Discourse to Hypatius 1

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 C. W. MITCHELL, M.A., volume 1 (1912). First Discourse to Hypatius against the False Teachers. A VOLUME OF

SELECTED DISCOURSES
OF THE BLESSED SAINT EPHRAIM. THE FIRST AGAINST THE FALSE TEACHERS
Greeting to Hypatius. EPHRAIM to Hypatius my brother in our Lord—greeting : may peace with every man increase for us and may the peace which is between us abound, in the peace of truth may we be established, and let us make especial use of the greeting (conveyed) in a letter. I write a letter though I would rather have come to see thee in person. Behold, I am writing willingly something that I did not wish to write. For I did not wish that a letter should pass between us, since it cannot ask or be asked questions ; but I had wished that there might pass between us a discourse from mouth to ear, asking and being asked questions. The written document is the image of the composite body, just as also the free tongue is the likeness of the free mind. For the body cannot add or subtract anything from the measure of its stature, nor can a document add to or subtract from the measure of its writing. But a word-of-mouth discourse can be within the measure or without the measure.

For great is the gift of Speech.

For the Deity gave us Speech that is free like Itself, in order that free Speech might serve our independent Freewill. And by Speech, too, we are the likeness of the Giver of it, [Ov. p. 22.] inasmuch as by means of it we have impulse and thought for good things; and not only for good things, but we learn also of God, the fountain of good things, by means of Speech (which is) a gift from Him. For by means of this (faculty) which is like God we are clothed with the likeness of God. For divine teaching is the seal of minds, by means of which men who learn are sealed that they may be an image for Him Who knows all. For if by Freewill Adam was the image of God, it is a most praiseworthy thing when, by true knowledge, and by true conduct, a man becomes the image of God. For that independence exists in these also. For animals cannot form in themselves pure thoughts about God, because they have, not Speech, that which forms in us the image of the Truth. We have received the gift of Speech that we may not be as speechless animals in our conduct, but that we may in our actions resemble God, the giver of Speech. How great is Speech, a gift which came to make

those who receive it like its Giver ! And because animals have not Speech they cannot be the likeness of our minds. But because the mind has Speech, it is a great disgrace to it when it is not clothed with the likeness of God ; it is a still more grievous shame when animals resemble men, and men do not resemble God. But threefold is the torture doubled when this intermediate (party between God and animals) forsakes the Good above him and degrades himself from his natural rank to put on the likeness of animals in his conduct.

And a letter cannot speak. A letter, therefore, cannot demonstrate every matter about which a man is seeking to ask questions, because the tongue of the [Ov. p. 23, 1. 2.] letter is far away from it,—its tongue is the pen of the writer of it. Moreover, when the letter speaks anything written in it, it takes to itself another tongue that the letter may speak with it, (the letter) which silently speaks with two mute tongues, one being the ink-pen, the other, the sight of the (reader's) eye. But if we thus rejoice over a letter poor in treasures, how much more shall we rejoice over a tongue which is near us, the lord and treasurer of the treasures within ! Yet I have written because I felt myself unworthy to meet thy piety.

But I had desired that instead of your seeing me in the characters of a document, you might have seen me in the characters of the countenance ; and instead of the writing of my letter thus seeing you, I had desired that my eyes instead of my writings might see you. But because the sight of our face is not worthy of the pure gaze of your eyes, behold you are gazing on the characters of our letter. But justly pure writings have met your pure eyes ; not that I say that the pure is profaned by the defiled, but it is not right that pure eyes should look at what is riot pure. For even though the People had sanctified their bodies three days, (yet) because they had not sanctified their hearts he did not allow them to approach the holy Mountain, not that holiness would be profaned by those who were defiled, but those who were defiled were not worthy to approach holiness. [Exod, xix. 10 ff.] But by Moses, the holy one, who went up into the holy Mountain, God gave an instance for the consolation of the pure and for the refutation of the defiled, (showing) that all those who are holy like Moses are near holiness like Moses. [Ov. p. 24.] For when one of the limbs of the body is satisfied all the limbs receive a pledge of satisfaction, that they too will be satisfied together with that one in the same manner. For by means of that body, too, in which our Lord was raised, all bodies have received a pledge that they will be raised with it in like manner.

Discreet fear prevented me from visiting thee at thy request. But, my brother, in that thou didst stir up our littleness to approach you, know that if I wished I could come, but know, too, that if I could come I would not wish to be deprived (of the opportunity). For I could come if I had no intelligence ; but I have been unable to come because I had intelligence. In (blissful) innocence I might have come on account of love, but (looking at the matter) intelligently I was unable to come on account of fear. Not that I was overawed at the prospect of a discussion. And whoever is steeped in love like a child is above fear ; and whoever! is timorously subject to fear vain terror always tortures him. It helps athletes too in a competition to be above fear through the encouragement of a good hope, and not to fall under the sickly apprehensions which result from a timorous habit of thought. Athletes

perhaps (might) well fear because the victor is crowned and the loser suffers shame, For they do not divide the victory between the two of them.

There would have been gain however it ended. But we ought not to fear a struggle in which failure is victory ; since when the teacher wins the learner too is much helped. For helper and helped are both partakers in the gain. If, then, we had come to teach there would have been a common victory as Error would have been overwhelmed by our Truth. [Ov. p. 25. l. 3.] But if we had been unable to teach, yet had been able to learn, there would have been a common victory in that by your knowledge there would have been an end of ignorance. The treasure of Him that enricheth every one is open before every one, since Grace administers it, (Grace) that never restrains intelligent inquirers. If, therefore, we had possessed something we could have bestowed it as givers, or if we did not possess anything we could have received as inquirers. But if we had not been able to give nor able even to receive, our coming could not have been deprived of all good. For even if we could not have searched you out with our mind yet we could have seen you with our eyes ; since we have no greater gift than seeing you. [Ex. xxxiii. 18 ff.] But Moses testifies that while it was granted to him to do everything like God, at last he abandoned everything and prayed to see the Lord of all. For if the creatures of the Creator are thus pleasant to look upon, how much more pleasant is their Creator to look upon ; but because we have not an eye which is able to look upon His splendour, a mind was given us which is able to contemplate His beauty. Man, therefore, is more than his possessions, just as God is more excellent and more beautiful than His creatures.

In spite of my conscious inferiority I might have given a little help: for all are mutually dependent.

