Discourse to Hypatius 2

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). Second Discourse to Hypatius against Mani and Marcion and Bardaisan. THE SECOND (DISCOURSE) TO HYPATIUS AGAINST MANI AND MARCION AND BARDAISAN The self-contradictions in Mani's Teaching. LOOK at this Teaching intelligently how it is destroyed by itself, and refuted by its own nature, and unmasked by its own character; its condemnation is from it and in it. And just as the very words of the servants gave the verdict against them before the Lord of the Vineyard, so also the very words of this Teaching give the verdict of their condemnation before wise Hearers. Darkness could not have had a passion for Light. For he has set a difficult beginning over against a confused ending, things which strive with one another that it may be known that not one of them is true. For at the beginning he said that the Darkness has a longing Passion for the Light; which is not natural for this Darkness which is visible, inasmuch as even this Darkness which is visible to us is, as they say, [P. 2, l. 3.] of the same nature as that which is invisible to us. Yet this Darkness certainly flees from before the Light as from its opposite, and certainly does not make an Assault upon it as upon what is pleasant to it. Behold one argument in favour of their condemnation, an argument drawn from the nature of things in general.

Nor does Light finally imprison Darkness. Hear, again, another argument against them from their scripture. If the Darkness verily longed passionately for the Light because the Light soothed it, how do they say that the Light is its opposite and finally its torturer ? And if Light is an Element which is desirable and attractive to Darkness, how is there produced from that pleasant Nature something which is bitter to Darkness ? For the sweetness of our place bears witness that bitterness is not tasted in its midst. [The Prison for Darkness not built from Darkness.]But if that Prison-house, the tormentor of Darkness, is built up from the Nature of the Domain of Darkness, a Nature cannot torture itself. For fire does not burn itself. And if the Darkness is tortured by what belongs to itself—a notion difficult to accept—then Good, too, is not at rest in its place, and the matter is found to be preposterous, (namely), that every Entity which is in its own place is in anguish, but [P. 3, l. 9.] in the place of its Opposite it is at rest. For if all Darkness altogether with all that is in it is one Entity all alike, it is not opposed to its own nature ; just as a wolf does not oppose itself nor a lion itself.

Nor from the Good Realm. How could Bân, make that Grave for Darkness? Cf. pp. xlvii., lxxv.

But if from the Domain of Good that Prison-house is built up for Darkness, how is its enjoyment changed to its torment ? For lo, it is a Nature which is unchangeably pleasant. "For the Architect and Builder of that Grave," as their account says, "is one—whosoever he may be, whose name is BÂN—who in the days of his adversity became the fashioner of the Grave of the Darkness. And how from that one Entity, since it is single, does there come both builder, and that which is built, and from it the Grave and from it the Earth on which the Grave is built ? For this is found (to be the case) with this earth of ours that everything comes from the earth itself, both he who makes and that which is made; for since it was not created out of Natures and Entities it is changeable into anything as [P. 4, l. 5. the word of the Maker commands. [If the stones for the Prison come from the Light- Realm they must suffer when cut. But if all those things are one Nature and from one good Entity, how can it be divided up ? And how when that Nature is cut does it not suffer ? And do not they who are not even willing to break bread lest "they pain the Light which is mixed with it," pain it in cutting and hewing these Stones ;

and if the Light suffers in the breaking of bread, how much more does it suffer in the cutting and hewing of its members ! And if it be an Earth in which there is no sensation, and they be Stones in which there is no feeling, how is it that, though it is one Nature and one Entity, from it there come speaking Souls and also deaf-mute Stones? [Cf. p. XXXV. l. 32.]Therefore, there is not one homogeneous Essence, but many unlike one another. And if on account of their mute condition, they do not feel when they are cut, behold also this Light being of the same nature is mingled with these things in a mute condition. Why, therefore, do they not break and cut them, seeing that this [P. 5. (Light) does not feel ? But if they do not cut it lest they should pain it, with their teeth they cause it to suffer much more when they eat it, and with their bellies when they confine it there.

On Mani's doctrine that the Body was made by the Evil One. But if he who framed the Body is evil, as they blasphemously say—and this God forbid, it is not so—if the Darkness contrived to frame that Body to be a Prison-house for the Soul that it might not go forth thence, it would not be difficult for him to know from this that the refining Furnace which he framed injured him and refines the Light. But if it escaped his notice at the beginning he could, now that experience has taught him, destroy his framing and make another Body, not one that separates (the Light), but one that imprisons; not one that refines, but one that befouls; not one that purifies, but one that defiles ; and not one that makes room for the Light (to escape), but one that detains the Light. If this making of the Body really belongs to him (i.e., the Evil One), then his work convinces us concerning him that he is a wise and skilful Maker, he who might have made vessels alien to the Cleansing of the Light. [P. 6.] But if he might have made them so and yet did not so make them, his workmanship is sufficient to extol him and to put to shame those who falsely accuse him.

