13 Ascetic Discourses (part 1 of 2)

Philoxenus of Mabbug (c. AD 440–523)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Discourse 1 -- Prologue

Philoxenus, Ascetic Discourses (1894) pp.1-22. Discourse 1 (Prologue)

TRANSLATION.
[Page 3], THE DISCOURSES UPON DISCIPLINE OF LIFE AND CHARACTER WHICH WERE DELIVERED BY THE BLESSED MAR PHILOXENUS, BISHOP OF MABBOGH, IN WHICH IS SET FORTH THE WHOLE ORDER OF INSTRUCTION ---- HOW A MAN SHOULD BEGIN THE DISCIPLESHIP OF CHRIST, AND IN WHAT LAWS AND MANNER OF LIFE HE SHOULD WALK UNTIL HE ARRIVETH AT SPIRITUAL LOVE, FROM WHICH IS BORN PERFECTION, AND IN WHICH WE BECOME CHILDREN OF THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST, EVEN AS SPAKE PAUL THE APOSTLE. NOW THE FIRST DISCOURSE IS BY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD THE PROLOGUE TO ALL THIS VOLUME.

Our Lord and our Redeemer Jesus Christ in His living Gospel invited us to draw nigh in wisdom to the work of keeping His commandments, and to lay within ourselves the foundation of His discipline rightly, in order that the edifice of our life and character might mount up straightly. For he who knoweth not how to begin wisely the building of this tower which goeth up to heaven is not able to complete [it] or to bring it to the finish which is of wisdom. For knowledge and wisdom should order, and arrange, and [p. 4] work the beginning and end and founding [of the edifice], and whosoever beginneth thus is called a wise man by the word of our Redeemer, "Whosoever heareth these My words, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man who hath dug, and made deep, and set his building upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for its foundations were laid upon the rock. But whosoever heareth and doeth not, is like unto a foolish man who set his building upon the sand, and even if feeble things beat upon his building they will sweep it away". We are therefore bound by the word of our Teacher not to be constant listeners only to the Word of God but also constant doers.

For the man who, though listening not, doeth, is better than the man who is constant in listening and empty of works, even as the word of the apostle Paul teacheth us, "For not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified: for if the Gentiles which have no law do by their own nature [the things] of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; and they show the work of the law written upon their hearts, and their conscience testifieth concerning them". The hearing of the law is

good, for it bringeth to the works thereof, [p. 5] and reading and meditation in the Scriptures, which purify our secret understanding from thoughts of evil things, are good, but if a man is constant in reading, and in hearing, and in the meditation of the word of God, and yet perfecteth not by his reading the labour of works, against this man hath the Spirit of God spoken by the hand of the blessed David, rebuking and reproving his wickedness, and restraining him from taking even the Holy Book into his polluted hands, saying, "For to the sinner speaketh God, What "hast thou [to do] with the books of My commandments, that thou hast taken My covenant in thy mouth? Thou hast hated My instruction, and thou hast cast My words behind thee," together with the other things which are written after these.

Now as for the man who is constant in reading and remote from deeds, his reading is his own condemnation, and he is the more deserving of judgment, in that while he listeneth every day, he mocketh and is contemptuous every day, and he is thenceforth like a dead man and a corpse which hath no feeling, for if ten thousand trumpets and horns were to blow in the ear of a dead man he would not hear [them]; even thus is the soul which is dead in sins. And the understanding, from which the remembrance of God hath perished in the death-dealing error of the thoughts [of evil things], will not hear the sound of the cries of the divine voices, nor will the trumpet of the word of the Spirit move it, but it is sunk into the sleep of death which is pleasant to it; and although dying, it perceiveth not its death that it might turn and seek life for itself. And as the man who hath died according to nature is not sensible of his death, even so the dead man who dieth by his own will to the knowledge of God feeleth not his death, [p. 6] nor perceiveth his destruction, that he might find a way and seek out an invention of life for himself.

For also when God saw the dying condition of the Jews who of their own will stopped their ears, and blinded their eyes, and made thick their hearts against the remembrance of the knowledge of God, He stirred up Isaiah to rouse them up, and cried to him to cry into their ears, saying, "Cry with thy throat, and spare not, and lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their iniquity, and the house of Jacob their sins". And again in another place the same prophet saith, "He said to me, Cry. And I said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is like the grass of the field". Yea, "like the grass" and like the herb which drieth up before the sun, which when once its natural juiciness and moisture have dried up neither the rain nor all the watering of the fountains can make grow green again, even so became the nation which was dead to all the vivification of the Spirit, and like grass and straw it became dry and withered by reason of the noonday heat of error, and by the hotness of evil things. The soul dieth without the remembrance of God, and when it dieth all its discretion dieth therewith, and all its emotions of thought of heavenly things are annihilated therefrom. While the soul liveth in its natural state it is dying by its own desire; and while it is found in uprightness it is lost in respect of its freedom.

The disciple of God, then, should seek to have the remembrance of his Master Jesus Christ fixed in his soul and to meditate upon it day and night, [p. 7] And it is right for him to know where he should begin, and how and where he must raise the structure of his building, and

how he should begin and finish it, that he be not laughed at by all those who pass along the road, even as our Lord spake concerning that man who began to build a tower and was not able to finish it, that he became a laughing-stock and a mockery to all who saw him. And who is this man who began the building of the tower of whom our Redeemer spake, if it be not the man who setteth out on the path of the Gospel of Christ? Now the beginning of the building of this disciple who hath agreed to go forth from the world and to keep the commandments is his promise and his covenant with God; and he should begin, and run his course, and finish it, collecting and bringing together from all places fine stones of a noble life and character for the building of the tower which reacheth up to heaven. Now the foundation is set and laid, and is, according to the word of Paul, "Jesus Christ our God," and every man, howsoever he pleaseth, buildeth upon that foundation.

For by His love the foundation hath been laid down once and for all to receive everything which might be set upon it, until the coming of the day of the revelation in which the work of every man will be tested and proved; and He who hath been the foundation stone in the corner of the building will go up and become the Judge and Head in the top of the building. And according to what Paul himself spake, "If any man buildeth on this foundation gold, [p. 8] or silver, or stones of price, or wood, or hay, or stubble, each man's work shall be revealed, for that day shall reveal it, inasmuch as it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. Now Paul likeneth the conduct of Christian life and character and the beauties of righteousness to gold and silver and precious stones, and among these faith is as gold, and the restraining of the passions and desires, and fasting, and self-denial and the other works of righteousness are as silver; and he likeneth to precious stones love, and peace, and hope, and pure thoughts, and holy meditations, and a mind which is wholly afraid in the Spirit, and which at all times reserveth in all its emotions wonder at God and admiration for the majesty of His Being, and an understanding which keepeth silence in trembling before the inexplicable and inexpressible mysteries of God.

Now these heavenly thoughts, and emotions, and anxious fears, and life of the Spirit Paul calleth "precious stones; and error and wickedness and the ministry of all the lusts he calleth wood, and hay, and stubble. And since the building itself is fixed in the ground every man can build and raise upon it whatsoever he pleaseth, until the day which shall decide is revealed, and He shall come of Whom it is said, "He holdeth His fan in His hand and He will purify His threshing-floors; and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the straw He will burn up with unquenchable fire. And the Husbandman who planted in the world the tree of our mankind will shew Himself [to be] the Judge, and He will hold in His hand the axe for cutting down [p. 9], and every tree which beareth not good fruit He will cut down and cast into the fire.

When that Fisherman who hath cast His net into the sea of the world, and hath filled it with fish, both great and small, which are the races and families of mankind, and the nations and tribes of the children of flesh, of divers tongues and innumerable kinds, shall appear He will strike and bring up His net to the sea shore, even as He Himself hath said, and He will

gather together the fine fish and cast them into His baskets, which are the living treasuries of His kingdom, and the poor ones He will cast forth into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. These things are laid up to take place through Him at that time when the Prince of the shepherds shall be revealed in the glory of His kingdom. The time of trial is one, the time of teaching is another, the time of reading is another, and the time of proving is another; and as in this season of teaching there is no [time of] trial, even so in that season of trial there will be no [time of] teaching.

Let us therefore, my beloved, hearken unto the living voice of God Who hath called us to give us life everlasting. His voices are filled with life, and they give life unto him that will hearken unto them. With life are those living voices filled, and by the living voices is life given unto those who with a living hearing incline their ears unto their words.

But inasmuch as it is meet for us to speak separately concerning each matter in its place, and to make known in our discourse which cometh first and which cometh last, and how these good things, one after the other, should be kept and perfected, [p. 10] we have composed this introduction to be an encouragement to the reader [to proceed] to the wealth of the things which follow after. For it is meet for the man who would begin in the way of the Commandments, of Christ to know where he should begin, and what stone should properly be the first in the edifice of his instruction, and what stone should be second, and what stone should be third, lest being ignorant of the art of building, and not having learned where to begin, he know not also where and how to finish, and lest, by reason of his lack of knowledge of instruction, he make the last things first and the first last, and place some of them in the middle. Now if the farmers and husbandmen of [this] world know that there are certain seasons for sowing grain and planting trees, and others for harvest and the ingathering of fruit, and they preserve the order of the seasons that their affairs suffer not injury and become not confused, how much more is it meet for the spiritual farmer and husbandman and for the true disciple to know what things befit his first beginning in instruction, and where it is proper for him to begin?

so that having laid the first stone in its place in the foundation of his teaching, he may build up the whole of the building according to the law. And in this manner both builders and architects work, for having begun to lay the foundation of their building with fine, large stones, and great strong doorposts and sockets, even though they set in the building itself those which are inferior, the solid foundation is able to receive and to carry substances which are less strong. But if in the foundations which are beneath they were to lay [p. 11] small or bad stones, and upon them massive and fine stones, all their building would be overturned and would fall down. And again, let us take an example also from the learned who transmit instruction to the young, and who teach them knowledge according to rule. They do not pass over [certain of the] canons of instruction and disturb the order thereof and the consecutiveness of human learning, but they know which to give first and which should follow after, until the learner arriveth at the limit of his capacity for learning. And

so also according to law is this instruction in proper order known among all the handicrafts of the world.

For those things which are given to apprentices to do when they first of all begin to learn their craft, are, according to their feeble capacity, the unimportant things in the handicraft, and their masters shew them how to do them, so that if it should happen that there be a loss the loss is a little one. Even so is it with those who learn the art of the strife of the Christian life, for it is laid down for them with what forms of contests they must begin with first of all, and with what grades they must mount up and ascend in the art of the strife of the Christian life. First of all they must learn to exhibit towards each other the readiness of standing in position, and after this they must throw their hands each upon each, and thus they are stimulated, and draw nigh to the perfect contest.

And again also those who are chosen for the military service of [this] world learn the art of war on this system, [p. 12] and their instruction is neither confounded nor confused, but each of the things which they learn they learn in its proper place and order. And so with every thing else in [this] world, of which the beginning and middle and end are known. Now therefore, [judging] from the examples of the demonstrations which we have brought, this systematic order of things is especially useful to us, and the knowledge of the first rule of conduct of the Christian life and of that which followeth is very necessary for us; for it is in this world that the art of spiritual strife is to be learned, and we have been chosen for the service of those who are in heaven. And just as those who are chosen to perform service before the kings of [this] world learn the king's laws and customs from those who have served before them, and those who come last learn from those who have been before them how to walk, and how to dress and how to talk, and how far they may properly speak in his presence, and those who have been newly chosen [learn] from those who have been before them, even so also in this case it is necessary for the man who hath been chosen, whether by his own decision or by the promise of his parents that he should serve Christ, that he should learn this service from those who have [served] before him, or from the Holy Scriptures, or from men of the spirit who have walked in this path according to the law, and who began with works, and have finished in the spirit and have been made perfect in love.

Now those lusts which fight against us in the beginning [p. 13] of our youth are well known, and also those which war against us in the middle of youth, and at the end of the period of youth. And those which fight against us in the beginning, and middle, and end of [our] manhood, and those [which fight against us] in the stage which is after manhood in the self-same manner, even from the beginning until the end of this period, are well known; and also those passions, which in the time of old age war against us until our going forth from the world, and also what are those which come into being from us in infancy and childhood in emotions and natural movements, before the discernment of freewill hath been moved in it, and before we arrive at the knowledge which distinguisheth virtues from vices.

And moreover, it is meet that we should know at the time when we are leading the Christian life and doing the works thereof which passion fighteth with which, and which lust

contendeth with which, and at the end of that good work what evil thing can be stirred up against us, and how in [our] overcoming one lust another gaineth the victory, and how when we have subdued the lusts of the body there is stirred up against us the war of the passions of the soul, and how when we have cast out the evil thing from us it returneth to array itself with our innermost thoughts, and when we have slain it in our bodily members it cometh to life in the living motions of the soul, and when we have cut it off and cast it out from us it entereth and lieth in ambush [p. 14] that it may be within us. And [we should know] what feeling is born to the soul by the fasting of the body, and what feeling by self-denial, and what feeling by singing psalms and hymns with the voice, and what feeling by prayer in silence, and what feeling by the lack of possessions, and what feeling by poverty of dress.

And [we should know] what feeling is born in us by general loving-kindness to all mankind, and what feeling is stirred up in us when our conduct of life is more excellent than that of our brother, and what feelings arise from the knowledge of the mind, and what feelings arise from words of instruction, and what feelings arise from the words which are handed on to us in books. And [we should know] into what feeling we shall fall when we have conquered the lust of the belly in everything, and what feeling is stirred up against us at the end of the triumph of the war against fornication, and what feeling is born in us by obedience to those in authority, and by obedience to every man, and what are the feelings which arise in us when we resist obedience, and by what doctrine the opinion which will not be persuaded by its teachers may be abated, and by what consideration we may root up from ourselves the doubt [which cometh] from knowledge which ariseth in us against our soul.

And [we should know] what feelings can be conquered by other feelings, and what lusts can be abated by others, and of what [nature] is the war against things of the body, and of what [nature] is that which is against the things of the soul and against things of the spirit, and [we should know] what it is meet that corporeal beings should do when they wish to overcome the lusts of the body, and what beings endowed with souls [should do] [p. 15] to overcome the passions of the soul, and what spiritual beings [should do] to be delivered from the failings which befall spiritual beings in the country of the spirit. And [we should know] how far the fight can be extended in each one of these series, and how we may know when the emotion of lust springeth from ourselves, and how and when it befalleth us externally at the instigation of the Enemy, and by what things the lust which is born of ourselves and that lust which the Adversary stirreth up against us may be overcome, and whether by any means that same lust can be overcome at all times, or whether in order to overcome at other times other means are necessary to us.

And [we should know] how, and by what [means], we may perceive when, either by the power of our endurance or by the grace of God, our lusts have been vanquished by us, and what manner of strife may be stirred up against us when we are among men, and also what manner of strife may be raised up against us when we are in solitude, and how the soul may be especially purified and cleansed, and what place is an assistance to the labour of the body. And [we should know] with what things it is meet that we should begin when

we have drawn nigh to the discipleship of Christ, and what feeling will be aroused in us at the praise which may be bestowed upon us by people in authority, whether by reason of our knowledge or on account of our rule of life, and what feeling will be aroused in us when we are applauded by the greater number of the assembly in church. And [we should know] with what thoughts we should observe the onset of passions, and how we may guard ourselves from being disturbed by them when they attack us, and what [p. 16] opinions we may take unto ourselves when we overcome their struggling. And [we should know] how we may obtain the possession of humility, and with what thoughts we may abate in us the pride which is the opposite of humility, and with what minds we may hold fast patience within ourselves.

And [we should know] what is the poverty of the body, and what is the renunciation of [the things of this] world, and what is the poverty of the soul, and how when we have made ourselves beggars in respect of the riches of the things which are seen we may possess the wealth of the gifts of Christ. And [we should know] what commandments are meet for us to observe at the beginning of our instruction, and how we should listen to our teachers, who give us counsel and teach us good things, without observing their shortcomings. And [we should know] what power our soul obtaineth from each, one of the virtues which are exercised by us, and how it is meet for us to bear ourselves in a correct manner in the dwellings of our brethren. And [we should know] to what extent it is right for us to fast, and how at all times likewise [we may know] how to add unto or to diminish our bodily food, and how and in what way it is meet for us to endure patiently when the war of lust attacketh us. And [we should know] what to do when we desire to quench the passions of the soul in ourselves, and with what meditation of the mind we may root out enmity from us.

And [we should know] how and whence pure prayer is born in us, and what intuitions strike us by the admiration of God, and how we should move within ourselves at all times a passion for God, and how many are the feelings and aspects which belong to this passion for God, and how when we come [p. 17] into a life of contemplation we may preserve our thoughts from wandering outside ourselves. And [we should know] what loss will arise to a man from communion with heretics, and how by human conversations and meetings our heart is made thick, and how the remembrance and the thought of God are darkened. And it is meet that we should know what is fasting of the body, and what is fasting of the soul, and what is fasting of the spirit; and what is purity of the body, and purity of the soul, and purity of the spirit; and what is poverty of the body, and poverty of the soul, and poverty of the spirit. And [we should know] what are the distinguishing characteristics of contemplation of the body, and of the soul, and of the spirit; and how the soul may be taught to fast from evil things, even also in like manner as the body is taught to fast from meats.

These and many other things like unto them the disciple of Christ is bound to learn and to know in order to walk confidently on the path of his service, and to do the will of the heavenly King Whom he serveth. For if those who learn the handicrafts of [this] world learn carefully all the secrets of their trades, and are incited to know all the [different] kinds of

work which are in each of them, how much more is it meet for him that hath been chosen for this spiritual trade----if we are right in calling it a trade----to know all the ways, and paths, and signs, and marks of the mysteries of this Divine manner of life? And he should know that, although he is a man according to the body, he is chosen to work spiritual things, and that, by the grace of God, he hath been held worthy of the life of heavenly things, [p. 18] and that, although he existeth in the flesh in [this] world, he should walk in the path which is superior to his nature.

We are bound then, if we be disciples, to ask and to learn all those things whereby we may obtain our living like disciples; and as disciples learn their crafts from their masters, even, so let us learn and receive [instruction] from our spiritual masters. Now no man is able to become a master except he be first of all a disciple, and he cannot help and profit others unless he gathereth useful things from others, and subdueth himself to receive [instruction] and to learn from every man, and esteemeth every man greater and more excellent than himself. For our nature hath been created, and when as yet we were not we existed in the will of the Creator, and we have [but] recently been able to possess the doctrine of good things. And as we came into existence from a condition of non-existence, even so from [being] sinners have we become righteous. When once a man hath cast off the world wholly he can then put on himself completely the manner of the life of Christ, for until he hath cast off from himself the polluted garment, and hath cleansed himself by means of tears of repentance from the blemishes of evil things, he cannot array himself in the purple of the knowledge of Christ.

The man who is befouled either with thoughts or deeds of iniquity is first of all bound to heal his sores, and to rub away the blemishes of his soul and body, and then he may come to the feast chamber of divine mysteries, arrayed in the spiritual garments of the feast. And for this reason it is especially meet that every one who becometh a disciple of Christ should, from his earliest age, lay the foundation of his instruction in such a way that all his [p. 19] subsequent growth may receive goodly habits, and that the world may not exhaust the power of his soul and body, after which he may draw nigh to this service like an old and worn out vessel; but, according to what is said by our Lord, "Let us put new wine into new bottles, and both will be preserved". And thus in the beginning of our youth, when as yet our foundation is new, and while our strength is yet in us, and our freshness hath not been made old by sin, let us put within ourselves the new wine of the doctrine of Christ, that we may be able to endure the fervour of the love of the doctrine of Christ, so that while we preserve it we may ourselves be preserved through it from all evil things, more especially when the power of our soul hath not been violated and carried off by the work of the service of profane things.

Whosoever then would begin this course of life in his youth, it is meet for him to be under the care of masters and to be obedient to their words without judging their shortcomings. And those teachers also should put themselves in the position of foster-parents to whom the bringing up of the children of the heavenly king, whose father is a king, and whose brother

is a king, and whose mother is a queen, hath been delivered, And as those who educate the children of a king of [this] world shew endless care for their growth and progress, and watchfulness and zealousness to please their parents in them and the children also when they arrive at the honour of royalty, even so also should the master of disciples consider that he is educating the children of a king, and he should be watchful and take heed to their custody and to their growth and progress.

[p. 20] It is meet also that we should be like unto physicians towards ourselves and towards each other. For there is no physician who, being smitten with pain in his own body, will not exercise care concerning it before [he attendeth] to the healing of the sicknesses of others; if however, other people fall sick, the law of the art of healing requireth him to run to heal them. And like physicians it is meet that we should know first of all what are the causes of the pains and then should apply medicines, so that we may not be unto the sick man a medicine which increaseth the sickness. For we have received soul and body by the grace of God in the construction of our created form, and it is required from us that we should take care of both. Now as concerning sicknesses and bodily sufferings, that same bodily nature maketh demands from us concerning meat, and drink, and clothing, for those natural needs compel us to take thought for the body, and we are not able to neglect it, even if we wish to do so, for the force of its feelings draweth us to heal it, and the demands [made] by its needs [draw us] to supply the things which it requireth.

And concerning the healing of our soul, the command of the word of God urgeth us to heal its sicknesses, and to cure its sufferings, and to satisfy its hunger with the food of doctrine, and to give it to drink of the knowledge of God, and to clothe it with the dress of belief, and to shoe it with the preparation of hope, and to rear it in goodly habits, and in the perfection of all good things, and in the obedience which is ready [p. 21] for the work of the commandments of God, so that, our secret parts being holy and our visible parts being pure, we may become vessels prepared for the Spirit of God, so that He may dwell in us purely and holily, we having cured the diseases which smite us by knowledge and wisdom, and having healed in our souls the wounds of sin.

Now there is no single sickness of the lusts for which healing medicine is not given to us by the word of God. For like as medicines are mixed and prepared by the physicians for bodily sicknesses, even so are medicines made ready and prepared by the Spirit of God for the sufferings of sin, so that whosoever perceiveth his sickness may find medicine by his side, and may at once bring help nigh to himself; and every disease, as it appeareth in most cases, can be healed by something which is opposite [in nature], in order that the contrariety of the medicine may combat the injurious effect of the disease. The sicknesses which arise through cold are healed by roots (or drugs) having astringent properties, and those which arise through heat are helped to decrease by things of a cooling nature. Thus also is it with those which arise from dampness, for dryness cureth [them], and to heal those which arise from moisture medicines which dry up are given.

From this similitude then, take an example, O understanding man, who desirest to heal the sicknesses of the soul, and do to thy soul what the art of healing doeth to thy body; for this work of things which are manifest is set before our eyes that it may be a demonstration of doctrine for the things which are hidden. And in the same way in which the body is healed let us heal the soul [p. 22] from the sicknesses of evil things, and let us make ready the medicine which is the antidote against every passion of sin» Against doubt, faith; against error, truth; against suspicion, certain assurance; against lying, integrity; against craft, simplicity; against cunning, uprightness; against wiliness, sincerity; against hardness, gentleness; against asperity, graciousness; against the lust of the body, the lust of the Spirit; against enjoyment, suffering; against joy of this world, joy of Christ; against profane songs, psalms of the Spirit; against lewdness, groanings and tears; against prodigality in eating and drinking, fasting; against drinking unto drunkenness, the parching thirst of prudence; against the rest of pleasure, labour; against enjoyment, tribulation; against fleshly pleasure, pleasure of the thoughts which rejoice in the Spirit; against speech, silent meditation; against external conversations, silence; against slackness, strenuousness; against inactivity, activity; against negligence of the thoughts, keenness of understanding; against weariness, endurance; against cruelty, loving-kindness; against wickedness of the mind, piety of the soul; against haughtiness, humility; against boasting, contempt; against the love of honour, subjection; against praise, contumely; [p. 23] against riches, poverty; against possession, want;

against enmity, peace; against hatred, love; against anger, conciliation; against wrath, propitiation; against envy, love; against evil jealousy, the love of mankind; against cursing, blessing; against smiting upon the cheek, the turning of the other cheek to him that smiteth us; against trouble, joy; against suspicion of ourselves, confident hope towards God; against the passions of the body, the passions of the spirit; against the sight of the body, the sight of the spirit; against ornament in dress, the want of attire; against luxury, asceticism; against fatness, emaciation; against the mind which meditateth upon meats, the mind which contemplateth heavenly things; against the sight of everything which is visible, the remembrance of everything which is invisible; against the world which is present, the quest of the world which is to come; against the love of parents of the body, the love of parents of the spirit; against the bond of relationship which is in the human race, the bond of our understanding in our heavenly kinship; against a city and a house on earth, the dwelling of Jerusalem which is above.

All these things then, and others which are like unto them, are healed by what is opposite in nature to them, and are made whole by [their] antidotes; and it is meet that whosoever lusteth after spiritual things should deny [himself] corporeal things. For until one lust is dead in us another cannot live within us, that is, until the lust of the body is dead the lust of the spirit cannot live in our thoughts; for the death of one of them is that which maketh its fellow come to life. When the body [p. 24] with all its lusts liveth in us the soul with all its lusts is dead, but when the soul is associated with the life which is in the spirit, all its members----which are its thoughts----live with it. Then riseth man from the dead, and

liveth in the new life of the new world. Until we have cast off from us the old man we cannot put on the new man of the spirit; and even though, by grace, we may put him on yet we do not perceive him.

Now all these sicknesses which we have enumerated can be healed by these medicines, and it belongeth therefore to the man that is sick to know his sickness, and to be a physician unto himself, and for each of these sicknesses which we have enumerated let him apply the medicine which is its antidote. For behold, by the side of the sickness a drug for healing is laid, and near the blain is the medicine which will cure it. If thou wouldst seek to heal thy sicknesses, behold the medicines for their cure are by their side; but [first] understand thy diseases and acquire the knowledge of the drugs which have the power to heal them. And from the slight indication which I have described for thee thou must understand that [all] the rest belongeth to thine own care; for instruction doth not teach thee everything lest thou become sleepy and useless. Now if these things which have been or which are about to be written are thought by thee to be more difficult than thy strength [is able to bear], cry unto God for help, and from Him thou shalt obtain grace which will assist thee in the war in which thou standest.

We will then draw nigh, by the help of God, and in few [p. 25] words we will write concerning each of these passions so far as power [lieth] in us----that is according as grace shall sustain [us]----for our own benefit and for the profit of others. And we will set these matters in order, one after the other, and we will show where it is meet that the disciple should begin, and how he should advance and ascend all the grades of the Christian life and conduct, until he arriveth at the topmost step of love, from whence he shall ascend to the grade of perfection. Then will the spiritual land of the joy of Christ receive him, and when he hath stood upon it he will be free from passions, and will be delivered from lusts, and he will have subdued all his enemies under his feet, and that man will speak with boldness the word of the Apostle, saying, "Yet I live; [and yet] no longer I, but Christ liveth in me": to Whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Here endeth the First Discourse which is the Prologue of the volume. [Footnotes renumbered and placed at the end. Page numbers in square brackets refer to the pages of volume.1, the Syriac text: page numbers in the translation are highlighted in red as normal]

Discourse 2 -- On Faith

[P. 26] THE SECOND DISCOURSE: WHICH TEACHETH WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT THAT THE MAN WHO DRAWETH NIGH TO THE DISCIPLESHIP OF CHRIST SHOULD LAY HOLD UPON.

Whosoever wisheth to draw nigh in systematic order to the life and conduct of the discipleship of Christ before all things it is meet that he should within himself lay hold upon sure faith, which maketh certain that God is, and enquireth not; which holdeth His words to be sure; and seeketh not to investigate His nature; which hearkeneth to His words, and judgeth not His deeds and actions. For faith maketh [man] believe God in everything that He speaketh without requiring testimonies and proofs of the certainty of His word, the certain proof that it is God Who speaketh being sufficient for him. Signs and testimonies and proofs are demanded when it is man who doeth or sayeth anything, but when it is God Himself who speaketh, and the Lord of the universe Who sayeth that He will perform [it], it is necessary for us to believe, it being sufficient for the persuading of our faith that it is God Himself Who speaketh and will perform. And man hath not the power to judge His will; for how can [p. 27] man who hath been made judge the will of Him that created him? For as the vessel cannot chide the handicraftsman and [ask] why he hath thus formed it, or judge any of his works, so also is it with man who is a rational vessel, and he hath no power to chide with the Workman Who made him.

And although man possesseth the speech of knowledge it was not given to him to judge the will of Him that made him, but that he might be a panegyrist of the knowledge which formed him; for the rational man is farther removed from the power of scrutinizing His Creator, than is the speechless vessel from the power of criticising him that made it. For the giving of thanks have we received speech from God our Creator, and in order that we may admire His created things hath He placed in us thoughts of knowledge. That we may perceive Him He hath made us to possess a sense of wisdom, and that we may receive a foretaste of His gracious acts hath He placed within our soul the sense of discernment. That we may see Him in His works He hath given to us the eye of faith which can see deeply into His secret things. God is too great to be investigated by the thoughts, and His dispensation surpasseth the seeking out of speech. And with His nature go also His works: for as His nature is inscrutable so also the deeds and actions of His nature cannot be sought out. And

His will and wish cannot be judged, either for what reason hath He willed thus, or for what reason hath He done thus;

for as He cannot be judged by us as to why He hath made us in this form, and why He hath formed us, and placed us in the world in this order of constitution, so also none of His wishes can be found fault with by us, either as to why He willed thus, [p. 28] or why He performed.

"He that would draw nigh to God is bound to believe that He is, and [that] to those who seek Him He will be a rewarder;" this law hath Paul committed to the man who wisheth to draw nigh to God, and this obligation of rewarding [him] is laid upon God. He must believe only that God is, and whosoever believeth that He is, from what time and in what manner [He existeth] he will not enquire. So also is it with His will, if he heareth [it], and His word, and His doctrine; that it is the will of God Himself he will be sure, and the voice and commandment of God he will hearken unto and believe. That he should judge why, and in what form, and for what reason [He is] thus is the insolent investigation of the soul which hath not perceived God.

It is meet for every man that would draw nigh to God that he should possess the mind of a child; and as a child is towards his father and mother, so should he be towards God and towards His dispensation. And as the child receiveth instruction from his master without searching into his words or examining his doctrine, and without judging in his thoughts that which he teacheth him—for he hath not sufficient ability in his own thoughts to be a judge of what he heareth—so also is it meet for the man to be towards God, neither enquiring into Him with his words, nor judging His deeds and actions in secret thoughts; for he is a child, and like a child he should incline his ear unto His instruction, and receive it with faith. And it was also for this reason that God gave birth to us a second time, that He might teach us that we were children [p. 29] and infants of the world born unto faith, for the womb which gave us birth — that is, baptism in which the Spirit is mingled—has been made the means.

Now we have been born in faith, and as the natural child who is born from the womb existeth wholly in natural simplicity and knoweth nothing of the world, and seeketh not to know, and enquireth not, and thinketh not, and speaketh not, except that he moveth only with the living motions of nature, being remote from all power of the mind, so also this child, of the Spirit, who hath been brought forth by the womb of baptism instead of by the natural womb, is not bound to enquire concerning Him that begot him while he listeneth to His words with sincerity, and he should become like a child to His doctrine, accepting [His] commands and drawing not nigh to enquire into them. And as that natural child learneth the names of the things of the world without understanding their power, so also let [the child of the Spirit] accept the names and words, and God shall give him the secret of understanding them. For in respect of that knowledge we are children and infants compared to the unspeakable wisdom of God, and thus also are we called by the word of our Redeemer, [Who said], "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and restrain them not, for of those who are like these is the kingdom of God". And again in another place He said, "Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall not enter into it."

For as is the faith of little children in respect of the things of [this] world, so is it meet [p. 30] that our faith should be towards the words which are spoken to us by God, because thus is also the child towards the word which he heareth from his father, and everything which is promised to him by him he believeth without doubt that he will give him and that he will not fail in his word, and he doth not question him; he doth not first make investigations concerning it, and test its power, and attack its trustworthiness, and then accept it. And if the thing which hath been promised unto him be too great for the power of his father [to perform] he knoweth not how to distinguish it, but everything which he saith to him he accepteth from him directly and doubteth not. And if he seeth purple raiment upon a king's son, or the crown which is placed upon his head, he asketh his father to give them to him, and he believeth in the sincerity of his mind that he will give them to him, for concerning him he thinketh that he is able to do everything. And if he seeth a snake or a scorpion he doth not hesitate to stretch out his hand towards them in his simplicity, and he biddeth his father or his mother to give them to him, and he also maketh known the desire of his simplicity by his weeping [if they give them not to him];

and his constant importunity concerning them, and his cries, and his tears, testify that he asketh [for them] with all the power of his nature, believing that the power of his father is able to resist the injuries of the harmful reptile, and he hath no doubt whatever in his soul that that which he desireth can be given to him. Therefore after this type of children did our Lord command that all those who would receive His kingdom should become, believing and holding to be sure the promises of God unto them like children. For our Lord proclaimed and revealed His kingdom to corporeal beings, and said, [p. 31] "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven hath drawn nigh. Thou hast heard the voice of him that proclaimed concerning His kingdom, believe it then undoubtingly, especially since thou hast learned that it is the voice of God. Meditate not in thy soul how this kingdom can be, and try not to search out these spiritual countries in thy imagination; take not upon thyself the customary habit of the thoughts of the body when thou hearest of incorporeal, countries, and fashion not imaginary forms out of thy heart concerning these glorious mansions which the Ascension of the Son hath prepared [for thee]; and think not to order in thy knowledge that which the knowledge of God hath fashioned aforetime.

