to a sign (σημεῖον) and a line that they too are incorporeal things (dependent) on bodily substances which exist, that is to say, a horse or an eagle or one of the various bodies and substances.

When some one begins to portray them . . ., at the (very) commencement, when thou seest, thou knowest whether he wishes to portray a horse or a lion, and before the artist portrays (anything) on the tablet, the likeness of the horse is portrayed in his mind, and if the artist wishes to add (extra) limbs thou blamest him by reason of the substance of the horse which the truth fashions. But if I say to thee, "I intend to draw a line," thou knowest not what (line) I shall draw for thee ; for a line has not any [P. 20. substance, as a horse has a substance, so that if he (i.e. the artist) adds or subtracts thou canst convict him. But if thou thinkest, "He is drawing a straight line," he draws for himself a crooked one ; and if thou thinkest that he is making it (to consist) of four angles he can make it (to consist) of eight1 angles. For when artists portray the likenesses of bodies which they perceive they cannot add or subtract anything ; and when they portray the likenesses of substances which they do not perceive they portray them in their proper colours and shapes. And if he adds in one of the substances anything which is not in the (true) image of that substance, he is blamed.

But in the case of a line he adds and subtracts anything that he wishes, and he is not blamed, because there is no real substance (which is) the likeness of that line so that thou couldst blame him. And because it has not substance it does not exist, and because it does not exist we have on that account also called it incorporeal. But Bardaisan has said that even a line is measured by that body, whatever it be,

in which it is. Hear this (word) as (thou [P. 21. hast heard) that which I have said concerning Space, in the case of which the terms Length and Breadth are used, not, however, (as applying) to it but to that which exists in Space. For consider that before a horse is portrayed it is pictured in thy mind, and thou knowest what is its length and breadth. But (in the case |x of) a line, before it is formed thou knowest not its length and breadth, because it has not length and breadth. For if they belonged to it it would be known before it is formed, as the length and breadth of all animals is known in our mind before they are portrayed, except such animals as are invisible to us, or the likenesses of angels, whose length and breadth, when we see them once, are pictured in our mind as (in the case of) those things which are visible to us.

But (in the case of) a line, though thou seest it always, thou hast never yet limited it, and this (is) because, as I said, it has no 'bound' likeness or fixed body (such) that if the draftsman of the line departs from the likeness he can be [P.22] blamed. That line therefore has no length or breadth before it is formed on the tablet, in the way that even before a man is born we know the fashion of his length and breadth ; but this line, which has no substance, when it is drawn (lit. falls) upon a tablet or upon (some other) body these three dimensions arise for it. But they (i.e. the dimensions) belong, not to it, but to that thing with which it is associated ; for if they were its own they would belong to it even apart from this tablet. But I say to thee briefly — there are these three classes which are incorporeal, one class (consisting) of fixed nouns which are given to bodies and substances ; and another class of nouns which are given to notions, like these of Space and Time and Number ; and another class (consisting of) verbs which are used with reference to anything. And whereas these three classes are incorporeal, they have nevertheless called these seven names only "incorporeal. And why (none) but these names, seeing that 'Gold' and 'Silver,' even if these also are names (or 'nouns'), [P.23] are ἀσώματα, i.e. incorporeal ?

Nevertheless, because they have been given to bodies and substances, they also are corporeal names. When therefore thou hearest a name which some one uses and he calls out 'gold,' or 'silver,' or 'eagle,' or 'earth,' at the mere mention of the name thy imagination fixes itself on the corporeal substance, and thou knowest whether it be soft or hard, or bitter or sweet. And so also when some one speaks to thee of colours. But if, on the contrary, he mentions to thee 'Time' or 'Number' thy imagination does not fix itself on |xi bodies or substances. For what substance belongs to Time, or what body belongs to Number or Space ? Nor dost thou know whether they be black or white, whether they be soft or hard. And if thou sayest that likewise Height and Length are names and are used of bodies and substances, [I reply] that at first they exist by themselves and stand without the support of any body whatsoever, but afterwards [they are applied] also to [P. 24. bodies according to common usage ; for a man says 'length' even though bodies and their extent have not previously been mentioned, for "the name of Length and Breadth—these

names exist by themselves without the support of any body" ; but afterwards a man says "the length of a stone" and "the breadth of it"—these, lo, stay upon the bodies by favour.