But know, my beloved, that if we had come, it would not have been possible for us to have been real paupers such as receive everything, nor again for you to have been complete givers, to give everything. One who lacks is not lacking in all respects, lest he should be abased ; neither is he who is complete, complete in every respect, lest he should exalt himself. But this lack has arisen that completeness may be produced by it. For in that we need to give to one another and receive from one another, the wants of all of us are filled up by the abundance of all. [Ov. p. 26, 1. 7. For as the wants of the limbs of the body are filled up one by the other, so also the inhabitants of the world fill up the common need from the common abundance. Let us rejoice, therefore, in the need of all of us, for in this way unity is produced for us all. For inasmuch as men are dependent on one another, the high bend themselves down to the humble and are not ashamed, while the lowly reach out towards the great and are not afraid. And also in the case of animals we exercise great care over them on account of our dependence on them, and obviously our need of everything binds us in love towards everything. O hated Need ! yet much-loved unity is produced from it. Because countries are dependent on one another, their dependence combines them as into a body ;

and like the limbs they give to one another and receive from one another. But these arrangements of interdependence belong to one rich complete Being, Whose need is this—to give to

everything though He has no need to receive from anywhere. For even what He is thought to receive from us, He takes it astutely from us in His love that He may again give it to us manifold more as the rewarder. This is that astuteness which ministers good things, and our craftiness which ministers evil things should resemble it.

I said above that I refrained from coming through fear. Such fear even S. Peter experienced.

But as regards that fear of which we spoke above, not only upon us weak ones does the constraint of fear fall, but even upon the heroes and valiant themselves. Nor have I said this in order to find comfort for our folly, but that we might remind thy wisdom. For when Peter despised fear and was wishing to walk upon the waters, although he was going (thither) on account of his love which was making him run, yet he was nigh to sinking on account of fear which fell upon him ; and the fear which was weaker than he on dry land, when it came among the waves into a place in which it was strengthened became powerful against him and overcame him. [Ov. p. 27, l. 13. From this it is possible to learn that when any one of all the desires in us is associated with an evil habit which helps it, then that desire acquires power and conquers us. For fear and love were weighed in the midst of the sea as in a balance, and fear turned the scale and won ; and that Simon whose faith was lacking and rose in the balance was himself nigh to sinking in the midst of the sea. And this type is a teacher for us, that is to say, it is a fear-inspiring sign that all those whose good things fail and are light when rightly weighed, are themselves nigh to sinking into evil.

But if any one say :—why is it necessary to frame illustrations of this kind, let him know that this may not be harmful if we receive from everything some helpful lesson for our weakness. [Ov. p. 28. If, therefore, Peter was afraid of the waves, though the Lord of the waves was holding his hand, how much more should weak ones fear the waves of Controversy, which are much stronger than the waves of the sea! For in the waves of the sea (only) bodies are drowned, but in the waves of Investigation minds sink or are rescued.

The Publican in the Parable was conscious of this fear. But, again, that Publican also who was praying in the Temple was very importunate about forgiveness, because he was much afraid of punishment. He was in a state of fear and love ; he both verily loved the Merciful One on account of His forgiveness, and he verily feared the Judge on account of His vengeance. And though, on the one hand, he was praying in love because of his affection, yet, on the other hand, because of his fear he would not dare to lift up his eyes unto Heaven. And though Grace was urging him forward, his fear was unable to cross boldly the limit of justice. Such fear may be a gain. If the fear of the Publican who was justified knew its measure and did not exalt itself to cross the limit, how can weakness dare to neglect the measure and to cross the limit of propriety ? For this also (is said) that a man may know the degree of his weakness and not exalt himself to a degree above his power. I think that such a man cannot slip. For he does not run to a degree too hard for him and so receive thence a fall. For without knowledge men run to degrees too hard for them ; and before they go up pride urges them on, and after they fall penitence of soul tortures them.

On the other hand,the Lord gave a Parable of unabashed importunity. But, again, indeed, I see that that importunity about which our Lord spake was praised and enriched because its importunate nature ventured to cross the limit of propriety ; for if it had been abashed and observed propriety, it would have gone empty away, but because it was presumptuous and trampled down harmful modesty as with its heels, [Ov. p. 29, l. 5.] it received more than it had asked. O Necessity, whose importunate words enriched its destitution! For it does not aid necessity to be subject to harmful modesty, but (it is aided) by its importunity being a good instrument for (securing) good things. Better, therefore, is wholesome importunity, than a barren scrupulosity about exact propriety. But if all these praises were bestowed on importunity, which opened closed doors, and aroused those who were asleep in bed, and received more than was its due, how must that indigence be censured which has not approached open doors nor received help from the treasuries of the Rich One ! Better, therefore, is he who is importunate about his aid than he who is ashamed and loses his aid. For whoever observes proper modesty while he loses his aid, even the propriety which he has observed is in that case subject to censure, and propriety has become impropriety. And he that seeks after exact propriety at all times is neglectful of sound propriety. For from the best wheat, if it shed not much bran, fine flour cannot be made ; for unripe fruit is not palatable, and what is over ripe loses flavour, or else its taste is pungent, or bad.

The proper limits of Knowledge. For if we refine things much beyond what is proper, even the fine and the pure are also rejected. For it is not right for us to cultivate Ignorance, or deep Investigation, but Intelligence between-these-two-extremes, sound and true. For by means of the two former a man surely misses his advantage. [Ov. p. 30, l. 3.] For by means of Ignorance a man cannot understand Knowledge, and by deep Investigation a man cannot build on a sound foundation. For Ignorance is a veil which does not permit one to see, and Investigation, which is continually building and destroying, is a changeful wheel that knows not how to stand and be at rest; and when it passes in its investigation over true things, it cannot abide by them ; for it has unstable motions. When, therefore, it finds anything it seeks, it does not retain its discovery, and is not rejoiced with the fruit of its toil But if we inquire much into everything we are neglectful of the Lord of everything, inasmuch as we desire to know all things like Him. And since our Knowledge cannot know everything. we show our evil Will before Him Who knows all things. And while He is higher than all in His Knowledge, the ignorant venture to assail the height of His Knowledge. For if we are continually striving to comprehend things, by our strife we desire to fence round the way of Truth and to confuse by our Controversy things that are fair—not that those fair things are confused in their own nature, but our weakness is confused by reason of the great things. For we are not able completely to apprehend their greatness. For there is One who is perfect in every respect, whose Knowledge penetrates completely through all.

It is not good for us to seek deep Knowledge : for deep things are unknowable. See how Simplicity is better than Cleverness.