Thou wast not called to search out the kingdom, neither its preparation nor construction, but only to be an heir and a guest, that thou mightest enjoy thyself out of the overflowing abundance of its spiritual delights. Thou hast heard the word concerning the kingdom which Jesus speaketh to thee, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven hath drawn nigh; to thee He hath said, "Repent," and not that thou shouldst be one who should try to examine into the kingdom, for that is near unto thee if thou wilt draw nigh unto it. Now the drawing nigh unto the kingdom cannot be arrived at by the questionings of these words which enquire, "How, and in what manner, and what the kingdom is like; but let each of us keep the laws of the kingdom, and perform the commandments which have been committed unto us by the Ruler of the kingdom.

All these things by faith thou hast heard concerning God, that He is from everlasting [p. 32] and world without end, and that He existeth in His own being, and that He hath not come into being from any other substance; and that He is not One Person, but a Nature, existing of Itself, which is believed and confessed in Three Persons. And moreover, the word of faith teacheth thee to be certain concerning the Persons, that He Who begot cannot be divided, and that He Who was born cannot be separated, but the Father together with His Son is everlastingly and eternally of like nature with the Holy Spirit. That they exist is all that thou [needest] to confess. How, and from what time, or in what manner, and to what limit, and with what form and order, and what is their likeness, and how they can be Three not being divided from each other, and how it is that since they are in each other they are called Three, and how the Son can have been born since He hath not been separated from the Father, and how the Father begot him since He hath not gone forth from Him, and how it is that having been in existence from everlasting and world without end they are not described as Three Beings— these things and others which are like unto them are accepted by faith, and without faith man is not able to hear them [and believe them]. Even the ordinary hearing is not able to bear them unless faith be found to precede them and to accept them.

And thus also is it in respect of the spiritual natures and orders of celestial beings, and it is faith which maketh it possible to receive every word which is spoken concerning them; [p. 33] for otherwise there must necessarily be unbelief, since the Book calleth them "absolute spiritual beings" [in one place], and in another it speaketh of them as "compacted bodies," to which it attributeth forms which are different from each other. Concerning the Seraphim we are told by the word of the Book [that they have] wings and faces, and concerning the Cherubim [we are told that they have] other forms which are different from each other; which of these statements are we to accept as true? for according to the outward hearing of the word each contradicts the other. The statement that they are spirits we believe, the statement that they are compacted bodies we hold to be true, the statement that their construction consisteth of forms of different kinds we accept; and we receive them all by faith, because it hath been said by God that their [four] sides were "living animals" [which] were "full of eyes as they turned round.

And by this word He hath taught us that the whole of the spiritual nature can see, and that all of it can hear, and that all of it can perceive, and that all of it can think, and that all of it can put things to the test, and that all of it can understand, and that all of it can desire with the desire of its nature; and it doth not hear with one member and not with another, or see with one and not with another, but the whole of it is hearing, and the whole of it is seeing, and everything which it is that it is wholly. And its hearing is not disturbed by its vision when with the member with which it heareth it [also] seeth, or when with that with which it thinketh it also tasteth; and we believe them to be undisturbed and undestroyed by each other.

Now in respect of compacted bodily natures which have been discovered to be the opposites of these spiritual beings, in that they hear with one [member], and see with another, and taste with another, and smell with another, and feel with another, and think with another, contrary to the constitution of their members the movement of their passions maketh division; [p. 34] but above, with these spiritual natures, each one of them is wholly and entirely one thing in all his motions, and his members—head, and feet, and hands, and face, and back, and front, and length, and breadth, and colour, and forms which are different from each other—are not separated. For in these natures there is not the composition of these members, and it happeneth not that because there is no eye there is no vision of the eye, or that because there is no ear there is no hearing of the ear, or that because there is no bodily palate they have no [power of] tasting spiritual things, or that because they have no wings they cannot fly, or that because they have no legs they cannot move about, or that because they have none of the members of the heart they cannot think; but they possess all the service of the members, although they have no compacted members. And how the operation of the members is established without the members themselves we have no power in our own knowledge to understand; but by this [power) which is given to us by God, I mean faith, we understand these things, and although they do not at all fall under the investigation of the human thoughts they are accepted by us without any doubt. For from faith we learn this [fact] that they exist, and not they only, but also the Being Who existeth of Himself, their Creator, by faith we accept that He is.

The stablishing of all our instruction (or doctrine) is in faith, for although the appearance and march of things teacheth and maketh understanding men wise concerning [p. 35] their Creator, yet faith should precede even this, for behold, because there was no faith this became a lie unto many. And to speak briefly, everything which is of the spirit, and the whole world of spiritual beings, faith seeth and faith perceiveth. If we do not take faith within our soul we shall understand nothing outside of that which can be seen. To [understand] these things which are seen faith is unnecessary because the vision of the eye seeth them, for they are corporeal in their nature, and man looketh at them corporeally; but the whole world of the spirit is perceived by faith, and it seems as if that world could not exist if there were no faith.

Observe then how great is the power of faith, for all the spiritual things which are would, without it, be as if they existed not; and not only living works or spiritual countries, but that Being which is, would be, if we had no faith, as if He existed not For this reason Paul looked upon the mystery of our doctrine, and said, "He that would draw nigh to God is bound to believe that He is; he commanded the disciple [first] to take faith upon himself, and then to draw nigh to the discipleship of Christ. For Paul knew that the spiritual nature could not fall under the bodily senses, and that it could not be known, for not even one of the bodily senses [p. 36] could subjugate it, and for this reason he commanded us in his doctrine to believe only that He is. Now the Creator divided the whole of the corporeal nature into five kinds; one may be seen, another may be heard, another may be smelled, another may be perceived, and another may be touched; and He gave to man five senses with which he might

be sensible of the world in its multitudinous varieties. Therefore, outside these five senses which I have enumerated a man can neither perceive anything of the corporeal world, nor doth the world exist to him outside these senses.

And the remainder of everything which is spiritual, whether it be that which existeth of itself or whether it be things which are created, cannot be subjected to one of these five forms, neither can it be experienced by [any] one of these five senses. And for this reason also when our Lord gave us this blessing of perceiving Him, He delivered unto us first of all faith, with which we might perceive Him, and then He revealed to us concerning Himself, and for this reason the blessed Paul said that "Faith [cometh] from the hearing of the ear, and the hearing of the ear from the word of God. By the hearing of the word of God Paul taught us to receive faith, and although faith hath been implanted in our construction by God our Creator, yet hath it been corrupted and changed from faith to error, and after the manner of that natural wisdom which hath also been given to us in our construction we have changed it, and instead of the wisdom of God we have gathered together the wisdom of [this] world with it. And something else which is external to God through the wisdom of God have we changed, [p. 37] even as Paul saith, "Through the wisdom of God the world knew not the wisdom of God."

And thus also hath the natural faith which is in us been turned into error, and these things which have been given to us by the Creator for [our] advantage have been found by us to be a loss, for we have changed their profitable orderings, and we have made use of them in a manner other than that for which they were designed. Our faith hath believed in what is unseemly, and our wisdom hath made acquaintance, with what is not befitting; for where faith was unnecessary there have we made use of faith. For what the eye of the body saw, and what all the bodily senses perceived, that thing was understood to be something else by our faith, and we expected one thing in the place of another. And because of all this the ordering of the faith which was implanted in us by the Creator hath been destroyed, the word of God hath been implanted in us a second time, and the power which is in us hath been stirred up by the doctrine of Christ; for this reason He urgeth with all His words, high and low, that faith should be in us, saying, "Verily I say unto you if there be in you faith like a grain of mustard seed ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be too difficult for you."

He taught us by faith that nothing should be too difficult for us, and according to this everything can be overcome by the power of faith, according to the command (or decision) of the word of Christ. For by faith signs took place, and wonderful deeds were wrought, and mighty works were completed, [p. 38] and things worthy of admiration were accomplished. Everything which is above nature faith alone performeth, whether it be the raising of the dead, or the healing of the sick, or the curing of those who are smitten with disease, or the cleansing of lepers, or the opening of the eyes of the blind, or the making the lame to walk, or the making sound and stablishing of all the other members of the body, or the making to speak those having impediments, or the making the deaf to hear, or the driving away

of devils : all these faith perfecteth. By faith a mountain removeth from its place, by faith the sea and rivers have been crossed on foot, and by the power of faith all natural things have been obedient to the voice of man. And to speak briefly, faith giveth the power of God to man, for when he hath once believed, everything that he wisheth he doeth by the power of faith. Faith changeth feebleness of the body into its own mightiness, and the despicable order of man it maketh into the audible command of God.

Faith looketh upon something which existeth not as if it were something which doth exist, and that which existeth it accounteth as if it existed not. And this also is an example of the power of God, concerning Whom Paul spake, "He calleth the things that are not as though they were. And the Prophet said, "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers; and again, "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth; He rebuketh the mountains, and they smoke. And again the prophet Isaiah saith, [p. 39] "All the nations are accounted as nothing by Him. Now these things the Spirit of God spake concerning the power of God, that those things which were not He called to come into existence, and that what did exist He called and changed into nothing. To this power also He compareth faith, not only in that matter of [the working] of signs and wonderful things, in that the things which are not it worketh after the manner of God, and those which are it bringeth to an end and finisheth by the power of God, but also in that those things which, because of their being hidden, were accounted as if they existed not, were perceived by it as if they were manifest, and those which are, and in which we labour, and by which we are ministered unto, are accounted as if they existed not, for [faith] saw aforetime their dissolution.

And although their nature was not to pass away, it made them pass away; and although they existed, it dissolved them; and although they were visible, they were to it invisible; and although their delights could be experienced, they were as nothing to it; and although all created things were to run, to faith they would be at rest. When it seeth death it maketh not sure that it is death, and riches are accounted poverty by it, and everything which is in the world or is even of the nature of the world it looketh upon as if it existed not, because its course is about to be annulled, and its affairs to cease. The things which are remote and afar off, it bringeth and placeth near in front of it, and it looketh upon them face to face; and without a covering (or vail) it looketh upon all secret things and regardeth all things that are hidden. To the sight [p. 40] of the body the kingdom of heaven is afar off, yet the eye of faith regardeth it; these mansions in the house of the Father, which are remote according to the body, hath faith already dwelt in. That spiritual light shineth in its country gloriously, and faith hath already walked therein and gazed upon it. The apparel of our glory is in heaven, but faith hath already put it on. Our spiritual riches and possessions are there, and our faith receiveth therefrom and giveth away. Our true city is in heaven, and faith henceforth dwelleth therein.

Our race, and family, and parents are in that country, and faith speaketh with them, and is in conversation with them always. The table of our happiness is there set, and faith rejoiceth thereat continually. The spring of life from which we drink there floweth, and faith at all

times drinketh therefrom. The powers of life and ranks of light are in the country of life, and faith glorieth with them.

And why should I speak concerning things which, although they be glorious, are externals, and although they be mighty and worthy of wonder, have been newly constituted? If they are remote from us now by reason of their hiddenness, yet are we about to draw nigh unto them when we have become [beings] of the spirit according to the ordering of their country. And what shall we say concerning these things? Wherever is the self-existent Nature of God, Who is remote and afar off from everything, He is near to faith; and however remote He may be He is not remote from it; and however far off He may be He is not far off from it; and although He be away beyond everything [p. 41] yet is He near to faith; and although He be within all rational things and inarticulate things, and in things which have life and in things which feel not, wherever He may be, there is faith with Him. For this is the nature of the vision of faith; what cannot be seen it seeth; what cannot be known it kopweth; what cannot be perceived it perceiveth; and what is illimitably afar off it seeth and becometh nigh thereunto. And however minute, and concealed, and hidden, and spiritual, and exalted, and unutterable be that natural thing which faith seeketh to see, the more triumphant is its vision of it.

Now on those things which are very great faith is wont to seize and, show her [power] of investigation, for it is accounted by her a disgrace to remain with small things, and to be held back to created things, and therefore she passeth through everything and is detained by nothing, except by the Creator. The capacity of creatures is not able to bear and to grasp the power of faith, for not one of them can believe therein, and if it believeth therein [it thinketh] that faith is a created thing, and not that it is self-existent; now the trial thereof can only be made in God; for it casteth everything away and setteth all natural things upon one side, and doth itself draw nigh to the Creator. For faith mak-eth to pass away the things which now exist, and it bringeth on those which are about to come into existence. Faith is the tongue of God, and faith is the command of the Creator. Faith commandeth, and like God it is obeyed in every thing; [p. 42] it beckoneth, and all creation respondeth to it. And the power of God is the power of faith, because the power of faith is derived from God. Faith is the mistress of created things, and as a mistress who giveth orders to her handmaids and is obeyed by them, even so faith commandeth all creation, and it obeyeth her.

And it is a marvellous thing that not only are created things obedient unto faith, but even the Creator Himself resisteth not her will; whatsoever she seeketh she receiveth, and whatsoever she asketh from Him He giveth to her, and [when] she calleth to Him He answereth her.

The door of the Giver is opened to the petitions of faith, even as He said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask, not being doubtful, ye shall receive." In the house of God faith giveth her commands like a mistress of wealth and a ruler of possessions. The mystery of faith is a wonderful and exalted thing, and no man is able to fathom its mystery; and it is so great that it is a place of habitation for God. Faith is that which is not a name only, nor is it even voice or speech;

but it is that which sheweth itself by the true examination of the soul, and by the sure and certain stability of the thoughts, and it denieth not itself, but in this respect also it is to be compared with God, concerning Whom Paul saith, "He cannot deny Himself." Thus also is it with the faith which denieth not itself, which bringeth not doubt upon itself, upon which no suspicion falleth, and whose power fear reacheth not. Everything that it wisheth, it doeth, and whatsoever it seeketh is given unto it.

[p. 43] The man who would draw nigh unto God is bound to lay hold upon faith in his soul, for faith hath no thoughts which dissolve one the other, neither hath it opinions which annul each other. Faith retracteth not what it doeth and sayeth, and it blameth not itself when once it hath spoken and asked for what it desireth. And as in God there can be no repentance concerning anything which He doeth and speaketh, even so there ariseth no repentance in faith concerning whatsoever it doeth, so that in this respect it is to be likened unto God. Faith is a command, and its command ruleth; it prayeth with confidence, and according to its confidence its prayer is straightway perfected into works. There are instances in which faith doth not even offer up prayer and then give a command concerning something; but it speaketh with authority like unto God. And as there is nothing which is able to resist the command of God, so also can nothing resist the command of faith. There are instances in which faith prayeth and in which it revealeth itself in its prayer; and there are instances in which while it prayeth not it giveth the command authoritatively, and it is answered. Elijah did not pray before Ahab and then was heard, but the faith which was in him gave the command authoritatively, and what he commanded immediately stood firm.

And his word had more power over all natures and created things than the command of a king concerning the provinces of his dominion. "As the Lord, the mighty One, liveth, before Whom I stand this day, there shall not be rain or dew these three years until I speak. It is not written that he prayed [first], and then spake, but immediately creation heard his word it bowed itself under the nod of his command. [p. 44] All things hearkened unto the command of a mortal man as if it had been the word of God. The clouds were obedient unto him, he called the earth and it answered him, he commanded the air, and it did not appear in its variable forms. All creation became a submissive handmaid before the word of Elijah's faith, and, although disturbed by the command which her mistress had spoken to her, [nevertheless] ministered thereunto.

And in another place, concerning the captains of the hosts who went up to bring him down with the others who were with them, it is written that he commanded and spake with Godlike authority, and the fire of God came down from heaven and burnt them all up. "If I be a prophet, as thou sayest, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and the fifty who are with thee," and straightway and without delay, the fire descended from heaven upon the unclean, and it burnt into them as it came down, and to the word of the prophet there was actual fulfilment. Now in other places it is written that faith prayed and was afterwards heard, according to that which is written, "And he bowed himself, and put his face between his knees, and he sent his disciple to look by the way of the sea". And again

when he raised the widow's son, he prayed, and prostrated himself, and then raised him. And in this prayer also faith made its appearance. For if he had not believed that he could raise him, he would not have taken the boy from his mother, and have carried him up [to his chamber] and have cast him upon the bed. And again also he commanded his disciple [p. 45] with authority, saying, "Ask whatsoever thou wishest, and I will give it to thee before I am taken from thee;" and according to what the disciple asked and the master commanded, the Spirit ministered in very deed, and bestowed the gift upon Elisha.

Now when he was offering up sacrifices on Mount Carmel in the sight of Ahab and of all Israel, "Answer me, Lord, answer me, Lord," he cried out, "that all this people may know that thou art the Lord, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done everything by Thy command; and until he had prayed he was not answered and no fire came down. And the reason why in one case they prayed, and in another gave commands with authority is manifest; in the one their feebleness was apparent, and in the other the power of God towards them was revealed. For while they were praying and making entreaty they appeared like the feeble children of men; but while they were giving commands and being obeyed without prayer, it was recognized that it was the power of God which was with their command. In the one place they spoke like children of men, and in the other like the servants of God, that is to say like gods of flesh, for the faith which was in them made them heavenly gods. And in this respect also they are to be compared to Christ God, who in some cases wrought things like a Being of power, and in others He [first] entreated and afterwards worked. He did not raise Lazarus until He had prayed;

He did not bless the bread and distribute it to the multitudes until He had looked up to heaven;and He did not give the command for the ears of the deaf man to be opened until He had spit, and laid His fingers upon his ears, [p. 46] and looked up to heaven.Others, however, He healed by a command of power, without either looking up to heaven or asking His Father. For by a command of power He raised up the young man, the son of the widow; with a word He called to the daughter of the chief of the congregation and straightway she stood up; He commanded the sea and it was silent, and the wind and it was stilled; He spake only, "Fill the water pots with water and draw out and bear to the governor of the feast," and created matter delayed not [to do] His will. "I say unto thee," He spake to the dumb spirit, and immediately it departed from the man. "I will, be thou clean," He spake to the leper, and as He willed, straightway the leprosy fled from his body.

For in this manner Jesus also wrought marvellous things, so that He might also bring Himself down to those whom, by His grace, He called, His "brethren"; and that it might not be grievous unto them that they were not answered until they had prayed He humbled Himself and prayed, and was afterwards answered. For the Lord took upon Himself equality with His servants in order that that which is written might be fulfilled, "In everything it was meet that He should be like unto His brethren." He gave unto them dominion that they might speak with authority, and be answered, so that by this they might be known to be the servants of God; and He gave boldness to faith that it might do everything that it wished.

Thus also with power did Joshua, the son of Nun, command the sun and the moon, and they were restrained, [p. 47] and each of them stood still in its course. Joshua stretched out his hand and spake with the power of faith, saying, "Thou sun, tarry in Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon;" and the sun was restrained, and the moon stood until the people had taken vengeance upon its enemies.

And why should I speak concerning the prophets [only] in the case of a nation in the whole of which—together with women and children—faith showed forth such mighty triumphs as these? For faith, as it had-been commanded, cried out, and the walls [of Jericho] were not able to stand against its voice. In every place faith manifested such triumphs as these, and it worked marvellous things in all the Holy Books. He that hath perceived the power of faith, and hath had experience thereof in very deed, knoweth that it wrought these things, and he believeth also that it doeth [still] such things as these.

Therefore, O thou who wishest to become a disciple of God, do thou also get faith, the mistress of all possessions. Let this thing be to thee the beginning of thy instruction, and lay it as the foundation of the building of thy tower, in such a way that if it were to seize the height of heaven it would not fall, for the edifice of faith is its foundation, which cannot be shaken by waves and winds. And Jesus also set this faith [as] a foundation by the hand of Simon, and as our Lord made it the beginning, so also is it meet that the disciple, who would draw nigh to discipleship in systematic order, should first of all begin with it. Faith Jesus made the foundation of the whole Church, do thou also lay the foundation for thine own rule and manner of life therewith. He built thereupon excellent rules of life and conduct for the whole world, and do thou [p. 48] build upon it thine own triumphs and order of life. He laid it out as a foundation for all the generations of the world after His coming, and do thou make it the beginning of thy life which is in God. See then how great faith is, in that it is sufficient to bear all children of men!

And Jesus also made faith the foundation of the edifice of the Church because He saw aforetime its invincible might, its unconquerable assurance, its never-diminishing strength, its irreproachable triumph, its power which cannot be overthrown, its unenfeebled strength, its irresistible command, its decree of judgment which never turneth back, its never-failing word, and its dominion which can never fall into contempt. This faith, the mistress of triumphant deeds, did Jesus make the foundation of the Church, and the beginning of the building of His holy Body, that He might teach all men to begin therewith, and that the disciple might make it the foundation of all his rule and conduct of life. It was not set by Him to be the foundation of the Church to show its power only, but also to teach every man who might wish to begin to build the new edifice of his discipleship to make it the beginning [thereof], and in all other parts of the building it will support and raise up the mansions of the virtues. For not one fine stone can go up to the building of this tower, unless faith carrieth it up, and there is no life in any of the limbs of good deeds [p. 49] unless the life of faith be in them. And as, without the life of the soul, all the members of the body are dead, so without the life of faith all the deeds and acts of righteousness are dead.

And as the members live through the soul so do works live through faith. And as although the members of the body may be healthy and sound, yet so long as the soul is not m them they are useless, and their beauty and healthiness profit them nothing, so although a man may be sound in the running [of the race] of righteousness, and work strenuously in his rule and conduct of life, as long as faith be not in the members of his works, his service is in vain. And as all the members receive feeling from the life of the soul, for through the life thereof each one of them moveth in the ordering of its nature, and in the service which appertaineth thereto—the eye to see, the ear to hear, the palate to taste, the nostrils to draw breath, the hand to touch, the feet to walk—and the whole body moveth and worketh, and trembleth with the movements of life in every form through the service of all its members, so also in this manner are the members of the works of righteousness, and as long as the life of faith be not in them they are dead and useless.

For fasting is not fasting if faith be not therewith, and alms are accounted nothing if they be not given in faith; [p. 50] neither is loving-kindness anything if faith be not therewith. The life of the Nazarite and ascetic is nothing unless faith be mingled therewith, and humility and subjection are nothing unless faith supporteth them, and painful seclusion is nothing if faith be not therewith; for the blessing of faith is not mingled therein, neither is it accounted a blessing, and the name of righteousness which is not mingled with faith perisheth, and its labours are in vain. For as the shadow of the body is not called the body, and as the shadow of the hand or foot is not called by the name of one of the members, so also the body of righteousness in which there existeth not the life of faith cannot be called the body, nor can fasting be called fasting, or self-denial and asceticism be called by the names of true members. Without faith they all are a shadow and a dead body; and they cannot be spoken of as a true body, for they stand in suspicion, and they toil in a strange vineyard. And faith is the hedge [which protecteth] the plants of the commandments of Christ, and every plant which is found inside this hedge belongeth to Christ, and is planted in His vineyard, and those plants which are outside this hedge are called wild plants, which either bear no fruit at all, or if they bear any, the wild beast trampleth down and the birds of the air destroy it; and if it come to pass that they remain they are parched, and the sweetness of food is not in them.

This is the vineyard [p. 51] for which the master of the house hired labourers, and every one whom he saw standing outside he accounted idle, and persuaded him to work in his vineyard. By faith the good things which have been discovered may be preserved, and by faith those things which are not [in us] may be acquired. For faith gathereth treasure together, and preserveth riches; it layeth up wealth and, preserveth it. Faith is the foundation and the architect, and faith is laid out under the structure of the building, and it mounteth up therewith. Faith formeth the members, and faith maketh them to live. Faith planteth the plants of the spirit, and faith tilleth the plants of the spirit. Faith is the hedge [round about] the plants, and faith is the fountain which watereth them. Faith giveth birth, and faith is the nurse. Faith is the body, and faith is the soul which is in the body. Faith scattereth seed,

and faith reapeth and gathereth in the crops. Faith planteth the trees, and faith plucketh and carrieth in the fruit thereof. Faith is everything, for faith is sufficient to be everything.

Therefore, O disciple, lay hold upon this faith, and in this sure thing be strong and slacken not; and whatsoever thou believest, ask and thou shalt receive [it] from Christ Who hath promised to give it, to Whom, and to His Father, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Here endeth the Second Discourse, which is on Faith. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in square brackets refer to the pages of volume 1, the Syriac text.]

Discourse 3 -- On Faith

[P. 52] THE THIRD DISCOURSE----ON FAITH.

And again come, O disciple, and hearken unto the triumphs of faith which are much to be desired. Come and incline thine ear to the voice of thy mother who giveth thee life by the sweet music of her voice. Come and suck the sweet milk of doctrine from the living breast of the mother who bore thee. Come and stand by the fountain which watereth nations and tribes, for whosoever drinketh not from her his thirst is not quenched, Come and sit at the table which is full of the food of life, for whosoever feedeth not therefrom hath no life in his life. Come and incline thine ear and hear; come, open thine eyes and see the wonderful things which have been manifested by faith. Come, hew out for thyself new eyes; come, establish for thyself secret ears; to hear secret things thou art invited, therefore secret ears are necessary for thee; and to see spiritual things thou art called, therefore eyes of the spirit are useful for thee. Come, look upon thyself [as] something which thou art not, and renew thyself before thou shalt be made new. The Creator hath made thee a new creation, and faith hath helped in the making of thee; thou hast become a change of wonder and a construction of heaven, and faith was with Him when He established thee.

[p. 53] For in the beginning when He created the world and all that therein is, and when He was establishing things, wisdom worked with Him, even as Solomon saith, "The Lord by His wisdom laid the foundations of the earth, and He constructed the heavens by His undertanding; and by His knowledge were the depths broken up, and the clouds distilled water. And again wisdom saith, "When He constructed the heaven I was with Him, and when He made a circle upon the face of the deep, and when He made firm the clouds from above, and when the fountains of the depths became strong". Now wisdom was with God in His primaeval works, but in this second creation faith is with Him; and in this second giving of birth He hath taken to Himself faith as a helpmeet. In everything faith cleaveth to God, and without it to-day He worketh no new things. It were an easy thing for Him to give thee birth from water and spirit without it, but until it is satisfied He doth not give thee new birth. He is able to make thee a new creature, and from being old to make thee new, but until He receiveth from thee faith [as] a pledge He neither changeth thee nor maketh thee a new creature.

From him that is baptized faith is required, and then he receiveth treasure from the water; but without faith everything is common. When faith hath come the most contemptible things appear glorious. Without faith baptism is water [only], and without faith the life-giving Mysteries are bread and wine [only]; and the old man appeareth as he is if it be not the eye of faith that seeth him. The Mysteries are common things, and marvellous things are to be despised [p. 54] if it be not the eye of faith which seeth them. The power of faith cannot be experienced by the test of words, but it must be felt in and from itself. Faith cannot be perfected by the hearing of the ear, but it must be made certain from within by the power of the soul. The ear only receiveth the report of faith, but the substance of faith is born from the mind. The pure understanding is a fountain which floweth with faith and a simple mind in which there is nothing else. For the mind of faith is single, and there is nothing therein which maketh contest against its neighbour. Faith regardeth secretly, and peereth, and looketh fixedly beyond unto the power which is buried in things.

Now faith is more deeply seated within than knowledge, for that which knowledge seeth not by the faith which is therein is made manifest. Knowledge is not able to perform the work of faith, and when knowledge hath gone forth faith entereth in her place. For in respect of created things knowledge is external, but faith is within the thing itself. Knowledge investigateth the wisdom which is hidden deeply in creation, and faith looketh steadfastly at the hidden things of the Mysteries. Knowledge looketh through and through into the force which [is in] edible things and fruit, and in all the food which is given to the body, but faith looketh through and through into the power which is hidden in the life-giving Mysteries, which are the food of the soul. However refined knowledge may make itself it burroweth among corporeal things, and in the visible world it goeth round about and wandereth; but faith [p. 55] goeth not about among created things, and the power of created things is unable to receive it to dwell in them.

The tongue cannot taste the power of faith, and speech is unable either to declare its beauties or to describe and depict its similitudes. Its might cannot be experienced by the voice, neither can it be known by the speech, nor by the portion of the mind which turneth to the body; but within the place of the hidden and spiritual holy of holies of the understanding are the mysteries of faith made manifest, and secret things revealed. For that part which is within us and is more glorious than all [the other] parts of man, that part alone is able to perceive faith; now the works of faith are visible from without, and its words may be heard with the ears. And its power must be experienced in the understanding, for even if thou seest the dead rise, or the eyes of the blind opened, or the devils going forth [from a man], still thou hast not yet seen the power of faith. For how canst thou see the power of faith in a body which riseth, for behold it also maketh the soul alive from the dead? And how canst thou experience its power in the healing of the eyes of the body, for behold it also createth eyes for spiritual natures? And how canst thou see its power in the devils going forth, for behold it also driveth out of the soul natural thoughts?

To those who are without the power of faith faith appeareth in external things, but man himself must experience it by the power of the soul. To the understanding faith giveth the experience of itself by nothing that is alien, but without the intervention of any alien thing faith lighteth upon it, and maketh it to experience [p. 56] its power. To the soul within signs from without can never become means for the experiencing of faith, but faith itself dwelleth therein and maketh it glad, and enlighteneth and maketh its thoughts to rejoice; it maketh the light of its nature to rise within it, and the soul admireth the new light which is shed upon it. For until faith maketh to turn and concentrateth the sight of the soul from every place it showeth not the soul the beauty of its nature, because the soul is unable to see it while its vision is distracted by other things. The natural vision of the soul becometh enfeebled when it is divided, and it looketh outside itself, and it becometh incapable of looking fixedly at the clear light of faith.

Now to the soul which becometh unto it a pure dwelling-place faith giveth such power that it doth not look upon things as they are, but as it wisheth to see them. For behold thou bearest upon thy hands the live coal of the Mysteries, which in their nature are common bread, but faith seeth therein the body of the Only One. The eye of faith seeth not as the eye of the body, but faith compelled! the vision of the body to see what is invisible to it. For the body seeth bread, and wine, and oil, and water, but faith compelleth it to see with its vision spiritually that which corporeally cannot be seen, that is to say, instead of bread we eat the Body, and instead of wine we drink the Blood, and instead of water we see the baptism of the Spirit, and instead of oil the power of Christ. [p. 57] And faith possesseth the power of God, and the will and dominion of God are in it, and it gathereth together excellent things wheresoever it wisheth. Faith draweth nigh to the bones of the saints, and instead of dead men it looketh at them as living men, and speaketh with them as with the living, and entreateth them concerning its needs.

For faith revealeth itself to the dead body in order that what it lacketh it may receive from the Giver of requests, and faith is persuaded that through this dead body it will receive this gift, without considering that the dead body is without life, and silent, without speech, and still without voice, and. incapable of movement, and a stranger to all the movements of nature. And faith doth not entreat the dead body to be a mediator by these things, for it knoweth that as concerns the things of its nature the dead body is insufficient in death, even as it was in life, to be a mediator for it with the Creator for this creation. But inasmuch as the dead body is superior to nature, and some of the power of Christ hath been mingled in the saints, and they also possess it, even though they are laid in the tomb, upon this faith looketh, and it entreateth the dead as if they were living, and speaketh unto those who are silent as unto those who have the power of speech.

And the eye of faith putteth off the sight of all things that are visible, and putteth on the hidden sight of all spiritual things, and in every thing which is within the body it moveth. For man standeth in one place but looketh steadfastly at another; he sojourneth in the lower world of the body but dwelleth by faith in the world above. Faith heareth concerning the

resurrection of the dead, and concerning the renewing of human bodies, [p. 58] and it considereth that they have already risen and have been made new creatures. Faith hath received the promise concerning the world of life, and of the kingdom of light and of the countries of glory, and of spiritual delights, and of the food of the blessed, and of the interpretation of the Mysteries, and of becoming in the form of the angels, and having heard of these things they are accounted sure by it. And faith is an intermediary between the things which are past and the things which are to come, for of all those things which took place before us, and those which are about to take place after us, we receive their teaching by faith, according to what is said by Paul, "By faith we understand that the worlds have been constructed by the word of God, and that out of the things which are unseen these things which are seen have come into being."

If man possesseth not faith he is able to make all these things which are written in the Holy Books a lie, and he is able to say of all hidden things which most truly exist, that they exist not; and inasmuch as they are invisible there is not rebuke near at hand for [his] doubt; but faith needeth not a testimony whereby it may be certain of what it heareth. To knowledge proofs and testimonies are necessary, and to him that desireth first of all to see and to feel and then to be certain; but faith ariseth not from wonderful things. As God hath no need to receive persuasion by mighty deeds and wonders concerning the things which are about to come into existence from Him, to Whose knowledge aforetime everything is manifest and revealed, so neither [p. 59] doth faith need wonders; for how can it be in need of that thing which it doeth? For behold, mighty deeds, and signs, and wonders and all such like things come into existence by faith; how then doth it need the testimony of that thing which it itself doeth to be certain of hidden things? As God needeth not the [testimony of] His works, in the same manner faith needeth not the [testimony of] the wonderful things which are wrought by it. For faith needeth nothing, neither sight, nor feeling, nor signs and wonders, nor arguments and testimonies, but only the hearing of the word of God, and when it knoweth that it is God Who speaketh, straightway it receiveth it and doubteth not.