But if thou sayest 'Iron' or 'Brass,' with the name there stays the substance also, and the name of Iron or Brass cannot be said (i.e. without implying the qualities of these substances). . . . * * * * * * * . . . And on this account they are 'bound' names, and these also [l. 33. [are attached] to 'bound' substances ; for these names of Iron or Brass or Stone . . . but it is right (? that incorporeal names [l. 42. should be detached, and, because they are not as 'bound' substances, perhaps on account of this they have called them ἀσώματα. * * * * * * * . . . that indeed 'there is a time for everything' 8 . . . [P.25 l.18] * * * * * * * (Here follows) yet another fashion (of argument). There is [p. 26] nothing which is not named as being in Space or in a place. [l. 2. There is nothing which is not in Time and subject to Time and performed within (the limits of) Time. There is nothing which has not or does not become subject to Number and Measure. There is nothing which does not possess Length and Breadth. There is no body or person who does not bear a Mark by means of which he (or it) is distinguished from others, like the point which distinguishes one word from another.

There is nothing |xii which is formed or written without a Line being in its form or in its writing. There is no clang or buzzing or humming or sound without one of these seven sounds, or of those seven vowels (?), or seven Syllables, being in it. And therefore here (i.e. in this connection) also the Stoics made the seven syllables ἀσώματα, so as to include everything within them just as (they include) these writings which have no sound. But just as there are names of horses which are derived from the Sun, that is to say Ἠλιοδρόμος, and from Fire, (that is) [P. 27.] Πυρολάμπος, and again from Water, Πήγασος, so there are among our names other names which are derived from each of those seven names, besides these words, which are verbs and not names, as I said above. But leave all of them (?), and hear the sound of the tongue, which has in it and within it (musical) tones, which convey a meaning to the hearer when they are varied in the mouth, and these tones and variations of the voice are called verbs, such as, 'eat,' 'drink,' 'rise,' 'sit.' Now these are variations of the tongue within the mouth and changes of sound, but the sound, because it exists (?), has been apprehended (lit. overtaken) by the hearing ; whereas the meaning of these variations of the tongue and of sound is perceived by the mind.

For nothing which reaches the hearing is (actually) severed from the tongue or from the sound, as if thou givest a piece of thy flesh or of thine eyelids thou givest some substance which can be felt and seen. But in this case (i.e. when the above-mentioned words were uttered) the ear heard thine own voice as it came. And [P. 28. if they (i.e. the speakers) are Persians, the mind fails to perceive the meaning

of the words, though the ear did not fail to hear the sound. But if the meaning were any sort of substance, the ear would perceive it also, just as it perceives the sound. And lo ! also by a gesture a man conveys a meaning, and in this case hearing is in abeyance and thou hearest with the eye (?). And (yet) nothing is severed from the gesture or from the things written and reaches the eye, but [the eye] sees something [of |xiii which] the meaning is seen by the mind — it (i.e. the mind) perceives it. And even an unlearned eye sees a book because it is really a thing seen. But these senses ... do not perceive . . . the meaning (of the book), because that meaning is not seen by the eye, nor tasted by the mouth, nor smelt, nor handled. But that meaning which is heard by the ear in the sound can attach itself (lit.

can come) to a gesture, and the ear does not hear it in the gesture, but the eye [sees] that whereby really the meaning was spoken. ... but it has not departed to (any other) place, [P. 29. because it exists (?). But the meaning can be expressed (? by anything, because it is incorporeal. So all these words and names of everything that exist are not bodies but meanings (or notions), so that they may not wander about among all words and names. . . . For during the day and [l. 19. the night all objects (? which are in space are visible to us. And so even (in the case of) these six notions which are associated with this (space), it is not the notions themselves that are visible or audible, but that thing has an appearance of its own and a special mark 1 of its own. For without a voice I hear its voice, even when no one has spoken to me about it. But the notions, if thou dost not speak to me 2 about them, have no voice, but within (the compass of) thine own voice thou utterest those notions which have no voice. But it is here that Bardaisan erred and went astray, for he said concerning notions that they are audible. But the Stoics did not err, for they said that they (i.e. notions) are perceived by the mind. [P. 30.] * * * * * * * [l. 5.] . . .