But it is not right for us to look at all things minutely, but rather simply—not that our Knowledge is to be Ignorance; for even in the case of something which a man does not do cleverly, if he does the thing with clever discrimination then his lack of Cleverness is Cleverness. And if, by his Knowledge he becomes an ignorant man so that he ignores those things which he cannot know, even his Ignorance is great Knowledge. For because he knows that they are not known, his Knowledge cannot be Ignorance. For he knows well whatever he knows. But the mind in which many doubts spring up, destroying one another, cannot do anything readily. For thoughts, vanquishing and vanquished, are produced by it, and the waves which from all sides beat upon it, fix it in doubt and inaction. [Ov. p. 31, l. 12. But it is an advantage that the scale of simplicity should outweigh in us the scale of wrangling-logic. For how many times, in consequence of the clever and subtle thoughts which we have concerning a matter, that very matter is delayed so as not to be accomplished! And consider that in the case of those matters which keep the world alive, Simplicity accomplishes them without many thoughts. For these matters succeed when a single thought controls them, and they stand still when many thoughts rush in. For there is only a single thought in Husbandry, that is (the thought) that in a simple manner it should scatter the seed in the earth.

But if other thoughts occurred to it so that it pondered and reasoned as to whether the seed was sprouting or not, or whether the earth would fail to produce it, or would restore it again, then Husbandry could not sow. For morbid thoughts spring up against a single sound thought, and weaken it. And because a thing is weakened, it cannot work like a sound thing. For the soundness of a [Ov. p. 32. thought like the soundness of a body performs everything. And the husbandman who cannot plough with one ox cannot plough with two thoughts. Just as it is useful to plough with two oxen, so it is right to employ one healthy thought.

Deep Investigation is to be avoided.

Moreover, if the martyrs and confessors who have been crowned had approached with double thoughts they could not have been crowned. For when our Freewill is in a strait between keeping the commandment and breaking the commandment, it is usually the case that it is seeking two reasonings destructive of one another, so that by means of the. interpretation of one reasoning it may flee from the pain of the other, that is to say, (it argues) in order that by a false excuse it may cast away the burden of the commandment. Now, without wandering after those things which are unnecessary, or omitting anything that is necessary, let us say in brief and not at length, that if anything succeeds by means of a single sound thought, its soundness is weakened by many thoughts. For if we approach with polished wiles any matter which we ought to approach in a simple way, then our intelligence becomes non-intelligence. For in the case of every duty, whenever a man proceeds beyond what is its due, all the ingenuities which he can devise about it, are foolish. So (too) in the case of any investigation in which the investigator slips from its truth, all the discoveries he may make, although his discoveries may be clever, are false. For everything which is clever is not true

; but whatever is true is clever. And whatever is debated is not deep, but whatever is said by God is subtle when it is believed. But there is no subtlety equal to [Ov. p. 33.] this, that everything should be duly done in its own way, and if it happen that what is to be done can be done simply, its simplicity is subtlety. For it is all the more fitting that we should call this simplicity subtlety in that it accomplishes helpful things without many combinations and reasonings. For in that it does things easily it resembles Deity, Who easily creates everything.

The advantage of simple Knowledge can be seen in the case of the husbandman. It is right, therefore, that we should investigate well the advantage of things by an examination of them ; and if they are judged by the investigators to be simple, there are many things which are thought to be obviously unsuccessful, but their unseen qualities achieve a great victory. For there is nothing that appears more simple than this, that the husbandman should take and scatter in the earth the gathered seeds which he holds in his hands. But, after a time, when it is seen that the scattered seed has been gathered and has come with a multitude like a general with his army, and that the seed which had been regarded as lost is found and finds also other (seeds) with it, then a man marvels at the husbandman's simplicity, which has become a fountain of cleverness. Therefore, with regard to this very thing, hear on the other hand the opposite of it, that if a man spare the gathered seed, so as not to scatter it, he is thought indeed to act prudently in refraining from scattering. But when we see the husbandman's scattered investment collected in the principal and interest, and the earth rewarding him, then the intelligence which refrained from scattering is seen to be [Ov. p. 34.] blindness, because it is deprived of (the chance of) gathering. Therefore, it is not an advantage to us that we should always be led astray by names, nor that we should be deceived by outward appearances.

I considered the matter carefully before I decided not to visit thee. For if, because I wisely discerned that it would not be right for me to venture to come, I did not come for that reason, perhaps it would have been better for me if I had not wisely discerned. For, perhaps, my coming to thee in childlike and simple fashion would have met with success. But know again that if I had come recklessly I would not have wished to come, because our coming would have been indiscreet. For we should have had no fruit of intelligence. For everything which is done indiscreetly belongs either to reckless habit, or blind chance ; and it has no root in the mind of those who do it. In deciding, I was conscious of a free power of Choice within me: the nature of Freewill.

But if these two wise conclusions (namely) that I should come and that I should not come, (both) belong to my Will, this is a single Will of which one half does battle with the other half, and when it conquers and is conquered it is crowned in both cases. This is a wonder, that though the Will is one, two opinions which are not homogeneous are found in its homogeneity. And I know that what I have said is so, but why (it is so) I am not able to demonstrate. For I wonder how that one thing both enslaves it and is enslaved by it. But know that if this was not so mankind would have no free power of Choice. For if Necessity

makes us wish, we have no power of Choice. And if, again, our Will is bound and has not the power to will and not to will we have no Freewill. ["The Will is both one and many."] And, therefore, necessity thus demands that there should be a single thing, and though it is a single thing, when that single thing wills to be two it is easy for it, and when again it wills to be one or many it is a simple matter for it. For in a single day there are produced in us a great number of Volitions which destroy each other. [Ov. p. 35, l. 5. This Will is a root and parent; it is both one and many. This Will brings forth sweet and bitter fruit.

O free Root with power over its fruit! For if it wills it makes its fruits bitter, and if it wills it makes its products sweet. For God to Whom nothing is difficult has created in us something which is difficult to explain, and that is, Freewill. And though this (Will) is one, yet there are two opinions in it, that of willing and that of being unwilling ; so that when half of it struggles with and conquers the other half, then the whole of it is crowned by the whole of it. For this is an unspeakable wonder, how, though the Will is one, half of it rebels against the Law and half of it is subject to the Law. For, lo, there are in it two opinions contending together, for part of the Will desires that Evil should be done, and again, part of it uses restraint and guards against Evil being done. And how on the one hand has the Will not been transformed by that part of it which desires evil things that it may become like its part which desires evil things ? and how again (on the other hand) has the Will not been converted by that part of it which loves good things, that the whole of it may become good like the part of it which loves good things ? But if both these parts can be converted to Good or Evil, what shall we call them ?