And none of the righteous pleased God without faith, even as the teaching of Paul testifieth, who, beginning with Abel, repeated all [their names] one after the other coming down unto the manifestation of Christ, and he showed that they all pleased God by faith. And setting a definite limit for all disciples he said, "Without faith man cannot please God; and again he said, "In faith all these died, and did not "receive their promises," for God considered aforetime help for us that they might not be perfected without us. And for their whole lives, according to the word of Christ, and until their departure [from this world] faith clave to them; by it they did mighty deeds while they were in the world, and by it they hoped and expected [p. 60] to receive the promises which were about to be, and to receive what had been promised to them for [the sake of] which they went forth after His word. Faith is the ground which receiveth the seed of the word of God, and as the seed of the husbandman is empty of produce if it hath no field [in which to be sown], so also is the word of God, as far as we are concerned, barren of spiritual advantages if the ground of faith receive it not. And

as the eye of the body [receiveth] the sun, even so doth the sight of faith receive the spiritual light of the commandments of Christ.

And as by the light of the sun, which maketh everything manifest, nothing can be seen unless the eye receiveth it, so also the commandment of God, Who is the Maker of everything, is not made certain to us without faith. The sun is a luminous body by nature, and the word of God is mighty when it giveth the command; but as the light of the sun's nature is diminished in power in respect of blind eyes, and maketh nothing visible, so also in the soul in which there is no faith is the commandment of God esteemed a feeble thing.

Faith is the eye of discernment which looketh at everything, and it regardeth [a thing] as it is; and because the things which are visible are too small for its vision, it forsaketh them and looketh at those which are invisible, and it regardeth those things which are above nature, and beyond feeling, and is made known unto them. By faith also a name was established for us, because it gave us birth from error to the knowledge of God, [p. 61] and for this reason every one, who would draw nigh to Christ and would become a disciple of His Gospel, taketh his name from faith, and is called Faithful one; for faith gave us birth and is our mother, and it is good that we should receive our name from her who gave us birth. And it is a wonderful thing unto what limit hath arrived the majesty of faith. For as the children of men also are called by the name of God and of His Christ, so also are we called godly men after the name of God, and Christians after the name of Christ, and we are named faithful after the name of Faith. This is the name which hath separated us from all false beliefs, and hath made us strangers to all doctrines of error. For no man is called faithful except him that hath been born of true faith, and she is his mother and nurse, because our whole doctrine looketh at the hope of those things which are to come, and desireth the expectation of invisible things; and the things of which we have become disciples are neither manifest nor known unto these corporeal feelings. For these reasons it is good that we have been "faithful," for the hope of all our good things standeth in faith, and if faith be removed from the way not one of these things which we have is to be believed.

For behold, whether it be Mysteries which are in this world, or the good things beyond which are promised to us, it is faith which graspeth them and preserveth them. Now if a man were to look with the eye of the body and without faith upon all the mysteries of the service of the Church, he would consider them common and contemptible, while those which took their origin in [this] world would appear to be mightier [p. 62] and more magnificent than our own. For behold with us is poverty, but with the world there are riches; with us there is disgrace, but with it glory; with us there is humility, but with it pride; with us there is inferiority, but with it dominion; with us there is indigence, but with it possessions; with us there is hunger, but with it satiety; with us there is want, but with it abundance; with us there are afflictions, but with it pleasures; with us there is subjection, but with it command; with us there is the "narrow way," but with it the broad path; with us is the single garment which is limited by command, but with it are various kinds of fine raiment and apparel; with us is the order which restraineth us from our daily food, but with it are the treasures

which are collected for generations and years; with us is the obligation to appear in neglect and contempt, but with it the appearance of pride and honour.

All these things, and those which are like unto them, appear glorious to the world, and better in every respect than those which we have; but if we remove from the midst faith which is our true riches, even as our teacher Paul also testified concerning this in his word, "If in this life [only] we have hope in Christ, "of all men we are the most miserable. And again in another place he saith, "We are fools for Christ's sake, and sick, and despised, and dishonoured, and we have nothing. And while in this world in which we live we possess nothing, we hold everything in that which is ours, also according to the words of the Apostle, "As having nothing, yet possessing all things; and to speak briefly, no one thing of ours [p. 63] can be seen in this life without the eye of faith which alone can see it. For in this world our riches are not seen, nor our power, nor the various grades of our labour, nor our honours, nor our enjoyments, nor our kingdom, nor the mansions of pleasures, nor the sealed and hidden happiness which is laid up for us, nor the city of our habitation [which is] heaven, nor Zion the country of life which thirsteth and desireth to receive her children, nor our stored up treasures, nor the riches of our heavenly possessions, nor our freedom which is above all subjection, nor the fulness of all the good things which we are about to receive.

For all these things of ours are hidden in this life, and they cannot be seen by corporeal beings. Believing men by faith only can perceive them, and they look upon everything which is not seen, and they hear those voices which are not audible to the ear of the body, and they feel that which cannot be felt with the hand of the body, and they taste those things which cannot be tasted by the palate of the mouth, because inside, beyond all bodily senses, the perception of the spiritual good things which are, promised to us is placed. And if we have no spiritual senses faith perceiveth with them even though they be not. Now if thou sayest, "Behold the mysteries which are here are glorious," yet see, for without faith their glory cannot be perceived. And everything which we have received from [this] world and of which we make use according to the tradition which hath come down to us, if we look at it with the eye of the world, it is of the world; but if we perceive it by the eye of faith, [p. 64] it is above the world. The temples of our houses of prayer are of the world because the buildings thereof are derived from the world and constructed [therein]; but they are spiritual things above the world, because they are types of that Church of the firstborn, whose [names] are inscribed in heaven, which is Jerusalem the free, the mother of us all.

And all the altars and all the other vessels of the service of the Mysteries, and everything with which we perform the Mysteries which have been delivered to us, according to natural origin are of the world; but by reason of the greatness of those things which are administered in them they are exalted and most high, and are esteemed by us as being above nature, for they are the likeness of the living and spiritual powers which are in heaven, in which the service of the hidden Mysteries of God and of His will are perfected. And again those holy Mysteries which are performed by us for the redemption of our life are taken first of all from the world, for the bread and the wine which goeth up on the spiritual altar is of the world;

but when the altar receiveth them, as the womb received the Word, it maketh them to be above the world, and to be the Body and living Blood of God Who is above the world. And thus also is it with the water which is [mixed] with the oil, with which the mystery of our baptism is performed, for both are taken from this world; but when the time hath arrived that those who are called to Grace should be born by and from them, the baptism of common oil and water becometh the womb and power which give birth to spiritual beings.

For the dead sinner who hath gone down to baptism cometh up alive, [p. 65] even as Christ [rose] from the grave on the third day; but instead of becoming alive on the third day like our Lord, the sinner is renewed by three baptisms in three names.

And as our Lord after His resurrection departed to a spiritual life from the corporeal life which [He led] before His crucifixion, so also the man, who hath been quickened into life by baptism as from the grave, walketh in a new life according to the doctrine of Paul. Now we bury our dead after the manner of all other men, and the external appearance of our method of sepulture and burial is in no way different from that of the heathen and the Jews; but we, in the hope of faith and in the expectation of the vivification of the dead, commit our dead to life and not to death, and according to our faith they are sent by us to heaven and not to hell. And the dead of those who err because the hope of faith is not found in them are sent to death and destruction.

The mysteries of believing men are great and exalted, if one will draw nigh unto them with the mind of faith. And because the eye of the body was too small for the sight of our mysteries, another eye, that of faith, was given to us, which is sufficient to look at them and to see them as they shall be, and not as they are; and the things which are remote and which have been promised to us it seeth as if they were near, and they are not accounted afar off by it.

Therefore must thou understand, O thou who wishest to become a disciple of Christ, that all our affairs are established by faith, and without faith neither can we be seen, nor the things which we have, nor those which come from us, nor those which are promised to be given, and they are as if they existed not. So then in the beginning [p. 66] of thy discipleship take to thyself faith, and go forth after God, for thou wilt not hear Him to keep His commandments unless thou dost first believe in Him. Now faith hath been planted and set in thee by the Creator, that thou mightest believe in Him by the faith which He placed in us. Turn not back then the power of faith, and by its means believe those things which are not; and instead of believing in these things which are fixed and abide for ever thou must believe in what is not fixed and in what remaineth not. For all the things which exist here in appearance pass away and are dissolved, according to the teaching of the Book; and all things which are promised and are about to come into being for the true believers, abide for ever, and they neither pass away nor are destroyed. Believe not then with that faith which is in thee in what passeth away, and deem it not an abiding thing, but thou shalt make use of faith in its fitting order, and shalt believe by it in spiritual things.

For behold those who worship idols, and who consider stones, and blocks of wood, and all the natural substances of creation to be gods, also have faith within them, but they have changed its fair order, and instead of believing by it in God have believed in made idols, and have called them gods erringly, since they are not [gods]. For as long as faith believeth certainly in the things which are fitting thereunto it is faith; but if it believeth other things which are contrary, and thinketh them to be what they are not, it is thenceforth not faith [p. 67] but error. And it was for this reason that God set faith in thy nature, that thou mightest believe only on Him, and through Him upon what He wisheth thee to believe and nothing else. For in that manner in which the recognition of God is placed within us naturally, even as the blessed Paul said, "The notion of God is manifest in them, for God hath revealed it in them," is faith also naturally implanted in all our thoughts. But as the notion of God was fixed in them, although they worshipped not His nature, and honoured not His Being, yet they worshipped His name, and paid honour [to it] in all creation, because of natural faith, so we with the faith which is placed in us believe everything, and whithersoever our desire wisheth thither it turneth our faith, and it directeth the natural movements which are in us so that we may see them.

If our desire seeketh in faith to believe, it believeth in God, and if it wisheth in faith, it believeth certainly in idols and devils; and if it seeketh the world of life it believeth that it will abide for ever, and for it it lusteth and seeketh eagerly; but if it desireth this world which shall be dissolved it believeth like a true believer, and it loveth it and runneth after it. For desire is the governor of faith, as it is also of all the other natural movements which are in us, and it is the director of everything, whether of external feelings or internal thoughts. [p. 68] And as eyes are given to us to see the beauties of creation, and ears to hear the divine commandments, and hands that they may be stretched out to good things, and feet to run to the trysting-places of excellent things----now it is the will which changeth them to the opposite, and which maketh the limbs and senses do wicked and hateful things instead of the good deeds for which they were created----so also the faith which is placed in our nature, by which we believe in God and make sure of His spiritual promises, hath reversed the power of the will, and instead of God it believeth in devils therewith, and instead of spiritual things it maketh sure of corporeal things, and instead of the things which are invisible the things here which are visible, and instead of the things which do not pass away the things here which shall be dissolved.

Do thou then, O disciple, make use of faith in its fair order, and turn it not into error; and believe by it in God and in His promises, and believe not in the world and in its delights therewith. Everything which is seen is temporal, and everything which is unseen is eternal, even as Paul also taught; believe then in God, and hope that everlasting blessing will be given to thee by Him, and let faith be the beginning of the way of thy instruction. If thou believest not in these things which are invisible thou canst not forsake the things which are visible; and if thou believest not that the promise of Christ is sure and also in the blessings which were promised by Him to all those who should go forth after His Gospel, thou wilt not forsake that of which thou hast possession, and wilt not run after the good things which He

promised to thee. [p. 69] "Unless a man deny his father, and his mother, and his brothers, and his sisters, and the whole world, and also himself, he cannot be My disciple; hear this voice, O disciple, and go forth from the world, and this Gospel which promiseth spiritual blessings alone can lead thee away from the life and conduct and habits of [this] world.

Thou hast heard this voice, believe it then, and of it be a disciple and of nothing else, and let nothing else be the cause of thy going forth from the world, otherwise thy going forth will not prosper. For as is the first cause, so also happeneth it with the rest of the matters which follow after it. Now many have, for sundry and divers reasons, forsaken the life of the world, and have drawn nigh to the discipleship of Christ, but not by reason of the one true cause, and in consequence their discipleship hath not prospered. And they have become like sick members in the healthy body of the discipleship of Christ, and they also prevent healthy members from the performance of the service of the spirit and from the doing of all the commands of our Lord; it would have been better had they remained in the world and not made an exhibition of slackness in the land of spiritual beings. The whole life and conduct of the world is sick and infirm in respect of spiritual things, but the body of the discipleship of Christ is sound and healthy. And whosoever would cut off his own members from that sick body, and come to be absorbed in this living body, [p. 70] it is the love of the Christian life and rule alone which can bring him into union with [this] body.

And it is not meet that there should be [any] other cause for his drawing nigh thereto, as it is in the case of many men, for by compulsion, and from obligation, and from the forcing of parents, and by the irritation of a woman, and from many other unsound reasons, many men are driven perforce to come and be disciples to Christ. And when they have come they are only [His disciples] in name, while in truth they belong to the world; to the Christian life [they belong] falsely and according to the sight of the eye only, and to the world in thought and deed; to the Christian life for custom's sake only, and to the world for their will's sake; to the Christian life by forcible consent, and to the world by the intelligence of their own freewill. And to speak briefly, in the Christian life is their shadow, and in the world is their body; in the Christian life they exist in form and appearance only, and in the world in [their] true person, being made the cause of stumbling to themselves and also to their brethren. And they eat the bread of Christ by theft, and not by right; and although they are hired by Him they labour for another, and are not ashamed. When He calleth them, they obey another who is His opponent, and when any man taketh and bringeth them as his own property, they abuse His goodness, and despise His commandments.

And they are made a stumbling-block in the place of the building, and a vision of detriment in the region of excellent things, and an occasion of falling in the land of truth, and a form of iniquity among helpful appearances. And for those who are thus, it would have been better, according to the word of Christ [p. 71] if they had never been born, or if they were born that they had remained in the infirm country of the life of [this] world in which they were, and had not come to make others sick with themselves, or to make living limbs die, being themselves dead before God. Do thou then, O disciple of God, flee from such things as

these, and let faith itself alone be the cause of thy going forth from the world, that as thou hast laid the foundation, so also the whole building of thy works may ascend. For when thy works have received strength from thy faith which is [laid down] first, and which hath brought thee forth from the world, all things will be completed and preserved by faith in sound condition, and they will abide in integrity, and they will advance towards the secret eye of God, and will be completed and perfected by the exhortation of faith itself. Now so long as faith looketh upwards it travelleth over the path of Christian life and character readily, and it runneth the way of works with swiftness.

It is that eye of faith which, from the beginning, hath opened itself, and hath seen from afar the promises of Christ; take heed then that ye blind it not by any cause which lighteth upon thee when thou hast begun [to walk] in the path of thy journey, lest a stumbling-block come in thy way suddenly, and thou fall down in the path along which thou art walking. But as those who begin [to walk] in a material path walk along it to the end thereof with the gaze of those who begin, taking care that they shut not their eyes in the course of their journey and so obstruct the sight which guideth them, so also do thou, O disciple, who hast begun to travel upon the heavenly road, keep with thee until the end that sight [p. 72] which thou hast had from the beginning. So long as the eye of thy faith regardeth the things which are to come, so long will the labours of thy life and conduct be light upon thee, and thou wilt delight thyself in the afflictions of thy fair deeds, And as the foot is guarded from stumbling-blocks so long as thine eye is open to see, so will thy soul be remote and free from slothfulness so long as the sight of faith is whole, and it looketh upon and regardeth heavenly things. The soul from which the sight of faith is removed is either asleep or dead.

That soul which driveth away faith from it entirely is dead, and that soul which hath preserved to itself the name of faith, but whose eye is not at all times open to look upon spiritual things, is asleep, and it is sunk in the sleep of slothfulness. And although it worketh, it perceiveth not; and although it is justified, it knoweth not; and although it runneth, it is not conscious thereof. And as he that is asleep is not conscious of those things which exist by his side, so also the man whose eye of faith is shut cannot perceive the good things which are wrought by it; but like as a blind man is led by another, so also is he driven by the force of custom, or because he is unable to change the forms of the labours upon which he hath laid hold, he goeth on in the place in which he is. Now it befitteth not the disciple of Christ that his virtues should be established by the laws of the children of men, lest when the laws are abrogated, or [p. 73] those who have made them seek to change them, his blessings be also dispersed and scattered. He that hath laid down the conditions of the strife for us is not a man, and therefore it is not meet for us to keep the laws of the children of men in the contest of this strife, but only the will of Christ Who hath laid down the conditions of the strife.

This then is the beginning of thy going forth from the world, O thou that wouldst begin the journey of the way of heaven! And thou must cast away from thee by faith the garment of error of the mind which is bound to the things of [this] world, and which erreth and

considereth that which is not as if it were. Take heed then that thou becomest not changed in thy faith, remembering at all times the word of Paul, by which thou wilt increase thy faith, and cleanse thy thoughts from the filth of error, even as he said, "He that would draw nigh unto God is bound to believe that God is;" to Whom be glory for ever, Amen. Here endeth the Third Discourse, which is upon Faith. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 4 -- On Faith- First Discourse on Simplicity

[P. 74] THE FOURTH DISCOURSE: ON FAITH, AND HOW BY SIMPLICITY A MAN MAY RECEIVE THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST.

Our Lord hath given unto us in His Gospel an easy and simple beginning, [that is,] the true and certain faith which is stirred up naturally in the simple mind, so that by this faith we may be obedient unto Him, and keep His commandments, even as all the righteous men of early times who were called by God hearkened unto His word with simplicity, and by faith they made certain of His promises. Now by simplicity is not to be understood the simplicity of the world, I mean stupidity, but the singleness of one thought (or mind) which is simple to hear and judgeth not, and which accepteth and enquireth not, after the manner of a child receiving the words from his nurse, and like a child also who receiveth the instruction of books from his master without criticising, or asking questions [concerning] those things which are said to him. For as the capacity of the child is too little to investigate human learning, so also is the measure of our mind too little to be able to understand the. explanation of divine Mysteries. And therefore by faith and simplicity only can a man hear and receive, even as Abraham, who was called, went forth after [p. 75] God, and he was not a judge of the voice which [came] to him, and he was not held back by race and kinsfolk, nor by country and friends, nor by any of the many other human ties. Immediately he heard the voice and knew that it was of God, he despised everything and went forth to Him, and hearkened unto Him with simplicity. And he held Him to be certain and sure [in his mind] by faith, and by the natural simplicity which acteth not cunningly with evil things; and as a boy after his father did he run towards the voice of God, everything being despised in his eyes immediately he heard the word of God.

And there was in him also the knowledge and discretion of nature, but he shewed his discernment in that he [found it] right to hearken unto God, Who had called him, as a servant to his lord, and as a slave to his Creator. And also to that knowledge in which he was [placed] he did not give power to investigate and to enquire why and for what reason he had been called by God, "Go forth from thy country, and from thy kinsfolk, and come to the land which I will show thee." And God did not reveal to him what the country was, in order that

his faith might be the more victorious, and his simplicity appear; and while he thought that He was carrying him to the land of Canaan, God promised to shew him another land of life which is in heaven, even as Paul also testifieth, "He waited for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And again he said, "It is evident that they desired a country better than the land [p. 76] of Canaan, which is heaven." And for this reason God teacheth us clearly that it was not that material land of promise which God promised to shew to Abraham. After He had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees He made him dwell in Harran, and He did not carry him to the land of Canaan immediately after his coming forth. And again, that Abraham might not think that he heard the report of a reward, and therefore go forth after the voice of God, He did not make known to him at the beginning the name of the country to which He would bring him.

Look then, O disciple, upon this coming forth, and let thy coming forth be like unto it, and be not backward in following the living voice of Christ, Who hath called thee. For as in that case it called to Abraham only, so in this He calleth every one He pleaseth by His Gospel, and inviteth [them] to go forth after Him. For in that He said, "Whosoever wisheth to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me," He shewed a universal calling to all the children of men. And instead of choosing one person, Abraham, as He did at that time, He now inviteth every man to be like unto Abraham. And again in the case of the holy Apostles, He renewed that [call] of Abraham; and observe their faith also, that it was like unto the faith of Abraham; for as Abraham heard immediately he was called, so also immediately He called the Apostles, they heard and went forth after Him. "He saw them casting nets into the sea, and He called them, and straightway they forsook their nets [p. 77] and their father, and went after Him; and before they had heard from Him [the words], "If a man forsake not his father and mother, and everything that he hath, and cometh after me, he cannot be My disciple," they forsook everything and went after Jesus. For He did not propound for the disciples lengthy doctrine, but only the hearing of the word of faith;

and because the faith which was in them was living, immediately it received the living word it became obedient unto life, and they ran thereafter straightway, and delayed not. Now in this they show themselves to have been disciples before they were called. For the custom of faith which is mingled with simplicity is that it receiveth not doctrine (or instruction) by much persuasion, but as the sound and healthy eye receiveth not the ray which is sent therein by contrivances and cunning inventions----but immediately that it is opened it looketh with strength upon the light, because its natural sight is sound----so also the eye of faith, which is set in the pupil of simplicity, immediately it heareth the voice of God recogniseth it, and there riseth in it the light of His Word. And joyfully it draweth towards Him and receiveth Him, even as our Lord said in His Gospel, "My sheep hear My voice and come after Me."

Wherever natural faith is preserved in its original state, [that man], with whom this faith is preserved, is a sheep of the Shepherd. For thus is it written concerning Matthew, "Our Lord saw him [p. 78] sitting at the place of toll, and He called him, and straightway he

forsook his merchandise and all his possession, and went after Him. And concerning Philip also it is written that He said, "Come after Me," and straightway he went after Him. In this sincerity and simplicity then the Apostles went after the word of Christ, and the world was not able to impede them, nor human customs to hold them back, nor was any of those things which are esteemed of any value in [this] world able to impede those souls which had perceived God. Now there is nothing stronger in the world to the man who hath in him the life of faith than the word of God. He in whom the word is feeble because of the deadness of his soul, in him is the mighty word without power, and in him is the healthy doctrine of God diseased; for in whatsoever condition a man liveth, to that turneth every action of his life. Whosoever liveth to the world, to the world is directed all the service of his thoughts and senses, and whosoever liveth to God, to His mighty commandments turn his soul and all his motions;

for the burden of the love of earthly things no longer hangeth upon those who have been called, when once they are obedient to the voice which hath called them. For the fetters of the world are a weight upon the understanding and the thoughts, and whosoever is fettered therewith and is bound by them heareth the voice of the call of God with difficulty. Now the Apostles were not thus, nor were the righteous men and the Fathers of this type, but they hearkened like [p. 79] living men, and went forth like swift ones who were unfettered by anything. And who is able to fetter and impede that soul which perceiveth God? For it is open and ready that whensoever the light of the divine word cometh thereunto, it may find it prepared to receive it.

Our Lord also called Zacchaeus from the fig tree, and he came down immediately, and received Him into his house, for he was waiting to see Him, and to be His disciple, even before He called him. And it is a marvellous thing that though our Lord had neither spoken to him nor seen him in the flesh, yet he had believed in Him through the words of others; now the faith which was in him was preserved by the life and soundness of its nature. In that Zacchaeus heard the rumour concerning Him and believed, he shewed faith, and in that he promised to give half of his goods to the poor, and to restore fourfold that which he had exacted he shewed that the simplicity of faith had dawned in him. For if at that time the mind of Zacchaeus had not been filled with the simplicity which befitted faith, he would never have made this free and full promise to Jesus to spend and distribute in a short time what had taken him years to collect in [this] world; for what cunning hath gathered together simplicity maketh to flow away, and the things which have been collected by the schemes of artifice sincerity scattereth. And whatsoever fraud hath been able to acquire faith repudiateth, and crieth out that it existeth not, for God Himself only is the possession of faith, and it cannot be persuaded to possess [p. 80] anything else with Him. To faith all possessions are little, except that One everlasting Possession, which is God. And, moreover, for this reason faith is implanted in us, that it may find and possess God only, and that everything which is beyond may [be accounted] a loss.

Now the Holy Scriptures have shown us that with this mind a man should draw nigh to God in faith and simplicity. And for this reason Adam and Eve, so long as they lived in simplicity, and so long as the faith which was in them had not been made gross through corporeal passions, immediately they heard the command of God they received it, and kept it. For God said to Adam, "Thou shalt not eat; and if thou eatest, thou shalt die; but if thou keepest the command I will give thee everlasting life. And by faith Adam received [the command], and kept [it], and [in] his simplicity he did not judge the command, [saying], "Why hath He withheld from us one tree, and given us power over all the others? And He hath promised to give me life if I keep the command; these things because of his simplicity he neither judged nor sought to inquire into. Now when the counsel of the Enemy came and found simplicity, it taught craft and cunning, and sowed in that one simple thought, another thought which was its opposite, in order that he who was one man, and was wholly and entirely sincere in his simplicity, might be divided into two thoughts----the willing and the unwilling, the judging and the being judged, and the being in doubt whether he would do [the command] or not [p. 81]----and the counsel which the Enemy brought to that childlike and simple man made him to be a judge of God's command to him.

Now Adam did not prosper in his judgment because it had destroyed his simplicity, for he stupidly thought it meet to listen to an enemy rather than to a friend, and to one who killed rather than to one who could make alive, and to one who taught wickednesses rather than to one who had been to them a teacher of good things. So long as they existed in their simplicity they hearkened unto the voice of God, but as soon as they wished to act cunningly they became receptacles of the counsel of the Calumniator; for cunning is at the side of Satan, and simplicity is with those who belong to Christ. The man who wisheth to be cunning and crafty cannot become a disciple of Christ, as His doctrine requireth. The mind which is full of cunning is at all times destroying and building up thoughts which are opposite [to one another]; it bindeth up and looseth, it believeth and denieth, at one time it deemeth a thing good, but at another it rejecteth it and chooseth another. The mind which is trained in cunning is a channel for confused opinions, and it remained not [long enough] in any one [of them] to believe it and to support itself thereupon; but simplicity is the opposite of cunning in every thing, even as its very name testifieth, for there are in it no thoughts which abrogate the others.

Simplicity hath received the name of being befitting to God, for we also call God "Simple" in the words of our confession of Him, because there are in Him neither structures nor parts of limbs, and thus also in our ordinary speech a man who is not cunning in wickedness is called by us "simple", because he hath not [p. 82] in his mind the anxious trepidation of evil things. And he knoweth not how to look at and to bring to an issue the things which happen to him from the world; and he contriveth no means whereby he may do harm to his enemies, or to make an end of the things which are spoken against him, and he weaveth no crafty things, and he layeth not snares, and he behaveth not artfully to do harm to others. These and such like things simplicity knoweth not how to do, and for this reason the mysteries of God have at all times been entrusted to it, and it hath shown itself worthy of divine

revelations, even as also were the Apostles when they were chosen. It is well known that the Apostles were the simplest of men, and it was for this reason Jesus chose them, that by their simplicity He might mock at the wisdom of the world, and that by their ignorance He might make manifest the emptiness of the learning of the wise and learned, even as Paul saith, "God chose the fools of [this] world to put its wise men to shame," And again he said, "Because, by the wisdom of God, the world knew not the wisdom of God, God willed that by the simplicity of preaching, He might make to live those that believed." And again he said to certain men of his disciples who were boasting in the knowledge of the world, "Observe also your calling, my brethren, for there are not many among you [who are] wise according to the flesh."

And I have not spoken these things wishing to show that there is no wisdom in the doctrine of Christ, but that that wisdom which is above the world is the wisdom of Christ, for the wisdom of the world, [p. 83] is its opposite in all things, even as darkness is the opposite of light, and bitterness of sweetness, and sickness of health. For the wisdom of God flourisheth not by these things, [that is] the study and care of earthly thoughts, but all its meditation is upon spiritual things, and its motions and thoughts are above the world, even as the Apostle himself testified concerning himself, "I am a fool to the wisdom of the world, but by my knowledge I possess the wisdom which is above the world." And in teaching that not every man is able to be a hearer and a receiver of that wisdom which he had, he crieth out, saying, "We speak wisdom among the perfect: not the wisdom of this world nor that of the rulers of this world, which are brought to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the wise men of the world hath been able to hear." The wisdom of [this] world is not sufficient for a foundation, nor is it able to receive the building of the wisdom of God, and for this reason our Lord placed simplicity in us for a foundation.

Who is there that knoweth not how simple was that first union of the first ones of the race of the children of men, and how simple they were in respect of all the life and conduct of [this] world, for they had had no experience and they had never been occupied in any of its affairs, because the conversation of the things of the world had not as yet been revealed to them; but they were near unto divine sights, [p. 84] and God spake unto them continually face to face, and He was at all times found in close converse with them, carrying, and bringing, and leading them from that place from which they sprang and in which they had been framed, and placing them in Paradise. And in the form of a man He was shewing them everything as a near friend, and they never took thought in their mind as to where was the dwelling of Him that shewed them [these things]; or from what time He was; or if He had been made, and if He had been made, who made Him; and why hath He created us; and for what reason hath He set us in this Paradise and delivered unto us this law. These things were remote from, their minds because simplicity thinketh not of such, but it is wholly and entirely drawn to listening unto that which it heareth, and its whole thought is mingled with the word of him that speaketh with it, even as is [that of] the child with the speech of whosoever talketh with him.

Behold then, in the early heads of our race God placed simplicity, and it became the receptacle of the commandment; for simplicity is anterior to faith because faith is the daughter of simplicity, but faith giveth not birth to cunning. He that is crafty and cunning doth not readily give credence unto what he heareth, but the simple man listeneth unto all voices and believeth. Now if simplicity is the sincerity of nature it receiveth only the things which are spoken by God. For as the earth was, in its natural construction [p. 85] intended by its Creator to receive the seeds and plants which are needful for the wants of mankind----that it bringeth forth thorns and briars is not of its own nature, for it received this from its Creator afterwards as a penalty----so also hath simplicity been placed in our nature by the Creator. But cunning and craftiness we receive afterwards by reason of the disputes which come upon us, even as the whole family of the children of men testifieth, for in all that are born is simplicity stirred up before craftiness. As long as they are infants and children they are filled with innocence and sincerity, but when they have lived in the world, through a gradual and progressive growth and the matters which befall them, they learn craftiness and cunning.

It is as if a man were to take away a child one year old, and were to go forth and bring him up in the desert, where there is neither conversation of the children of men nor the exercise of the affairs of the world, and where he would never see anything at all of the habits and customs of men; it would then be found that he was in a state of natural simplicity, and moreover, when he had arrived at manhood's estate this man would be able to receive very much more easily divine visions and spiritual thoughts, and he would readily become a vessel to receive the Divine wisdom. In this manner I think the matter standeth. And also it was because the marvellous preacher, John the Baptist, according to the testimony of the Book,lived in the wilderness until the day of his showing himself to the children of Israel, that he was able to receive and to teach Divine mysteries, [p. 86] and to receive the power of the baptism of the Spirit.

And of the things which none of the early prophets had perceived, he, through the natural simplicity in which he had been brought up, became a receptacle in the wilderness----and especially of those things which were before the abrogation of the curse and the death of sin, and before the wall of enmity which was set in the midst had been broken through, of which it is written that it was broken through by the Cross of Christ----and he became aforetime a receiver of the things which were after the Cross; and for this reason Grace led him forth to the wilderness that he might remain in the simplicity of nature, and be able to receive the knowledge of the mysteries which were above nature.

And in like manner when God redeemed the people out of Egypt, He led them out into the desolate wilderness where simplicity could be obtained, and I believe that He brought them forth into the desert that, being freed from the customs and habits of mankind, and from the cunning and wisdom of the world which they had received in the land of Egypt, they might become accustomed to the simplicity of nature, and receive divine instruction with sincerity. And although there are many other reasons why He brought them out into the

wilderness, this seems to be the primary reason to him that knoweth how to look at the mysteries of Divine dispensation. And because those who went forth from Egypt did not wish to cast off from them the wickedness and cunning which they had learned in Egypt, but were in every thing opponents of the promise of God towards them, He kept them in the wilderness for forty years, that evil, and those who ministered thereunto might disappear; [p. 87] that cunning might perish, together with those who had received it from Egypt; and that that generation which should be born and grown up in the wilderness----for all their bringing up was in simplicity, according to the law of the place----might go in and inherit the land of promise; because it is seemly for those who were brought up in the wilderness to be simple, and it belongeth to simplicity to hearken unto the commandments of God, and to be persuaded by them.

And if any man thinketh that they believed because they saw the signs and wonders in the wilderness, or because they feared the penalty which came upon those who were before them, it will be found that those who went forth from Egypt saw greater wonders than they. For with all the other mighty deeds which were wrought in Egypt they saw also the dividing of the sea, and that fearful passage; and [they saw] that the sea returned, and grew together and covered up all the Egyptians who had entered therein; and that marvellous thing which took place at Marah, how by means of a piece of wood the waters were made sweet and became drink for them; and to speak briefly, those who went forth from Egypt were spectators of all the wonderful things which took place in Egypt, and in the desert, and of those things which happened meanwhile. But the young generation which was born in the desert saw nothing except those wonders which were continually with them, the pillar [of fire], the cloud, the rock which poured out water, and the quails which came up from the sea; and although the miracles which they saw were lesser than those which the people who went forth from Egypt saw, yet they, through their simplicity, remained in the fear of God better than the men who had seen many and great signs.