sight perceives with the eye, voice with the tongue, smell with the nostrils, taste with the palate, but touch [with all] the body, and these things are 'bound ' and not separable ; but notions are not 'bound' [to one sense, for if] thou think 'surely it is bound up with the voice, consider . . . [l. 27. For see that unless thou hast sung or called I know not whether thy voice is beautiful or not, and unless thou hast seen (something) it is also the same (as regards) thy sight, and unless |xiv them hast smelt it is also the same (as regards) thy sense of smell, and unless thou hast heard I know not whether thy hearing be quick, and so also (with) thy foot and thy hand. For as regards each of these a man is able to learn it (i.e. its qualities) by means of it. But as regards thy notions, even without thy tongue and thy voice I can know by means of writings whether they (i.e. thy notions) are good or wise, though writings are (only) signs of [P. 31. notions. For writings are divided up into syllables, but a notion is not divided ; and a book, moreover, is visible, whereas a notion is not visible. And it is not right that the Greeks should be blamed for the

appellations which they bestowed. For these appellations were not invented with a view to judgement and discussion, but for the notion of why it was so.

It would therefore not be right that we should pass judgement on a thing which was not designed for judgement but for (expressing) a notion. For authors would not even have been able to compose anything, if they did not employ these appellations. For those things are known which introduce judgement and discussion. For even these very words which are spoken are included within these seven a0sw&mata, for from these same seven Names [every]thing begins to be spoken, while the limner asserts concerning Geometry that with its lines all works and all designs are made, and (also) what the Greeks called ἐπιφάνεια, Manifestation, i.e. the appearance of anything whatsoever, for there is nothing, either of things visible or of things invisible, which has not an appearance of its own.9 But the causes of appearance are these : that is, according [P. 32. as the intervening distance is far or near, and according to the |xv greatness or smallness of the object seen, and according to the healthiness or unhealthiness of the eye itself, and moreover according to the faintness or intensity of the light which reveals (the object) ; for by much light the eye is dazzled and that object which is (usually) visible is swallowed up or hidden, as the stars by the sun. On the one hand therefore the darkness is a revealer, like the light, since in the darkness the stars are bright and visible, which are hidden by the light, as the sons of darkness (are hidden) by the day.

But the cause of the eye failing (lit. slipping) is that the sight of the eye wanders by reason of the distance of the (intervening) distance, and on that account it (i.e. the eye) does not see. But if there were something in which the sight might be shut up, as in a tube, [the sight] would be able to go forth to see that object which it cannot (now) see on account of the distance . . . * * * * * * * [P.33] But again [in the case] of the stars, that same (intervening) l. 19. distance which belongs to them by day belongs to them also by night, and the eye which could not see them by day was able to see them by night. And why (is this so), unless it be that the darkness is for the eye as it were a tube and its sight is concentrated and goes up to the stars, while the light of the stars, on the other hand, descends to the eye as it were into a pit ? And so too a fire by night is seen from a great distance, but by day it is not seen even a quarter of this distance. * * * * * * * [p.34] [ll. 5-20. [Even by day the stars might be seen, if the light of the sun was obscured.] ... he (? cannot see by that light which is [l. 38.

outside (of the eye) that which he saw by the light which is within (the eye). Consider again and fix the eyes also on the sun, and see that, if the light is not concentrated (into the eye) little by little and (so) conies to its place, the eye cannot see. And again, if a lamp be extinguished at night on the [P. 35. way, observe that because the eye is distracted by the rays of the lamp (it is only) when it has concentrated the light into itself little by little that it can see. |xvi But that thou

mayest learn well how tubes concentrate scattered things and propel (lit. send) them, consider also the fire-hoses (si/fwnej), and see to what a height they propel and scatter the unstable water. Consider moreover aqueducts and see how water is collected in cisterns and pipes and (then) it ascends and does service on heights that are hard of access. And so would the eye be able to see from afar, if there were instruments to (assist) the eyesight. Look also at the mouth of a kiln, how it concentrates and sends forth the smoke, and it circles and is carried up on high. But when the smoke goes out into the open air it wanders (i.e. is dissipated) and is scattered and swallowed up after the manner of the aforesaid eyesight. Consider moreover the breath which we send forth from our mouth gently, and see that when it is concentrated in the furnace [P. 36.