If the Soul has the same nature as Light, it would be refined and sent up as the Light. Now wise physicians prove to us—and the limbs with the veins bear them witness—that the power of food pervades the body. But if the Light is refined little by little and goes out, it is clear that it is a Nature which is dissolved and scattered. And so if the Soul is of the same nature, how does it too not go out in the Refining ? For it must be that the Nature of the Soul itself is capable of dissolution just as the Nature of Light as. How. is it that the Light goes out while the Soul remains ? and who gave to the Soul this indissoluble fixity ? If this belongs to its nature, how is this Element partly fixed and partly not, partly dissolvable and capable of being scattered, partly fixed and massed together ? For if the Nature was a fixed one from its beginning, the Sons of Darkness when they ate it—if they ate it—would not be able to dissolve its Nature. For just as they could not annihilate its Being so that it should no longer be in existence—for lo, it is in existence—so they would be unable to dissolve the fixity of its Being. [P. 7.] These statements, then, can be made without examination, but on examination they cannot stand.

How could the Evil One fix the Soul in the Body? And if they say that that Evil One fixed the Soul in the midst of the Body, in order that it might be imprisoned, how then did he not fix that Light, which is 'refined and goes out,' so that it could not go out ? And how did he fix a Nature which is incapable of being fixed ? For who is able to fix the Nature of fire to prevent its being divided in the flame of a lamp ? And although fire is amassed, it can be divided because it has not a fixed nature. But a ray of the sun a man cannot divide because it is fixed through and through in an indissoluble nature. But, if by reason of the entrance of the Soul into the Body which can be confined, that (Soul) was confined which was not confined (before), how is it that that Light, which, they say, is 'refined and departs,' was not confined along with its kinsman who was confined there (in the Body) ? And if it has self-knowledge because it is collected together and fixed, it is clear that those Parts which are not fixed are deaf-mutes without knowledge, and silent without speech, [P. 8.] and quiet without motion.

On Bardaisan's teaching that the Soul is composed of seven Constituents.

And it is in this connection that Bardaisan, the teacher of Mani, is found to speak with subtlety, when he said that of seven Parts the Soul was composed and fixed ; though he is refuted as well. For the numerous Parts which the Soul gathers and collects, make (possible) many a mixing of the seven Parts without proper regulation. And because it does not receive in equal weight from all the foods the Parts of all the Constitutents, it may happen that the scale of one of the Constituents may preponderate and overwhelm the rest of its companions ; and this abundance of one is the cause of the disturbance of all the Constituents. And from the Body which is without it is possible to learn about the Soul which is within, (namely), that whenever one of its Constitutents preponderates on account of the quantity of one of the foods, the injury reaches the whole system. But the spiritual character of Angels proves that their nature receives nothing more ; and not only are those holy beings exalted above this, [P.9. but even in the case of unclean devils their nature receives no addition to and

suffers no loss from what it actually is ; nor is the nature of the sun ever more or less than what it is. For these things, and those that are like them, are perfect Natures, since at all times the (true) balance of their natural character is maintained.

But when anything has either too little or too much, either increases or diminishes, either is lessened or grows weak, its nature is destructible by its creation ; though even over those Natures which are not destructible there rules that Will which made them indestructible. But we have not come to stir up now the mire of Bardaisan ; for the foulness of Mani is quite sufficient. For behold our tongue is very eager to conclude at once and flee from him. But if those Natures which were mentioned above are perfect though made, how much more must the (Eternal) Essence be perfect in its Being !

The absurdity of Mani's teaching about two 'Roots.' This doctrine of madmen, then, proclaims an Existence which is deficient in everything, and this its deficiency refutes those who proclaim it. For they have put together two Roots with preposterous reasoning, but they are dissolved with straightforward reasoning. [P. 10, l. 5.] For if a statement is made without knowledge, it is rectified by sound knowledge ; and whoever puts on contentiousness is stripped bare by the persuasive arguments of Truth. For they have professedly set forth two Roots, though on investigation it is found that there are many. [For how can they produce offspring unlike themselves ?] For he introduces births and generations which are the opposite of one another. But, that though this Entity is one, there should be from it births (which are) the opposite of its nature—this is not pleasing to the ear of Truth. For how can that Element bring forth anything foreign to itself ? In the case of creation from nothing, this can be ; but in the case of a 'bound essential Nature ' there is no (such) means ; above all (it is impossible), when it (i.e. the Nature) is one and other Entities are not mixed with it.

Or mortal beings spring from an immortal Element ? He has set forth, therefore, an Entity which is immortal though the children whom it brings forth from itself are mortal. And whence did mortality spring up in the fruit though it was not mixed in the root from which it came ? And how does a [P. 11.] Nature which is not composite bring forth bodies which are composite, which have been confined and killed ? Mani's Teaching about the making of the World. Thou hast heard this foolishness ; come hear one that is greater still. "When the Primal Man," he says, "hunted the Sons of Darkness he flayed them, and made this sky from their skins, and out of their excrement he compacted the Earth, and some of their bones, too, he melted, and raised and piled up the mountains,"—we thank him that his falsehood is revealed— "since there is in them, a Mixture and a Mingling of the Light which was swallowed by them in the beginning." For his sole purpose in stretching them out and arranging them was, that by means of the rain and dew whatever was swallowed by them might be purged out, and that there might be a Separation and Refining of the Natures from one another.

If it were true, the Maker would be foolish or inexperienced. O how foolish a workman was this ! But perhaps he was a learner, who had not yet reached experience in workmanship.