[p. 88] And that thou mayest know that all the mighty deeds which took place, and all the wonderful things which were wrought, were not able to uproot and to abrogate in them the evil things which they had learned from Egypt, and that that generation which had been born in the desert was entirely remote from them by reason of its simplicity, understand from this [fact]. After they had arrived at an inhabited land at the end of the forty years, and were encamped opposite Midian wishing to go into the countries of the heathen, by reason of the sight of the women whom the Midianites had arrayed in fine apparel and set before them, whoredom broke out among the remnant of the people who had come forth from Egypt, and they waxed wanton, even as the Holy Book maketh known, "The people saw the daughters of Midian and committed whoredom [with them], and they were united with Baal-Peor, and worhipped idols; now those who did this were, according to what the Book saith, those who remained of the people who had gone forth from Egypt. "And the plague had dominion over them, and four and twenty thousand of them died; now the Book saith that the number of those who went forth from Egypt amounted to six hundred thousand,

and God said, "They shall not go in to see the land of promise," and by the fact that they alone of all the people died we may understand also they only committed whoredom.

"And Moses and all Israel were sitting before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle, and Zimri, the son of Salu, the chief of the tribe [p. 89] of Simeon, went into the cell to Cozbi, a daughter of the chiefs of Midian, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all Israel; and there rose up Phinehas, and shewed forth the triumph of zeal. Now from the fact that the pestilence had dominion only over that remnant which remained of the people who had come forth from Egypt, it is right that we should know that it was they only who drew nigh to that work of wickedness, and that all the rest of the people who had been born in the wilderness, and who had been reared in the purity and simplicity of the fear of God were sitting at the door of God, and were entreating mercy by repentance with Moses. And from what took place at the casting of the calf I also believe this, for at that time also when Moses came down from the mountain, and saw the confusion of the people, and knew that this incitement [to sin] belonged only to certain of them, he ground the calf with a grinder, and scattered its dust upon the waters. And when the people had drunk thereof, it became a test of their thoughts, and those men in whose imaginations the calf had been first depicted became the men who urged the doing of this wickedness;

and it is written that in them and in those who were slain by the swords of the Lévites the sign of the calf appeared. And from the ending of their deaths we may also understand that the beginning of error was in them. Because they urged on [others] and were the leaders in error, [p. 90] the penalty which the word of Moses had decreed also overtook them through the sign of the calf which appeared in their persons. And so also here from the fact that twenty-four thousand [men] only fell through that sudden pestilence----now the Book saith that with them was brought to an end the number of those who went forth from Egypt----it is right that we should know that they only were joined unto whoredom. From their penalty let us learn [concerning] their whoredom; and from their violent death let us recognize that their whoredom belonged wholly to them, and that, remembering the worship of idols in Egypt, when they saw it in Midian they were straightway joined thereunto. And the simplicity of the upright who had been born in the desert preserved them for the Lord, and they sat at the door of the tabernacle in the purity of their hearts, and with souls remote from cunning, and with thoughts free from the craft of wickedness, they entreated mercy of the Lord.

And for this reason also the promises to Abraham of material things were fulfilled in them, and simplicity went in and inherited the land of promise, and innocence took possession of the border of the inheritance which had been promised to the chief of their race, and integrity, which they had [received] from the Lord, made them victorious in their wars with the Amorites. For when they had passed over the Jordan Joshua commanded them to go round Jericho seven days, each day once, and on the seventh day to go round seven times, and he and the priests were to go before them carrying horns and the ark [p. 91] of the Lord; and the whole people followed after Joshua and after the ark in simplicity, like children fol-

lowing their fathers. And what shall I say concerning all the rest of the people? Concerning Joshua the Book pointeth out that in him especially were found simplicity and innocence; "But the young man Joshua departed not from the tent, but was there continually in the service of Moses; and he that was free from going out and coming in among the multitude was especially nigh unto simplicity. If cunning and wickedness are gathered together from conversation with the multitude, it is evident that simplicity and integrity can be acquired from being brought up to lead a life of silent contemplation, and the more a man increaseth his life of contemplation, the more his possession of simplicity groweth.

And concerning this the customary life of the world itself testifieth to us that all those who were reared in the contemplative life, and who never went forth in the ways, or contended and conversed with the multitude, were found to be especially upright and simple, and that the integrity which is born from righteousness was found in them, even as also the blessed David joineth integrity unto innocency in his words, "The innocent and upright have cleaved unto me because I waited for Thee. And again that same prophet testifieth concerning the simplicity of his soul, and how he was with God, [saying], "I was innocent and ignorant, and I was like a beast before Thee; and he was brought down to such ignorance [p. 92] like the beast with man, which by reason of its irrational and indiscriminating nature is unable to judge one of his deeds or actions; even thus was the knowledge of David in respect of God. For as the beast is governed by man, so also did David place himself to be led by the will of God, that he might not judge His will in any form, even as the verse following maketh known, in which he saith, "Because I am like a beast before Thee in all innocence, comfort me with Thy counsel, and lead me after Thy glory. And again he saith, "I have not enquired what is in heaven with Thee, or what is Thy will upon earth.

For I have never understood the distinguishing attributes of Thy government, because while 1 sought to know why Thou didst desire one thing, Thy will willed something else; and because I was confounded by the varieties of Thy deeds I ran and took refuge in simplicity. And I became before Thee a beast which knoweth not anything, that Thy will alone might govern me, and Thy knowledge lead me in the path of life, and that Thou mightest give me Thy wise care in everything which was necessary for spiritual and bodily life.

And moreover, David sheweth in a psalm that the grace of God aboundeth specially with the pure in heart, [saying], "God is good to Israel, [even] to the pure in heart;" now he uniteth purity of heart with the sight of God, for [the name] Israel is interpreted "He hath seen God". And whosoever is simple and pure in heart is able to see God, even as [p. 93] our Lord spake in His Gospel, "Blessed are the pure in heart, "for they shall see God." And moreover David the prophet sheweth that the mind which is remote from the cunning of human teachings is particularly able to comprehend the righteousness of God, and to possess courage of spirit and the confidence which will contend with all things, [saying], "Because I know not the art of writing, I will go in in the strength of the Lord, and I will remember Thy righteousness only." And teaching those who are simple and innocent, and those who are wise and understanding, he saith, "[Thou art] my doctrine from my youth up, that I might shew Thy

wonderful works." And again when he sheweth concerning the purity of his thoughts he likeneth them unto hands, and their freedom from iniquity he com-pareth unto the washing of the hands, [saying], "I have washed my hands in innocency," that is to say, I have cleansed and purified my thoughts, and I have remembered Thy altar, O Lord. And again he saith, "I have walked in my house in the innocency of my heart, when wilt Thou come unto me?" And again he saith, "Whosoever worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house," and it is well known that cunning is built up of deceit. And again he saith, "Examine me, O Lord, and try me, prove my reins and my heart." And again he saith, "I by myself have purified my heart, and washed my hands in innocency."

And besides these David's election testineth that he was chosen from a station which taught simplicity, for he was chosen from following the sheep, even as he himself confesseth and calleth to mind his election in one of his psalms, [saying], "He chose [p. 94] David His servant, and took him from [following] a flock of sheep, and from after the ewes that gave suck. And teaching that his kingdom also was governed by simplicity he saith, "He pastured them in the integrity of his heart," and it is manifest that integrity is simplicity. And the book of his history also sheweth us [his] innocency, for on account of his simplicity in the direction of the affairs of [this] world he had one to give him counsel concerning human business with him continually; for the Book maketh known to us that Ahithophel was David's counsellor. And from other things it is easy for us to see the simplicity of the blessed David, who himself also maketh it known when he spake with Jonathan, saying, "There is no wickedness in my heart, and [yet] thy father hunteth my life to take it. And this [is] also [shewn] by that which was said by Jonathan to his father, "He hath put himself in thy hands; and he made war and slew the Philistines by the simplicity of David the king. And again when the men who were with him counselled him to slay Saul, through his simple mind he refrained.

That they should counsel him to slay his enemy arose from the cunning and craft of [this] world, for it is the custom of those who are filled with the cunning of [this]. world to act craftily to remove obstacles from their path; but David in his simplicity and mercy refrained. And we might find many things in the Holy Books which make manifest the simplicity and uprightness of heart [p. 95] of this man of God, and that also which was said by the Lord unto Samuel, "I have found a man according to My heart," testified unto the purity of David's heart, and it is well known that simplicity is born of purity of heart. And again David himself asked in prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

And besides these we may also see that all the other just and righteous men pleased God through simplicity. Concerning those early disciples who became apostles after the Ascension of our Lord into heaven it is thus written, "They all dwelt together, and they were of one mind and of one soul, and they were breaking bread in [one] house, and were receiving food in rejoicing, and they were praising God in the innocency of their heart, and no man said of the possessions which he had, They are mine, for they had everything in common." Now it is manifest that such innocency as this is born of simplicity, and that their praise

ascended unto God from the purity of their heart; and that they took their food together with rejoicing, the man who brought much not considering that he should eat more than the other who cast nothing into the common fund, arose from innocency of character.

And again the Word sheweth that the blessed Joshua was the most innocent of all the people because he grew up being always in the tabernacle, and this man who was the most simple and innocent of all the people, [p. 96] for he had been brought up in quietness, was chosen to that famous government after Moses the Great. And that simplicity is nigher unto those who are brought up in the tabernacle or in the house than unto others who are exercised in going in and coming out, the history of Jacob and Esau testifieth. "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, and Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in a tent," and from their works we are able to understand the difference of their characters. In all places the Scriptures call Esau cunning and crafty, and one who layeth up anger, and keepeth wrath, [as it is said], "He keepeth his anger for ever, and he layeth up his wrath for ever and ever. And again [the Book] speaketh concerning his anger towards the seed of Jacob, "His fiery anger burned for ever, and he was furious at them," and again that he went forth armed to meet his brother with four hundred men also sheweth that his anger was of long standing;

for he had sought to take vengeance upon his brother for the [stealing] of the birthright for twenty years after Jacob had turned towards Haran, and had it not been for the humility of Jacob and for the hidden dispensation of God which changed his anger into pleasantness, he would have performed that to do which he went forth. But Jacob appeareth as the opposite of this in everything, whether as regardeth his parents, or the house of Laban, for by his deeds he is shewn to us to be a simple and obedient man. And for [p. 97] this reason the Holy Book sheweth us all his simplicity in one word: "Jacob was a simple man dwelling in a tent. And, moreover, by reason of his simplicity he would never have meditated the stealing of the birthright unless his mother Rebecca had taught him; but when he heard of the matter which would help [him] he was persuaded in the simplicity of his mind and was not stubborn. And that no man may imagine that his simplicity was natural foolishness, see how attentive he was to the curses of his father, and how he returned answer concerning the things which were set forth by knowledge, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Peradventure my father will feel me, and I shall be in his eyes as a mocker, and curses shall come upon me and not blessings.

But his mother in faith, being certain of those early promises which were revealed to her, and of those things which were spoken to her when she went to enquire of the Lord, and it had been told her, "The elder shall be a servant to the younger," made answer unto him, saying, "Upon me be thy curses, my son, only hear my voice, and do what I command thee; and straightway he was obedient to his mother like a child. And she prepared and gave to Isaac the food which he loved, and she covered Jacob's hands and neck, in the places which are near to the touch, with skins of animals; and he in his simplicity judged not what would happen to him, but like a child that is set before his nurse, who doeth unto him what she wisheth, was that full-grown [p. 98] man before his mother by reason of his simplicity. And

again, when he took in the food to his father, that which Rebecca had put into his mouth he repeated like a child, adding nothing and taking away nothing. And again when the time for his marriage had come, he did not venture to draw nigh thereto of his own freewill, but in his simpleness he had regard unto his father's commands.

Now Esau, like a man crafty for wickedness, because he wished to vex and grieve his father and mother in return for their having dealt deceitfully with him, went and took wives from the daughters of Canaan, who were continually embittering the spirit of Isaac and Rebecca. And when he perceived that the hatred of his parents towards him increased because of the perpetual strivings of his wives, and seeing that he could not be deprived of [his] material inheritance----now he considered this also with craftiness----he went and took [another] wife, Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael, as one might say, with the wound he took a plaster. And he did not do this like an understanding son who was penitent for the things which he had wrought previously, but only because he was afraid lest Isaac would not proclaim him [heir] to that inheritance of riches and possessions which he loved, even as he was also vexed by reason of [the loss of] the birthright and the blessings, not because he had lost the spiritual promises which were therein, but because he had been deprived of the larger part of the riches which the firstborn are wont to receive, and because he saw that his father's love, through which he expected to receive the larger part [p. 99] of his riches as an inheritance, was changed. Now all these acts of Esau teach whosoever knoweth how to regard them [aright] concerning his craftiness and wickedness;

but with these things we are also able to discover in this place the simplicity of Isaac their father. For although his whole love was turned to Esau, and he loved him as his firstborn, immediately he perceived the dispensation of God which is above nature, and Rebecca had gone in to him and revealed what had been spoken to her when she went to enquire of the Lord, immediately [I say,] was his love changed from Esau, and he directed it towards Jacob who was worthy thereof.

And let us also observe the obedience of Jacob, who was persuaded by his parents in everything like a child. "If Jacob also thus shall take wives of the daughters of Canaan," said Rebecca, "what good shall my life do me? And Isaac called to Jacob and commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not take unto thyself a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites. But go unto Laban, the son of Bethuel, thy mother's brother, and take thee a wife from thence; and he was obedient and went forth readily, and became suddenly a stranger to all the good things of his father's house. And like an alien who possessed nothing he began [to travel] the path of his journey, and he asked from them for his need nothing, neither beast for burden, nor servants for ministration, nor costly apparel in which to appear, nor other things which are a vain show, to which many hold fast to-day, but he went forth from them with his staff, [p. 100] being provided for the journey, and bearing blessings and promises of good things instead of these things of mankind. And his words also make [this] known unto us, for in giving thanks unto God for the things which he had, and entreating to be delivered from his brother, [he saith], "With my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan, and now I have

become two companies; deliver me from the hands of Esau, my brother, for I am afraid of him.

Let us listen also unto the words which he spake in that country in which God was revealed unto him, for from them we may especially see his simplicity: "Verily there is the Lord in this place, and I knew it not. Didst thou think, O simple Jacob, that God was limited only to the country in which thy parents lived, and that He did not reveal Himself or make Himself manifest in every place to those who are worthy of His revelation? And let us consider also how many times his wages were changed while he lived with Laban, even as at the end his words rebuked that crafty man: "Thou hast changed my hire ten times, but the Lord hath not suffered thee to harm me. And again when he served him for his younger daughter, Laban took the other in her stead and brought her in to him, and led him astray in his simplicity, and he perceived [it] not; and when he asked by word or mouth why this deception had been perpetrated upon him, immediately a plausible excuse was offered to him----even though it was a lying one ----his simplicity listened thereto and accepted it. And how many times did Laban in his wickedness seek to oppress Jacob, and how many times did he through his cruelty and cunning change his acts towards him with manifold schemes [p. 101] and tricks! But Jacob's innocency was not disturbed, and his simplicity was not agitated, and his integrity was not made crafty;

and so long as he himself was watchful concerning the things which related to himself, so long also was God mindful of the things which concerned him. This is the proof of enlightened doctrine to every one who wisheth to serve the Lord: his thoughts must not cease from meditation upon God, or occupy themselves with artful schemes and inventions wherewith he may do harm to his enemies. Do thou, O disciple, abide in the sincerity of thy mind, for it belongeth to the Lord to know how He will direct thy life, and the things which are beneficial for thee those will He perform for thee. Though thou hear of some who are ready to act wickedly towards thee, and of others who dwell in ambush to take away thy life, and of others who are become workers to overthrow thy building, and of others who blacken thy fair fame and vilify thy manner of life, and of others who dig deep that they may cast thee down from the height upon which thou standest, and of others who make signs of detraction at thee, and of others who speak against thee with scorn and who pour out against thee blasphemies with mockery, and of others by whom thou art made a proverb and a byword, and of others whose whole conversation is curses of thee; in spite of all these things do thou abide in thy simplicity.

And turn not backwards from that country to which thy gaze is directed, and cease not from thy hidden converse with God, and let not the power of the things which are without thee overcome the power of the hidden anchor upon which hangeth thy life, but keep fast hold upon the hope that Christ cannot lie, according to Paul's counsel [p. 102] to us, "To lay hold of the hope which is promised to us; which we have as an anchor fixed in our soul that it may not be moved. For as the anchor which is cast down [into the sea] by its weight holdeth fast and restraineth the ship in the waves that it may not wander and drift away out of its

proper course, so also is the hope which is promised to us in heaven, and which is the hidden anchor which is set above us, and is sunk and hidden from us in the heaven of heavens; let us make fast our minds to it, and let us fasten the ship of our soul thereto that it may not shift about and be disturbed by the storms and waves of the world which beat upon it, and drift out of its proper course. In spite of the things which thou hearest abide thou in thy simplicity, and let not those who speak against thee change thee and make thee to become like unto them.

For the Adversary gathereth together all these things for this reason and setteth them in array against thee to turn thy mind from its state of happiness, and to disturb and trouble thy innocency, to make crafty thy simplicity, to make thee like unto those who fight against thee, to fill thee with anger like unto them, to make thee a vessel of wrath like unto them, and to clothe thee with the dress of wickedness. And when thy mind hath descended from that state of simplicity which looketh at one [thing] alone, and thou directest thy gaze upon many, and thou hearest the things which are spoken against thee, through these the Adversary will find thee as he desireth, and thou wilt become easy of access to him, and a ready and easy prey; but do thou persist in thy simplicity which is a vessel of righteousness. For as a material vessel [p. 103] becometh a receptacle of what we put therein, so also is simplicity a pure and honourable vessel which receiveth the various forms of righteousness.

Now therefore let Jacob the simple man, whose history I have depicted for thee, be a type of the things of which I have spoken to thee, and when words of strife are stirred up to disturb thy simplicity, and thou art sensible of the snares of the Enemy which would trip thee up, think upon this blessed man, and consider all his history from the beginning to the end----for for this reason these things and others like unto them were written in the Scriptures----and let them be a support to thy soul which is tottering to a fall, and a consolation to [thy] thoughts which are filled with sadness by reason of the indignation of him that stirreth up anger. Observe how much Esau and Laban plotted to do harm unto Jacob, but the Lord followed after him in all his actions; and while Jacob remained quiet and took no pains to meet the schemes of his enemies, God turned their crafty devices backwards, and instead of a changing series of losses He brought gain upon him. For Jacob was occupied in his integrity, and God sought out good things for him; Jacob busied himself wholly in every work like a child in his simplicity, and the Lord in His wisdom made his paths to prosper. Laban plotted schemes whereby he might cause him loss, and Jacob perceived it not, that simple man felt it not, and that innocent man knew it not;

but in his stead God saw and knew everything, and what [p. 104] Laban had bound, the Lord loosed. Laban contrived a scheme of loss against Jacob and the Highest scattered [it]: he made an invention which would increase his own possession and diminish that of Jacob, and God made another invention against it. While Jacob remained at peace the Judge became his advocate, and while he journeyed on in his works innocently God in His wisdom directed his paths. These things [concerning] Jacob were written for thee, and they belong to thee if thou wilt abide in the simplicity of the mind of Jacob, and in the sincerity of soul of

that simple man; for the simple belong unto the Lord. Be not ashamed of simplicity, for the cunning and the crafty are vessels of the Adversary; desire not and lust not after cunning, for cunning is the ground which produceth wickedness, and simplicity is the field which maketh righteousness to bring forth fruit. For this reason, in all places, the Lord speaketh with simplicity, and in it His Will abideth, and it becometh a dwelling-place and a receptacle of His revelations.

For Eli was sleeping with his sons inside the temple, and when the Lord desired to speak with the children of men, He forsook the old age which was trained in wisdom and exercised in the affairs of the world, and lusty manhood which had received the cunning of evil things, and came to simplicity and spake with it, and chose converse with it. ”The Lord called to Samuel, ”Samuel, Samuel,” twice; and simplicity rose up and ran to old age, and the child knew not who it was that called him; and he ran to give an answer to Eli instead of to God, [p. 105] and he did this three times, because he had not yet had experience of divine revelations. Now when Eli understood that it was the Lord Who had called him, he commanded him to make answer as unto the Lord, and not to run towards him; for ”Eli understood that the Lord had called the boy. And old age sent youth to the Lord to learn His will, and cunning had need of simplicity that by means of it it might learn the Divine Will; for Eli entreated Samuel and begged him to reveal to him everything which he had heard from the Lord, and not to hide anything from him. And because he perceived that he himself was unworthy to speak with the Lord, he offered entreaty to the child to reveal to him the Divine mystery;

and between Divinity and knowledge simplicity became an interpreter, and childhood received and made answer, and to a child only a few years old, who was unacquainted with the arrangement of the affairs of men, was the knowledge of God revealed. For the Lord dwelleth in the upright, and with the simple ones He speaketh; and He chooseth the sincere, who having learnt the word do not consider that it is their own, but they recognize Him that spake it, and to Him they return gratitude. And the word of God doth not become to them the material for pride and vain boasting, and they are not exalted by the things of God as if they were their own, and they say not, The word of wisdom which we have is our own. Now these simple and upright ones never consider [that it is their own], but in their simplicity they confess that what they have belongeth to the Lord; [p. 106] and for this reason we have found in all places that God rejected cunning and chose simplicity. For because the man wise in the spirit, that is, the man who hath by the experience of his soul obtained the taste of the knowledge of life, is not easily found, his simplicity of nature is acceptable unto God; for this is His own gift and the first thing formed in our nature, for when God created us in the beginning He placed simplicity within us.

So therefore simplicity is placed in [our] midst, and one riseth therefrom to the doctrine of spiritual things and becometh a wise man of the spirit, and another cometh down therefrom to the doctrine and training of the things of this world, and such an one is called crafty and cunning. For if men should be called according to the exact name of things, those who are exercised and whose whole training is in corporeal things would not be called wise, and

those whose simplicity hath been trained in spiritual things would not be called crafty and cunning; but those who have collected their knowledge from the world would be called crafty and cunning, while those who have been exercised in spiritual things would be called wise and understanding men, for wisdom belongeth to God alone and to the man whose quest is God.

The knowledge of the world is not worthy to be called wisdom, rightly speaking, nor can the wisdom of God be said to be cunning and craftiness by the understanding of discretion, for in this wisdom there is no scheming, and it is not stablished by the composition of various opinions. It passeth the power of speech [to say] why [p. 107] God delighteth in simplicity, and why He chooseth it rather than the wisdom of the world, for behold the wisdom of the world is the gift of God, even as the apostle said, "By the wisdom of God the world knew "not the wisdom of God. And for this reason it is well known that if wisdom were not in us from the time when we were framed and made----and wisdom is not implanted in everything that hath been made----we should not be able to gather together wisdom from the world. Behold then also the wisdom of the world is the gift of God, and why then hath He rejected it and chosen simplicity? It is well known that the reason is because our own labour is therein, and because it is collected from those who possess it, whose vision is directed to the world and not to God, and who run thereafter that they may be thought to be wise men in the opinion [of men].

And to speak finally, the human passions weary themselves when they gather themselves together and seek this wisdom among things which have been made, and in that they have united labours to their quest, and the trouble and afflictions of their persons to the discovery of this knowledge, they imagine that it belongeth to them when they consider how they have laboured for its sake. For this reason the Lord rejected the wise men of the world and chose the simple ones in their stead. And moreover, inasmuch as the wisdom of the world is the opposite of the Divine wisdom in every respect, and there is no means whereby they may be mingled with one another, even as light cannot be mingled with darkness, so also if a man wish to obtain from the wise men of the world [p. 108] knowledge of the things of the Spirit he must first of all cast off from him the thoughts of that wisdom, and the whole expectation of his previous knowledge, and he must stand at the beginning of the path of the first step which is simplicity, and childlike disposition, and the faith which heareth and receiveth with simpleness. And then he may begin the journey of the path of the wisdom of Christ and set out on his course, and if he be zealous to march on wisdom itself will shew him the way.

Simplicity then is the gift of nature, and it belongeth to the Creator, and nothing belonging to us is mingled therein, that is to say, nothing of our will and nothing of our work. Therefore its gift dwelleth in His gift, and His wisdom abideth in the place which He hath constructed, even as it also stooped [to dwell] with Samuel; it forsook subtlety and spake with him, and the chief priesthood and came to him. And behold the Holy Book doth not blame Eli for much wickedness, but only because he was remiss, and because he chid not his sons. Now

Eli himself was not a participator in their iniquity, and if any man should say that he acted in his youth as they did [we must remember] that the Book doth not accuse him of this, neither doth it say, "Thou didst do wickedly in this manner in thy youth, and now thy sons do like unto thee; but the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle," because Eli had heard of the iniquity which his sons were doing in the tabernacle, and had rebuked them not. Now . the whole accusation of Eli arose because of his negligence, [p. 109] and because his rebuke was not commensurate with the wickedness of his sons: for it is written that he rebuked them, but the rebuke was feeble and ineffectual, and not one which the serious nature of the iniquity demanded.

His negligence alone and not his own wickedness, was the sole object of the condemnation of Eli the priest, and although the matter was thus yet God chose youth rather than him, and He made His conversation with childhood and simplicity. For as the Book maketh known, Samuel was brought up in the temple of the Lord, as were Joshua the son of Nun and Jacob, for these also were reared in the tent, even as our discourse hath shewed above. And it is a thing to wonder at how the Lord called what He had formed from these two places, whether it be those who were accustomed to the wilderness, or those who were brought up in the tent, for in both these places simplicity was to be acquired. For behold God set apart from the wilderness David, and Moses, and many others for His dispensation, but Samuel, and Joshua, and Jacob He chose from the bringing up in the tabernacle (i. e., tent). Behold then, from this also we may know that simplicity is beloved of God, and that it was the beginning of the way of those who drew nigh unto God. And moreover, we may also see simplicity in Abel, and the Holy Book sheweth us that he was more simple than Cain; for they both brought offerings to the Lord, and the offering of simplicity was accepted, but the offering of wickedness was rejected. And Cain was angry with the Lord and with Abel; [p.

no] with Abel because he envied him, and with the Lord because He had rejected his offering. If he had been of a simple disposition he would not have been envious, and if he had been sincere he would not have been angry with the Lord. And moreover we may see the cunning of Cain from the outlet which he found for his wickedness, for when he meditated slaying Abel his brother, and was not able to do it because he was near unto his parents, he said "Let us go down into the plain;"and Abel, in his innocency, heard and was persuaded like a child. And his simplicity imagined not wickedness, and he did not consider in his heart why Cain called him to the plain, neither did he perceive Cain's hatred towards him, because simplicity knoweth not how to be a spectator of these things; but in the innocency of his heart and in brotherly love towards him he turned, and whithersoever he called him he [went] readily and obediently. And observe here also the works of simplicity, and have regard unto the injurious effects of cunning and wickedness, and be strenuous to be on the side of the simple, who have at all times pleased God; and reject cunning as something which is unfit for thee, and which is not meet for the discipleship in which thou standest.

For as the apparel which befitteth thy rank in life is well known, and if thou puttest on that which is contrary hereto thou wilt become a laughing-stock, so also the apparel of simplicity is meet for thee, and if thou puttest on that of cunning thou wilt be condemned by the wise and understanding, and the feast will not receive thee [arrayed] in this apparel.

[p. 111] And with these men let us also consider Joseph the chaste, whose honour towards his father and whose love towards his brethren were born of simplicity; for his brethren were envious of him and he perceived it not, they devised murder against him and he knew it not, and [when] his father told him to go and visit his brethren, he obeyed him readily. He saw dreams which made known his own greatness and their subjection, and in his simplicity he drew nigh and revealed unto them their subjection; the simple man did not perceive that cunning would add to its wickedness, nor that hatred [of him] would be increased in his brethren by the hearing of these things. And when the old man Jacob saw the simplicity of his son Joseph, he rebuked him [and told him] not to reveal [it], not because he was not certain of what would happen, for the Book saith that he kept all these things because he believed that they were about to take place; but he rebuked the simplicity of Joseph in order that he might not increase the hatred of his brethren by the revealing of his dreams. He bore and was carrying food to them, and he passed from place to place asking for them; and he did not know that in running to his brethren he was running to murderers. He saw them, and in his simplicity he was filled with joy, but they when they saw him [were filled] with gloom and anger.

And while simplicity was meditating good things, and increasing love at the sight of the brethren, the envy which cunning brought forth grew the more strong, and increased, and meditated murder; and they plotted wickedness and they wrought wickedness. But see the end of the two [sides], and observe with which [p. 112] God was well pleased. While that simplicity which did not know how to hide its dreams was mounted upon a chariot of honour, craftiness was cast down upon the ground before it, and simplicity gave the command, and craftiness was obedient thereto. Simplicity was increased by the wisdom of God, and craftiness added wickedness to itself. "I have seen that there is none who is so wise and understanding as thyself," said the king of Egypt to that simple man. For simplicity is nigh unto wisdom, and the understanding of God is akin to integrity, and simplicity is the vessel which receiveth the divine revelations. Now the blessed Paul also wisely rejected cunning, saying, "We walk not in craftiness, and we handle not the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth we shew ourselves before all the consciences of the children of men. And behold, Paul also hath taught thee that deceit is closely joined to cunning and that it is the vessel of all wickednesses, and for this reason he also fled therefrom.

And who is the disciple who will not reject it if the apostle rejected it and cast it forth, and made it a thing alien to the pure doctrine of Christ, which befitted him not? For as wickedness is the opposite of good, so also is cunning the opposite of simplicity. And in another place Paul writeth to his disciples, "Peradventure like a crafty man I have carried you off with guile; and here also he closely uniteth guile with cunning, [p. 113] And again in another

speech he condemneth the heretics and sheweth that all their doctrine standeth in cunning. "Let us not be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of the deceitful doctrines of the children of men, who in their cunning act craftily to lead astray; but let us be firm in our love that we may make to grow up everything of ours in Christ" And moreover our Lord also maketh known that heretics are cunning and crafty, for He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves; and [He maketh known] also, that when a man appeareth to be one thing and is another, he is a worker of cunning. To appear in sheep's clothing, being actually wolves, was taught unto them by cunning; for cunning ministereth unto two things, it maketh wickedness to grow, and it maketh wickedness to increase, and moreover, it schemeth how it may teach itself to others.

Where it is meet to hide, it hideth, and where it knoweth that it is meet to reveal, it revealeth; for wickedness is blind, but cunning hath eyes. And again in another place our Lord taught His disciples to beware of the cunning of the Pharisees and Sadducees, saying, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, and of the leaven of Herod; and thou mayest know that He here calleth cunning and wickedness by the name of leaven, [p. 114] because in another place when the Pharisees said "Herod desireth to kill thee," he called Herod a fox because of his cunning, saying, "Go ye and say to this fox"----for because he hath no power to do what he desireth by authority, behold he contriveth artful schemes and plots in order that cunning may take the place of power, even as cunning taketh the place of strength in the fox----"by My own freewill will I go, but thy cunning which is outside My freewill, is not able to make Me go forth. To-day and to-morrow I work miracles, and the third day I am perfected. Behold then our Lord warned His disciples against the cunning of Herod and the wickedness of the Pharisees, because while they were doing one thing they taught another. Our Lord did not bid them beware of the doctrine of Moses which the Pharisees taught, but of their traditions which they invented in their cunning that they might be material for the merchandise of iniquity;

and of their feigning to be righteous before the children of men; and of their being careful of the honour of God while in their secret works they belittled Him; and of their making long their prayers in order to devour widow's houses; and of their disfiguring their countenances that they might appear to be men who fasted; and of their washing the outside of the cup and platter----that is to say, they beautified and made fair the parts of them which were manifest----being filled within with iniquity and all impurity; and of their adorning their persons outside with a reverent and venerable demeanour to be observed with the eye, being secretly filled with rapine, and deceit, and wantonness, and the desire for all [p. 115] objects of lust.Of all this doctrine then of the Pharisees our Lord commanded His disciples to beware.

All these things which arise from deceit, and which are wrought under a false disguise are born of cunning. Why then instead of these things did our Lord command His disciples to be harmless as doves in respect of good things, and cunning as serpents, in respect of evil things? towards faith [that they should offer] simplicity, and against error that they

should oppose craftiness? It was in order that the upright might save their life, and that the crafty might not destroy it. For for the acquiring of virtues simplicity must be employed by us; but that we may not perish craft is necessary for us; towards God sincerity of mind (or conscience), and towards the children of men, who plot to take away from us the things of God, craftiness of thought. So then well did our Lord command us to be harmless as doves2 towards each other and towards Him, and crafty as serpents towards those who scheme to deprive us of spiritual things. For even the craftiness of the serpent is [directed] against the man, and not against itself, and it delivereth its body to blows by the craftiness of its nature, but it guardeth its head from injury, for from it death is transmitted throughout its entire length.

And again to the disciples who asked craftily which should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and who lusted with crafty mind to rise a step above the others, He taught the simplicity of children, in whom there is no desire for dominion and rule, and whose thought hath never experienced the love of the honour of the world. "Verily I say [p, 116] unto you, that except ye be converted and become childlike and simple as children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God like a child"----with uprightness of heart and simplicity----"shall not enter therein. And again Paul also taught concerning this simplicity that we should not only make use of it towards God, and towards each other, but he also commandeth the servants of this world to honour their masters in simplicity, without deceit and without cunning. "Servants, be obedient to your masters in all things, not with eye-service as those who please the children of men, but with fear and trembling, and with the simpleness of heart as unto Christ. And again he also commanded the Jews that simplicity should be found with them in their gifts. "He that giveth [let him do it] with simplicity; and he that standeth at the head, [let him rule] with diligence. For if cunning be found among those who give they become spies of the affairs of those who receive, and for this cause the gift which simplicity would give without thought is kept back.