That we should call them Evil (is impossible, for) they can be good,—that we should call them good (is impossible, for) they can be bad. [Ov. p. 36. And though these two can be a single thing, yet except they are divided and are two there can be no struggle between them. This is a wonder which we are unable to speak of, and yet we cannot be silent about it. For we know that a single Will possessed of many conclusions exists in us. But since the Root is one we do not understand how part of the thought is sweet, and part of it bitter, even if it does not completely escape our notice. And how, on the one hand, is that bitterness swallowed up by that sweet thing so as to become pleasant like it ? And how again when it (i.e., the sweet thing) has been swallowed up is it mixed with that bitter thing so as to become bitter like it ? And again, how when these two frames of mind have been swallowed by one another, and have become one thing affectionately, are they again separated from one another and stand one against the other like enemies ? For where was that Mind before we sinned that brings us to penitence after sins ? And how is that Mind turned to penitence after adultery, which was raging before adultery ? These are frames of mind which are like leaven to one another, so that they change one another and are changed by one another.

But here our Truth has conquered the (false) Teachings and bound them so that none of them can bear investigation.

This Discourse is meant for friends. But if any one wishes to investigate some of the Teachings (in question) let him know that we have not been called at present to struggle with

enemies, but to speak with friends. But when the statement (intended) for friends is finished, then our belief will show a proof of its power in a contest also. But it is easy for every man to perceive what I have said, because there are in every one two Minds, [Ov. p. 37.] which are engaged in a struggle one against the other, and between them stands the Law of God, holding the crown and the punishment, in order that when there is victory it may offer the crown, and when failure appears it may inflict punishment. False views about the origin of Evil make the Law an absurdity, or make Good akin to Evil.

But if the Evil which is in us is evil, and cannot become good, and if also the Good in us is good, and cannot become evil (then) these good and evil promises which the Law makes are superfluous. For whom will the Rewarder crown—one who is victorious by his Nature and cannot fail ? Or whom, again, will the Avenger blame—that Nature which fails and cannot conquer ? But if that good thing which is in us is obedient to something evil, how can we call that Good, seeing that it has a close relationship to Evil ? For by means of that thing whereby it becomes obedient to Evil its kinship with Evil is perceived. For that Evil would not be able to draw it to itself if it were not that its lump had an affinity to the leaven of Evil. See therefore, also, that what they call a good Nature is, in virtue of what it is, convicted of being an evil Nature; inasmuch as it has an evil Will which is drawn away after Evil. But inasmuch as it has an evil Will, all Evil things had a tendency towards it. [The evil Will is the root of Evil.] For there is nothing more evil than an evil Will. For that is the root of evil things. For when there is no evil free Will, then evil things come to an end. For the deadly sword cannot kill apart from the evil Will of its holder. [Ov. p. 38.]But see, already when we have not advanced to the contest (even) before the contest, the enemies of the Truth have been conquered beforehand.

The Will is its own explanation.

And if any one ask, what then is this Will ? we must tell him that the real truth about it is that it is the power of Free-choice. And because it is not right to scorn a good learner, let us now like those who hasten and pass on throw him a word, that is to say, one of the words of Truth. For, even from a single word of Truth, great faith dawns in a sound and wise hearer ; just as a great flame is produced by a small coal. For if a single one of a few coals of fire is sufficient to make scars on the body, one of the words of Truth, also, is not too weak to clean away the plague spots of Error from the soul. If, therefore, any one asks, "What is this Will, for though it is one thing, part of it is good, and part of it evil ? we shall tell him that it is because it is a Will. And if he asks again, we shall tell him that it is a thing endowed with independence. And if he still continues to indulge in folly, we shall tell him that it is Freewill. And if he is not convinced this unteachableness of his teaches that because there is Free-will he does not wish to be taught.

But if he is convinced when they say to him that there is no Freewill, it is truly wonderful that in the annulling of his Freewill, his Freewill is proved, that is to say, by his being in a desperate state. [The very denial of Freewill proves that it exists. And the matter is as if some eloquent person wished to harangue and to prove that men have no power of Speech.

And that is great madness; for he says there is no power of Speech when he uses the power of Speech. For his power of Speech refutes him, for by means [Ov. p. 39. of Speech he seeks to prove that there is no power of Speech. When Freewill, too, has gone to hide itself in a discussion and to show by argument that it does not exist, then is it with more certainty caught and seen to exist. For if there were no Freewill, there would be no controversy and no persuasion. But if Freewill becomes more evident when it hides itself, and when it denies (its own existence) it is the more refuted, then when it shows itself it is made as clear as the sun.

The Will is not enslaved, but is the Image of God. And why does Freewill wish to deny its power and to profess to be enslaved when the yoke of lordship is not placed upon it ? For it is not of the race of enslaved reptiles, nor of the family of enslaved cattle, but of the race of a King and of the sons of Kings who alone among all creatures, were created in the image of God. For see every one is ashamed of the name of slavery and denies it. And if a slave goes to a country where men know him not, and there becomes rich, it may be that, although he is a slave and of servile origin, he may be compelled to say there that lie is sprung from a free race and from the stock of kings. And this is wonderful that, while slaves deny their slavery, yet the Freewill of fools denies its own self. And see, if men give the name of slave to him who says that there is no Freewill, he is displeased and becomes angry, and begins to declare the Freedom of his family. Now, how does such a person on the one hand deny Freewill, and on the other acknowledge it ? And on the one hand hate literal slavery, and (on the other) acknowledge spiritual slavery ? If he chose with intelligence and weighed the matter soundly it would be right for him to acknowledge that (principle) that he might not be deprived of the mind's free power of Choice. [Ov. p. 40.] And here he is exposed who blasphemes very wickedly against the Good One, the Giver of Freewill, Who made the earth and everything in it subject to its dominion.

Freewill is denied by those who wish to blame God for their failures. But there is no man who has gone down and brought up a crown with great toil from the hard struggle, and (then) says that there is no Freewill, lest the reward of his toil and the glory of his crown should be lost. The man who has failed says there is no Freewill that he may hide the grievous failure of his feeble Will. If thou seest a man who says there is no Freewill, know that his Freewill has not conducted itself aright. The sinner who confesses there is Freewill may perhaps find mercy, because he has confessed that his follies are his own ; but whoever denies that there is Freewill utters a great blasphemy in that he hastens to ascribe his vices to God ; and seeks to free himself from blame and Satan from reproach in, order that all the blame may rest with God—God forbid that this should be ! But if he is intelligent he ought not to think that a being endowed with power over itself is similar to a thing which is bound in its Nature. [The mystery of the Will is a part of a wider mystery.] And, moreover, it would not be right for any one, after he has heard that the Will . . . to ask (and say), 'But what, again is the Will ?' Does he know everything, and has this (alone) escaped his knowledge, or does he know nothing at all since he cannot know even this ? But if he knows what 'a bound Nature' is, he can know what an unconstrained Will is, but that which is

unconstrained cannot become constrained, because it is not subject to constraint. But in what is it unconstrained except in that it has (the power) to will and not to will?