For if there had been wine (to purify) would he not have known how to make a strainer ? And if there had been silver or copper (to refine), would he not have known how to arrange a furnace ? [P. 12, l. 4] For by means of these instruments which the wisdom of mortals has contrived, the dregs can easily be separated from the pure and the dross from the silver. But this workman, even after many years, has not acquired intelligence nor after innumerable experiments has he been able to know what is necessary for his workmanship, that is to say, how to employ such compendiousmethods. But he made the sky a strainer which is useless all summer, and even in winter it does not refine every day ; but in the remote south it is not even, a little moistened. Very stupidly arranged, too, is the hollow of this filter ; for if what is pure descends to the earth, then the dregs are left above in the sky. And this performance is the reverse of the right one, in that the pure descends to the bodily sphere while the dregs remain behind in the spiritual sphere.

But as for the other statements, how and what they say about the Snow, as they are quite futile, let them be gathered within a covering of silence. Mani teaches that the whole of creation 'refines.' "Moreover," (he says) "he (i.e., Primal Man) made trees to be Furnaces." Yet they do not at all times separate fruit from the dust and their produce from the soil; and also cornfields (are said to be furnaces) ; and yet they do not continually draw up life from the earth. And if, as they teach, a Refining goes up from the offal of the Archons, [P. 13, l.12] then the greater part of that swallowed Light is going forth by means of the offal of the Archons who swallowed it. Such is the polluted teaching which refines the Parts of its God from the midst of offal! On Mani chaean principles the Archons and their skins are alike mortal.

But if, as some of them say, just as a serpent has a Sheath-skin, so out of the Sheath-skins of the Sons of Darkness the sky and the earth and the rest of created things were made, let them know that the proof which they offer stands against them. For there cannot be lifeless Sheath-skins from, things which in their nature are immortal. For as the lifeless Sheath-skin of the serpent convinces any one that the serpent also is mortal, and in like manner divisible, capable in like manner of being disintegrated and destroyed. And as the Sheath-skin of the serpent proves that its nature is destructible, so also the [P. 14.] Sheath-skin of Darkness proves that Darkness is mortal too. For a thing that is derived from an Existence is like it in every respect. Therefore, whether they were Sheath-skins, or real hides, the case is the same. Why was the Father of the Archons left alive and imprisoned?

But if the Sons of Darkness were skinned and stretched in the air, they give evidence that Darkness, their Father, is also mortal because he is composite. Why, therefore, did they not skin him, too, in the beginning and deliver creation from his injuries ? What necessity could there be that he should be left alive, and what reason was there in his case that he should remain and turn again to struggle with pure souls ? . . . [Cf. p. lxxiii.] And after he has 'intoxicated' and perverted and put them to shame, after he has made some of them fornicators and minstrels and blasphemers, then that wise Builder and Architect [Cf. p. xxx. l. 14.] has sense enough to frame a Grave and Prison for him. And instead of the

Prison-house being thus built after a long period, and with [P. 15.] much toil, if the Sons of Light had been gathered together and with these Stones had stoned him, then, lo, [Cf. p.xxi. l. 32.] he would have come to an end. But if he would not have died, because his nature is not mortal, then this impure Teaching is put to shame in everything it says. For how did the sons of the immortal die, and how were the sons of a spiritual one skinned, and how were those who are not composite disintegrated ? [Mani himself was skinned.] And they did well who skinned the lying Mani, who said that Darkness was skinned, though it has neither hide nor Sheath-skin.

The Manichaean teaching about the Moon is impossible. If, moreover, as they say, "the Moon receives the Light which is refined, and during fifteen days draws it up and goes on emptying it out for another fifteen days," if she is filled very gradually till the time of full moon, it may well be because there are not sufficient Refiners to give the Light at once, but why, pray, is it that she empties the Light little by little ? [Cf. pp. xxxviii. ll. 27, 127 ; xlii. 1. ll. P. 16.] Either the Receiving-Vessels do not receive and let it go at once, or the place into which she empties it is small and there is room for only a part daily. And while for fifteen days that Ship of Light seeks to empty out (the Light), where, pray, does that other Light, which is 'being refined and is going up,' go and collect and exist while the Moon is being emptied ? It must wander about and be lost for lack of a place to receive it; and so Darkness swallows it once more. [Cf. pp. xliv. 1.16; lxxxv. 1.4; lxxxix. l. 26.] For if it 'sucked in the Light' when it was far from it in the beginning, will it not gulp it down all the more, now that the Light exists at the very door of its mouth?

How foolishly Mani's 'Director' has arranged the Moon's function! But understand how foolish that Director is. For, instead of (the arrangement) which would have been right, namely that the Moon should go and empty out (the Light) in one hour and return so that that former Light which was emptied out might be preserved, and that latter Light which is being refined might not be lost, (instead of an arrangement such as this), behold, the Moon is worn out with going and coming, and at full moon it is then emptied in such a way that the former Light is worn out and the latter scattered. Now a woman is with child for a long time, since her babe is developed after nine months. But when her [P. 17.] labour is easy, the birth takes place in a single hour, and thus the child is not in much torment, nor is the mother much exhausted. But in the case of the bright and lightly-moving Moon, at the time of full moon her child is produced in such a way that she is worn out and her child exhausted. And if she brings forth each offspring in a day, can she not also bring forth as the scorpion in one day ? And if she really empties it out she should be there as long as she is emptying. Why is she worn out with coming (and going), though she takes nothing hence till the time of full moon ?