Now it is the custom of simplicity not to think and then to give, but to all men it divideth and giveth abundantly. And again, our Lord taught this simplicity when He said, "Give unto every one that asketh of thee; and again Paul himself prayed for those who give that the fruits of their righteousness might be increased, and that they might distribute gifts to the needy with simplicity, [p. 117] "May that God Who giveth seed to the sowers, and bread for food, multiply your 'seed, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; that ye may be enriched in everything in all simplicity, which perfecteth by our hand thanksgiving to God. And behold here also in simplicity Paul prayeth for his disciples that they may be enriched, and that therefrom, he saith, thanksgiving towards God may increase and wax strong. And again he saith, "Ye have become obedient to the confession of the Gospel of Christ, and ye have become subject with them and with every man in your simplicity. And again he saith, "I fear lest, as the serpent led Eve astray in its guile, your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is towards Christ; and here again he teacheth us that whosoever believeth in Christ, it is meet for him to abide in His doctrine. And he sheweth

us also by [his] words that until Eve had forsaken simplicity towards the commandment of God she did not receive the guile of the cunning of the Tempter.

And moreover, that [kiss of] peace which at the end of all his Epistles Paul commandeth his disciples to give one another, is born of simplicity, and sincerity of mind giveth it. "We live by the Spirit, and by the Spirit let us come to an end. Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, and envying one another. And that a man should live by the Spirit and come to an end by the Spirit cometh to a man by simplicity and innocency of mind.

Now therefore it is good that the disciples of Christ should follow after simplicity, and that they should have regard unto innocency of mind; [p. 118] and let us not be envious of those who are cunning in respect of wickedness, and who are crafty to obtain the honours and pleasures of the world. For behold we may learn from all the books of the Old and New Testaments that in simplicity man draweth nigh unto God, and that simplicity becometh the dwelling-place of God; and together with the doctrine of the books the actual experience of affairs sheweth that righteousness is nearer unto simplicity than unto cunning. For although the cunning and the crafty may do works, and appear to lead the life of righteousness, yet are they held fast by other passions, and for this reason they persevere in labours that they may nourish the evil passions which are stirred up in their souls, whether it be honour or glory or power which they scheme to pursue by their life of labours. Now simplicity hath not such ideas in the service of its labours, for it is led by the beautiful law wherewith it is held fast, or by the fear which it putteth not away, or by love towards God which guardeth it in its afflictions, if it happen that it hath come to this, for as far as is the capacity of love fear guardeth and supporteth simplicity.

Therefore be not ashamed, O disciple, of this good gift, but lay hold upon it from the beginning of thy discipleship unto the end thereof, and in all good things let it be found with thee; for by simplicity and faith thou hast hearkened unto God, and hast gone forth from the world, and thou hast not judged and examined therewith into the things which He spake to thee. For if thou hadst been cunning thou wouldst not have listened unto Him, and if thou hadst inclined thine ear unto His word with thoughts of craftiness thou wouldst not have gone forth after God who called thee, neither [p. 119] would any of those who have been called and who have been obedient unto God have hearkened unto His word and gone forth after His command when He called them to go forth after Him, nor would they have been ministers of His dispensation in any form towards the children of men. For from natural simplicity is born the abundance of the spiritual mind. And observe that the simple mind is able to receive the learning of this world also, for a very young and simple child accepteth the learning of the world and feareth [his] masters, but in proportion as he increaseth in stature and becometh crafty in the things of the children of men, he despiseth [his] masters, and esteemeth learning lightly. And thus also doth simplicity receive spiritual learning, being filled with fear of the Teacher, and being watchful not to forget [His] instruction.

And if any man wisheth to draw nigh to craftiness and therefrom to things which are to be desired, he immediately despiseth instruction, and holdeth God in contempt. Let us then

lay hold upon and be watchful of this good gift, and let the whole course of our life and conduct be in sincerity of heart. Let us reject craftiness and be remote from cunning; let us rebuke wickedness and be watchful against guile; let us be remote from artifice, and let us flee from the Calumniator; and let us cast away from us the tongue which smiteth in secret. And with a simple understanding and innocent mind let us give praises unto the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for ever, Amen.

Here endeth the First Discourse which is on Simplicity. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 5 -- Second Discourse on Simplicity

[P. 120] THE SECOND DISCOURSE WHICH IS ON SIMPLICITY. At all times it is meet for us to direct our discourse to spiritual excellencies in this place----which is the market-place of virtues----for I see that ye yourselves desire to hear a profitable discourse, and not one which is to give pleasure only and to be the cause of cries of approbation. For the words which are composed to give pleasure to the sense of hearing or to stir up cries of the applause of those who listen to them, are absolutely unnecessary in this chaste land, and it is meet that as is the place, so also should be that which is spoken therein. For the country wherein we are gathered together is one of spiritual excellences and help: in it then we will speak with simple words, which bear profit alike to him that speaketh and to them that listen, for it is written, "Let him that heareth the word communicate it to him that listeneth to him in all good things."

The discourse which cometh before this was upon simplicity and innocency, and in this also I desire to speak again concerning this excellent matter----for it is a thing which befitteth us, and simplicity belongeth to us----and that we could live without it in the service of the virtues [p. 121] is by no means possible. For as the members cannot see without the eye, so neither can virtues be cultivated without simplicity; and as when the eye is blind all the members are in darkness, so also when simplicity is done away with all good qualities are impeded. Now simplicity especially befitteth the life of the solitary and ascetic, and innocence of mind greatly befitteth those who have forsaken the world, and who have become strangers thereto; for where there are none of the forms of the world, the craftiness of the world is unnecessary. For here with us we have no buying or selling, and we have not with us vain talk concerning good things which pass away. Here there is none who would be greater than his brethren, or who would wish to appear in greater power than his neighbour. Here there is none who oppresseth or is oppressed, for we have not with us the causes for oppression. Here there are no fields and vineyards to be divided, nor estates which have to be separated by boundary marks.

Here there is no one who wisheth to be richer than his brother, nor any one who wisheth his worldly wealth to be more abundant than that of his companion. Here there is no one

who wisheth to appear in rich garments, for we all have one kind of apparel, that of weeping and humility. Here there is no one who doeth work for his belly, and who wisheth to find preparations of rich foods, for we are all fed from one common table. Here there is no one who wisheth to pluck honour from his brother, for we are all commanded to honour each the other. Here there is no one who speaketh judgment with his [p. 122] fellow, for we all speak judgment each for the other. Here no one wisheth to build [a house], nor doth another lust to found castles, for to us all there is the one narrow dwelling of the ascetic life. Here there is no one who wisheth to enlarge his dwelling and to construct gilded couches for himself, for we all with narrow measure limit our place of sleeping upon the ground with humility. Where these things are wholly made strange things, it is not meet that the craftiness of the world should be found; for where the worldly rule and conduct of life is expelled and cast out, there also it is right that the craftiness thereof should be rejected.

For where the corporeal things of the body are esteemed lightly, there also should be despised the cunning which doeth battle on their behalf. Where the old man is crucified together with his affections, there is it meet that the guile which is the advocate of the old man should also be crucified. Where falsehood is rejected, there is it right that craftiness, the mother of falsehood, should also be rejected. From the place where deceit hath been expelled and cast forth, thence is it meet that its parents and begetters should also go forth. For in the assembly of deceit there is nothing, and falsehood cannot be made of use in it; and it is right that cunning and craftiness, the parents of these things, should be despised. Wherever the humble garb of hair existeth, there is it meet that the simplicity which befitteth it should be honoured; for garments made of linen befit not our rank, and ornamented and embroidered apparel is not good for our order. Similarly, but even much less than these, cunning befitteth not our discipleship, nor doth craftiness [p. 123] become our garb. The ornamentation of the head, which belongeth to the wanton and dissolute, befitteth us not, neither doth deceit, which is the first invention of the Enemy. For craftiness is the possession of the Calumniator and of all his ministers, and simplicity is the riches of Christ and of all His disciples.

Craftiness is alone useful in the conversation of the world, and to those who have set themselves to spoil and plunder others, and for the oppression and defrauding of those akin to them; to them [alone] is apostasy necessary. ”Wisdom dwelleth not in the soul which worketh deceitfully in wickedness”, saith Solomon the wise man , and knowledge of the Spirit sojourneth not in the body which is conquered of sin; for the soul which worketh deceitfully in wickedness is full of cunning, because cunning itself is the inventor of wickedness. Whosoever desireth to serve [his] lusts runneth to become a disciple of cunning, so that with the learning which ariseth therefrom, and with the deceits of iniquity which it sheweth to him he may find means whereby to cover his wickedness, and to make an excuse for the hateful things which are wrought by him. For from where lusts are rejected and human passions cast out, from thence it is meet that the root thereof should be torn out, and cut off, and cast away, even that which increaseth them. In Gabriel and in Michael there is no cunning in name, and there is no craftiness of wickedness. There is neither apostasy nor

the deceit of abominable things in the countries of the Spirit. There is no darkness of deceit [p. 124] in that Jerusalem of light, the city of life. There there is no one who schemeth to overcome by falsehood, for in that country falsehood cannot be made of use.

There there is no one who hath learned to hide his abominable practices, and none who by cunning is able to hide his wickednesses. And as these things exist not in that land of spiritual beings, so also in our land which is the type of that country it is meet that they should not be found. The rule and conduct of the life here is the similitude of that of spiritual beings, and the dwelling here is a type of that of heavenly beings. The conversation of you who are clothed with the body is a copy of that of those celestial and incorporeal beings. It is seemly for you to say that which Paul proclaimed, "Although we live in the flesh, we do not war according to that which is in the flesh". Being corporeal beings ye may be seen with the eyes, but your warfare is wholly spiritual; O corporeal beings, ye are angels, and spiritual beings clothed with flesh. Pure, undenled, innocent, and holy is your dwelling, and the likeness of the celestial habitation of spiritual beings is stamped thereupon. The whole rule and conduct of life of the disciples of Jesus standeth in simplicity, and if thou didst take simplicity therefrom thou wouldst destroy that life. Simplicity is our boast, and whosoever acquireth it is a wise man.

And as in [this] world whosoever is simple is called a fool by fools, so also in this spiritual country is it meet that the cunning man should be called fool by the wise and understanding, for he possesseth in [that] country a possession which is not suitable thereunto, and he findeth therein an invention which belongeth not thereto. No man seeketh to find trees, and seeds, and plants among the waves [p. 125] of the sea, and again no man demandeth to see waves and billows on dry land; but each is to be sought for in its proper place, and there will it be found. And thus it is is not seemly that cunning should be found in the pure country of spiritual beings, because the land of cunning is a world which is full of wickedness. And as songs are unseemly amid the noise of those that weep, and weeping is out of place at a feast, so also is it unseemly that the craftiness of wickedness should be found in the country of simplicity; for within the country of spiritual advantages the invention of cunning is a loss to spiritual beings. Thou wilt not speak with thy brother cunningly, how then can craftiness be necessary unto thee? Thou wilt not lie in ambush in the monastery to slay the righteous man in secret, of what use then will craftiness and deceit be to thee? Why then art thou proud, O fool, of that which will be thy condemnation?

Why dost thou boast thyself in that which will put thee to shame? Why dost thou magnify thyself in that which is thy reproach? Why art thou proud of a possession which belongeth not to thee? Thou hast taken craftiness from the world, and through it thou wilt be condemned, in that all the wickednesses of the world are to be found with thee. The fruits of a tree cling closely thereto, and craftiness is a tree the roots of which are wickednesses; and wherever it is found with it also are found all evil things, and if they are not made manifest by outward deeds, they nevertheless exist in the innermost thoughts. For craftiness is a

disease of the soul, just as simplicity is its certain cure. Where [p. 126] didst thou ever see a sick man boasting of his sickness, or a diseased man who boasted of his pains?

It is meet that the monk who is crafty should be ashamed, because he is found in that which is not seemly for him. For as converse with a harlot is a shame to him, even so it is right that he should be ashamed if craftiness, which is the similitude of a harlot, be found with him. Craftiness in the soul is like a harlot in the street; for as the harlot speaketh with all men and putteth on all persons (or characters) so that she may appear to be like unto every man, even so doth craftiness appear in every variety of opinion, and it prepareth the [various kinds] of ornamented forms which are required [of it], that it may show itself to be like unto every man by them. And that which was written by the Apostle in integrity, "I have become all things "unto all men, that I might profit all men", is wrought in the opposite manner by craftiness, which becometh all things unto all men that it may destroy all men, and that it may mock and laugh at all men. And if these things are the works of craftiness how doth it itself befit the disciple of Christ? And how is it right that it should be found among simple solitaries? Look then with the eye of knowledge and understand that all wickednesses spring from craftiness.

Deceit is in it, falsehood is found therein, calumny is akin thereto, the mocker is its friend, what is whispered it possesseth, the destruction of the Evil One is its mansion, error and prevarication [p. 127] are its doctrine, it is an associate of theft, it is an advocate of adultery, for fornication it maketh an excuse, hypocrisy is to it a garment of which to be proud, by it ambushes are fabricated, it is ready to bear false witness, and of the empty prating of lying it is the mother. And to speak finally, craftiness hath made itself an advocate of all wickednesses, that it may pronounce right that which concerns them: some of them it covereth up, for some of them it maketh excuse, of some of them it prateth that they exist not, and it multiplieth words intended to convince, and feigneth excuses, to some wickednesses it giveth other aspects, and sayeth that they did not take place for this reason, and that they were not wrought with this design. Unto it is gathered together all lying speech, it cleaveth to judges when they wish to steal, of it governors make use when they wish to take bribes, and it cleaveth to those who work wickedness when they are judged. The woman who wisheth to trangress the path of law against her husband taketh it into her company, and then she goeth forth to the error of depravity; when it hath been learned by children they begin to lie to their masters.

The advocates who plead before judges compose their speeches of its riches, and their perverse things are forged in its furnace. It spreadeth the nets of iniquity, and layeth out the toils upon the paths of the wayfarers, it hideth the snares of deceit, it diggeth the pits of destruction, it is a follower that hath been paid and that demandeth a second time. Until lying draweth nigh to it, [p. 128] it knoweth not how to make excuse for itself; lying is ready to utter falsehood, and how it is do so craftiness teacheth. Falsehood maketh ill will ready, but of how it is to be wrought in deed craftiness is the counsellor. [Falsehood] beginneth to walk in lying, in the path which is contrary to the truth, and it crieth to craftiness, "Come

in my train", and then it goeth forth. Craftiness is the teacher of all wickednesses, and it is the ready advocate of all abominable things; it hath respect unto every person, and it speaketh right of every thing, and maketh excuse therefor. And it seemeth as if this had been said by craftiness to wickedness, "O thou wickedness, do evil as long as thou wishest, and let all thy members enjoy the pleasures of lust. Let the body of thy senses be delicately nurtured on the things which it loveth, let all thy fruits collect in them their natural taste, and let them grow large and become ripe. So long as thou lustest enjoy thyself and spare not, live delicately and afflict not thine eye.

Do evil so long as thou pleasest, and work wickedness, and fornicate as long as thou wishest. Take thy fill of iniquity and fear not; perfect thyself in all abominable things and be not moved thereat. Let not the fair fame of laws disturb thee, and let not the threatening of the judge move thee. Be not terrified at the voice of governors, and let not the cry of lords make thee afraid. Against all [these] I am armed on thy behalf, and I will make an excuse for thee to all who blame thee. It is easy for me to turn to thy glory the blame which is laid upon thee and those things which [p. 129] others imagine will condemn thee, and I will bind a crown of victory upon thy head. All my care is for thee, and in thoughts on thy behalf I am steeped by day and by night, so that whenever I am required to do so I can make an excuse for thee; at all times am I careful [for thee]. Do thou then, O wickedness, enjoy thyself in pleasures, and I will learn the instruction which will make thee innocent. Be not anxious how or what thou shalt speak before the judges, for I will make speech for thee. I will silence those who bring accusations against thee, and I will vanquish justice which shall declare against thee, and I will silence the equitable arguments of the judges [who condemn] thee of crime.

I am thy tongue, O wickedness, and I have made myself ready to be for thee a mouth which speaketh; against every tongue which wisheth to pronounce judgment against thee I will stand up, and I will condemn it".

Now these encouragements are offered to wickedness by craftiness, and with such speech as this it corrupteth it to stir it up to pass on to iniquity. Therefore cunning is the wicked principle of wickedness, it is the power of sin, and it is the life of the body of abominable things; and if craftiness existed not, in very surety wickedness would remain quiescent through fear of being found guilty and through terror of the judgment which is prepared for it by justice; so therefore, craftiness is the most evil of all wickednesses. Craftiness is the strong tower of sin, for when sin hath come down on the paths, and hath plundered every man, it fleeth to craftiness for refuge that it may make an excuse for it to those who bring accusations against it, and it hideth itself in it as in a strong tower from [p. 130] the leaders of justice, who have gone forth to track out its footsteps. Behold with what wickedness is thy boasting, O disciple of woe! and of what wilt thou be proud, O wolf who art clothed in a lamb's skin? If craftiness is in thee all iniquity is with thee, and if cunning is in thy soul all sin dwelleth in thee. If thy life consisted! of the guile of apostasy, all wickedness dwelleth in thee;

and thy hateful things are not seen outwardly, for craftiness itself covereth them over, for thus is it promised by it to whomsoever will become its disciple, that it will be a veil for his sin. This thing which is the mother of all wickednesses is not seemly for thee, neither doth the wickedness which hath become a nest of all wickednesses befit thee. Do thou then, O upright disciple, rejoice in thy simplicity with which thou hast run the path of righteousness, and be not ashamed because thou art called "child", for this name befitteth thee, and this appellation is worthy of thee, for thereby thy freedom from iniquity is made known; for the name "child" is one which indicateth his innocence, and it is the byname of the simple one, and it proclaimeth that there is no guile in him. For as every handicraftsman in [this] world (or him who serveth in the army of the sovereignty of man) hath a name whereby his position (or rank) is known, and whereby his handicraft is distinguished, so also is it with the disciple, and his name shall be called "simple". Would that thou wert called by the name by which God is called! for the word "simple" indicateth something which is single.

For in the simple man there is no deceit, [p. 131] and snares are not devised in his presence, and falsehood prospereth not in him, and deceitfulness is not to be found in him, and in him calumny dwelleth not, and he smiteth not his companion in secret, and he seeketh not to do evil, and he schemeth not to do injury, and he hath no deceit towards his neighbour in him, and he meditateth not wickedness against his brother who dwelleth with him in peace; but he is a pure and clear vessel, and the neighbourhood of him is the neighbourhood of light. And as in the natural child none of these wickednesses ariseth, so also in him whose mind is simple not one of these things hath motion; for the child by reason of his childishness meditateth not wickednesses, nor doth the simple one by reason of his simplicity think upon abominable things. For in the word simplicity are gathered together all good things, just as in the name craftiness are borne all wickednesses. Simplicity is a cultivated field which receiveth the seed and plants of all excellent things, and craftiness is a piece of ground which is filled with brambles and briars, that is to say, with divided and empty thoughts. And as the growth of good seed is retarded in the field which is full of brambles and briars, so also is the simple growth of faith retarded by the divided thoughts of craftiness.

And as the growth of good seed in ground which is free from the sprouts of thorns is healthy, so also doth the growth of the word of truth spring up healthily within the simple understanding. For simplicity judgeth not the words of faith, and it seeketh not to find out for what reason [p. 132] God hath commanded in such a manner, and it [urgeth] no objection against what it hath been told to do; but it heareth uprightly, and it receiveth innocently, and it keepeth [the command] simply. For simplicity is without toil in all its actions, and it is not oppressed by the opinions which bind and loose others, for the service of righteousness is easy to simplicity, and it travelleth along the path of labours without delay. For this reason our Lord also taught His disciples the innocency of children, that He might make them to acquire simplicity; He rejected the cunning and chose the simple, He cast out the crafty men and the scribes, and He brought to Himself the ignorant and innocent. Annas was a crafty man, Caiaphas was a cunning man, the Pharisees were subtle, and the scribes were deceitful, but the choice of our Redeemer rejected all these;

and instead of Caiaphas He chose Simon, and instead of Annas, John, and instead of the scribes, Andrew, and instead of the Pharisees, Matthew, and instead of the men of knowledge, Philip, and instead of the crafty, Bartholomew, and instead of the cunning, James----a band of simple men instead of a company of crafty men----and He chose those who knew nothing instead of those who thought that they knew themselves everything.

At all times truth prevaileth by simplicity, and faith shineth forth in innocency. And moreover, after our Lord had rejected the companies of the wise, and the bands of cunning and crafty men, and had chosen those fishermen who were innocent and without instruction, He moreover taught them also to increase their simplicity, and not to abide in that first grade of their childlikeness only. [p. 133] And He took a child and set him in the midst of them, and looking at them all, He said, "Except ye be converted, and become like this child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven".And this our Lord did because He saw that they sought to depart from the mind of their simplicity through a question of position of honour and to receive one a grade above the other. A question such as this the simple never seek to enquire into, but this question was born of a mind which desired to examine into matters with craftiness. And our Lord rebuked this outcome of a troublesome question, and said to His disciples, chiding and reproving them, "If ye are Mine ye must be simple men, and if ye desire the kingdom of heaven, ye must be like unto this child; as ye desire to receive the life which is to come abide in sincerity. If ye wish to become wise in the word of life abide in your ignorance, for from being simple I do not desire that ye become cunning, but from being simple become ye wise.

For he that runneth to become cunning from being simple goeth downwards, but he that runneth to become simple from being cunning goeth upwards. The cunning man receiveth not My doctrine, and for the reason that ye are simple children I have chosen you. Ye have rejected cunning in others, beware lest it be in you and I reject you because of it. Let this child be a proof to you that as he desireth nothing of the world, and asketh for nothing of the children of men, neither [p. 134] rank nor honour, neither riches nor power, but only the mere food and clothing of which his childhood hath need, so also do ye become children like unto him, and upright and simple like unto him, that ye may be to Me chosen disciples, and that ye may be found by Me [to be] even as I have chosen you". Behold then, by this command also did Jesus our Lord incite us to simplicity, and He warned us to become innocent and upright. For it is not right that we should be ashamed of simplicity, and should seek to be excused therefrom as from a thing of [this] world which is useless to us, nor that the simple should be despised in our eyes, nor that we should consider them to be good for nothing; for [although] they are unnecessary for [this] world, they are useful and necessary to the kingdom of God.

For that which is rejected by the children of men is a choice thing with God, even as also the Apostles were rejected by all the world, and our Redeemer Jesus also was hated and rejected by all the Jews. So then also whosoever rejecteth the simple, and despiseth and contemneth them because of their simplicity, the portion of this audacious man shall be placed with that

of the Jews, and scribes, and Pharisees, who rejected Christ and His disciples. And observe what penalty the word of Christ hath decreed against that man who shall make one of them to stumble; beware then lest ye make them to stumble. Now although the saying, "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it were better for him that the millstone [turned by] [p. 135] an ass should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea",admitteth of other significations, yet it is particularly applicable to the simple, that no man may dare to scoff at the simplicity of the upright.

For when thou hast laughed at and hast mocked and made scorn of his simplicity, and hast blamed his pacific nature and hast despised his integrity, and he is accounted by thee fit for nothing and useless, the indignation of thy blasphemies against him will drive him to strip off and to cast away his innocency and to deny his simplicity, as if it were the cause why he should be mocked, and to flee from that childlikeness by reason of which he was deemed by the audacious to be a fool, and instead of what he was, to become what he was not, and through thy indignation and thy blasphemies against him thou wilt make him to stumble in his first rule and conduct, and to forsake it, and instead thereof to lay hold upon other things which are the opposite of his innocency. And although he be leading a life of silent meditation he will reject this, and will honour and choose speech rather than silent meditation, and craftiness rather than his early simplicity, and subtlety rather than his ignorance, and from being a sweet-tempered and peaceful man thou wilt make him a furious and wrathful man.

Now therefore when thou thus hast caused him to stumble, and he hath been driven by thy indignation to change his good qualities into bad ones, it were better for thee that the millstone [turned by] an ass should be hanged about thy neck, and that thou shouldst be cast into the depths of the sea, rather than that thou shouldst cause one of these little ones who believe on the Son to stumble.

Observe thou also that our Lord Himself called them "little ones", because they make themselves smaller than all men, and He did so to teach thee not to despise them because they followed after littleness, but rather that they might be magnified in thy sight, [p. 136] For the appearance of the simple is common, and their garb is rude and bad; and whosoever wisheth to despise them obtaineth a cause whereby he may mock at them from their appearance, because they have not the skill which knoweth how to arrange their outward appearance before the children of men, and to make them appear outwardly before the world as distinguished and famous men. Do thou, however, take a reason from this fact, and magnify them especially, and let their lowly condition be to thee the cause for honouring them, and let their despised state be the object of their being glorified. For where faith hath been preserved in its integrity, and hath not been corrupted with thoughts of craftiness, it honoureth and magnifieth simplicity, and it loveth and supporteth it, even though it happen that its appearance is contemptible. And from the experience of facts thou mayest understand how greatly simple men are loved by believers, and for Christ's sake how dear are the ignorant and simple to the whole body of Christ's disciples. And, moreover, thou mayest un-

derstand that the crafty men of [this] world run towards the ignorant men of faith, and that cunning men and rulers bow down before the simplicity of Christ. For look and observe the great ones of the world how lovingly they embrace simplicity and [how] they worship and love ignorance, and how in proportion as a man appeareth in the excellent part of simplicity, the more especially is he great and honourable in their eyes. For the children of the world do not go forth to the spiritual folds which are outside the world to see crafty and cunning man.

Lift up thine eyes, O disciple, and look upon these who come to thee, and who run to thy door in love, for they run to see the children of the spirit, and not those who are trained and experienced [p. 137] in the deeds and affairs of the world. For when those who are exercised and skilled in the wisdom of the world wish to see crafty and cunning men they go into towns and cities; but when they go forth from the world they wish to see simple men and children of Christ. Let not Him come and find thee a serpent instead of a dove, and a hawk instead of a simple bird, and with thy discourse [directed] to evil thing's instead of being wise to good things. Let Him come, O disciple, and find thee as He wisheth to see thee, for He Himself hath cast off His craftiness, and hath put on humility, in which He hath drawn nigh to thee. And wouldst thou follow to put on that which He hath cast off, and wouldst thou desire to possess that which He hath rejected? He did not carry and bring with Him thoughts of cunning, but the simplicity of faith; when He cometh into thy dwelling, let Him not come and find that which He left in the world in the country of spiritual things.

And hearken unto the prophet who also proclaimed our Lord with his simple teaching, and who likened Him unto a lamb and a sheep, the most innocent of all animals: ---- "Like a lamb was He led to the slaughter, "and like a sheep before the shearer He was silent". The lion and the wolf and bear are crafty, together with the other wild beasts, because craftiness was mingled with their evil nature when they were made; but sheep and lambs and ewes are simple and innocent in their ways and movements, and to them was our Lord likened, and by their name are believers called. Our Lord did not liken Himself unto a lion, which bringeth suffering and death, and He did not call His flocks by the names, of [wild] animals, which by the nature in which they were created are cunning in respect of evil things, [p. 138] but He was called "lamb" and "sheep", and being meek like unto them He was led to suffering and to death, for "like a sheep before his shearer He was silent", and thus He in His humility opened not His mouth. And we may be sure that the word of the prophecy is true in fact, for when they took Him, He was quiet; and when they judged Him, He was silent; and when they smote Him, He complained not; and when they condemned Him, He disputed not their judgment; and when they bound Him, He moved not; and when they smote Him on His cheeks, He murmured not;

and when He was stripped of His garments as a sheep at its shearing, He cried not out; and when they gave Him gall and vinegar, He cursed them not; and when they fastened Him to the wood, He raged not at them; and when Simon wished to throw off the simpleness of the sheep, and took a sword to avenge the insult of his Master, He rebuked him, [and

commanded him] to carry [it] in its sheath, saying, ”Put back thy sword into its place”, for I have no need of thy help. The doctor and teacher of all wisdom stood before the judge, and He refrained and answered not a word. He kept the command of simplicity that He might confirm the prophecy, ”He was led as a lamb ”to the slaughter”. They led Him as One who was speechless, and they took Him round about from one place to another, and they drove Him from place to place, and they dragged Him from one judge to another. He stood before Annas and was silent, and until he adjured Him He spake not; He was questioned by Pilate and was silent, and until He heard from him the words, ”Art thou the king of the Jews? which made known [to Him] that he suspected Him of being a rebel against [p. 139] Caesar, He answered them not a word. They carried Him to Herod, who [wishing] to see and hear from Him great things asked Him questions temptingly;

and there also He stood silent and spake not, and He returned no answer to His questioner. He was esteemed a contemptible man who knew nothing, and a fool who had no answer [to give]. The Jews and priests thought [this] because they wished [it]; but He forsook not the simpleness of a lamb, and the law of simplicity He left not. The Apostle Paul considered Him as one ”of no reputation”,and the crucifiers considered Him to lack understanding, and [His] enemies accounted Him to be without knowledge and intelligence, and concerning Jesus Paul spake against them, ”The foolishness of God is wiser than the ”children of men”.

For in order that it may not weigh heavily upon thee to be thought contemptible in thy simplicity by the children men, God Himself hath shewn Himself to be of ”no reputation, ”in that He stood before His questioners without answering a word; and He was thought by them to be an ignorant man because He returned them not an answer. Wherefore do thou also persist in the power of thy soul, and transgress not the law of simplicity, even though thou be considered to be a fool by every man, and art esteemed to be without knowledge and instruction. For whosoever is angry if he be considered by man to be simple and ignorant, his mind is fettered by the passion of the love of the vain knowledge of the world, and if he is thought to be the opposite, trouble and sorrow rule his life. For in order that thou mayest finish thy course it is meet that thou shouldst endure everything, and thou must fashion thy journey for the end of the path.

[p. 140]For behold David the prophet also in [his] scheme for delivering his life from death feigned himself to the Philistines to be a madman and without sense, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard after the manner of a man who lacked understanding, that he might save his life from death. And if David feigned himself to be mad, and to be without understanding and discretion that he might not destroy [his] life in this world, how much more is it meet for thee to abide in thy simplicity, and not to be overcome by the indignation of the scoffers, and not to depart from the goal which is laid down for thee, for the sake of life everlasting? And our Lord also called the faithful ones of His pastures by names in which simplicity is indicated: ”If thou lovest Me”, He said to Simon, the chief of His disciples, ”feed My sheep, and My lambs, and My ewes”. And as He was called symbolically by the word of

the prophecy, ”lamb”, and ”sheep”, and John also called Him, ”The Lamb of God”, even so did He call the disciples of His word by the names which indicate simpleness.

And He did this that when all believers heard what names were given to them by the Shepherd they might, like sheep, and lambs, and ewes, be incited to abide in all simpleness, and might not go forth from the law of simplicity, and that like these innocent animals, which are led to death, and are brought to slaughter, and are bound for shearing, and are hunted by [wild] beasts, they might neither cry out nor complain, but [p. 141] remain in quietness and in the innocency of their nature. And thus also is it meet for the disciple of the Lord, that before all trials of words or deeds, of afflictions and evil speakings, of fetterings and violence, of oppression and prison, of indignation against calumnies, and of lying accusations, he should abide in the simpleness of his heart, and should not forsake the law of his contemplative life, and should not cast away his innocency, and should not forsake his simplicity and become crafty to do harm to his enemies; for the deceit of wickedness, and the crafty things of the iniquitous men are the work which belongeth to them, and their life is at all times at leisure to do their work. But to thee there belongeth the work which is hidden from their knowledge, and the sincerity of thy mind is able to perfect it; thou wilt delight thyself therein, but they are not able to feel this enjoyment, for they are not accounted worthy of the pleasures of thy own delights.

For simplicity hath no anxious care, and for this reason joy is at all seasons continually with it. For as the joy of children is continual, and laughter is abundant with them by reason of their simplicity, for the anxious cares of the world cannot smite the joy which moveth with simpleness in their minds----so also is joy continual at all seasons in the simple heart, because there are no means for trouble to fill it when it goeth not forth to labour. Whosoever wisheth to do evil to his enemy, and is not able to do it, or whosoever deviseth plans to become rich, and becometh not rich, or whosoever runneth [p. 142] to overtake, and overtaketh not, by reason of these things sorrow and grief rule his life, and all the joy which is born of simplicity is taken away from him. The simple man is, according to what is imagined, of no use to the world; and if thou, O disciple, art esteemed to be of no use to the world, let not this be grievous unto thee, for it is the glory of the Christian when he is not trained in the things of the world, and when he is worthless absolutely for the life and conduct of the body.