The power of Freewill is obvious but unspeakably difficult to explain.

And if he is unwilling to be convinced in this way, it is because the power of his Freewill is so great, and our mouth is unable to do it full justice ; our weak mouth has confessed that it is unable to state its unconstrained Will. For it is a Freewill which subjects even God to Investigation and rebuke, on account of its unconstrained nature. It ventured to bring up all this because it desired to speak about that which is unspeakable. [Ov. p. 41, l. 5. But that (Freewill) which has ventured to make statements concerning God, itself is not able to state its own nature perfectly. But concerning this, also, we say to any one who asks that this is a marvel which it is very easy for us to perceive, but it is very difficult to give a proof of it. [But it is impossible to explain anything completely. But this is not so only in this matter, but it is the same with everything. For whatever exists may be discussed without being searched out; it can be known that the thing exists, but it is not possible to search out how it exists. For see that we can perceive everything, but we cannot completely search out anything at all ; and we perceive great things, but we cannot search out perfectly even worthless things. [Let us thank God that our Knowledge of things is limited.

But thanks be to Him Who has allowed us to know the external side of things in order that we may learn how we excel, but He has not allowed us to know their (inward) secret that we might understand how we are lacking. He has allowed us, therefore, to know and not to know that by means of what can be known, our childish nature might be educated, and that our boldness might be restrained by those things which cannot be known. Therefore, He has not permitted us to know, not that we may be ignorant, but that our Ignorance may be a hedge for our Knowledge. [Knowing that our powers of knowing are so limited we can avoid vain and weary searching. For see how we wish to know even the height of heaven and the breadth of the earth, but we cannot know ; and because we cannot know we are thus restrained from toiling. Therefore, our Ignorance is found to be a boundary for our Knowledge, and our want of Knowledge (lit. simpleness) continually controls the impetuosity of our boldness. For when a man knows that he cannot measure a spring of water, by the very fact that he cannot, he is prevented from drawing out what is inexhaustible. [Ov. p. 42, l. 5. And by this experience it is seen that our weakness is a wall in the face of our boldness. Thus, too, when we know that we cannot know, we cease to investigate.

For if, when we know little, the impetuosity of boldness carries us on and proceeds to those things which may not be known, who is there who will not give thanks to Him. Who has restrained us from this wearisomeness, even if we do not wish to remain within the just boundary within which He has set us ? Our Ignorance, therefore, is a bridle to our Knowledge. [Yet we are not to be ignorant, but to seek after practical Knowledge. And from these instances it does not follow that the All-knower wished to make us ignorant, but He placed our Knowledge under a helpful guardian ; and better is the small Knowledge which knows the small range of Ignorance than the great Knowledge which has not recognized its limits

; and better is the weak man who carries about something that is necessary for his life than the arrogant strong man who burdens himself with great stones which cause his destruction. [Our chief Knowledge is to know what subjects can never be known. But our chief Knowledge is (just) this—to know that we do not know anything. For if we know that we do not know, then we conquer Error by our Knowledge. For when we know that everything that exists is either known or not known, thereby we acquire the true Knowledge. For whoever thinks he can know everything, falls short of the Knowledge of everything. For by means of his Knowledge he has gained for himself Ignorance.

But whoever knows that he cannot know, from Ignorance Knowledge accrues to such a one. [Ov. p. 43. For in virtue of the fact that he knows that he cannot know, he is enabled to know, that is to say, (he knows) something which profits him.

No external force compelled my Will when deciding not to come to see thee. If, therefore, as I said above, though the Will is one, part of it compels and part of it is compelled, by whom was I compelled not to come except by my own Will ? O that some unknownexternal Constraint had opposed me ! For perhaps with the whole of my being I would have contended against the whole of that (Constraint) and been victorious. (O that it had been thus), and that an inward Constraint had not opposed me, (a Constraint) of which I know not how to give an account ! For I am not able to state how part of me contends with another part ; in virtue of being what I am, I conquer, and am conquered continually. The heretical Teaching says that the Will is a Mixture. But we are not stating the case as the Heresies state it. For they say that Constituents of Good and Evil are mingled together in us, and "these Constituents conquer one another, and are conquered by one another." But although Error is able to deck out what is false, the furnace of Truth is able to expose it. For we say that free Volitions conquer one another, and are conquered by one another ; for this is the Freewill which the voice of the Law can transform.

Consequences of the denial of Freewill. And if they say that if Freewill comes from God, then the good and evil impulses which belong to it are from God ; by saying this, what do they wish to say ? Do they wish to affirm that there is no Freewill ? And if they deny Freewill what can they believe ? [Ov. p. 44.]For if they deny Freewill the Law and Teaching are of no use ; and so let books and laws be rolled up and let judges rise from their thrones, and let teachers cease to teach! let prophets and apostles resign their office! Why have they vainly laboured to preach ? Or what was the reason of the coming of the Lord of them all into the world ? Freewill and the teaching about the Constituents are incom patible. But if they profess belief in Freewill—which is actually what they profess—that Freewill which they profess to believe in compels them to deny that Evil which they believe in. For both of them cannot stand. For either our Will sins, and (at other times) is proved to be righteous, and for this reason we have Freewill; or if the Constituents of Good and Evil stir in the Will, then it is a Constituent which overcomes, and is overcome, and not the Will.

Freewill means Freewill not a 'bound Nature.' But if any one says that everything which stirs in our Freewill does not belong to Freewill, by his Freewill he is making preposterous

statements about Freewill. For how does he call that Freewill when he goes on to bind it so that it is not Freewill. For the name of Freewill stands for itself; for it is free and not a slave, being independent and not enslaved, loose, not bound, a Will, not a Nature. And just as when any one speaks of Fire, its heat is declared by the word, and by the word 'Snow,' its coolness is called to mind, so by the word 'Freewill' its independence is perceived. But if any one says that the impulses that stir in it do not belong to Freewill he is desiring to call Freewill a 'bound Nature,' when the word does not suit a Nature. And he is found not to perceive what Freewill is, and he uses its name rashly and foolishly without being acquainted with its force. [Ov. p. 45.] For either let him deny it, and then he is refuted by its working, or if he confesses it, his organs contend one against the other ; for he denies with his mouth what he confesses with his tongue.