How is the amount of Light received by the Moon always the same ?

And how is it that from eternity to eternity this Ship of Light is filled uniformly and receives neither more nor less ? But this contrivance was not a wise one. For it would be right that, at the time when the Refining is great, the Moon should receive more, that is to say, instead

of being filled till the time of full moon, it would be right that she should be filled in five days. For if their statement were true, it would be right that what I have said should be the case. [Mani's teaching has not aided the Refining. For to-day there is much of Mani's Teaching, and so it is clear there is also much Refining! But as a hundred years ago, this Teaching did not exist—would that it did not now—it is evident that the Refining of Light a hundred years ago would be less than it is to-day. And if the Refining of Light was not the same in amount then and now, how was the Moon then and now uniformly filled till full moon ? And when the Refiners were few in number, there was not less Light for the Moon, nor to-day when the Manichaeans abound is there any Light added to it. But when there were no Manichaeans, and when they are now in existence, there is no increase in the Moon to-day though they exist, just as there was no lessening in the Moon when they did not exist. [P.18, l.31.

So by the Moon, fixed in the Height which they have made as a mirror for themselves, it is possible for that secret falsehood of theirs to be brought to light. For if the existence and non-existence of the Manichaeans are alike to the Moon, the lying Teaching is refuted by what is peculiarly its own, in that its existence is on a level with its non-existence. And if they do not exist for the Moon, for which they imagine they do now exist in a very special way, they do not in a very special way exist for God the Lord of the [P. 19. Moon. Thus from the Luminaries they receive a special refutation who imagine that they are recognised by the Luminaries. And, in fact, does not the reasoning of arithmeticiansconvince them that when those who persuade are many, much more do those that receive measure out; and when there are many floods the rivers are filled above their limits and rise beyond their wont ?

The lunar month of 29½ days opposes Mani's view about the Moon. And why, indeed, is there a Moon for twenty-nine days and a half ? Let the false Teaching which disguises itself offer a proof on this point by means of a natural demonstration. But let us strip it that it may appear bare without any truth. Let them tell us, therefore, concerning this part of a day why it is defective and not completed ; is there no superfluous Light in any of the months, so that the deficiency for this day may be filled up ? But when it (i.e., the day) is defective it is not finished, and if there is superfluous Light (?) it is not completed. And if on account of the small amount of Light that day is imperfect, there would [P. 20.] be a chance that other days too would be imperfect. And in like manner when the Light increased, it would be right that the days should be found increasing as well. The shortage of Light, however, does not make any lessening in the Moon, nor does the increase of Light fill up this defective part. So let this defective part of a day convict the Heretics that they are altogether lacking in truth.

The Manichaean teaching about the Sun.

And because Truth quickly refutes them, when it passes from dealing with the Moon to the Sun . . . that it may refute by the pair of Luminaries those who while they worship Luminaries are persons whose intelligence is wholly dark. For just as he is enlightened

who worships the Lord of the Luminaries, so is he darkened who exchanges the worship of their Lord for the worship of the Luminaries. Let us, therefore, state the case as they state it, though we shall not maintain it as they maintain it. For they say that the Sun receives the Light from the Moon ; right worthy are these Receiving-Vessels which receive from one another! [Cf. p. xxxvi. l. 10. xlii. l. 11.] And is there then no room in the Sun to receive all those Parts in one day from the Moon ? But, perhaps, the Sun might receive it, but the Moon is unable to give it; and behold with whatever load she has, she must hurry along and fling off some of the weight she is carrying. How, again, does the Sun not show that there has been some addition to his Light when he receives fifteen Parts of refined Light ? For, behold, the Moon is clearly marked even by one Part which is added every day, just as she shows when she is lessening. Is the sun then a vessel not completely filled ? And how is its deficiency invisible ? And if it is not deficient how does it receive ? For if it is complete and its cavity is full of its Light—as it is in reality—(then know that) if thou pourest anything more into a vessel that is already full, it does not receive it; for anything that falls into it overflows. But this full object (i.e., the Sun) which does not receive anything which the Manichaeans assert (to exist), by its appearance calls us not to accept anything from the Manichaeans.

The Mosaic narrative gives the true purpose of the Sun and Moon.

Let us forsake then those doctrines of the Manichaeans, because they are the only witnesses concerning them, and let us hear those of Moses, to which all nations under Heaven bear witness, and in old time the Hebrews who reckoned according to the Moon, and after them all nations who are called Barbarians, and also the Greeks, who use the reckoning of the Sun, though they do not desert the reckoning of the Moon. And, therefore, even if we prolong our discourse, let us declare what is numbered by Sun-reckoning and what by Moon-reckoning. Days are numbered by Sun-reckoning. [P. 22, l.22. For the dawning and darkness are indicated by the Sun. Behold the division of the day. But by the Moon the months are indicated. For the beginning of the months and end of the months are indicated by the Moon. [The Sun marks the days not the months. For it is by the rising of the Sun and the setting of the Sun that the days are divided. But in the matter of months it makes no division, because its succession goes on uniformly, and does not declare any division when thirty days are ended, that it may be known by that division that the month has ended, or begun. [The Moon marks the months not the days. But the Moon, when it is full and wanes, makes a division for the months, but makes no division for the days.