For if a man were to say to thee, ”Thou knowest not the carpenter’s craft”, or, ”Thou knowest not how to labour in the tanner’s craft”, or, ”Thou knowest not any of the contemptible trades of the world”, this would not be a reason for laughing at thee, because not even a king would be disgraced for not knowing how to labour in any of the crafts of the world, but rather would this fact be to thy glory, for inasmuch as the king’s rule is exalted above these things and he cannot condescend to know them, the ignorance of them will be found to be creditable to him, for the knowledge thereof would cause him to be blamed. And as we see also many men, who occupy some position of worldly honour, and who have knowledge of certain crafts and trades, and are acquainted with affairs which are beneath their position,

deny and say that they know them not----and this ignorance is held to be creditable to them, and as if it were an honour to them they run and take refuge therein and say that they do not understand crafts and trades----in like manner therefore to the disciple of Christ [p. 143] is the ignorance of the affairs of the world a cause of glorification. And that he knoweth not how to act craftily and cunningly redoundeth to his praise, and it is a fair reputation to him. that he is unacquainted with the deceits of wickedness;

and the knowledge of these things is before him accounted to be a disgrace which is greater than that which would accrue to a king of this world if he knew the handicrafts and trades of the world. And that the. disciple who is written down for the celestial kingdom should know the things which are alien to his profession, and which are remote from the life and rule of his instruction, would be a matter for blame. For his life is not free from conversation with God to turn to the doctrine of these contemptible things; and to meditate upon the things which belong to the flesh; and to scheme how he may do harm unto, and injure his enemies, and how he may become rich and acquire possessions, and how he may speak, and hear things against those who oppress him, and how he may find profit, and with what reasons he may find it. For the conversation of the simple who are with God doth not allow the disciple to turn towards these things and to meditate in them, neither doth it make him to descend from die height of the knowledge of the kingdom of Christ to the schemes and plans and anxious cares belonging to infirm passions, which are at all times sick, and which move to and fro in their minds.

Now it befitteth not the mind, in the simplicity of which the faith of Christ moveth, to turn and take anxious care concerning the deceits of the flesh, and concerning the craftinesses of destruction. Let it not then be accounted to thee a disgrace that thou art not acquainted with the craftinesses of the world, but let it be to thee an exceeding great honour, that thou, in the likeness of spiritual beings, art exalted and raised above the things which are of the flesh, for neither have the spiritual beings inventions and crafty schemes concerning the affairs of the world. For if their rule and conduct of life [p. 144] is superior to all carnalmindedness, it is evident that their mind also must be superior to passions; and all their conversation must be upon divine meditations alone, having been brought up in the knowledge of the spirit in the things which are above their knowledge. And they go not down to see what is beneath them, because they desire not to descend from their grades; but they earnestly desire to go up, and to become participators at all times with what is before them in the mysteries of the Self-existent One. Now therefore in the similitude of these powers are the minds which are not disturbed by material things, and they form a grade of spiritual beings who learn only the things which are above the world, and whose thoughts descend not to the quest and doctrine of the things which are alien to their kind.

For as the learning of one handicraft is separate and distinct from another, and whosoever becometh an apprentice to one handicraft is strenuous to learn it and not another, in the place of instruction, in like manner let the whole meditation and conversation of the disciple be upon the learning of his handicraft, and let him not destroy the anxious care of his

thoughts by anything else. For our handicraft is the doctrine of spiritual things, and our trade is that our thoughts and our deeds should be above the world, and that we should participate at all times in what is before us in the things which are of the Spirit. The apprentice who maketh not progress in learning his handicraft in the workshop is blamed by his masters, and he is mocked at, and made a laughing-stock by his companions; and the disciple of this spiritual handicraft who is like unto him deserveth to be blamed more than he, [p. 145] for he should increase [in knowledge] day by day, and he should progress in the work of the body and in the thoughts of the spirit, for the loss which shall betide each of them is manifest and well known. For the man who receiveth not the instruction of a handicraft of the world loseth the benefits which are to be found in the handicraft;

but whosoever receiveth not the teaching of Christ and groweth not in virtues, his loss is the kingdom of heaven, and the happiness and delight which are sealed and preserved for the chosen of God, and that which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, and which hath not gone up in the heart of man, and that intercourse which the perfect will have with Christ, and for the sake of which Christ Himself even came down from heaven to earth, and in the end this man's loss is his own person, together with the good things which are above nature.

For the mind which is able to receive these things is sincere and simple. And as the mind of the child is more sincere and receiveth instruction in everything more easily than the full-grown man, so also is the mind of the simple man of better disposition in the learning of spiritual things than crafty and cunning thoughts. For simplicity is a piece of good ground which receiveth readily the seeds and plants of this doctrine. And as there are qualities which make certain pieces of ground in the natural world to receive trees and plants and which make them to bear fruit more quickly than those in other fields, so also is it in respect of the fields of the thoughts of the simple; for they receive the plants of this spiritual doctrine with simplicity, and [the ground] speedily layeth hold [p. 146] of them, and maketh [them] to bear fruit. On the other hand the ground of craftiness is oppressive to this doctrine, and it either receiveth it not at all, or if it layeth hold of the doctrine, and it is accepted by it, the growth which is therein is strangled by the brambles and thorns of doubts and thoughts which are always throwing down and building up those who are the adversaries of faith and of simplicity.

Rejoice then in simplicity, O disciple, for not only will it make thee beloved before God, but also will it make thee dear in the sight of men; and thou mayest observe and see, if thou wilt from the experience of facts, that the simple are more beloved in the sight of the children of men than the cunning and crafty. Every man loveth simplicity, even also as childlikeness is dear unto every man; for both the simple and the childlike are alike beloved. But cunning and wickedness are hated by every man, and every man is on his guard against them; for they are full of deceits and ambushes, and their habit is to overturn the integrity of everything. Simplicity, however, in addition to being beloved, is a place of confidence, and no man is on his guard against the simple man in whatsoever he doeth, for he is acquainted with his sincerity, and he knoweth that he deviseth not wickedness. And as no man is on

his guard against a child who wisheth to go secretly into a house, for his childhood hath not power to make him become a spectator of that which will cause him loss, so also no man is on his guard against the simple man in the things which he wisheth to do, for he beareth the similitude of a child in his thoughts.

Who then would not earnestly desire to be beloved by God, and to be accounted dear by man? [p. 147] and both these things are possible through simplicity. Why therefore, O disciple, shouldst thou flee from becoming beloved by God and dear unto man, seeing that thou canst obtain love from the Creator and from His creation for nothing? But perhaps thou sayest, "They mock at me, and consider me a fool and a simple man, and without understanding, and without discretion", but what good thing is there that hath not its drawback, O disciple? If thou art afraid of the things which are drawbacks to those that are good, no good thing can ever spring from thee, for to all things drawbacks are to be found, and in the working of them all toil is mingled, in addition to the envy and jealousy which are stirred up in the children of men against the other virtues. Now this virtue of simplicity is more free from evil consequences than all vices, because envy and jealousy are not continually opposed to it, nor do hatred and enmity contend with it. And if simplicity bringeth with it this slight contempt and scorn, love is nevertheless also found therewith.

And the men who scorn the simple man love him, and he is not despised in their sight because of hatred, but either because of their [want of] confidence [in him] or because he is not useful unto them for what they seek, they consider him a fool in respect of the things of the world, and a simple man as concerning the conversation of man, and without knowledge in respect of cunning and wickedness. Therefore in the things in which thou rejoicest it is meet that thou shouldst be considered that which thou art, and that thou shouldst be called that [p. 148] which it is right for thee to be. If a man now were to say unto thee, "Thou knowest not how to lie, or to commit adultery, or to steal", would it be a disgrace unto thee? Or [if he were to say], "Thou knowest not how to stand in a chariot, or to become a charioteer", or, "Thou art not acquainted with the craft of the athlete", or, "Thou knowest not how to sing nor the art of the dancers", or, "Thou art not able to jest and laugh, and thou canst not play the part and act like the actors"; would the ignorance, I say, of these things be considered a disgrace to thee? I trow not. And no man would blame thee because thou wast a stranger to the knowledge of these professions.

And so also let it not be considered a disgrace by thee that thou art lacking the craft of wickedness and the deceit of abominable things, for also the blessed David said that the upright and men of integrity clave unto him,and it is well known that integrity is born of simplicity. Now my speech here referreth to the purity of spirit which ariseth in the soul after the flight of all wickedness; for the order of natural simplicity is one thing, and the order of purity of the spirit is another. The simplicity of nature is the beginning of the path of the doctrine of Christ, but purity of spirit is the end of the path of righteousness. And whosoever beginneth in simplicity endeth in purity, even also as the blessed Apostles, when they were chosen, at the beginning were simple men; but at the end of the dispensation

after they had received the Holy Ghost, they were shewn to be pure men. Now purity is this: a man should by toil, and weariness, and striving against all hateful motions separate [p. 149] from him the filth of wickedness, and cast it away from him, and the purity and undefiledness of pure thoughts and of the thoughts which are moved by the Spirit, and are above all doubt, should abide in him. And simplicity is that which is not stirred up naturally in these thoughts;

and that which simplicity distinguisheth not when it entereth, it must overcome in contest, and in wisdom must reject, and expel, and cast forth from the place of its purity. These things purity doeth.

Now simplicity is the beginning of the path, and a field cleansed from thorns to receive good seed. That a man should root up thorns, and hoe up weeds, and clean the ground and make it ready and prepare it to receive good seed and beautiful plants is one thing, but the field which is sown, and planted, and beareth fruit, and which looketh for whomsoever will gather the crops, and how the produce which it beareth shall be carried and laid up in the barns, is another. Now the condition of purity is that of a field which is full of grain and plants, and which beareth fruit of the kinds which have grown to their fullest extent, and have become ripe; and simplicity is a tilled field from which the weeds have been hoed up, and which is ready and fit to receive whatsoever may be placed therein. Cunning and craftiness are a field which is full of weeds, and thorny growths, and tares, into which even if good seed fell, it would choke its sprout, and smite its growth. O disciple, be thou a tilled and prepared field for Jesus, [p. 150] and let Him cast in thee the good seed of His word, and let Him plant in thee the new plant of His doctrine. And if thou hast simplicity in thy nature, rejoice therein, and be strenuous to add unto it; but if thou possessest it not as from a natural seed, follow diligently after it with eager desire and possess it.

For it is an invention which will do benefit unto thy life which is in God, and it will enable thee to live thy life without fear and in confidence in the dwelling in which thou art. The simple man is not esteemed an evil by men, and he is not afraid of the wickedness of others; so long as he himself schemeth not to do evil, he thinketh that others will not do harm unto him. For simplicity imagineth that every man is like unto itself, and as a man is towards himself, and according to what he is towards himself he thinketh that he and every [other] are like unto it. Simplicity is its own mirror, and is the appearance of its own self, and as it looketh upon itself so it looketh upon every man; and as it itself is without guile, even so it thinketh concerning others; and although those who look upon themselves are doubtful about the distinctions of their wickedness in respect of themselves, yet to simplicity they are all one. And for this reason it abideth at all times without storms, and waves and breakers are not stirred up within it to disturb its simple state;

because the wind of craftiness by which are stirred all the waves of expectation never bloweth thereupon, [p. 151] For as in the natural sea storms are stirred up through the agency of the wind which bloweth over its surface, so also through the blowing of the wind of craftiness which bloweth through it are the confused thoughts of cunning produced, and

the meditation of abominable things stirred up from within it. Now the mind of the simple man is a place of tranquillity in which there are no storms, and as the sea is smooth and without waves when there is no wind, so also is the simple mind at peace in [its] freedom from all the things which can terrify it, and which beat upon it like waves. For simplicity is a haven which hideth within it the ships which flee before the storms of craftiness, and everything which entereth therein it maketh to abide in peace, and it turneth all disturbance into the condition of peace.

Not only is the simple man himself simple, but that which cometh into him he turneth to his own condition. For to simplicity is also closely joined obedience, and besides that it judgeth not the things which are spoken into it, it doth not dispute against the things which [men] command it to do. The dwelling of the simple man is restful to those who are near thereto, and all those who know it rejoice therein. Round about it there is no contention, and in its neighbourhood there is no strife, and in its company there is no quarrelling, and in its obedience there is no compulsion, and it contradicteth not that which is said unto it. Every man seizeth it, yea by choice, and in the doubtfulness of affairs it is chosen by many, for it is considered the better part by whosoever cometh thereto, [p. 152] For he knoweth not that he will not be heard, and he knoweth not that he will dispute with any man; for all his knowledge [tendeth] towards good things, and not towards bad, and he deviseth means whereby he may please those who give him commands and not how he may resist their will. Simplicity then befitteth the life and conduct of solitaries, and integrity is meet for the life of the anchorite, and sincerity becometh the monastic life, and gladness is meet for self-denial, and simpleness belongeth unto poverty.

The chief priests of the Jews marvelled at the Apostles, because being simple and unlettered men they were making answers like wise men to questions concerning the life which is to come, and they became advocates of Christ through their simplicity. For Christ took foolish advocates to speak for Him, that through them He might the more proclaim the triumph of His wisdom, and that it might be known unto all men that it was not they who were speaking but He Who spoke in them; "They perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men; and they remembered that they had gone hither and thither with Jesus", and they marvelled at them. So then that simplicity should keep the commandments was also a marvellous thing, and that ignorant men should do what wise man could not was a thing to be wondered at. For if the priests had been acquainted with the Apostles before the time when they became wise men, and they had not spoken wisely, they would not have been greatly astonished at them, for they would have heard from them that which befitted their instruction; but they marvelled especially at them because they heard from them what they expected not, [p. 153] and they answered them with speech which was above the measure of all wise men, and through their simplicity Jesus triumphed, and His wisdom was proclaimed before all men.

And for this reason also our Lord chose the simple, and rejected the wise and learned, that He might teach every one who should become His disciple to lay hold upon this beginning,

and to walk therein unto Him, and that we should not follow after cunning because it is thought to be wisdom by the world, or seek to be excused from possessing simplicity because it is held in contempt among the children of men. For behold our Lord shewed unto us two things by His choice; He chose fishermen, and He chose tax-gatherers, that is to say, He chose the simple and the wicked, the fools and the knaves, the opposite of knowledge, and the opposite of righteousness----for such are fishermen and tax-gatherers, and the fisherman hath no knowledge, and the tax-gatherer hath no righteousness----that when these two classes of men had acquired the two things to which they were strangers, Jesus might be revealed to all men. as the One Who maketh wise and the One Who maketh just. Matthew and Zacchaeus, those who clave to Christ, had acquired the training of the world, but when they had been chosen they were found [to be] simple men, and their obedience testifieth to their simplicity;

for until they had become above the training of the world, and had become strangers to the human craftiness which they had acquired, and until they stood in the measure of the simplicity of fishermen, Christ did not bring them near to become the receivers of His doctrine, and He did not give them power over the treasures of His knowledge, but forthwith, in addition to that which He in all places commanded concerning simplicity, [p. 154] He counselled them to become like simple children, and He spake for the sake of those disciples so that He might also restrain others from the doctrine of craftiness. He taught the simple to abide in their simplicity, and He admonished those who had been reared in the doctrine of craftiness to cast away from them this denied garment, that both classes might come into uniformity, and might, as it were, begin to run the path of virtue upon each other's legs. Now there are some who, without training, become the children of simplicity, like Simon, and Andrew, and James, and John, and there are others who by being brought up in the world are held fast in the womb of cunning, like Matthew, and Zacchaeus, and Philip, and many others; and to those which were not brought forth He gave birth from craftiness to the state of simpleness.

And He swathed them all in the swaddling band of simplicity, and then He began to rear them in the stature of His doctrine, and to bring them to the measure of the strength of the Spirit. And if in respect of the Apostles simplicity appeared to be far beyond everything here in value, how much more especially is it right that it should be found with us, and it should be beloved in the congregation of the solitaries where our service also demandeth this, and those who come to us expect that they may see us thus. The crafty disciple prospereth not, and he is envious of evil things for all his fellow disciples. He is a teacher of evil things and not of good, and an example of loss, and not of gain. He is a teacher of disobedience, and one who sheweth forth stubbornness; [p. 155] he wandereth among empty things and speaketh those which are useless, being shut up he would be a wanderer, he is bound by necessity, he is led by force to what he desireth not, he is a labourer full of grumbling, and a lazy hireling, for that which his mouth eateth he worketh not; he is a destroyer of the field of the prosperous man, for he shutteth up his own farm, and it remaineth without tillage by him; he is a stone of stumbling to those who run, and a guide of strange paths;

he bringeth forth deceit to those who travel uprightly, and he perverteth the path before those who run in integrity; he looketh gladly at that which is ruined; he eagerly desireth rulers, and is a lover of rich men; he is an associate of noble and famous men, and a companion of those who live delicately; he fasteth by necessity, and is [only] weaned from meats by the force of the law; he laboureth without advantage; he is a disciple in appearance and not in thought; he nourisheth deceit, and is a soul which desireth evil things; he is a scoffing tongue, and a proud and empty man; he is an abject in which there is nothing; he is a drawback to all right dealing; he is built up by various forms of stumblings; he is a body framed of limbs of falsehood; he throweth blame upon every thing, and he abuseth everything which is done; he taketh vengeance upon those who look not upon him: he is slow to good things, but runneth quickly after evil things; he is a child of slumber, a son of slothfulness, an enemy of watching and a hater of prayer; he is a companion of the table which is always laid, he awaitetli dainty foods, and looketh out for delicacies; he is the right hand of the Calumniator, and the secret arm of the Enemy. These and such-like things are found in the cunning disciple, but the things which we have spoken [above] are [only] the kernel of his deformities;

and it is meet that whosoever is thus should be despised by all men, [p. 156] in order that his wickedness may be smitten through contempt of him.

And the prophet of God abuseth those who are foolish in respect of good things, and wise in respect of evil things. "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding; he cometh to Egypt and he goeth to Assyria, and in the way of repentance towards Me he walketh not". Now the prophet maketh an accusation against such silliness, because it is not simplicity, but folly. And this also is the wickedness of those who are silly in respect of good things. Instead of one Redeemer, they have chosen unto themselves many helpers, and they have forsaken the path which leadeth to God, and have run after the Egyptians and Assyrians that they might come to their help. And although they have experienced many times that they were not able to redeem them from the evils in which they stood, they never became wise enough through the experience of facts to run to God's place of refuge. And the prophet likened them unto doves whose fruit others carried off, and the children of whose bowels were made servants unto others; and he considered them to be without understanding, because they possessed not the discretion through which they would have drawn nigh to God. And again in his speech Solomon also reprehendeth him that is led after his lust like a foolish person, and who lacketh the knowledge which should fight against his passions.

"He goeth after her like a simple man, and as an ox that goeth to the slaughterer, and as a dog to the fetters, and as a stag into whose liver an arrow hath pierced". And this foolishness is worthy of blame, because it ministereth not unto good but unto evil things, and it is not right, properly speaking, that it should be called simpleness----although the Book calleth it so because it is contrary [p. 157] to the mark which is laid down by it----but folly, and madness, and senselessness, and the destruction of what is seemly. And this our discourse doth not urge this kind of simplicity upon a man, nor that he should ignorantly submit to

every voice, and be persuaded by the deceit of every doctrine, for the Apostle of God also biddeth us to beware of this, saying, "Be ye not children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of the deceitful doctrines of the children of men. For behold the frame of mind which is led by every voice and doctrine, and which changeth its construction into abominable conduct, and deeds, and a hateful life, hath been called madness by the word of the Apostle, but the word of our discourse urgeth a man to that simplicity which meditateth at all times upon good things.

Look then upon the simplicity of all the believing men, and see the innocence of mind of the disciples of Christ, who, although they were not acquainted with the guile of the crafts of heresies, and although they knew not the abomination of their evil doctrine, yet nevertheless took heed not to become associated therewith, but held the truth without change through their wise simplicity, and because the fear of God was closely united to their simplicity. And although they knew not the consciousness of [other] doctrines, yet were they acquainted with reasons of their own doctrine. And as a child who knoweth one master only, by the fear of whom he is ruled, and at whose command he trembleth, and of whose rod alone he is afraid, and who knoweth not even of the existence of other masters, so also [p. 158] with the child in faith doth the fear of the mastership of Christ alone rule his life, and other teachers of doctrines are accounted nothing by him. And he is not persuaded to perceive another learned man, and he is not obedient save to one master, and he neither trembleth nor is terrified by fear, save of those of whose authority he is sensible, but like the natural child his fear taketh heed to one teacher and to one master only. And if any other teacher wisheth to give him another doctrine besides that which he holdeth he receiveth it not; for his simpleness is the sincerity of nature, and not the destructive error of [other] opinions.

Let us then, like disciples of Christ, run in the path which He hath shewn us, and let us walk in the way which He hath trodden for us, and let the invention of simplicity be precious in our sight, and let us be simple children to receive the doctrine which is good. And let us be wise as serpents against the Enemy who schemeth to do us harm, and let us remember at all times that which was spoken by Christ our Lord to all the disciples in His word, "Whosoever receiveth not the kingdom of God like a little child shall not enter therein"; may we by His grace be held worthy of this kingdom, and may we inherit it together with all the saints, through the mercy of Christ God, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Here endeth the Second Discourse on Simplicity. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 6 -- First Discourse on the Fear of God

[P. 159] THE SIXTH DISCOURSE: WHICH MAKETH KNOWN THEREIN THAT, AFTER THAT FAITH WHICH IS BORN OF THE SIMPLICITY OF NATURE, THE FEAR OF GOD IS STIRRED UP IN MAN, AND HOW IT IS PRODUCED, AND BY WHAT THINGS FAITH IS ESTABLISHED AND CONFIRMED WITHIN US.

Let us now with a mind fearing God again draw nigh to the doctrine of the word of the fear of God, and according to our power, and as we are able, that is to say, according as the grace of God shall grant, let us make use of [our] speech for our own help, and for the advantage of others. For we do not write in order that we may appear to be learned, but because we love to speak of our own benefits for [the good of] others. And we do not remain silent and speak not because many [others] have spoken and written, for those who were before us have written and spoken like teachers; but we, like their disciples, repeat after them their doctrine, even as a child who giveth utterance to and repeateth at all times the doctrine which he receiveth from his master that he may not forget it; and thus also do we repeat the things which have been heard by us, so that by repetition we may remember them, and so that our thoughts may be kept from wandering after empty things which benefit not. For as long as the mind is not held fast [p. 160] by beneficial thoughts it wandereth outside itself, and goeth hither and thither in a place which is outside the help of God.

And as when it meditateth upon virtues it dwelleth in the light of the remembrance of God, so also when it constructeth and meditateth upon useless and empty thoughts, its whole conversation is in the darkness. Whosoever standeth in darkness, seeth not, and is unseen; and he discerneth not, and is not discerned; and he knoweth not, and is not known; but he is deprived of the beauty of the appearance of created things, and all who themselves see are removed from his sight; and he discerneth not the path and understandeth not the way; and he seeth not the passage of those who go by. Now that this may not happen to us, let us be at all times occupied in the word of God, not merely bringing it up in repetition upon the tongue, but with the understanding meditating and thinking thereupon with the mind, so that at all times our mouth may speak through the superabundance of our heart. For what the mind meditateth upon in secret, that will the tongue speak openly, however

careful a man may be; and if the tongue remaineth quiet through craftiness from that which it would speak, the secrets of the heart are made manifest to beholders by other means and motions of the senses, and the face by its various expressions giveth indications concerning the secret mind which hideth in the soul.

Whosoever drinketh continually of the doctrine of God, the tree of his own person yieldeth divine fruit at all times, if it be not that he heareth the word of doctrine from mere habit, and that he listeneth not unto the helpful word of God for pleasure's sake, and that he receiveth it not that he may increase in him human knowledge thereby, [p. 161] and that he listeneth not to learn it so that it may be for him the material of the handicraft of vain-glory. For the doctrine which is spoken in knowledge, and is heard with discernment, manifesteth spiritual fruit in two places, in the tongue of him that soweth it, and in the ear of him that receiveth it, because both the man who teacheth and the man who learneth hear his word gladly if he be an exact teacher, and if he be not a mere passage for the doctrine of others.

Now continuous labour at a handicraft addeth unto the knowledge thereof, and a man traineth all [his] faculties in working at it. And thus also meditation at all times in the word of doctrine moveth the thoughts to knowledge, and sharpeneth the tongue for speech, and bindeth the understanding in the contemplation of God. And whosoever meditateth upon God at all times, having this remembrance constant within his soul secretly, in him also is increased the fear of God, which becometh unto him a wall which protecteth from all evil things. For as the wall of a city protecteth its inhabitants from the harmful attacks of [their] enemies, so also doth the fear of God protect a man from enemies, and from those who would spoil our souls, and it keepeth back the body from the working of the lusts [thereof], and it protecteth the soul from abominable thoughts. Whosoever hath learned in very truth to fear God not only preserveth his body from the lusts [thereof], but also his heart from abominable motions. Now what the manner of the fear of God is, and in what grade standeth the man who feareth God, [p. 162] and how this fear is to be acquired, and by what things it is increased, it is meet for us to shew, forth, according to what we have learned from those who were before us spectators of knowledge, and ministers of the word of teaching.

Now according to what they have taught me, the true fear of God is produced from true faith, and whosoever believeth truly will himself also fear Him in Whom he believeth. And as his faith existeth not by means of plans and devices, so also his fear consisteth not of skill and knowledge; for as soon as a man believeth that God is, he beginneth to receive the doctrine of His commandments. For faith itself is born of the simplicity of nature, and it is established and protected entirely by simplicity. Now those commandments which faith heareth and accepteth, doth the fear of God keep; for in the manner in which simplicity preserveth faith, doth also the fear of God keep His commandments. Now by "fear" I do not mean the fear which a man meaneth when he sayeth by word of mouth, "I fear God," nor that fear which existeth in many who are habitually thought to be fearers of God; but I mean the fear which is excited in the soul naturally, and when the soul which is within

trembleth and tottereth, it moveth together with itself all the members of the body. For the body is afraid of that which can injure it, and the soul also [p. 163] is moved at that which hath power to destroy it.

For as is the fear of the body of external things which can injure it, of wild beasts, or of fire, or of swords and of scrapers, or of drowning in the water, or of falling from lofty rocks, or of the rumour of thieves, or of the sight of judges, or of painful lashes, or of fetterings and imprisonment, so also is the soul naturally afraid of the hidden Judge Who is able to punish it with spiritual afflictions, according to its nature, together with the body. And as the body is naturally afraid of all these things which we have enumerated, even so is the soul naturally afraid of the remembrance of the judgment of God, and of the punishments which are laid up for those who provoke to wrath, and of the Gehenna which is threatened for those who work wickedness, and of the report of the outer darkness, and of the rumour of the fire which is not quenched, and of the worm which dieth not. For when the body seeth the things which can injure it, it is afraid of them, and when the soul looketh upon the things which can torment it, it is affrighted at them. The body is not excited by the machinations which exist to do it harm, but immediately it seeth them, or it meditateth upon the remembrance of them, it becometh excited and is afraid of them naturally.

And thus also is it with the soul, for when, with the eye of faith, it looketh at the things which are threatened in the future, and it seeth inwardly the fearful things which the word of the Judge hath revealed, it is straightway filled with fear, and all its thoughts----which are its spiritual members----tremble, and by reason of its trembling, the body also trembleth, and through the fear of its thoughts the members of its body are also afraid. And as the soul itself participateth in the fear of the body, [p. 164] so also is the body mingled in the fear of the soul; for although the nature of the soul cannot be injured by the things which do harm to the body, yet, inasmuch as it is mingled therewith, it feareth therewith. And although the afflictions and punishments which are about to come are not visible to the eyes of the body, yet because the soul seeth them inwardly it trembleth and is affrighted at them; and the body is also moved with it, and fear and terror take up their abode in all its members. For according to the experience of facts it is thus, and those who have had experience thereof, and have received the test thereof in their own persons know that immediately the soul remembereth the judgment of God, it shaketh at the remembrance thereof, and together with itself it maketh all the members of the body shake with one accord.

When the soul and body of a man are not purified from sin, immediately he remembereth God he is forthwith wholly and entirely filled with fear, and all his members tremble, in the manner in which his body trembleth when it seeth suddenly that which can destroy and do it harm. And if a man hath not experienced this in his own person ----for not every man hath arrived at the measure of natural fear of God----from the fact that the body being moved, it moveth the soul also with it----which is manifest and well known unto every man----we may also understand that the soul is capable of fear and that it poureth out its fear upon the body, which only the few have experienced, that is to say, those whose souls are not dead

in the death of sin, because the sin which happeneth carnally outside the remembrance of God, is the complete death of the soul, even as [p. 165] the Holy Book calleth the sinner dead which repenteth not. For repentance ariseth from the remembrance of God by a man, so then whosoever sinneth, and in whom the remembrance of the judgment of God is not moved, either when he sinneth, or after his committing sin, this man is dead in his own soul, although in the body he appeareth to be alive. By the constant remembrance of God then may the soul which liveth be known;

and if it sinneth and repenteth it is a sick thing, but if it sinneth carnally without repentance and without the remembrance of God, from this it is made manifest that it hath been slain by sin. For the knowledge of God is itself the spiritual life of the soul, even as the life of the body consisteth of the abiding of the soul which is therein within it; and its life is known by its perceiving everything which draweth nigh to it, or which it itself approacheth. And thus also the life of the soul is the knowledge of God, and it is known that it liveth from the fact that it is sensible of God.

For the body which is dead cannot feel any harm, neither can the soul which is slain feel the remembrance of the judgment of God, And whatever pains and tortures thou mayest bring upon the dead body it feeleth them not, and if thou wert to make the soul which is once dead to God a participator in all wickedness it would feel it not. If the dead body be struck it perceiveth it not, and if it be hacked and hewn in pieces it feeleth it not, and thus is it with the soul which is dead to God. It sinneth, and perceiveth it not; it doeth wickedness, and knoweth it not; it sinneth, and is unmindful of it; it is condemned, and its conscience pricketh it not; it doeth evil, and feeleth it not; and as its conscience pricketh it not to discretion [p. 166] when it fulfilleth naturally the things which are its natural need, even so the soul which is destroyed by sin, and is once dead to God, is not condemned by its conscience for the things which are wrought by it.

So then the remembrance of God is the life of the soul. And as all the motions of the body are constant, and it moveth and is moved throughout by all its nerves and members so long as it participateth in life, even so the soul which hath therein the knowledge of God, moveth and is moved at all times by the remembrance of God, and so long as it remembereth God, it sinneth not. And if it happeneth that for a brief space the light of its knowledge becometh obscured through the smoke of lust, the remembrance of God is straightway stirred up in it, and the fear which ariseth therefrom driveth it to repentance. For the fear of God worketh two things in the soul: it keepeth a man that he sin not, or if he sinneth, it urgeth him to heal his sin in repentance; for it is the habit of all those with whom the fear of God or the fear of man is found, that they either offend not, or when they have offended they rectify their wrongdoing.

The fear of God then is a shield against all wickedness; it guardeth the man who is behind it from being harmed, and it is a wall of protection against all abominable things; now there are times when it becometh the healer of wickedness, even as both qualities [p. 167]---- that of healer and that of protector----may be seen in this fear. For it is a protecting wall

against evils that they come not, and it is a wise healer of the wickedness which is wrought by negligence. One man is terrified at the very sight of the judge, and another trembleth at the mere mention of him. The man who taketh heed that he sin not is restrained from wickedness by the sight of the judge; but the man who, after he hath sinned, turneth to repentance is terrified at the rumour of him, and he is affrighted at the mere sound of his judgment. In the act of committing his sin he is unable to see him, for sin is the blindness of the soul; and when sin is wrought and ministered unto in the person of a man, the sight of the soul is obscured by the vapour of the work of lust as by much smoke, and it is unable to see the Judge. It heareth, however, the voice of His threatenings from the mouth of others----that is to say from the Holy Books----and it trembleth at the report thereof, and is afraid when it heareth them;

now this happeneth while the soul is not entirely dead to the knowledge and perception of God. And the man also who is blind in his natural body is not terrified by the sight of dangers, neither is he afraid of them, except by the report which he heareth from others. For the lion which would come to crush him cannot be seen by him, nor the serpent which hisseth to sting him; but if he heareth the report of them from another man, he is frightened. And again, the rock or the pit which is in front of his footsteps he seeth not; but if another reveal to him [p. 168] the danger which is before him, fear preventeth him, and he straightway checketh himself, and turneth back; but whosoever hath sound sight naturally hath no need to learn concerning these things from others, for his sight teacheth him concerning the harm of his body. After this manner let us also consider the one who taketh heed unto himself and sinneth not, and the other who having sinned repenteth of his evil; for the soul is not afraid of the dangers of the body, although it must be imagined that it feareth because it is mingled therewith. And when the soul feareth the things which are here, its fear is outside its own nature, that is to say, the vapour of bodily fear goeth up upon it, and darkeneth its power of discernment, and together with the body it is afraid of those things which cannot harm it.

But if the soul is afraid of God its fear is natural, for the natural fear of the soul is that it should fear God alone; for the body is not naturally afraid of God, nor doth the soul naturally fear wild animals or any other harmful things. And behold, beasts, and wild animals, and birds, because they are body only, and participate not in a living soul, have not in their nature any fear of God; they only fear death by each other, or by other things which are opposed to them. And similarly the body also feareth only the dangers which belong to itself; now if thou liftest up the soul to participate in its thoughts, the body feeleth with it the fear of God, [p. 169] even as the soul feeleth with the body in its fear of wild animals. For the Judge Who can torment the soul is God Himself only, because He Who is more subtle of nature than the soul is alone able to be the Judge thereof; but the children of men may be judges of the body, and they are able even to kill it, although in their judgment they have no power over the soul, even according to the testimony of the word of Christ which saith, "Fear not those which kill the body, but who are not able to kill the soul; for the dominion of judges extendeth over the body only, and it can they judge, and torment, and slay.