of a blacksmith or in the fireplace of a goldsmith its blast goes forth strongly because of its concentration. Furthermore, if this wind that blows is compressed between the clefts of a mountain, or in the opening through a wall its breath beomes stronger because of its accumulation. Consider moreover a trumpet, and see that the voice which in us was weak and, when it went forth from us, wandered (i.e. was dissipated), as soon as its wandering motions are concentrated in the trumpet, observe how far the concentration of that voice carries. Again, make (lit. take) an experiment for thyself, (namely) if thou openest thy mouth wide and criest, thy voice wanders and is weak ; but if thou compressest thy lips a little on the outer side and makest with them as it were a spacious hollow on the inner side thy voice is concentrated and increases, especially if thou art looking downward and not upward. Again, observe a carpenter (and see) that when he considers the straightness of the wood— because the sight of his eye is scattered as long as it (i.e. his eye) is altogether open—the workman closes half of his eye, that he may concentrate it (i.e. the sight) against the straightness of [P. 37. the wood. Again, inhale breath from thy mouth and inhale also from thy nostrils, and see that the inhaling power of thy nostrils is strong enough to concentrate (and) bring in the air, because the nostrils are compressed and hollow (? like cavities and tubes.

And if |xvii a workman is comparing (? depth with height he makes a small hole for himself, in order that he may concentrate and cause to pass through it the sight of the eye, and that he may estimate (lit. weigh) the extent (lit. surface) of the depth and reckon it in comparison with the height. But I say that if smell and heat were concentrated they likewise would be found travelling to a distance. But it must be so ; for rest cannot be stable, because that air which sets things in motion (lit. the dragger of things) is (constantly) travelling and knows not how to rest. For it is by the air that everything is drawn along. Consider again that he who blows a flute or he who utters cries with a mouth that inhales and exhales the air (does so) in order that the air may be a vehicle for the voice or the flute-blowing. For the air is a vehicle for everything. Moreover when a man looks in the direction of the sun, if he does not place [P. 38. his hand above his eyes and shelter them, their sight

is not concentrated (enough) to look (steadily). And likewise when a man carries a lamp, if he does not spread his hand above the lamp and ward off the rays from his eyes, his eyesight is scattered and cannot travel to a distance.

And when a man looks into a basin of pure water he sees in the collected water below the colour of the sky and likewise a bird, if it happens to fly above the aforesaid basin. But because everything is given to us by measure, we also see by measure, along with everything else. For beings above and below, along with everything which is created, act by measure. But if there be some who exceed (others), as (it may be said) that cattle eat more than birds, and a wild beast drinks more than creeping things, and the sun is brighter than the stars, though (even so) all these are subject to measure. For increase the blaze and see that the heat increases ; and likewise the sight becomes less through much fasting, and when the sight [P. 39. is weak errs (lit. slips). But the contrivances which I have mentioned assist our weakness. Know moreover that Dark and Light are the opposites of one another ; the opposite indeed is not assisted by its opposite, nor is Light injured by that which is akin to it, but the sight (is |xviii injured) by the Light, because the sight wanders right and left, like water that wanders in a plain. But in the dark, because it (i.e. the sight) does not wander right and left, and as ... in a tube . . . and the sight [comes] up to the torch or the . . ., on that account they are seen by the eye ;

and the sun does not hide the stars when it rises—for light does not become the opposite of the star which is akin to it—but the rays scatter the sight of the eye and it (the eye) cannot see the stars. For lo ! a lamp, although (? it is seen at noon on account of its nearness . . . that which is swallowed up is seen neither by reason of distance nor yet on [P. 40. account of nearness (?). But light cannot swallow up anything because its concentrated nature . . . nor does it swallow up the darkness ; the darkness is wholly destroyed and ceases (to exist), because there was nothing in the sky, for it (i.e. the darkness) is incorporeal. There are these two natures only coming to meet one another, namely sight and the illuminated object; the latter comes with its light visibly towards the eye, and sight goes to meet the illuminated object invisibly, like the invisible scent which comes from visible blossoms. For if it were not the fact that some sight (or other) is sent out and goes forth from the eyes, how would those animals which see by night see in the darkness ? For there is no light of which we can say that it is. ... For the rays do not belong to the eyes nor . . . nor to the water, but to the light which comes and strikes its rays upon it (i.e. the water) ; [P. 41.