For how often does it happen that the Moon rises at the third or fourth hour, and sets [P. 23, l. 2. at the seventh or ninth hour ; while for two whole days she is not seen at all. God, in His wisdom who, indeed, ordered the months for the purpose of reckoning and the days for the purpose of numbering, made the Sun to number the days, as also the Moon to number the months, and as the day is completed in its course, so the Moon also is completed in its months, and from its beginning to its end the Moon produces thirty days. But if the day consists of twelve hours, and the Sun moves through a course of twelve hours, it is clear

that the Sun is the fount of days. And, again, if the month consists of thirty days and the Moon completes thirty days in waning and waxing, it is clear that the Moon is the mother and parent of the months.

Their inexactness in dividing time shows that the Luminaries are deficient and not worthy of worship. But the exact reckoning is twenty-nine days and a part. For this also in the beginning the Wisdom of the Creator (both) put together and ordered the numberings that it might perfect the reckoning. For when the months are reckoned by, numbering [they have] thirty days. But the eleven days which are after the months he did not put in their right place, and why not ? And, wherefore are eleven days lacking in the Moon, and why are there three hours more in the year in the course of the Sun ? They are these three excellent Mysteries (?), as the numbering is interpreted, and the reckoning explained, so that because of the lack which exists in the Moon months are intercalated, [P. 24, l.21.] and because of the excess which exists in the Sun days are intercalated in order that since months and days are intercalated this Luminary may be abased, and the sovereignty of God may be made known. For because many nations go astray in the matter of them (i.e., the Luminaries) on account of their Light, let their numbering convince them (i.e., the nations) that on account of their dependence it is not right that they should be worshipped.

For if the numbering of the Sun is not arranged (with exactness) the course of the Moon (also) by its swiftness and deficiency changes the seasons of the year, so that summer is turned to winter, and winter to summer. And if again a deficiency is not [P. 25.] found in the Moon, which is dependent on the fullness from the Sun, as for these three superfluous hours which are in the Sun there is no place for them (in which) to go and remain in the numbering and reckoning of the year. For in the perfect days of the three hundred and sixty-five days, where may three superfluous hours enter and exist, (those hours) which cannot be reckoned with the perfect number of the months, and do not exist in the perfect number of the days ? But between the months of the Moon and the numbering of the days of the Sun, the Lord of the Luminaries arranged for them a place that they may go and rest in it. But we have spoken this rapidly because we were not sailed to speak of these matters ; but we were compelled to speak (of them) in order to refute those who wish to turn aside the Luminaries from the service of the months and days, that they may point out in them Refinings which go up from the earth.

If the Moon is a vessel how can the vessel itself wax and wane?

And inasmuch as the Moon seems to be made for the numbering of thirty days, and consists altogether of these parts., when the thirty days come to an end, it (itself) ceases to exist. For it is not one thing and its Light another thing. And because ”the Moon is a vessel into whose midst the Light is poured,” even if that Light were lacking, the vessel itself as [P. 20, l.9.] regards its own nature with (i.e., in proportion to) the aforesaid Light, would not be able to come to an end or increase, since all vessels give evidence that they themselves exist in their natural size, and if there falls into them a greater amount the vessels do not grow larger, and if less falls into them, they do not shrink. And if anything that is in them is

emptied out and vanishes, those vessels themselves do not vanish. And since they call the Moon the Ship of Light, let a demonstration come forth from a ship to refute them, (namely), when it is filled or emptied it remains in its proper size, that is to say (in the real proportion) of its length and breadth and height. But in the case of this Ship of Light, which, they say, is in the heavens, the Light which is poured into it or emptied from it is visible to us, but the Ship itself is not visible ; either let them then tell [P. 27.] us the nature of the vessel, that we may know that for this purpose it was arranged that it might be filled and emptied as they say ; or let them tell us if that vessel itself is filled and built up and rises, and is completed and demolished and comes down. It is evident even to blind men who do not see that the Moon is made for the numbering of the months, and is not for a Refining.

The purity of the Moon and Sun. And if they say that because the Moon is very 'pure and ethereal,' therefore, it is not visible, then how is the Sun visible, seeing that it is a Light purer and more refined than the Moon ? [Cf. p. lxxxiv.] And it is the Sun that goes and comes every day on account of its purity to the House of Life, as they say. Contrasted views of Bardaisan and Mani about the Moon. And which view shall we hear, that of Bardaisan, who says about the Moon that it is an Earth and a Matrix which is filled from a high and lofty overflow and floods those who are below and beneath, or that of Mani, who says that the Moon is filled with those who come from beneath and sends (them) away to the Upper Places ? But they both are wrong in both respects, so that the word of Moses may be believed who said concerning the Luminaries, 'they shall be for signs and for [P. 28.] seasons, etc.'

Mani's teaching about the Luminaries and Disgorgings is ludicrous.