The Law of God presupposes Freewill. For the Giver of Freewill is not so confused (in mind) as this man who is divided (against himself) part against part, that He should become involved in a struggle with His nature. For He gave us Freewill which, by His permission, receives good and evil impulses, and He furthermore ordained a Law for it that it should not do overtly those Evils which by His permission stir invisibly in it. And let us inquire a little. Either though He may have had the means to give us Freewill, He did not wish to give it, though He may have been able to give it, or He may not have had the means to give, and on this account He was unable to give it. And how was He Who was unable to give freewill able to give a Law when there was no Freewill ? But if He gave the Law, the righteousness which is in His Law reproves our Freewill, for He rewards it according to its works.

The diversity among men proves that Freewill exists. And if there is no Freewill, does not this Controversy in which we are involved concerning Freewill, bear witness that we have Freewill ? For a 'bound Nature' could not utter all these various matters controversially. For if all mankind were alike saying one thing or doing one thing, perhaps there would be an opportunity to make the mistake (of thinking) that there is no Freewill. But if even the Freewill of a single man undergoes many variations in a single day so that he is good or evil, hateful or pleasing, merciful or merciless, bitter or pleasant, blessing or cursing, grateful or ungrateful, [Ov. p. 46.] so that he resembles both God and Satan, is it not established by thousands of witnesses that we have Freewill ? And, behold, at the mouth of two or three witnesses is every word established. [Deut. xix 15. S. Matt. xviii. 16.]

Man alone has Freewill. Compare him with other creatures and see the difference. For examine all those variations which I mentioned above, and see that they do not exist in any 'bound Natures,' not in the sea nor on the dry land, not in the luminaries nor in the stars, not in trees nor in roots ; nor even in animals—and yet there is sensation in animals—nor even in birds, though they have sight and hearing. But if hawks are birds of prey, they are all birds ofprey; if wolves are destructive, they are all ravagers; and if lambs are harmless, they are all innocent, and if serpents are cunning, that subtlety belongs to all; but man, owing to his Freewill, can be like them all, while they cannot become like him. On this

account they have a (fixed) Nature, while we have Freewill. The word Freewill must stand for a reality.

Thou usest the word 'Freewill,' learn its independence from the word ; thou usest the word 'Slavery,' learn the bondage (of slavery) from the word; thou usest the word 'Nature,' recognize its immutable fixity by the word ; and thou speakest of 'God,' recognize His actual Existence by the word. For all these are words which are not at variance with their (underlying) realities. If thou namest these things when thou wishest, thou must of necessity acknowledge them to thyself even if thou dost not wish. Speak against Freewill, and in virtue of what it is we can know how powerful Freewill is, since it has struggled with its power against its power. [Ov. p. 47.] For even when a man says that there is no Freewill, he is able to say there is no Freewill because he has Freewill; and, therefore, in proportion as that Freewill artfully changes itself in various ways, so those changes tell us that Freewill exists. For a 'bound Nature' cannot be changed. Why then is it necessary for us to obtain from another direction testimony as to whether Freewill exists or not ? For, behold, in virtue of being what it is, the evidence for it is proclaimed. For when it denies itself, (saying) that it is not independent, it is convicted of not being in bondage. For when any one acknowledges that Freewill exists, it is not right that Necessity should come near it.

The Teaching about the Constituents makes all teaching futile. But if, as these say, the Constituents of Good and Evil overcome, and are overcome, they are able to believe in a Mixing of Good and Evil, just as if they denied that there is a Mixing, then they are able to believe that Freewill exists. But if they say that, when the evil Constituent is large, Freewill is subject to compulsion ; what, then, is it that the Heretics teach in their Congregations except the Error which they have been taught ? For if they teach it is because there is Freewill; supposing there is no Freewill, let them shut their mouths and not teach. The Will cannot affect the nature of physical poisons. But let them be asked, are they Teachers of Freewill or Changers of our Nature ? If a man eats by mistake from a deadly root, the Will of the eater cannot change that deadly thing, seeing that it is not an unfettered Will that he should change it; but it is an evil Constituent, the nature of which cannot be changed by words. How then can the just Judge condemn mankind (by asking), why they have not changed by the Will the evil Nature which cannot be changed by the Will ? [Ov. p. 48.] Therefore, let them either admit that unfettered free Wills are changed to Good or Evil or let them admit that if they are 'bound Natures'of Good and Evil, they are Natures which cannot be conquered by words. For they ought to supply an antidote as a medicine to counteract a deadly poison. For it is right that by natural illustrations that Teaching should be refuted which was composed deceitfully from analogous phenomena in Nature. But Truth is strong enough to destroy with the single reply which it makes the numerous fabrications of Falsehood.

The great diversity of our thoughts shows that we have Freewill. For it is obviously clear from what I say that there are not Weights of Good and Evil conquering one another and being conquered by one another. For, behold, in a single hour one can think even a hundred

good thoughts. And if because there was at that time much Good in a man, his good thoughts were numerous within, behold that man can do the reverse of this in the same hour. For directly after these good thoughts a man can think a multitude of evil thoughts. Which one of these, therefore, do they affirm to be more than the other ? And if they say that the Evil was most (in amount), how then since all that Evil would be in the man did it permit him to think all those good thoughts ? And if that Evil made room of its own Will, that Evil is good, which has this good Will. For how did that Evil which, when it wished, finally conquered the Good, consent to give way before it at first ? [Ov. p. 49.] But if they say that the Good exceeded (in amount), in which of a man's limbs, did all the Good hide itself, and make room for the small amount of Evil to go up and show a great victory ? If, therefore, the Evil submitted to give way before the Good, the Evil is better than the Good, in that it took the crown and gave it to its opponent. But if the Good consented to give place to the Evil that it (i.e., the Evil) might be victorious, the Good is more evil than the Evil in that it gave place to the Evil to do corruptly.

The Soul is not a Mixture: it has free Choices. It is, therefore, clear to any one who has knowledge that Weights and Constituents of Good and Evil neither outweigh one another, nor are outweighed by one another ; but on the contrary, there are real free Choices which conquer one another and are conquered by one another, since all the Choices can become one Choice. For if good Choices spring up in us from the good Root which is in us, and evil Choices are produced in us from that evil Root which is in us, then these (powers) in us are not independent free Choices, but Natures fixed by Necessity. Freewill could not separate the Constituents. For if, as one of the Heretics says, Purity and Foulness were mixed together, it is not Freewill that would be required to separate the good Will from the evil Will, but a strainer to separate the pure from the foul. For in the case of things that are literally mixed together, a separating hand is required to separate them like the skilful hand which separates with a fire the dross from the silver, and separates with a strainer the pure from the foul.