But as for the soul, its nature is exalted above the injury of those who can slay [it], and it cannot burn in their fire, and their stripes cannot fall upon its spiritual nature, and it cannot be cut in pieces by their swords, and its person cannot be lacerated by their tools of torture; for he that judgeth is of the body, and the sentence which he passeth on evil doers he uttereth with the tongue of the body, although the soul moveth inwardly the deliberation of the penalty. And all the members which are ready [to receive] the sufferings are of the body, and through bodily sufferings the body alone receiveth injury; but the nature of the soul, because of its spirituality, is exalted and raised above these things. And however deeply the sufferings may penetrate, they sink into the body only, and however far in and deep they may pierce, the soul is situated more deeply within, and the death of these members hath no power over its life. Now judges are not able to kill the soul, and therefore it is not meet for men to be afraid of their judgment; "but fear Him that is able to destroy both the body and the soul [p, 170] in Gehenna. The Lord Himself alone is the Judge of the soul, and He that made it a living thing is Himself able to bring death upon its life, and to torment its spiritual nature by a spiritual sentence of judgment;

and because the soul perceiveth that the Lord alone is its Judge it is afraid of Him naturally. And as with those who are alive in the body and are dead in their souls the remembrance of the judgment of [the] world restraineth them from their evil actions, so also doth the remembrance of the judgment of God check the man who is alive in his soul from his wickedness, and as long as he remembereth His judgment he keepeth himself from sin. The judgment which is near is not depicted before the eyes of the wise man, but upon that which is afar off he looketh intently, and he trembleth and is affrighted thereat. For as the things which are manifest are revealed to the eye of the body, so also are the things which are hidden revealed to the eye of faith. And as the body which is alive perceiveth all the material things of this world, so also doth the soul which is alive feel all the spiritual things of the world which is to come, and it beholdeth them spiritually.

So therefore the remembrance of God is the light which sheweth the things which are to come, and where there is sin the making mention of His name causeth terror; but unless the conscience of a man in sin prick him, the fear of the future Judge will not prick him, for as is every man towards himself, even so is he towards the remembrance of God. If he standeth in the grade of sinners, [p. 171] God appeareth to him as a Judge; but if he hath gone up into the other grade of penitents, He sheweth Himself to him as one Who forgiveth. And again, if he standeth in the state of loving-kindness, he looketh at the riches of God's loving-kindness; if he be clothed with humility and meekness, the favour of God is apparent before him; if he hath acquired an understanding mind, he looketh at the unsurpassable wisdom of God; if he cease from anger and be free from wrath, and peace and quietness be moved in him at all times, he is lifted up to see the untroubled sincerity of God; and if the motions of faith are constantly rising within his soul, he at all times observeth the incomprehensibility of the works of God, and those things also which are thought to be simple he maketh sure that they are beyond [his] knowledge.

Now if a man standeth in the exalted state of spiritual love, according to the state in which he is doth God appear to him, that is, He is wholly and entirely love. And this is a thing to be wondered at; although God is single in His nature, and He hath neither parts nor members, He appeareth unto every man in many [different] forms, and to whomsoever seeketh He appeareth on every side that He wisheth. And as in respect of Himself He is One, and hath no similitudes, He appeareth to minds in similitudes, according to the feelings which are nigh unto the soul. Whosoever wisheth to see that God is good, let him himself be good, and behold, He will appear to him to be good. Imagine not that thou wilt see God as a good. Being whilst thou standest in a place of wickedness, for this sight would work sluggishness in thee, [p. 172] and thou wouldst see God as He wisheth not to be seen by thee, that is to say, thou wouldst not see Him at all, because thou wishest to see Him outside His will; for until thou hast become like unto Him in every one of the virtues which He hath commanded thee to keep, He appeareth to thee as He is; and if thou thinkest that thou seest [Him], thou seest Him only in thy imagination, and not His true appearance.

Now therefore everyone who standeth in a place of sin, and who feeleth that there are evil passions within him, and whose conscience pricketh him because of his wrong-doing, must look upon God as the Judge Who condemneth; and he must not dare to regard Him differently, lest thereby he may increase in himself the fear which will remove evil things from him. If now thou wishest to see God as One Who for-giveth, put away thy wickedness, and draw nigh to repentance, and put away also the sin which others have sinned against thee; then shalt thou lift up the eye of thy understanding, and thou shalt see the One Who forgiveth. The man who sinneth continually, and worketh folly, and who thinketh that God is One Who forgiveth, heapeth up wickedness upon wickedness. Put not your trust in remission of sins, lest thou heap up sin upon sin; for many sin continually, and without repentance, relying upon pardon, never having felt pardon, and having heard only of the report of pardon. The man who forgiveth others is himself able to feel the pardon of God, and after this manner also is every good thing of God; until we have become the doers of good we cannot perceive that it is in God. For from hearing hath every man learned that God is good, but from knowledge of the soul [p. 173] alone it is that those who are good perceive His goodness;

and from the rumour which is uttered every man confesseth that He is merciful, and long-suffering, and of great kindness, and that He is wholly and entirely filled with love. Those who have kept these things in their own persons through the perception of their soul experience them in God. Now therefore so long as thou standest in the place of sin, thou art bound to be mindful of the judgment of God, that by the remembrance of His judgment thou mayest drive away thy wickedness, and thou must not dare to think of Him in any other manner, so long as thou standest in the place of sin. For the place of fear is one, and the place of joy is another. The place of fear belongeth to penitents, and to those who feel their sins, and to the men who are not as yet free from [their] passions; but the place of joy is above love. After the victory over lusts a man is deemed worthy to arrive at joy, and when he hath brought all his passions under the power of his thoughts, he then goeth into

the country of joy, where there is neither terror nor fear, to live gloriously. Now fear is the opposite of joy, and where there is fear joy is not born, and where there is joy fear cometh not; because fear is an accessory of wickedness, and joy of goodness; and as goodness is the opposite of wickedness, so also is joy the opposite of fear.

The man who [liveth] in wickedness perceiveth not the joy of the spirit when it is born of goodness, and the man who [liveth] in joy feeleth not the fear which is closely united to wickedness. That a man should wish to [live] in joy while [p. 174] he yet standeth in the region of fear, is like unto the man who imagineth himself to be good while he is evil, and while he fulfilleth all abominable things, or unto the man who imagineth himself to be rich while he is actually the poorest of men.

Everyone then who is conscious of his own follies and evil doings is bound to increase within himself at all times the fear of God, and he must meditate upon it in his going out and coming in, and he must deliberate upon it when he sitteth down, and when he riseth up, and during all his acts and deeds must his thoughts be filled with the fear of God. And one certain time must not be set apart for this fear, but all times must be to him times for the fear of God. When this fear springeth not up in a man, contempt for the commandments of God is found in him, and his thoughts are sunk in the sleep of error; and like a vessel without sense he meditateth wickedness, and doeth abominable things, and he sinneth, but knoweth not that he sinneth. But if he knoweth, it is the knowledge of hearing and not of the truth, because the certain knowledge of wickedness straightway formeth fear in a man. And as when the eyes are opened the light shineth in through the pupils, so also is it with the remembrance of God; for immediately the fear of God shineth into the mind, it rouseth a man and it maketh him to rise up as out of the depth of slumber.

And it is as if the light should shine upon a man who is plucked away into the depth of slumber, and although he be ready to get up forthwith, it should find him upon his bed; and when he openeth [p. 175] his eyes, and seeth it, he is straightway roused and greatly moved, and his sudden fright speedily driveth away from him all the heaviness of the sleep in which he was plunged. And so if a man be careless, and the wakefulness of the remembrance of God be taken away from him, and he remain in the sleep of contempt and the abyss of carelessness, if it happen that either for one reason or another, or by his own will, the light of the remembrance of God shineth in his soul, he is straightway roused and he casteth away his former contempt, and he is filled with fear, and the terror at the remembrance of the righteousness of the Judge groweth strong in him; and when contempt hath gone out from him, repentance therefor entereth into him straightway, and he is filled with trembling, either on account of the things which have been done by him, or on account of the wasted seasons which he hath enjoyed without the remembrance of God. For behold, the man who liveth in this remembrance is filled at all times with fear immediately an ordinary motion of lust flieth over his soul, and he is greatly moved and is roused by reason of the lustful thought which hath come to him;

and this thought of wickedness straightway fleeth, and is destroyed before the fear of the soul, even as a bird which riseth up unexpectedly before a man, who is thereby suddenly startled out of his composure.

Now fear and shame of the children of men preserve the body from lusts, but the fear and shame which man hath of God preserve the motions of the soul from thoughts of evil things; and because man seeth that at all times God seeth him, he becometh perpetually an observer [p. 176] of himself that he sin not, and he preserveth his inner man from the secret blemishes upon which the hidden eye of God looketh. Hedge thyself round then with a fence of the fear of God, O man of understanding, and evil things will not dare to enter into the city of thy soul. Be thou ashamed before God inwardly, and behold thy soul shall be preserved in its purity; excite within thee at all times the fear of Him, and behold thou shalt be kept from sins of the thoughts. Let the continual remembrance of Him abide in thee, and the remembrance of wickedness cannot sojourn with thee. For so long as thou art mindful of God it is not possible for thee to remember evil things; because light and darkness cannot dwell in the eye together, neither can the remembrance of God and the remembrance of wickedness abide together within the soul. Until thou forgettest God thou canst not be mindful of wickedness, and until thou forgettest wickedness, the remembrance of God riseth not in thee; for the error of the one is the remembrance of the other, and the going in of one is the going out of the other.

And the remembrance of wickedness is error, and the remembrance of God is true knowledge; and error is darkness, but knowledge is light. And as modesty is near unto the man who standeth in the light, so also is the soul, into which the remembrance of God shineth, always constant in shamefacedness at the nakedness of wickedness. And as the sight of men frighteneth a man to cover his nakedness, so also when the remembrance of God looketh [p. 177] into the soul, it dazeth it, and maketh it quickly to be ashamed, and it suddenly spreadeth over itself the garment of modesty. And if it hath any member of darkness which is manifest, it covereth it; and if it containeth any thing which is not seemly thereto, it is straightway terrified and casteth it away. And if it be confused, it setteth itself in order; and if it be in turmoil, it composeth itself; and if it sinneth, it maketh itself just; and if it be spotted, it maketh itself white; and if it be foul, it purifieth itself; and if it be unclean, it sanctifieth itself; and if it be polluted, it is made clean; and if it be impure it is made chaste; and if it be wanton, it becometh modest; and if it be foolish, it is made wise; and if it be poured out, it is gathered together; and if it wander outside itself, it returneth to itself; and if it be poverty-stricken, it gaineth wealth;

and if it hath lost its life, it runneth and seeketh it; and if it be sick, it is healed; and if it be feeble, it is made strong; and if it be infirm, it is healed; and if it hath in it a breaking [of bones], it bindeth them up; and if it be filled with gaping wounds it presseth them together; and if it happen that it hath grown old, and hath become worn out in sin, straightway the remembrance of God, together with the fear of Him, maketh it new.

Therefore the experience of the fear of God belongeth to the soul, and man himself is alone able to know by it whether he feareth God or not. Each one of us is bound to take this good thing within himself. If thou art mindful of God, and if thou art moved when thou rememberest him, and art straightway filled with fear, and thy thoughts and thy members tremble, and thy soul and body are moved, and thy knowledge boweth down its head, and thy understanding is ashamed before God inwardly, if these things happen unto thee thou mayest know [p. 178] that thou hast the fear of God in thee, and that the remembrance of the Lord is in very truth near unto thee. For it is not the man who saith, "I fear God," who feareth God, but the man who experienceth within himself the things which I have said is he who is truly a fearer of God. The good deeds which are seen outwardly do not prove that the doer of them is in truth a fearer of God, because the causes which work good deeds among the children of men are many, and there are various ways of keeping the commandments. The man who keepeth God's commandments through fear of him, is a true servant, and a divine labourer who feareth Him that laid down the law, and he fulfilleth His law; and moreover the divine law cannot be kept wholly unless it be kept by the body and by the soul.

There many who bear the weight of spiritual labours outwardly, but who inwardly minister unto all wickedness; and there are others who have bound their limbs with the fetters of afflictions, but who have sent away and dismissed their thoughts to wander after abominable things; and there are others who are outwardly clothed in chastity, but who are clothed with wantonness within; and there are others who to outward appearance fast, but who inwardly are prodigals and gluttons; and there are others who outwardly appear to be righteous, but who secretly work all wickedness. One man keeping a fast, eateth; and another professing poverty, is a lover of money; and another, professing outwardly to be long-suffering, is a man of wrath, for his patient endurance appeareth outwardly, but anger secretly dwelleth within him. One man excuseth himself from pleasures outwardly, but he seeketh for them secretly; and another cannot be constrained to hear the word of blasphemy, but inwardly he blasphemeth actually at all times, [p. 179] One man prayeth openly, and another prayeth in secret; one man singeth Psalms with his tongue, and another singeth them with his understanding. One man crucifieth his body only, and another crucifieth his soul together with his body. One man keepeth himself from sin that he may not be reproached by man, and another restraineth himself from it because of the love of righteousness. One man standeth in awe at the face of God, and another is ashamed before the face of the children of men.

One man hateth to sin because he knoweth that sin is hateful to God; and another taketh heed not to commit iniquity because he seeth that wickedness is disgraceful in the sight of men. One man sinneth not through fear of the judgment which is beyond [this world], and another committeth not offences through fear of the judgment which is nigh. One through the remembrance of the fire which is near cooleth the lust of his members, and maketh its motions to be at rest; and another through the remembrance of the Gehenna which is afar off allayeth his lust and destroyeth it.

So therefore the labours which are visible are not alone sufficient to prove a man to be a fearer of God; do thou then, O man of understanding, examine thyself, and let thy testimony be from and in thyself, if the fear of God be in thy soul. For by the righteousness which dwelleth within is the fear of God made, but that fear which dwelleth without, and the course of the actions of which is external, the sight of man inciteth thereto, and its agency is external, and not internal, and it is only seen by the eyes of men, and it is not wrought for the sight of God inwardly.

The afflictions which can be seen are good because they compel [p. 180] the limbs to become obedient to the thoughts, and they subdue the stony nature of the body, and make it to become subservient to the soul, but they do not cleanse the understanding from the motions of sins, and they do not make the soul to fear God, unless the soul hath learned inwardly to fear God; for the hidden service belongeth to the soul, and the labour which is manifest belongeth to the body. The labour of the body cannot be justified without the service of the soul, but the service of the soul can be justified even without the labours of the body, if it be that a man doth not excuse himself from labours through contempt, and he doth not flee from afflictions like a man who loveth pleasures. For the sight of men doth not protect the outward and inner man from sins, but the sight of the fear of God doth restrain the body and soul from sins;

and as the man who standeth before the judge to be questioned concerning his wrong-doing hath no means wherewith to act corruptly before the judge, but is anxious to hide also his former offences, so also the man before whose sight the fear of God the Judge is set, and the fear of Whom striketh his thoughts at all times, cannot sin, but by day, and by night, and at all times he putteth on chastity and modesty over his inner man, and every motion of sin which riseth up in him he driveth away from him in the fear of God. The fear which is of God maketh beautiful the inner man, but the fear which is of men adorneth with virtues the outer man; [p. 181] He Who is the Judge of thy works shall also be the One Who shall approve of thy contest, and the fear of Him must be set before thine eyes continually.

For if the fear of masters is set before the sight of their servants, and the dread of kings, and of judges, and of generals clotheth always those who have been subdued by them, and those who are subject unto them----and moreover the fear of teachers and masters preserveth and guardeth continually the innocency of childhood----how much more binding is it upon that man who hath become a disciple of God, and who is naturally a servant of the Heavenly Lord, and a soldier of the Everlasting King, and a subject of the Judge of the truth of the law, that the fear of Him should rule continually over his whole course of life, and over his thoughts in secret, and over his members outwardly? The fear of God is a bridle which holdeth back the violent impulses of a man from the error of wickedness, and it driveth him back from the pursuit of abominable lusts, not in his outer man only, but more especially in his inner man. The spiritual soldier should not fear God only as servants fear their masters, or as people who have been conquered fear kings and judges, for the fear of them decks itself in outward forms, and it appeareth externally on the members of the body only; for although it may

happen that they hate them inwardly, and despise them in their thoughts, yet outwardly they manifest to them the guise of fear.

Let then thy fear of God be not like unto this, but from the place on which He looketh, from there let it shew fear, and where He seeth [p. 182] secretly the motions of thy soul, there let the power of His fear lay hold upon thee. And let thy whole being----both thy inner man, and thy outer man----entirely fear God, Who is the Judge of thy secret things, and of those which are manifest. Let thy soul be ashamed before Him, and sin not, and let thy thought be shamefaced, and commit no wickedness. For if the shame of the children of men driveth us from sin, how much more should the shame of God restrain us from wickedness?

Remember thou then at all times that God looketh at thee, and do thou thyself also look at Him inwardly, even as He seeth thee inwardly, and sin shall not abide in thy thoughts. For as in the place whereupon the sun looketh darkness abideth not, even so in the soul upon which God looketh, and which itself also feeleth that He is regarding it, the darkness of wickedness remaineth not. "The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the Sun," saith the Holy Book, "and He seeth all the works of the children of men. And in another place it saith, "All the deeds of men shine as the sun before Him, and He examineth and knoweth their ways. Now the prophet of God also rebuketh by his speech the wickedness of that man who is without the fear of God, and who upon the cushion of his couch acteth abominably, and rebuking his stupid thought that God could not see him, for God doth see him, he brought forward this proof saying, "The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun," in order that he might teach every man that God seeth our secret things, and that we should take heed with all diligence against the sins which are wrought in secret. For thou shalt not sin in thy thought, [p. 183] neither shalt thou do wickedly in thy house in secret, because God seeth thee especially in these secret things.

Immediately the sight of the children of men is turned away from thee, the sight of God receiveth thee; and when the children of men no longer look at thee as thou art, the Lord of what hath been formed observeth thee the more, for He knoweth that as long as man looketh upon thee that thou wilt be watchful against [doing] before them the deeds of shame, and that fear and shamefacedness of them will drive thee from the deeds of sin. So then when thou art alone, and the walls and the roof of thy house hide thee on all sides, the armour of the fear of God is necessary for thee, for in the darkness sin is readily committed; and then art thou bound to rouse up thyself to the remembrance of God, and thou must strengthen thy members that they be not conquered before lust, and thou must stand up like a man against the sin which warreth against thee to overcome thee, and against the secret Enemy who with the motions of thy lust fighteth with thy life.

The thoughts of the soul hide within the members of the body, and as the body hideth within the house, even so do the thoughts of the soul hide themselves under the covering of the body. And because the man who is within cannot easily be seen corporeally, he sinneth quickly, and every time he wisheth, he doeth wickedly. The sin of the thoughts is more easy and light than the sin of the members, because the members are restrained and impeded by many

things; but immediately the thought wisheth to sin, it fulfilleth m itself the act of sin. [p. 184] And neither time, nor place, nor material, is necessary for sin, for as is the swiftness of the movement, so also is the swiftness of its sin, and against this swiftness which the thought hath is the persistence of the remembrance of God necessary, and the perpetual fear of the Judge of secret things must abide therein. And, if we may say so, the motion of the fear of God must be swifter in him than the motion of his thought, so that when the thought of sin hath been moved the remembrance of God may smite it at once. The soul upon which this bridle hath been cast is silently dumb to the motions of hateful thoughts, and if it happen that it be seized suddenly, this remembrance checketh it, and turneth it back that it may look upon its own person.

Now therefore there is none of the virtues which is not preserved by the fear of God, and if a man were to call the fear of God "a guard-house of virtues," he would not do wrong. For faith is confirmed thereby, it preserveth fasting, through the remembrance of it prayers are made constant with us, it urgeth [us] to give alms, it quieteth the abominable motions which are in the soul, it quencheth the lust which burneth in the members, it purifieth filthy thoughts, it uprooteth the meditation of abominable things from the soul, it maketh it empty of thoughts, and anger and enmity, it driveth the mind of every man from daring to lust for that which is not his own, it stablisheth laws that they be not trodden under foot, it counselleth men that the divine commandments be not transgressed; and it is a boundary against [p. 185] all wickedness, and like a shield it standeth against all abominable things. It standeth against the left hand, and inciteth to the right with noble deeds; it doeth away with wickedness, and stirreth up to the service of the virtues. The fear of God also preventeth wickedness from being wrought. It keepeth a man back from the path of iniquity, and it ministereth unto good in two ways, for it keepeth a man from the way of wickedness, and maketh him watchful to travel in the path of virtue, and it inciteth him.

to gather together noble things, and it turneth and guardeth what hath been gathered together by him; for if there was no fear [of God], corruption would [rule over everything. It followeth judges, and for this reason their commandments are established firmly; it surroundeth kings, and therefore their laws are not transgressed; it cleaveth to governors, and therefore their rule is formidable to those who are subject unto them; and it keepeth all men in the faith of God. Now although the fear [of God] is born of faith, yet it itself is also the preserver of faith. Whosoever feareth God taketh heed not to transgress the boundary of the faith of God, and whosoever believeth in God himself draweth nigh to the fear of God, and the man, in whose soul the fear of God dwelleth, himself becometh a watchful guardian of all the commandments. Adam believed in God, and he was not afraid of God; he believed that He was, and he received from Him the law which He delivered into him. And because he cast out the fear of God from his mind, he forsook the faith, and trod the law under foot. For He that ordained the law [p.186] involved the commandment with fear: "In the day that thou eatest of the tree, thou shalt die the death. And because Adam had cast out from him that fear, he believed the crafty one instead of God, and trod under foot the law which had been ordained by the Judge.

And not only Adam did God surround with fear that it might be a fence for the keeping of His commandments, but in all generations, to all the commandments which He ordained did He unite fear. Over Cain, who did not fear God of his own freewill, did fear rule of necessity, and he became a vagabond and a wanderer in the earth; for because he did not fear the One Who was worthy to be feared, he was filled with fears at everything which appeared unto him. And by reason of the torture of fear he entreated God and besought Him that whosoever found him might kill him, so that he might flee from a life filled with fear and dread. And God also gave the law by the hand of Moses, which was filled with many and divers commandments, and to all the commandments He linked fear, for without fear the commandments would not be kept. "Thou shalt do no murder", and "whosoever slayeth shall be slain; for the sickness He ordained the medicine of fear, that it might not increase and grow strong in iniquity. "Thou shalt not commit adultery", and "whosoever committed adultery shall be slain; and fear keepeth [this] commandment from being held in contempt. For by fear He checked them from doing wickedness to one another, and because He saw that they loved wickedness, He restrained them from their [evil] deed by the fear of the judgment. Where there is no love, [p. 187] it is fear that keepeth the commandments.

There are three things through which all commandments are kept; by fear, or by reward, or by love. Of all these the first is fear, and the second is the possessions which are promised, and the third is true love; the first belongeth to servants, and the second belongeth to hirelings, and the third belongeth to spiritual beings and friends. Now the beginning of the way of the conduct and life of Christ is accompanied by fear, for unto every one who beginneth to learn this doctrine cleaveth the mind of a child, and fear is seemly unto childhood, and it urgeth it to receive instruction. For childhood is unable to taste the sweets of knowledge, and on this account it is meet that fear should accompany it; for when it has tasted the knowledge of Christ, and a man hath felt the power of His commandments, the pleasantness itself of what he tasteth leadeth him to the keeping of the commandments. But so long as a man hath not arrived at this state, it is necessary for fear to be his nurse, and a teacher, and a reminder of all the commandments. And as the children of nature receive instruction from teachers, and the schoolmaster receiveth them that he may be unto them at all times a reminder of what they have heard, so also doth a man receive the doctrine of the commandments from God, Who is the true Teacher and Doctor.

So then fear must straightway be used, that, like the schoolmaster, it may remind a man of what he hath received; and that if he forgetteth, it may remind him; and if he be negligent, it may stir him up; and if [p. 188] he sleep, it may awake him; and if he love foolish talk, it may rebuke him; and if he wander forth towards deceit, it may turn him back into the path; and if he act contemptuously, it may remind him of authority; and if he act scornfully, it may remind him of the instructor; for these things a life of fear accompanieth not, for it wandereth among all wickedness.

For every one who hath need to learn fear is necessary to remind him of his instruction, for without fear instruction is not perfected, or if it be perfected without it, it is not acceptable,

and if it be accepted without it, it is not preserved. And the prophet of God reproacheth severely those who have broken the yoke, and cut the bands of the fear of God, and again, in another place, he heapeth contumely upon Israel who had slipped his shoulder from [under] the yoke of the divine commandments: "As an ox which hath escaped from the yoke, so have the children of Israel escaped, they and their kings and their nobles". Now Israel became rebels because there was no fear [in them]; and they trod under foot the commandments because they were not mindful of what was threatened; and they despised the law because they remembered not the penalty of Him that ordained it. For He Who ordained the law because He knew to whom He was giving the law, against [the breaking of] His commandments multiplied His threats in His wisdom, so that although freewill might hold the law in contempt, the fear which followed thereafter might incite [Israel] to the keeping thereof. And because he that received the law became a rebellious slave, He made him to labour in bondage in the fear of tribulation. Before his face He displayed all the various forms of punishment, so that as long [p. 189] as he looked thereupon he might take heed to the commandments, and keep the law.

Let us then study to fix the fear of God in our mind, and let us meditate thereupon by day and by night. If the fire of lust kindleth in us, let us set in opposition thereto the fire of Gehenna. If greediness of the belly seize upon us, let us remember the worm which dieth not. If the beauty of the face excite us, let us remember the outer darkness. If the love of mammon fight against us, let us call to mind our own unworthiness. If human benefits stir us, let us be afraid lest we lose the kingdom which abideth for ever. If wrath attacketh us with its violent onset, let us look at the threat of God against those who provoke to wrath. If vainglory raise a tumult within us, let us bring up in our minds the disgrace and contempt [which we shall feel] before our Judge. By fear let us make fear of none effect, and by death let us vanquish death.

And together with these things, whosoever wisheth to keep his life with all diligence from sin hath need of the perpetual remembrance of death; for whosoever is continually mindful of the day of his departure, and who at all seasons meditateth upon the hour of his death doth not easily march on to iniquity, and doth not dare to draw nigh unto the work of sin. The remembrance of death drieth up all lusts, and the sight of the remembrance of death scattereth all the wickedness which is gathered together against the soul, and all the lusts which are drawn up against the body. Let the death which is near be unto us a teacher against the death of Gehenna, and let us keep [p. 190] our life on all sides with watchfulness, let us remember God and fear His judgment, and let us keep His commandments, that being pure from all vices, and our persons being adorned with all virtues, we may be worthy to enjoy the heavenly delights with all the saints, and that, together with them, we may praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever, Amen.

Here endeth the First Discourse upon the Fear of God. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 7 -- Second Discourse on the Fear of God

[P. 191] THE SEVENTH DISCOURSE: WHICH SHEWETH THAT ALL THE RIGHTEOUS MEN OF OLD FULFILLED THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

The way of the rule and conduct of the Christian life hath been trodden and made smooth by the example of the righteous men of old for whomsoever wisheth to travel rightly therein, and the marks of the footsteps of those who have before gone thereupon are before us, that we ourselves may go forward therein with ease. And like the sign-posts and mile-stones which are set by the side of a natural road that they may define the place wherein the passers-by are to travel, so also do the examples and types of the men of old, and the divine commandment and law encompass the way in which we are to travel, and they limit the passage of our footsteps within them, so that no man may venture to stray to the right hand or to the left. For like as we are obliged not to stray on either side of the plain path of truth, that we may not wander in deceit, and be tripped up in our faith, so also let us not go forth, either to one side or the other, from the lawful way of the divine course of life which hath been delivered unto us, but as in the way of faith, [p. 192] let us travel rightly along this fair path. And let us know the beginning, and the end, and the middle, and let us look closely at the many steps, so that we, one step after another, in fitting order, may mount this ladder which leadeth up to heaven.

Now the Dweller in heaven shewed this ladder aforetime, as in a mystery, to the elect of the Fathers, the blessed Jacob; and also that those who went up and those who came down upon it were angels. And that that ladder belongeth not to heavenly angels alone, the word of the Book indicateth to us, because the angels of God were going up and coming down thereupon; for every man who draweth nigh to enquire thereat, and who beginneth to mount it, laboureth after the order of angels, and is numbered among the elect of spiritual beings, and he hath inscribed his name as a heavenly soldier. And as the children of men who receive human positions, and who labour in some one of the grades of the world, change the name of "rustics", by which they were formerly called, to "servants" (or soldiers), so also the man who of his own freewill enrolleth himself in the company which Christ hath formed,

and who serveth in the army of spiritual beings, the word of the Book nameth him ”angel”, and not ”man”, and rightly so, because he hath begun the service of angels, and he is bound to receive their name. And he is called ”angel” instead of ”man” because of his service and manner of life, and not because of his nature. And moreover upon the ladder, Jacob the upright saw angels ascending and descending;

those who were ascending were men, [p. 193] because it belongeth unto men to ascend from earth to heaven, and those who were descending were angels, because their country is heaven, and they descend from their country, the heights above, to the earth. Now therefore angels and the children of men were mingled upon that ladder that the Holy Book might teach us that a fair life is common both to spiritual and corporeal beings, and that the keeping of the commandments is obligatory to both of them. And the children of men keep the commandments when they are exalted from the depth to the height by the steps of the commandments, and the angels minister unto the wishes of [the Divine] Majesty when they are sent below from above. For those who are to inherit life, that is to say, those who are of the body in their nature and are inferior beings, the service of the commandments maketh celestial and spiritual beings; and the command of the Creator urgeth those who are celestial and spiritual by creation to go down to the country of terrestrial beings, and to abide continually with corporeal beings, so that from races which are different from each other, one Church may be gathered together in the bond of love, which will sing the services of God’s will, and which will be wholly and entirely moved by one living and spiritual motion, even as the natural body is moved entirely by the life of the soul.

Now therefore it appeareth to us from the word of the Book, that this ladder which goeth up to heaven is made of many steps, and that it must be ascended by these steps one after another, in proper order, even as those who have ascended this ladder before us have delivered unto us. [p. 194] For we ourselves have shewn that the first step is faith, and the second simplicity, which is the pure motion of nature, and which although faith be produced therefrom, also protecteth faith. For as craftiness is the destroyer of faith, even so are simplicity and innocence the things which establish faith, from the simplicity of which the fear of God also is produced; because fear is closely united to simplicity naturally. Now the simple are afraid, but the crafty despise us; the simple quake at the sound of correction, but the crafty prepare a place to which they may flee. And as fear followeth in the train of natural simplicity, and it inciteth it concerning all doctrine, and it stirreth it up to receive learning and instruction, even so is the fear of God closely united to the simplicity of the soul, and it inciteth it to keep the commandments and to fulfil the laws, and not to despise and to hold in contempt the things which have been delivered unto us by the word of God.

And fear leadeth man until [he hath acquired] discretion, and until the righteousness of the Judge is revealed to him, and it teacheth him that he is bound to keep the commandments; trembling and terror of Him that ordained the law, hold fast for the disciple so that he may keep vigilantly the laws which have been given to him. And when the righteousness which is in Him hath been revealed, and this virtue which hath been placed naturally within his

soul hath risen upon it, it demandeth from him [p. 195] that like a man who is in debt, he should pay his debt, which consisteth in the keeping of the commandments. For as do the creditors of [this] world towards those who are in debt----now they press and compel them to pay what they owe----even so doth the justice which is in our soul compel us to pay to God the debt of His commandments, for the fear which followeth in the train of simplicity bringeth us to this state, and by this fear all the men of old pleased [God].

It is necessary that whosoever occupieth the position of a servant should fear, for fear should follow after service in every form; but there is in the love which is not perfect, fear, for the Holy Book saith, "In perfect love there is no fear". So then after the man who, beginneth. with love and is not yet perfect, fear followeth. One man feareth lest he be struck, and this is the fear of slaves; another man feareth lest he suffer loss, and this is the fear of hirelings; another man feareth lest he cause distress, and this is the fear of friends; and another man feareth lest his name be not handed down to posterity, and this is the fear [of lack] of children. Now although the name of fear is one, yet many different kinds [of fear] are found therein. There is the fear of God which the holy Prophets had, [and there is the fear] which the nation of the Jews had from time to time, but the forms of that fear were different; the Prophets, like friends, feared [p. 196] to cause distress to God, Whom they loved, but, the Jews, like slaves, were afraid of the rod of His chastisement. And that He might increase in them this fear, immediately, by the mouth of offence, the rod of His chastisement was revealed, and after the offence the Chastiser gave them no respite, because their servitude was not worthy of His longsuffering.