But who will not laugh at the words of children, that the Luminaries have finally become the Receiving-Vessels of the School of Mani, and not of anything which is great, but of Disgorgings ! For by these the Light is refined if it is refined. For there is no evidence that it is refined by Prayer as they say, but that (it is refined) by Disgorgings its taste gives evidence. And if not, let them pray and disgorge, and let incontrovertible experience show in which of them is the taste of food, in Prayer or in Disgorgings! But above all there is evidence that he who disgorges looks upwards in order to send upwards by means of the force and violence of the wind that thing which is refined to the Domain from which it has come down. And, perhaps, this Mystery was secretly in the world, and the world did not perceive it! And, perhaps, even Mani did not perceive it. And here it is not the man who prays much who is refined, but the man who disgorges much. For those physicians by means of things which are very different excite Disgorgings in order to purge (? the stomach which does not digest. [P. 29. For when it does not disgorge there comes the evidence of its (i.e., the food's) heaviness and coldness.

And it must be that if it does not digest, it does not liquefy, and if it does not liquefy, it (i.e., the stomach) does not disgorge, and if it does not disgorge, it does not go forth ; and if it does not go forth, it is not refined. For the coldness shuts up the food heavily there, that is to say, the cold phlegm, which is over the food—the great enemy of the School of Mani. For it wishes by its coldness to restrain the Refining, lest it (i.e., the food) should be released, and

go forth thence. And, therefore, that pungent radish can be the enemy of their enemy ; for it enters and does combat, and as it were, engages in a contest with it, and rends the veil which is spread over the face of the food ; and then a way is opened up for the imprisoned Light which is there that its Refining may go forth in the Disgorging.

And thus when the Manichaeans disgorge, because their food has not yet been digested, it is clear that their Refining has not [P. 30.] yet 'gone up,' and we must say that their Light is still mixed in their vomit, and it would be right for them to turn and swallow it anew in order that that Light which is concealed in it may not abide in corruption. Above all if (?) a dog comes and swallows it behold that Light which has gone forth in vomit from the midst of a Manichaean called a Righteous one (ZADDIQA), has entered and become imprisoned in the unclean stomach of a dog, [and it is clear] that if the Manichasan had turned and swallowed his vomit immediately, there would have been an ascent to the Height for the imprisoned Light to fly away and 'go up' to the House of its Father. And that Manichaean ought to be tormented instead of it (i.e., the Light), because he knew (?), and (yet) that Light went in and was imprisoned in the belly of the dog, and thence it was sent forth by a Transmigration (?) when the dog produced young ; and that Light was transmitted in the race of mad dogs and biters ; and it must be mad like them, and bite like them. It is right, too, that it should bite and tear in pieces that Manichaean who disgorged it and did not swallow it again ; for he is the cause of this madness. [P. 31.] But if they say that in a dog too it is refined, then are dogs more than they are in the Refining-process, and it is right that they should be fed more than they.

The Refining of air and foods cannot be true.

And if they say that the air 'is refined and sent up,' they confess, though they do not wish it, that not by Prayer is it refined, but by other causes, such as either dry or boil or heat or cool. For if, as they say, 'that pleasant taste which is in foods belongs to the Light which is mixed in them,' then just as the mouth perceives that Pleasantness of the Light when it enters so it ought again to perceive it when it goes out. For if the mouth perceived it when it entered, though it was mixed with Bitterness, how much more ought the mouth to perceive it when it goes out, when its Pleasantness has been separated and isolated! But if it perceives it when it enters, but when it goes out in the Refining-process it does not perceive it, it is clear that the Pleasantness belongs not to the Element which is refined, but to its Opposite. [P. 32.] For a thing that is palpable and capable of being tasted when it enters must be palpable and capable of being tasted when it goes out. But if they tell additional falsehood, they incur additional exposure. If they say that because the Light has been made very subtle and has been 'refined,' on that account the mouth does not perceive it, then by this short utterance their whole system is utterly upset as to the manner [Cf. pp. xxxvi. l. 17; lxxxv l.4; lxxxix. l.26.] in which the Primitive Darkness, not merely 'seized' that Primitive Light, but also 'felt, touched, ate, sucked, tasted, and swallowed it.' For behold this mouth (of ours) is of the same nature as that Darkness, and it certainly does not perceive the Light when it goes out from within it. And here all this falsehood of theirs is felt because a sound ear meets it.

Why is the Refined Light so gradually sent up to its Place ? For this Refining which goes out of the mouth is not completely refined ; therefore, it goes from the mouth to the Moon, and from the Moon to the Sun, to be refined, and to be as it was of old. For if it is refined and not dependent on the Refining of the Moon, why is it necessary that it should go to the Moon, and from the Moon to the Sun, and (why does it) not flit away outside and go up, and be taken up to its place? [P. 33, l. 7] For it abides here in idleness for fifteen days while the Moon is being emptied, and then it suffices for thirty days. Or is it possible that it forgot the way to its Home ? And how did it know to go, because it did not know the way ? . . . [then how does one (i.e., the Moon) know how to go, and does not lose its way, while the other (i.e., the Refined Light), loses itself and requires a helper to conduct it ? Such easily lost Light would not be able even to find its way to the Moon, but it would require a helper to conduct it, and deposit it in the Moon. But if they are both (i.e., the conducting Moon, and the Refined Light) one Nature, how does one draw while the other is drawn ?]