If Freewill cannot alter visible Evil, how can it alter spiritual Evil, a bound Nature ?

But if they say that these Natures in which there is mixed an excrement have 110 Freewill whereby they may separate the Foulness from them, let us leave them a little. Even if we wander a little from our subject, let us go with them where they call us. For Truth on account of its strength goes wherever it is led as a victor, and where it is pressed towards a defeat, there it gains the better crown. Let us leave, therefore, the 'bound Natures' and let us come to 'the independent Minds' ; let us see if the Wills of these men in whom there is Freedom can separate and send out of themselves the evil Ingredient, that by (the example of) the visible Mixing of the visible Evil we may believe that also the invisible Mixing of the invisible Evil can be separated. [Ov. p. 50, 1. 12.] If there is a quantity of harmful poison or deadly phlegm in any of these men, let them tell us : will 'the blameless Conduct of Freedom' separate this Evil, or will drugs and medicinal roots ? Does not this fact refute them (and convince them) that the harmfulness which I have mentioned cannot be separated by 'the

righteousness of Freedom,' but by medicinal skill ? If, therefore, this small Evil which is mingled with us is not expelled from us by 'blameless Conduct,' but by the virtue of drugs, how can' Commandments and Laws' separate that mighty and powerful Evil which is mixed in Souls ? For, behold, as experience teaches us, (medicinal) virtue can separate from us even the Evil which we have mentioned by means of skilful (medical) methods, and not by the 'Conduct of Freedom.' For if they talk such nonsense let no one hear those who would relate empty tales to foolish minds. [Ov. p. 51.] For empty allegories are believed (only) by one whose mind is empty as regards the Truth.

The proper cure for Evil if it is a poison. If, therefore, that deadly Evil is mixed in mankind like a noxious poison let them hear the true reasoning with a healthy ear. Just as when a vessel of poison is filled up, an emptying is necessary by means of drugs that that poison may not overflow and produce in us pains and hurts ; so also when Evil is excessive in the Soul a discharge is necessary for it, either from month to month or from year to year. For, behold, just as poison becomes excessive in us from nutriment, so they say that "Evil collects and increases in us from Foods." If, therefore, the measure of the Evil of both kinds becomes excessive in us, it is clear that there must be a discharge and an emptying of the fullness. For, behold, it is also the case that when blood or phlegm increases in us (then) a discharge is necessary for them.

Forgiveness is no cure for such Evil; much less vicarious forgiveness. Those, therefore, who ought to expel Evil from mankind by a visible working, lo, they are purging away the sins of mankind by an invisible forgiveness. But though the sins of mankind do not depart from them they are added to those who (say that they) purge them sevenfold. For around their necks is hung the debt of sins for the pardon of which they have falsely gone surety. For also madness, though it does not depart from a dog which has gone mad, enters sevenfold into those who are bitten by the dog. [St. Matt. x. 14.] But the disciples were commanded that they should shake the dust off their feet against whoever did not receive them, [Ov. p. 52.] let us shake off the dust of our words against these who do not receive the Truth of our words. For if vengeance was ready to come for the dust of feet, how much more ready will vengeance be for the Truth of a word which is treated despite-fully by him who hears !

If Freewill cannot alter fevers how can it subdue the Great Evil? But I wish to know this : is Freewill the cause of sins, or is Evil the fountain of sins ? But if it is Evil as they say. free Volitions cannot block up the springs of Evil. By what method then is the Evil made subject to our Will ? For, lo, when we wish, we stir it up in us to injure us, and when we will we keep it quiet within so that it cannot harm us. A plain demonstration refutes their obscure Teaching. For, behold, not even a fever within us is subject to our Will, so that when we wish it may rage and abate. If, therefore, this slight fever is not subject to our Freewill, who can make subject to our Freewill that great Evil about which they speak ? If that Evil made itself subject to us, there is nothing kinder than it, for it has made its great power subject to our weak Will. But if the power of Good makes Evil subject to us, it is clear that

whenever it hurts us that same Good stirs it up to hurt us. And, therefore, even if that Evil is evil because it hurts us, yet that which permits Evil to destroy us is more evil than it.

See how our Will is unable to alter the Nature of things.

But we are not venturing to blaspheme against the Good, but (this is said) in order that by means of what is considered blasphemous, though it is not blasphemous, the blasphemy of madmen may perchance be refuted. For one cannot bring into the way a man who is walking outside of the way, [Ov. p. 53, l. 2. unless one goes a little from the way after him into the wilderness. See, then, that the Nature of things does not follow our Wills, but our Will goes after the Nature of Creation, in that we use them according to their natural adaptations (lit., as they are natural and for what they are natural). But if even fire is not cold or hot according to our Will, how is the fierce power of that Evil which possesses an Existence of its own made subject to the Will of those who are created ? But Evil does not possess an Existence of its own, because Freewill possesses empire over itself. And fire always retains its hot nature, but Evil does not retain the nature of its being even as much as the fire which is a created thing. And, though we do not wish to be burnt, yet fire still acts according to its own nature, and when we go near it, it burns us. How then is that Evil, which is mixed in us, if it also has an injurious nature, able to injure us when our Will wishes to be injured ?

If our Will gives it power, then the wickedness of our Will is stronger than the wickedness of Evil ; and according to their preposterous Teaching it is found that Evil is therefore accused by our Freewill because, as Freewill wishes, and in proportion as it wishes, Evil opposes it. And in vain do they blame Satan since their Will is more hateful than Satan. But if Evil can injure our Freewill whenever it (i.e., our Freewill) wills to be injured, it is clear that they are calling Freewill Evil, though they not not aware of it. [Ov. p. 54. For fire which burns does not wait for Freewill to will or not to will, but it injures alike him who wills and him who does not will—both of them—if they approach it.

The Will cannot change the nature of fire: how can it conquer the Evil Element ?