and if the beams were striking upon a mirror and turning back to it (i.e. are reflected towards the eye), they are thought to belong to the mirror. But if they belonged to the mirror, they would be seen in it also at night, in the absence of the light; for also when the sun diffuses (its light) upon the water, lo ! thou seest the sun and its rays (therein), but we do not say that that which is seen in the water

belongs to the water. And when it (i.e. the sun) declines and the shadow in its turn falls upon the water, how can we see the rays in the water, seeing that they are not in the water ? For everything that is polished, |xix when the light of the sun strikes upon it ... so that when the sun shines upon them the sight (of the eye) which gazes at them wanders. But as for dark-coloured stones and (other) black substances, know that also upon them when the rays strike the light is spread, but (only) on those white substances, which are akin to the light, does the light show its power. Nor again do rays go forth from unpolished bodies or from substances that [P. 42. do not glitter,10 as they go forth from polished objects or from substances that glitter.

But as everything which falls into a mirror is seen when it sinks into the midst of the mirror and is thought to belong to the mirror, although it does not belong to it, so also those rays were thought to belong to the mirror, although they did not belong to it, as I have said. But as when hard substances strike against one another a sound is engendered 11 from between them—and it was not the case that that sound was (previously) within them and was inaudible, for it is their nature to engender 11 a sound by striking together—in like manner also (in the case of) the eye and the illuminated object, by the striking of both of them, in combination with one another, sight is engendered 11 in the eye. As therefore heat that goes forth from a fire, and rays from a lamp, and perfume from spices are weakened when they go far from their sources, so also the sight diminishes as it goes to a distance. For (only) in a small measure is perfume deposited [P. 43. in a blossom and light in a lamp and heat in a fire ; on this account also they penetrate to a distance (only) in a measure and begin to grow weak as they go to a distance. For (in the case of) fountains of abundant water their flow is even, because there is an abundant and material (lit. solid) outflow. But effulgence perfume, and heat are not corporeal, nor do they really flow like a literal (lit.

bound) fountain. For lo ! the voice which is in us is a thing bound within us, and as it goes away it likewise grows faint, and by the mechanism of a trumpet it becomes something |xx different, by reason of the strength and clearness which are added to it. But as when the radiance of a lamp is abundant and copious this amount of light would be able to contend with the long measure of a great distance, so the amount of the sun's light suffices for the measure of all space ; and so also the amount of water (suffices) for the measure of the earth. So, because the [P. 44] extent of the distance is greater in its measure than the amount of the light of the eye, on this account from afar even large objects appear small. For as these things again mix one with another unequally, but are ... * * * * * * * [l.14. is perceived. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * [P. 45, l.15] on account of which not even those things which are before the eyes of the man are tested by him, since even the summits and depths of the earth, together with the summit and lower parts of the sky, both help and

harm. For the sky is like a circular belt, that is to say, like an arch, and that which is placed at its summit does not appear like that which is placed in its lower parts.

Let the moon when it rises from the East show how great is its circle and full and ... its disc. But there are those who say that because the moon [is affected by the power] of the sun, which is in the West, it (i.e. the moon) appears thus, and ... at dawn, when the moon reaches, the lowest part [of the West], the light of the sun rises from the East; and it is not thought . . . [P. 46. its disc. . . . And again there are those who say that, because it rises from the Ocean, on that account its appearance is great and its disc is glorious and beautiful. But I say that, because it rises suddenly and its light shines into the darkness, on that account it appears to the eye to be great, though its size has not received any augmentation (? and no further radiance has been added to its light. Thus although these four examples are equal, as I have said, these contrivances which I have enumerated for thee above have not yet failed ; for they are helpful to a certain |xxi measure. For a man calls, and there is a certain measure to which his voice reaches, but (lit. and) when the contrivance of the trumpet steps in it causes the voice to pass over that former (? limit. Oh ! what a thing is Contrivance ! since it makes Nature to become something different.

And on that account there is no excuse for the sinner, seeing that Nature itself is compelled to follow the will, when that will desires to compel Nature. For P. 47. God created the world and adorned it with natural objects ; and, (yet) if contrivance had not afterwards adorned the world, the world would be a waste. And that I may bring to thee a testimony from near at hand, consider thy limbs, that is to say, thy senses, and see that God created them as (He created) natural objects which are bound (by necessity). But by the gift which comes from Him thou teachest thine eye another (kind of) sight, (that) of many books, of seals, of pearls and the like. Again thou teachest thy hand to write and to work at a forge and to engrave, and so also (thou teachest) thine ear the hearing of many sounds. And again, as for what Bardaisan says, that "if a perfume or a voice reach to us we should all equally perceive them"—lo ! in the case of the light, which reaches all eyes equally, why does one man see more than another ? If he says that (it is) because of weakness or disease or other things of the same kind, it all tends to show that what he has now failed (to apply, namely) that if a p. 48. perfume approached us equally we should all perceive it equally.