[L. 35.] And how do the Sons of the Omniscient not know how to go to their House from which they came ? And who can have patience with these (men) ?—unless it be the truth that He delights in their repentance, [S. Luke xv. 7, 10.] He whose sole object in refuting these (men) is that they may not thus go astray. If, therefore, this (Light) which goes out of the mouth—inasmuch as taste [P. 34.] implies an Exhalation and a Mingling—is so 'pure and subtle' in its going forth from the mouth, (that) the mouth does not perceive it since it is refined, and is more refined and pure than before the Mixing and Mingling, how is the turbid Darkness able to handle that pureness which is not palpable, or how can the corporeal seize the spiritual which is intangible, or how can the bodily eat a thing which has no body ? For either the Darkness is 'pure and refined, and subtle,' and that Light is gross in its nature, or they are both subtle, or (both gross) ... (so that) the two of them do not perceive one another, so that as they were perceived in the food, they may be perceived in the Refining. And if they are both light, whence is this heaviness ? And if they are pure turbidness has entered from some other place. And, therefore, it is necessary that we should seek some other Entity who himself disturbed the two of them. . . .

Why did not the Good Being protect his possessions from the assaults of his Evil neighbour ? But if that Light (?) had been God, if he was good or just, it would have been incumbent on his Goodness and Justice to surround his place with a strong wall, and preserve his freedom and honour from his unclean Enemy and from his raving Neighbour, especially when the Good (Being) had perceived that his nature was capable of being injured, as they say—though God forbid that this should be said concerning the perfect Good! But if in their shame they turn and say that it is not injured, then whom do they teach—is it not one who is in error? [P. 35, l.30.] And whom do they heal—is it not one who is smitten? And whom do they teach the creed—is it not one who denies and blasphemes ? For these evils with innumerable others happened, and are happening to the Souls which (come) from him. And if they are not from him, and are in his Domain it was incumbent upon him as one who is wise and loves his possessions to place a protecting wall around his flocks which were capable of being injured.

See how God has protected Heaven from mankind and to their advantage !

But in these matters a convincing argument, may be drawn from this creation which has been arranged by a wise Creator, for, because he knew that mankind (would) presume with their Freewill and attempt by their free Choice to set a limit to creation . . . because they are not able to set a limit to creation—for Constraint does not permit them—they have attempted to set a limit to the Creator by Disputation; just as also they wished to build a Tower by which they might go up whither an ascent should not be made. [Gen. viii. [P. 36, l.22. For the ladder to that Height is the grace of the Creator, nor in thousands or myriads of years would they be able to go up to that Height whither Elijah went up in the twinkling of an eye. For a tower does not enable (us) to ascend to Heaven, because it is the Will of the Lord of the Heaven that enables (us) to ascend to Heaven. Therefore, in order that kings at the present time might not be bold like those of old He placed them in the midst of a creation which cannot be overcome. For (should they wish) to go up above, there are the outstretched heights immeasurable,—to go down beneath, there are the terrible impalpable depths,—to cross the ends (of the earth), [P. 37.

there are bitter illimitable seas, and these [things He did, not because He was afraid on His own account—He who is not capable of being injured—but He made the heaven strong against our boldness that it may not wear itself out in vain and fruitless efforts]. [L. 11. [The Realm of the Good Being ought to have been protected likewise. And if the creation is so protected against weak mankind it would be much more right that the Domain of the Good (Being) who actually exists should be fortified against terrible enemies. For as the Lord of the Domain is perfect in his Essence, so it is right also that his Domain be fashioned aright, and his building fortified, and it would be right that that building; should be protected with a strong wall.

Without a wall he is 'imperfect.'

But the Domain lacks a wall, and its lord lacks reasoning. And if he did not fortify it with a . . . wall, he would be lacking in it; how shall we call him God who is even more deficient than mankind ? For there is no one who does not make doors and bars for his house ; or do they perchance argue in answer to this, that there should not be walls for a city, and a fortress for a place of escape, and a castle for . . . a hedge for a vineyard, an enclosure for a flock ? And which of the Manichaean [P. 38. is there who does not shut his door or the door of his place of Assembly ? But closed doors are here . . . on account of that [—l. 16. injury. . . . And if a robber came against Mani in the open country, and against his disciples, would they not take refuge in a fortress, and hide in a castle and enter within walls ? [If the Manichaeans practice non-resistance. they do so that they may be killed and escape from the Body. But I think that they are wiser than their Father (i.e., the Good Being) who, they say, is a God. For they understand how to make these things though they are clothed with the disturbing Body ; but their Father who is not clothed with the polluting Body, does not know how to make these things in his own Domain.

And if the School of Mani do not flee before a robber, and do not take refuge in citadels or walls, let us ask, is it because their Bodies cannot be injured ? And if they are looking forward to this, (namely), to be killed and to escape from the Body, and so do not need a wall, above in the House of their Father there would be a special necessity for walls that they [P. 38. might not be mixed with the vile Body. [A wall would have prevented their being mixed with the vile Body. For owing to the lack of walls, of which they had none, the Darkness swallowed them and mixed them in this Body, and while they are expecting (? to escape from it by means of a sword, which, moreover, is not really the case, they Avould have escaped from it by means of walls.