But if they think "that our Will is able to conquer Evil," let us then dismiss the strife of Controversy, and let us come to actual experience. Let one of them stretch even the tip of his little finger into the fire, and if his Will can conquer the power of the fire that it may not injure him, it will be possible to believe that the injurious nature of Evil can be conquered. But if the fire causes irritation and pain over the whole body when it has touched only our finger, how does that injurious Evil, since it is all mingled with the whole of us, not also injure us like the weak fire ? If they say that He (i.e., God) has not allowed us to conquer fire by our Freewill, who then granted them power over Evil to conquer it by means of their Freewill ? But if another Good (Power) granted to Freewill the power of conquering Evil, all their blasphemy applies to Him Whom they praise. For all the censure is attached to that (Good One). For if He thus changed Evil so that it might not injure us like injurious fire, it is clear that He is also able to change any Evil that injures us at present that it may not injure us. But if He was unable, is our victory still certain ? And let them persuade us (and

show) how their Freewill conquers Evil when it cannot conquer fire. But whichever proof they may choose, they are fettered by the one they choose. If they say that because fire by its nature possesses heat on that account our Freewill is unable to conquer it, [Ov. p. 55.] it is evident that Evil does not possess Freewill by nature ; and on that account our Will is able to conquer it.

In any case, how can the Will lessen the evil Element except it is akin to the Evil ? But if the injurious and hot nature of fire, though it has been created and made, cannot be mitigated, how, seeing that Evil is an actual Existence, as they say, can the true nature of Existence be mitigated, seeing that even (mere) things cannot mitigate one another or be mixed with one another unless they have an affinity so as to receive one another ? And, if a thing cannot love its opposite, how did Evil, as they say, conceive a Passion for Good, and make an Assault on it and mingle with it ? And how, too, did Good mingle with Evil and love it ? And though teachers and law-givers summon it, it despises their counsels and makes void their laws, nor do the drawn swords of just judges frighten it to abstain from the hateful love which it has for the body which they call 'deadly,' and it hates and denies the good Source of its Nature, and loves to bring forth the evil fruit of the bitter Root [Rom. xi. 17 ff.] into which it has been grafted for a while.

And how does the Word of the True One convict (them), who says : there is no good tree which yields evil fruit! [St. Matt, vii. 18.] For if the Soul is a good thing from a good Nature, how does it bear the evil fruit of the 'deadly Body' ? And how does the Body which they say springs from an evil Element bear good conduct like good fruit ? They attribute incredible power to the Will.

But it is possible for thee to hear, O Hearer, what is greater than this. For lo, when we will, the Evil in us may 'become lessened' and not injure us. And in the twinkling of an eye, again, if we will, it may be real and 'fierce' and 'deadly' in us. [Ov. p. 56, l. 3.] O what a great marvel is this, that is to say, O what great blindness (in the false Teaching) ! For see, that when we lessen the Evil in us we do not mix anything in it except the good Will alone, that it may be lessened. And when it (i.e., Evil) revives and rages we do not mingle anything in it that it may rage except the evil Will. But if our Will lessens it or makes it worse, behold, is it not clear even to fools that our Will is good and evil ? Therefore they are alluding to Freewill when they use all these evil terms, and they are uttering blasphemies against this Will, though they are not aware of it. For if a man drinks diluted wine and mixes his good. Will in it, can it acquire strength and become overpowering though he should mix no (more) wine in it ? And if, on the other hand, the wine is unmixed and strong, can he lessen its strength by his Will alone, though he mix no water in it ? Therefore, let them take their stand either on a Mixing or on the Will.

If our Will comes from the Good, why is it not refined, and sent up? For if our Will lessens Evil, that statement is conquered whereby they say that Evil is mixed with Good, and behold (they say) "the Good is refined little by little." For behold our Will is in us always, and is not 'refined at all, nor does it go out from us.' For if our Will 'were being refined and going

out,' our Will would have already come to an end, and it would not be possible for us to will rightly. And if our Will does not come to an end neither do Good and Evil. When, therefore, does the Refining and Separation of the two take place ? [Ov. p. 57.] And if there is a Refining of the Good by means of Good so that it goes up from the Depths to the Height, why is there not also a removal of Evil by means of Evil so that it may be sent down to its Depths ?

The Manichaean religious formulae cannot thrust out the power of Evil. But if they persist in holding this (theory of a) Mixing, that (explanation) fails inasmuch as by our Will we conquer Evil, and, therefore, instead of 'the Good Words' which they teach they ought to distribute good Parts that mankind may eat or drink them that those good Parts may enter and lessen the fierceness of Evil. For words do not lessen the bitterness of roots ; but the (natural) acridness which is in a Nature is lessened by the (natural) sweetness which is in (another) element. For facts are not overcome by Words, nor by Expressions are Natures changed. For that Evil which exists independently, as they say, can be thrust out by means of some Good which also exists independently. For Power thrusts out Power and Substance is thrust out by Substance and Force is conquered by Force. Yet our (mere) Word cannot stir a stone without the hand, nor can our Will move anything without our arms. And if our Will is not able to move such insensible and helpless things, how can it vanquish the great Evil, seeing that a Power is required and not (mere) Will ? For Light does not drive out Darkness by Will, nor by Free-choice does the sweet overcome the bitter. If, therefore, these Natures, because they are Natures, require a powerful Force and not a mere Will, how is it that the quality of Power, not (mere) Free-choice, is not required in the case of Evil and Good, if they have 'bound Natures' ?

Moral and physical Evil cannot come from a single Essence. But if the Will does not lessen the Evil which is mixed with bitter and deadly roots, whereas Free-choice conquers this Evil of mankind, how can it be, if it is the very same Evil which is in mankind and in roots, that part of it is conquered by Force, and part by the Will ? Either Evil is divided against itself, or there are two Evils which are unlike one another in their essence. [Ov. p. 58, l. 7.] And if part of the poison which exists in fruits and roots is 'amassed and collected in us' (and), if Evil is all one, how is part of it in us conquered by 'a Law and Commandment,' and part conquered (only) by mixtures and drugs ? [Cf. p. cxvi. ll. 2, 3.] And Counsel and Teaching are of no avail to counteract the poison in our bodies, nor are drugs and mixtures of any use for the Evil which is in our Souls. And here it is seen that the poison which is in us is a 'bound Nature,' and a Law cannot change it, and the Evil which is in our Souls belongs to Free-choice and (medicinal) Roots cannot lessen it. Though, therefore, there are many things which it is possible to say on these subjects, I do not wish to increase (their number), lest it should appear that we have conquered by means of many words, and not by true words. For we do not conquer with the weapons of Orators and Philosophers, whose weapons are their logical Teaching. For thanks be to Him Whose Teaching thus gains a victory by our child-likeness and His Truth by our simplicity without the Teaching of Philosophy.

THE END OF THE FIRST DISCOURSE AGAINST THE DECEITFUL TEACHINGS. 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.

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.