For it (sometimes) happens that he who is near a thing does not see it, while another, though he is far off, sees that object which is placed on the (very) eye of the former. And so likewise (he errs) in that he says concerning the voice also that "it reaches the ear of (every) man equally, if his ear is not dull. But from this very thing learn that if, moreover, thou diffusest a perfume by measure in all directions thou wilt see that all (men) are not able to smell equally ; nor do they hear equally,

nor . . . foods touch all mouths equally, and yet all mouths [l. 33. do not taste equally * * * * * * * But so Bardaisan juggled 12 even by names and supposed that [P. 49.] |xxii the nature (of things) is like their names. For because 'light' in the Aramaic language is called as masculine, and 'eye' feminine in the same, he hastily coupled them together in a foolish phrase, saying that "Light, like a male, sows perception in the Eye. And lo, he, Bardaisan, calls the moon feminine 13 in the Aramaic language : when therefore (? the eye looks at the moon, does that female sow perception in a female ? Well, then, because in the Greek language 'sun' and 'eye' are both called masculine, when the eye looks at the sun a male sows perception in a male, according to the teaching of Bardaisan ! END OF DISCOURSE COMPOSED AGAINST BARDAISAN.

Note from Vol. 1 Introduction, p. (10): [Short lacunae are indicated in the translation by dots, and longer gaps by asterisks, but in neither case is the number of the dots or asterisks intended to bear any exact relation to the number of the missing words. In respect to this an approximately correct inference may be drawn by consulting the Syriac text. Double inverted commas mark quotations where the original has [Syriac] Single inverted commas are used in numerous cases where the words seem to be quotations or to belong to a special terminology. Words in italics inside square brackets are to be regarded as conjectural translations or paraphrases. In a few passages, where the text has suffered great mutilation, italics indicate an attempt to summarise the argument from suggestions in the fragments.] [P.101] indicates page 101 of the accompanying Syriac. [l.2] means line 2 of the current page of the accompanying Syriac. [RP]

FOOTNOTES I have moved the footnotes to the end. Those consisting of "Read [syriac] for [syriac]" or similar have been omitted, as it has not been possible to transcribe the fragments of Syriac. The pages are numbered with Roman numerals. Arabic numbers and line numbers relate to the Syriac text printed at the back of the paper volume. Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPIonic font, free from here. 1. 1 For the rendering, see Galatians vi 1, syr. vg. 2. 1 Albinus (c. 152 A.D.) wrote an Introduction (Εἰσαγωγή) to the Platonic Dialogues, but the work here referred to is different and does not seem to be extant.

3. 1 Lit. 'will belong to that which is incorporeal.' On p. 11, 1. 44, add [Syriac] at the end of the line. 4. 2 Here and in what follows it has been found necessary to render athra sometimes by ' Place ' and sometimes by ' Space.' 5. 2 The words in square brackets are uncertain ; perhaps they are place-names. 6. 1 Lit. 'between body and word.' 7. 3 In Syriac a Verb is called a 'word' ([Syriac]) and a Noun is called a 'name'. 8. 3 Ecclesiastes iii 1. 9. 6 Compare Aristotle, Metaphysica vi 2, 2 : "It is held by some that the boundaries of a body, such as the visible surface (ἐπιφάνεια) and outline (γραμμή) and extreme points (στιγμή) and its isolation (μονάσ), are real (υνσαίαι), more real than the solid itself." 10. 2 A

word used of gaudy attire in the Life of Rabbula 18919. The Note to p. 42, 1. 2, should be deleted. 11. 4 Note, in view of Ephraim's argument against Bardaisan (p. xxii), that the word for 'engender ' is, literally, 'give birth to.' 12. 1 Lit. 'sailed about' : see p. 221, 1. 35, and delete the Note, p. 48, 1. 48 13. 2 'Moon' is either masculine or feminine in Syriac.

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Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.