Cf. pp. XXX., lxxv. They cannot say that there were no materials to build the wall. And suppose a man says there were no stones, where was that great Earth from which BÂN, the Builder, cut whole stones for the Grave of the Darkness ? And where is blindness such as this . . . [that in a place where there existed this Graver and graven materials, and where there was all this Working, and where there was this Wise Disciple and Architect of its Grave who stretched the line and [P. 39, l.35.] weighed out axes (?) and set, the rules, and devised a plan, where there was all this], was there not found a single one to give advice that they should receive it and preserve their Domain ? And lo, they (would) have escaped from the ten thousand evils which encompass them to-day. Darkness would not leave its natural Domain as Mani taught.

But if they talk foolishly against these things, against all propriety they are debating so that only those things that are not proper may be proclaimed. And if they are thus puffed up though in Error (it is) as if they had found out something true ; for it has escaped the notice of the Heretics that they have discovered (only) Error; but they by their Freewill have been discovered [P. 40, l.10. by it according to its will. And because of the proud who have exalted themselves, let us diverge (lit., creep) a little from our Examination, and let us disregard them on the one side that they may be defeated rightly on the other. For it would never be pleasant for the Darkness to depart from its Domain, because every Entity which exists is contented if it is in its own place—because that is the place which belongs to its nature—[See from illustrations that this is true. as fish are in water, as moles in sepulchral vaults, as moths in clothing, as worms in wood, as maggots in barns, as swallows in places frequented by man, as an owl in ruins, as a dove in the light, and as bats in the night. To these and many others their natural dwelling-place is pleasant, and if any one changes the dwelling-places which belong to them for those which do not belong to them, that is to say, places which hurt them instead of those [P. 41.

which do not hurt them, it is a great evil and bitter trouble for them as the celebrated Psalm of the Blessed David reckons ; and he declares in due order the places of all of them in Psalm civ, which is 'Bless the Lord, O my Soul, O Lord my God, thou art become very great,' which declares that according to their nature are their places, and according to their places is their contentment. For if you immersed a fish in oil, and hid a mole in honey, and made a moth live in silver, or worms in gold, or a louse in a heap of pearls, although these excel

the dwelling-places which belong to them, yet they are contented with their own (dwelling-place). And if these things that are made, and that are not Entities are contented with the places which were created for them, how much more is the Entity of Darkness contented with its natural den! And if any one stimulates it to go forth thence, it suffers pain, just as a man pains the dark mole when he brings it up from its dark place.

Darkness would be contented only in its own natural Domain. For if the Darkness had its own peculiar Domain, as they say,--this is a statement which is difficult to believe—[but] what is more difficult than this is that "Darkness exchanged the Domain of its nature, and loved the Opposite of its nature," and exchanged its ordinary manner for something which was alien to it. For a newborn babe changes from its place to another place, for both of them belong to it; and though it comes from its own to its own [P. 42, l. 9.] it verily weeps when it goes forth,—how much more is an Entity [troubled] if a man roots it up from its place (and takes it) to another place which does not belong to it! For just as in its own Domain it is at peace, so in a Domain which is not its own it suffers calamity. Moreover, physicians say that everything which does not keep its nature ruins its natural generation, though they are speaking of custom and not of nature. For if a man goes to accustom himself to something to which he is not accustomed, if he does not wisely acquire the custom by stealth, little by little, he is injured by it. But if a thing to which a man is unaccustomed disables a man if he comes to it suddenly when it is natural even if it is not customary, how did the Darkness come upon the Light, its Opposite, suddenly [and enjoy it] ? And instead of what would have been right, (namely), that [P. 43.] it (i.e., the Darkness) should be positively injured as Nature indicates, it actually made an Assault upon it (i.e., the Light), as the Falsehood says, which against the Light. . . .

The Golden Calf story applied to the Manichaeans. But when that imposture is crushed by the questions of the [L. 16.] Truth all his system has been exposed and laid bare. For as the question (?) of Moses shattered the Molten Calf, so the power of the Truth shatters the fabricated Teaching. But I know that although the Calf was shattered the Jews did not flee from the worship of it, so also the Teaching of the Manichaeans has been well exposed, but the Manichaeans do not revile the worship of the Sun and Moon. For they are like one another in their blasphemies, even if they are not alike in their Scriptures. For as the Jews blaspheme against the New Testament, they (i.e., the Manichaeans) blaspheme against our Old Testament. [The parable of the Wineskins applied to Jews and Manichaeans.] But that (i.e., Scripture) is (both) new wine and old. For as for the old its-taste is in it, and its odour has not grown faint, but in the new there stirs the ferment of its power and of its violent heat. (?) But [P. 44, l. 10.] such vessels as do not receive the old convict themselves by their impurity, that (?) they are not even worthy to contain it. And such as do not receive the new they are old bottles which it (i.e., the new wine) convicts by its power that they are not able to bear it.

THE END OF THE SECOND DISCOURSE. 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.