Above their head the rod of justice hung continually, and immediately they committed sin they were chastened, and at the time of their offence they were beaten, and at the entrance of the path of their sins they forthwith received rebuke; for longsuffering teacheth the foolish servant contempt, and in order that that stupid nation, which in the manner of an evil-doing servant, sat in the house of God, might not [learn] contempt, the Chastiser took away longsuffering, especially when they went forth from Egypt. And we must also understand the object of that swift punishment in another way, and that there was not longsuffering as regardeth the correction of their sins; for God the Teacher took the people, like a child, from Egypt their nurse, that He might deliver unto them the doctrine of His knowledge, and might teach them the instruction of His wisdom. But the people, in their ignorance, when instruction had been delivered unto them, forgot it, and they never kept in remembrance the meditation of the. commandments of God, and they were frequently punished with seventy, so that, if it were only through fear of chastisement, they might lay hold upon the remembrance of [p. 197] instruction. The man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day was stoned by all the congregation; and the earth opened and swallowed up others who were called by Moses, and who scorned him and came not ;

and fire went forth suddenly, and burnt up the bodies of others who thought lightly of his priestly office, and who sought honour for themselves ; and others, who in the guise of paying honour, brought strange fire out of season, were burnt up by a tongue of fire which

went forth from the tabernacle, and they perished ; and others, because they asked for flesh and rejected the bread of angels, were tortured by the indigestion which came upon them ; and others who went astray as concerning the calf, were pierced through by the swords of the Levites; and others, who were the cause of the revolt at the waters of trial were set apart for destruction ; and others who murmured against the Lord perished by fiendish snakes ; and likewise they all, because they strove against going into the land of promise, came to an end and were destroyed in the wilderness. To these offences, then, these punishments were united, and together with each act of wickedness a punishment straightway sprang up by its side, so that evil deeds might be suppressed by stripes, and sins by vengeance, and so that the people might be like a child who feareth the teacher who giveth him instruction, and that it might tremble before the Judge who would beat them like a wrongdoing slave.

And for this reason Moses also, the schoolmaster of the people, in all places commanded the people to fear God, saying, Do such and such things, keep the commandments, fulfil the laws, love thy companion, [p. 198] visit the poor who are with thee, thou shalt not treat thy brother with violence, thou shalt covet nothing which belongeth to thy neighbour, honour thy father and thy mother, thou shalt not swear falsely in the name of the Lord. thou shalt not go through the boundary of thy neighbour, thou shalt neither spoil nor oppress, thou shalt not act with violence towards him that is more feeble than thou; and at the end of each of the commandments he reminded them, saying, ”Fear thy God”. And Moses the teacher bade them take heed that the fear of God might be in them, because he knew that the commandments could [only] be kept by fear, and that the fear of God [only] could drive the people from iniquity. That the people should love God was the greatest of the commandments, and therefore Moses urged them to fear Him. The commandment, ”[Thou shalt] love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”, belonged to those who were righteous among them; but those who were like slaves, and who like slaves were committing offences at all times, he commanded to fear God, for fear repulseth vices, and love perfecteth virtues.

Fear cutteth off the path of iniquitous men, and love urgeth on the way of the virtues. ”Fear God”, and ”Love the Lord thy God”; these two commands were ordained in the law which was given to the people, so that whosoever became exalted above the command of fear might find before him the command of love, which is perfected therefrom. For this reason Paul also, when he was shewing the difference between us and them, said concerning the discipleship of Christ, ”For ye have not received the spirit [p. 199] of servitude again unto fear” ----that is to say, ye have not been called to be slaves, that fear might be born to you out of servitude----”but ye have been invited to adoption”, which is perfected in love in all good things.

Well therefore doth fear accompany simplicity, and this is rightly required for the beginning of discipleship; for as long as fear abideth with the learner continually it remindeth him not to forget his instruction. And as Moses gave commandments concerning fear to those who had newly set out in the way of the discipleship of God, so also now it is meet that fear should accompany every disciple who setteth out in the way of righteousness. Whosoever

feareth despiseth not, and is not negligent, and is not contemptuous, for fear stirreth him up to keep the commandments; and if it happen that he cometh to contempt, the remembrance of fear suddenly maketh him stupid. For immediately a man remembereth God, if it be that the remembrance of Him hath been accurately depicted in his soul, he is greatly moved and troubled, and he is filled with fear and trembling, and stupefaction rusheth upon him suddenly because of his former contempt; even as saith the holy Prophet who knew how to fear God, and who had felt what things the fear of God worketh in the soul, "I remembered God, and I was troubled". And behold the remembrance of God should not be one of trouble; O holy Prophet, and why wast thou troubled at the remembrance of Him? And why did the beloved remembrance of Him clothe thee with trembling? [p. 200] "Because I have sinned against Him, and I remembered mine offences, and I became mindful of the Judge, and I was filled with fear;

I considered my sins and His vengeance, and the remembrance of Him troubled me. Whosoever fixeth his heart, trusteth in God, and he maketh his heart firm and feareth not" . The heart which is fixed in virtues the remembrance of God maketh to be glad, and whosoever hath obtained healing of spirit in his inner man, the remembrance of God maketh to rejoice. Wheresoever the conscience is pricked by sin, there doth fear, the remembrance of the Judge, dwell; for the offender who remembereth the Judge is troubled, and the evildoer is filled with trembling at the remembrance of punishment. It was for this reason that the Prophet said, "At the remembrance of God I am troubled. I meditate and my spirit is overwhelmed. Giddiness hath seized my eyes; I am silent and I speak not. I have considered the days of old, and I have remembered the years which are past. I have meditated in the night season, and I have communed with my heart, and examined my spirit, and said, Hath the Lord forgotten me for ever? Will He be favourable unto me no more? With such thoughts as these did the prophet of God keep watch, and he prayed upon the cushions of his bed as in the church of the saints, being mindful of the things which he was bound to pay back to God.

And he considered the days and the generations which had gone by, and he considered how each of the righteous men [of old] had in his time pleased God, and how and with what manner of life he had been victorious before Him. And these things which the Prophet called to remembrance were [intended] to make all those who were to come after him to remember, and to teach every man to fear God in this same manner, and [p. 201] [to teach] that a man himself should reckon with himself, and should consider also other men who were before him, and how they led their lives in all watchfulness.

Now the Prophet, moreover, said that he had done two things: "I have considered the days of old, and I have called to mind the years which are past in which the men of old pleased God", and through the remembrance of these two things "I am filled with fear at the way in which the righteous men pleased God, and at the way in which I have provoked [Him] to wrath. I have given my seasons to reckoning, and my hours to counting, I have meditated upon the days which have passed, and upon the years which I have lived in the world. I have

considered with what I have provoked Him, and what sins I have committed, the things in which I have sinned in act, and the things [in which I have sinned] in thought, and the things [in which I have sinned] with [my] hearing and with [my] tongue. And when I meditated upon these things I said, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight can no man living be justified". To such resemblance doth the word of the Prophet call us, and he delivered unto us this type of instruction. We must reckon the hours and the seasons, and in what we have provoked [Him], and the things upon which we have meditated;

for if those who practise the trafficking of [this] world reckon up their income and expenses each day, and what they gain and what they lose, how much more is the spiritual merchant who goeth forth in quest of heavenly riches bound to do this? And the reckoning of these things benefiteth a man in two ways; firstly, he collecteth his mind to reckon, and secondly, he is zealous in collecting his money. It is therefore a terrible thing for a man to provoke God, especially when he considereth carefully His Majesty, and His immeasurable love and what good things He hath poured out in abundance upon our race, [p. 202]and what His grace hath given unto us, which by our own works we were not worthy to receive. And when a man considereth within himself, who he is, and how the things which are with him have come, and Who is the giver of them, it is right that he should remember God, and be troubled, even as the Prophet taught him. For it is fitting that we should fear God for two reasons, either because we have sinned, or that we may not sin;

for whosoever remembereth the offences which have already been committed [by him], and considereth his former sins, must fear the vengeance due to his evil deeds, and whosoever thinketh that he is pure, and that he hath no offences [committed] in days gone by which he may reckon, and at the memory of which he may be troubled, let him be afraid lest he grieve God in the things which are to come. And thus also did the righteous men [of old] guard their lives from sin, and they healed the wounds which had come [to them], and against those which had not yet come they were watchful; for the first blow which a man receiveth teacheth him to avoid being struck again, and the pain of a first sickness urgeth him to be watchful against the suffering of a second.

What man can contemplate God with vigilant thought, and look upon His majesty, and consider His hidden nature, and can with the eye of his understanding look upon that pure and holy Nature, Which hath need of nothing; Whose country and dwellingplace are exalted; in Whom all riches, and good things and treasures are gathered together; Who is wholly and entirely light, and life, and pleasure; Who is forgiving, and merciful, and good; Who is gracious, and compassionate, and full of love; [p. 203] Who is beautiful, and lovely, and to be desired; Who beggeth, and entreateth, and urgeth every man to live; Who is afflicted for the sake of our life, and seeketh to find us, and is more pleased at our happiness than we ourselves; Who continually entreateth us to take from His riches and to carry off wealth from His storehouse, that we may be rich through His treasures, and not poverty-stricken; Who rejoiceth not in His life as in ours; Who because our poverty was not able to ascend to His riches, brought His riches down to our poverty; Who because He saw that we desired

not to become rich, made Himself a beggar that He might make us rich; Whose name is beloved, and Whose appellation is much desired, and Whose remembrance is sweet; Who maketh the soul which perceiveth Him to taste of the sweetness of the spirit; Who liveth in splendour in the rich wealth of His Being, Whom no man hath seen, neither is he able to see Him;

Whose nature is unspeakable, and Whose riches cannot be explained; Whose gifts also are like unto Himself, and, like Him, are beyond the limit of knowledge; Who is as good as we are bad, and Whose grace is more abundant than our wickedness; Whose nature only is the measure of His grace, and by it only can His love be measured; Whose grace is extended, Whose justice is contracted; Whose love is large, Whose vengeance is small; Who is ready to forgive, and slow to rebuke; Whose punishments are few, and Whose gifts are many; Who, although He correcteth us, beareth remission of sins for us, and Who, because He loveth to.gain us, for that reason chastiseth us; Him in Whom there is no loss, except only that we have become lost, and Whom affliction striketh not except [p. 204] for our sake; Who put on our passions that He might cast away our passions from us, and Who clothed Himself in our sickness that He might bring our diseases to nought; Who was afflicted to make us rejoice, and Who suffered grief that He might fill us with rejoicing; Who made Himself to be in need of everything that we might lack nothing; Who, knowing that we should become provokers to wrath, created our nature like that of beloved children who had need of Him; Who, knowing that we should enroll ourselves as servants of devils, inscribed us heirs of both His worlds;

Who, considering aforetime our likeness, and that the image of the will of Satan was sculptured upon it, carved and depicted us in His desirable likeness; Who, perceiving that we kept not the things of ancient time, made ready aforetime for us others which were greater; He the rich Giver Whose only loss was that we would take nothing from Him; Who while He was giving gifts unto us, grace was receiving us ourselves, and while we were taking from His treasure, we were laid up in His treasury as if we were treasure; Who loveth mankind, and is at all times the Good Being, and the Doer of good; Who being pure and untroubled worketh in us by His doctrine that He may make us pure like unto Himself; Who, being rich and Who being incapable of being brought to poverty, planneth devices whereby He may flatter us to take of His riches, and become rich; Who, having gotten wealth, feigneth Himself to be poor, and when we have gotten wealth, He feigneth that He hath become rich through us; Who, without us, desireth to possess nothing, and if He acquireth anything without us, He is as one Who rejoiceth not therein; [p. 205] Who considereth our joy His, and our affliction His, and Who accounteth all our losses His own; Who hath given unto us all good things, and is not satisfied, and Who hath poured out upon us all riches, and was not satisfied until He, in His love, gave Himself for us?

Who then would not be afraid to grieve this rich and good Being, Who is lavish in giving, sweet and gracious, providing and sustaining, indulgent and forgiving, merciful and full of love, rich, and making rich, good, and doing good, longsuffering and peaceful, loving our

race, and accounting our nature beloved, our Physician and Teacher, our Father by His grace, and our foster-parent in His graciousness? And who would not tremble to provoke Him to wrath? And what man, who should consider all these good things which have been given to us, and who should look at the majesty of their Giver, would not be troubled in his mind whenever he remembered Him? And what soul having received all these gifts would not be shamefaced before the Giver thereof? For it is a fearful thing that man should not be afraid of God, and that mortal beings should not be put to shame by all this love, and that those who receive all this wealth of good things should not feel shame; for these things, and others like unto them, the Prophet [David] remembered, and was therefore troubled. And every one, who posses-seth the watchfulness of that holy soul, will at the remembrance of this God also be troubled like the Prophet, and in his going in, and coming out, and in all his actions, will be greatly moved at the remembrance of Him.

[p. 206] Whosoever feareth sleepeth not, and if he sleepeth, he seeth in his dream the cause of his fear; he eateth not, and he drinketh not, and if the force of natural craving compel him, fear is mingled with his meat and drink. Everything which attacketh the man who is filled with the fear of God abideth outside him, for fear keepeth fast hold upon the place of his understanding, and upon all the places of ingoing and outgoing of the city of his soul. Like the watchmen who stand by the gates of the city, even so doth fear keep fast hold upon the places of ingoing and outgoing of the soul, and it permitteth no act or thought to enter in or to go forth which it examineth not; for it neither permitteth any internal thought whatsoever to go forth, nor any external act that is not seemly to go in. And moreover this Prophet maketh known in other places the fear of God; "My flesh contracteth through fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments". And again he saith, I am like a wine skin in ice, but I have not forgotten Thy commandments". And again he saith, "Sorrow is in my heart all the day long. How long, O Lord, wilt thou turn Thy face from me? How long wilt Thou forget me, for ever? How long wilt Thou set trouble in my soul? And again he saith, "Heal me, O Lord, for my bones tremble, and my soul is greatly moved.

I am weary with my groaning; [p. 207] every night make I my bed to swim; and I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye hath become sick because of Thine anger"; now it is evident that all these things arose from [his] fear of God. And again he saith, "I roared by reason of the groaning of my heart"; and again he saith, "Lead me, O Lord, in Thy fear and righteousness"; and again he saith, "There is no soundness in my flesh before the fear of Thee, and there is no health in my bones in the presence of my sins. For my iniquities have gone over my head; and [they are] as a heavy burden heavy upon me. My wounds stink and are corrupt, and in the presence of my iniquities I tremble greatly. All the day long I walk in sadness. For my ankles are filled with trembling. I am much moved, and I am brought to great misery". And again he saith, "My heart is turned back, and my strength hath forsaken me; and the light of my eyes is no longer with me". And again he saith, "I kept silent, and I was sorrowful, and I was afflicted even from good; and my sickness was stirred. My heart became hot within me; and in my body the fire kindled". And again he

saith, ”I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it. I have come to an end because of [Thy] rebuke of my sins”.

And again, in another place, he ascribeth blessedness to the man who feareth God, and he maketh known what good things the fear of God worketh in him that feareth [Him], saying, ”Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord”, and here the fearer of God is accounted blessed. And although our Lord ordained blessings for other things, the prophet David accounted blessed the fearer of the Lord. [p. 208) ”Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the way of the wicked”, and it is well known that he walketh not in the way of the wicked because he feareth God. And again he saith, ”Blessed is the man whom Thou shalt correct, O Lord, and whom Thou shalt teach Thy law”, and it is manifest that the fear of God teacheth the laws, and that the man who feareth confesseth his correction. And again he said, ”Blessed are those who are without blemish in the way, and who walk in the law of the Lord”, and here again the fear of the Lord preserveth [a man] from blemishes, and urgeth him to walk in the way of the law. And again he saith, ”Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sins are covered”, and it is well known that here also the fear of God bringeth to repentance, through which the forgiveness of sins is given, and through the suffering and tears which are produced by the fear of God the form of a man’s sins is covered before his eyes.

And again he saith, ”Blessed is every one ”that feareth the Lord, and who walketh in His ways” , and here again the prophet David sheweth that a man walketh in the way of the commandments through the fear of God. And in another place he saith concerning him that feareth the Lord, ”He taketh heed to the commandments which are given by the Lord”. And again this Prophet counselleth every man to draw nigh unto God in fear, and he entreated all creation to fear the Lord Who made it, saying, ”Let all the earth fear the Lord, [p. 209] and let all the inhabitants of the world tremble before Him” . For the word of the prophecy casteth fear and trembling upon all the inhabitants of the world, and it teacheth all created beings to come to God by this way.

Whosoever feeleth his state of bondage is bound to fear the power which hath subdued him, and hence it is right for every created being who hath in him discernment to perceive his Creator, to draw nigh to Him in fear and trembling; for that we should fear God is seemly for our nature, but that we should love Him is given unto us by His grace. For man is not worthy to love God, but God Himself came down that He might be loved by man. Now creation is bound to fear God naturally, but if it be exalted to the grade of love it is not its nature which is able to lift it up there, but Grace goeth down in search of it, and bringeth it up and stablisheth it in the height of divine love, that it may, by Grace, love God, Whom justly it is obliged to fear. And behold, moreover, to the kings and princes of [this] world not every man hath power either to shew love, or to reveal to them the most ardent and faithful emotions of affection; but all ranks and orders who are under their subjection must shew fear and service before them, and not the confidence of affection and love.

For according to the custom of exalted rank which is found with the governors of [this] world, to be loved by inferiors (or the poor) is considered by them a disgrace, and therefore, they demand fear from every man, in their capacity of lords, [p. 210] and not love like parents. Now God, having in His Grace ordained Himself our Father, gave unto us also power to love Him, and it is not right that we should of our own freewill exalt ourselves insolently, but we should remain the whole time of our life in the subjection of His fear, and when He Himself wisheth His Grace will exalt us to the grade of His love. To our mind the capacity of loving God belongeth not, but the capacity with which we were created is to fear God, and therefore the Holy Books everywhere demand from the children of men fear rather than love, inasmuch as circumspection accompanieth fear and confidence love. And, moreover, love is the cause of fear, for until a man plougheth, and toileth, and soweth the seed in fear, he cannot arrive at the reaping of love. For as the crops of the husbandmen of [this] world are in the hands of God, while the ploughing and the sowing belong to our own will, even so are the labours and the service of fear placed in our will, but that we should arrive at the capacity for love, and gather in the produce thereof belongeth to the will of God.

For until the manifestation of Christ----Who brought love to the world----fear ministered in the world to all the children of men, and until Christ was revealed to man in his own place, it was right that all his life should be passed in the perpetual service of fear; and although our Creator hath, in His Grace, called us "sons" to make us proud and to magnify us, yet is it more seemly for us to abide in the fear of servants. [p. 211] And that we were called "sons" belongeth not to ourselves, but to the Grace of Him that called us, and it belongeth not to us to ask for wages boldly, but to us it belongeth to serve in fear; but that one should give the wages of love belongeth to God. And no man will offend if he calleth love the wages of fear, for as a man receiveth [his] wages after his toil, even so after the service of fear doth Jesus make us taste the sweetness of His love, from which joy ariseth for us, and we stand in the confidence of sons, and our hidden man findeth freedom of speech with God, and our understanding stablisheth joy of spirit at all seasons, and our mind delighteth inwardly in the sight of heavenly light, and contempt for everything which is visible is born in the soul, and our dwelling is as if it were already in the kingdom which is prepared for the saints.

Now these and such like things hath the soul that hath tasted divine love, for the man who standeth in perfect love is in God, and what happiness compareth with this, or what pleasure or delight is equal to that of a man being in God? for the position which is in perfect love is purity from all wickedness, and the perfection of all virtues. And also Jesus was not persuaded to give this wealth of love except to the man whom He know to be worthy of it, for from love is born confidence, and to confidence contempt is closely united, and there is no virtue which hath not near it a breach through which it can be ravished. But in fear there is no [p. 212] contempt, only watchfulness and circumspection, and a perpetual guard which preserveth the good things from the ravisher; for the fear which is of God urgeth a man to gather together the things which are profitable, and when they have been gathered together fear also increaseth and multiplieth to him that gathereth them, for it turneth and addeth to his fear, and he taketh good heed to his virtues that they be not spoiled. He crieth out

because he is afraid, and he is watchful oi his possessions because he feareth lest they be ravished, and in every respect it is necessary and advantageous to life in [this] world that a man should fear God.

The country of fear is the country of the life which is mortal, and the country of love is the other world of the life which is immortal. Let us consider then our country, and let us increase in us fear, and let us look at the dwelling in which we live, and let us increase in us trembling at God, and at the remembrance of the report of Him; and let us rouse ourselves as from the depth of deep slumber, and let us wake up wholly to keep all His commandments. For the nature of the fear of God is that it urgeth us [to do] one thing, and one thing only, for it stirreth us up to do all the commandments, and for this reason the Spirit of God desired to teach us the fear of God by the hand of all the Prophets. And the Prophet David himself said, "All those who pass over the earth shall fear the Lord, and all those who go down into the dust shall kneel [before Him]". And again he saith, "Lead me, O Lord, in Thy fear and righteousness", and because he knew what the profit of the fear of God was, he asked it as a gift from God. [p. 213] For all the conversation of the soul which the fear of God leadeth standeth in righteousness. And again, when he entreated God not to remember the sins of his youth against him, he was moved to make this request by His fear of God;

and again he said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom".

Now the end of the path of good works is spiritual love, therefore from love divine wisdom is produced, and the blessed David well taught us that the beginning of this way of wisdom is the fear of God. For as to every matter in [this] world there is a beginning and an end. and as the paths which are trodden down naturally by the passage of footsteps have also a beginning and an end, even so hath the path of virtue a beginning and an end; its beginning is the fear of God, and its end is the wisdom which is born of love. And it is right that every man who wisheth to begin the Christian life should begin it with the fear of God, even according to the teaching of the blessed David; and again another Prophet said, "The fear of the Lord shall open [my] ears for me"; and concerning Jonah it is also written, "He feared before the Lord and fled to Joppa". For although his fear was born of simplicity, yet like a man who feared God he fled in order that he might not draw nigh to the work which he thought was too hard for his strength. And again when he was asked by the sailors whence he came, and what [p. 214] God he served, he said, "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven". And also when those who were with him in the ship saw the marvellous things which took place through God in the sea----for the sea rose up, like a being having intelligence, to demand from them the fugitive servant, and when he had been given unto it, it sank to rest and its billows were quieted----and saw through the things which took place the fear of God, it is written concerning them that "the men feared the Lord, and they offered up sacrifices unto the Lord, and vowed vows."

And again God demanded from the Jews the fear of Himself by the hand of Jeremiah, and reproached them by the testimony of the dumb things in nature, which, though silent, trembled at the fear of Him, while the Jews despised His commandments. "Fear ye not Me? saith

the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence? For I have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, [by] an everlasting law, and it shall not pass over it". And here again the Creator demanded fear and trembling from created things, and because they forsook His fear they were reproached through the dumb things of nature, which feared and trembled at the Majesty of the Creator, while His commandments were despised by the children of men. And God in all places shewed the majesty of His nature by the hand of the Prophet, that He might cast the fear thereof into those who listened. For to those who would have despised His meekness----if it had been shewn unto them----He revealed the majesty of His nature that they might tremble thereat; and to others He shewed His gentleness and meekness, [p. 215] which at the report of His humiliation would increase [their] love [for Him]. Now the fool is wont to despise whosoever is humble before him, but the wise man loveth him more because of his humility.

For the fool hath no eye to see love in humility, and for this reason greatness is made manifest to him, and indignation is written down for him, and seventy and terror are inscribed before him, that by reason of these he may fear the more Him Who maketh such things manifest. And the Will of God hath, according to the following testimony, revealed why He maketh use of these words to the children of men. "The sea is obedient unto Me, and restraineth the fury of its waves within the despicable bound of sand. And its waves lift themselves up, and pass not over the contemptible fence which hedgeth them in; but ye of your own freewill despise this terrible God". And again in another place He maketh known that He employeth every kind of benefit and help towards them, and that He took and brought nigh unto them every cause for fear and love, but that they would neither fear nor love Him. "If I be Lord, where are those who fear Me? And if I be Father, why do ye not honour Me? therefore they should either have feared [Him] as Lord, or have honoured [Him] as Father.

And for this reason also God in a certain place1 repeateth before him the benefits which He had wrought for the people---- the terrible Exodus from Egypt, the abundant gifts in the wilderness, the entrance into the land of promise, [p. 216] the subjugation of foreign nations, the benefits which were poured out abundantly upon their lives every day----so that He might rouse them up to love the Giver. And in another place He repeated the great things which He had done, and the works which He had established by the nod of His Will, and how all created things hang upon the power of His word, and the natural things keep their bounds, and the creation is yoked beneath the dispensation of His Will; before Whom the mountains are placed in scales, and the hills in a balance, Who hath meted out heaven with His span, and hath comprehended the dust of the earth in His palm, and before Whom the nations and peoples of the world are accounted as nothing. These things He spake by the hand of the Prophet, that through them He might make His majesty known, and that by the report of His majesty he might work fear in those who listened unto him.

For when God spake unto those who were in the condition of servants, He rehearsed before them the great and terrible things of His nature, but when [He spake] to those who were

accounted by Him worthy of the grade of love, He set forth the doctrine of humility, and of love, and of meekness, and He humbled Himself and spake to them because they did not despise Him in His lowly estate, but rather loved Him the more because of it. For where God cannot confide in the children of men because of their immature understanding and childish knowledge, He speaketh terrible and fearful things, and He granteth not unto them boldness to draw nigh unto the confidence of His love, lest, when they have perceived His knowledge and forgiveness, and above all things that love and grace are to be found with Him, for this very reason they despise [p. 217] His graciousness, and they cast themselves after the manner of the flesh to the working of all vices. And this is manifest alone to those who have obtained the inheritance of the name of sons, together with that of grace also, through the labour of their works, for in proportion as they feel love, they love the more; and in proportion as they perceive the goodness of the nature of God, they become better men; and in proportion as His condescension and graciousness become revealed unto them, they are themselves urged to become like unto their Father in things which are like unto these.

And for this reason all the revelations of God in olden time belonged to fear, but this latter [revelation] is of friendship and love; for in times of old He revealed Himself to teach us that He was our God, but in this last time He hath appeared and shewn us that He is our Father. In times of old He drew nigh to the children of men who were in the condition of slaves, but to-day He calleth them to the inheritance of "sons". And when He revealed Himself to gather together slaves unto Himself, He bore stripes and fetters, blows and chastisements, punishments and penalties, fear and trembling, indignation and cruelty, swift vengeance, the rod which was always stretched out over the head of sinners, the open judgment hall, and the judge who was ready; but in times of old was reared up the wood that the blasphemer might be crucified upon it, of old the stones were collected for stoning, of old the fire was kindled for the burning, of old the stripes were made ready for crimes, of old the instruments were prepared to take tooth for tooth, of old were the eyes bored out, of old the branding irons were ready to avenge, of old [p. 218] blows were struck, of old sentences of judgment upon crimes were passed. To those who were slaves belonged such stripes.

And that the wicked slave might not raise his head, and lift up himself insolently against the Giver of the law, He broke his legs that he might not kick, He cut off his hands that he might not strike a blow, He drew out his teeth that he might not bite, He put out his eyes that he might not see and desire the things which belonged not to him, He inflicted injury upon him that he might not injure others, and by the fear of punishments He drove back the vices of that nation because it would not be persuaded to be restrained from its abominable practices through fear of Him. For where there is the fear of God, man hath no need of the fear of these and such like things, because the fear of the unseen Judge sufficeth to draw him from all his vices. Lay fast hold then, O disciple, upon this fear in thy soul, and fear nought else, for the fear which is of God feareth not the world, and the fear which is of the world feareth not God. Let us then be afraid at all times lest we provoke God to wrath, because the portion of fear is placed in thee that thou mayest fear God therewith. In

[this] world there is nothing which belongeth to fear for the soul that perceiveth the fear of God, and the trembling of afflictions is accounted nothing to the man who hath in him the trembling of the fear of the righteousness of God.

Our Lord abrogated one fear, and established another; He lifted from us the fear of the death which belongeth to time, and He laid upon us [p. 219] the fear of the death which is for eternity. "Fear ye not the death [which is of time]", but fear the death [which is for eternity]. "Let not those who kill the body terrify you, but fear ye Him Who can destroy the soul and the body".Those who kill [the body] are not to be feared, for Another quickeneth, but He is to be feared Who is able to put to death so that there is none who can quicken, and when He hath killed, there is none who can bring to life. For that which is transitory the fear thereof also is transitory, but the fear of Him Who neither passeth away nor changeth cometh not to an end. "He looketh upon the earth, and it trembleth, He rebuketh the mountains, and they smoke". And again [the Book] saith, "At Thy rebuke they flee, and at the voice of Thy thunders they are afraid".

And behold, according to the word of the Prophet, the fear of the Creator also resteth upon the natures which are speechless, because each of them is bound naturally to be afraid of Him; and if dumb things fear Him, how much more should intelligent beings fear Him? The fire which belongeth to time is greatly feared by the children of men, yet how remote from the mind is the remembrance of the fire which [burneth] for eternity! The sight of the tortures which can be seen is terrible and appalling, yet how very far removed from the vision of the soul are the punishments which are to come! The death which is here is full of terror, and yet the image of everlasting death is not set before our eyes. Immediately the remembrance of the things which are written entereth in, it annulleth from the heart the remembrance of the things which are here; and so long as our minds .are not moved by the constant fear of God, every fear which cometh upon us terrifieth us. [p. 220] For so long as the king is absent the judge is held in fear, but when the king appeareth in his power the fear of judges is annulled, and not is this so only, but the judge himself, together with all the grades [of men] beneath him, is subject unto the fear of the royal power, and those who are feared themselves become people who fear.

For all fears gathered together are smitten by one fear, and all princes and governors, from whom fear descendeth upon the grades [of men] beneath them, are obedient and subject unto one fear which is the mistress of all others. Of One only let us be afraid, and through the fear of Him the power of all [other] fears shall be dissolved, and let the trembling which is produced by all [other] powers be brought to nought, and let every governor bow his head before one Royal Governor Who ruleth over all. Thus likewise when the fear of God is remote from the soul, it is afraid of everything, of powers, of judges, of governors, of men of rank, of captains of hosts, of rich men, of those in authority, of despised and common folk, and of men of low and contemptible condition; and together with these it feareth also affliction, and injuries, and punishments, and torments, and pains, and sicknesses, and loss, and poverty, and remoteness from kinsfolk, and removal from family, and deprivation of friends, and

departure from [its] native country. All these and other similar things are [objects of] fear to the man who feareth not God, but if the fear of God enter in and dwell [p. 221] within the country of the soul, and lay hold upon ail the members of its thoughts, it is henceforth impossible for the soul to receive [any] other fear;

and when any fear which goeth to dwell therein seeth that the fear of God abideth in the soul, it will leave [it] and depart, because its house is not capable of receiving another inhabitant. For as a vessel which is full of one substance cannot receive any other which may be put therein, unless it be emptied of that which first filled it, even so the soul which is filled with the fear of God cannot receive the fear of the world, or the fear of anything which is in the world, for it is wholly occupied by that one true fear of God. Let us all then strive to possess this fear, and let us despise [all] else, and let us be empty of everything, that we may be sufficient for the one work only of the fear of God; and in the remembrance of His terrible and venerable Name let us keep our lives with all diligence, and let us make glory to ascend to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.

Here endeth the Seventh Discourse: which is on the fear of God which was in the righteous men of old. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 8 -- First Discourse on Poverty

[P. 222] THE EIGHTH DISCOURSE: WHICH TEACHETH THAT A MAN CANNOT BECOME A PERFECT DISCIPLE OF CHRIST, UNLESS HE FIRST OF ALL MAKE HIMSELF DESTITUTE OF ALL HUMAN POSSESSIONS, AND GO FORTH FROM THE WORLD OPENLY WITH HIS INNER MAN AND WITH HIS OUTER MAN.

The man who wisheth to travel along the open way of perfection hath need to make the beginning of his journey in the fair order which is becoming to that way, and he should not begin his discipleship in the law which seemeth good unto him, but in that defined law which was delivered by the word of Christ our God unto His disciples, even as He walked in this way of perfection. And He in His own Person became a law unto us, and He gave us a fair example that we might journey after His footsteps; for Jesus was not a teacher unto us in words only, but also in the works of perfection which He fulfilled in Himself, and therefore [p. 223] He is truly the good Teacher Who taught, and practised, for His teaching was practice, and His practice was teaching. And thus also our Lord Himself depicted and shewed us in His own ministration, for after He had performed all the righteousness which justice required, and had kept the law of the commandments which are to be perfected in the world. He then left the world, and went forth therefrom that He might teach perfection. For I do not say also that those who are in the world cannot be justified, but that it is not possible for them to arrive at perfection, for the world itself is an obstacle to perfection, that is to say, of righteousness also, and of the uprightness which is worked therein.

And a man is not able to bear two labours and to be perfect in two virtues while he is in the world, and for this reason the commandments were defined and set apart for those who journey in the world in order that they might possess their lives through them, and the other path of perfection, which is above the world, was opened. For the Will of Christ ordained the law, that is, He required that all the children of men should journey along the path of angels, and that no man should turn aside from that mark which He placed in the midst, but because not every man was able to do this----now He wished that every man should live----He gave divers commandments to every man that he might live thereby. And He made measures and steps in His doctrine, not because these things exist in it, but because

of those who were to receive it, and because they were in need [of them], and without them they were not able to live. [p. 224] To the path of the world the life of righteousness is united, and to the path which is outside the world is attached perfection, and the end of the path of righteousness and justice is absolute destitution of all possessions.

For so long as a man possesseth human wealth, whether it be little, or whether it be much, he is unable to walk in the path of perfection, for in respect of every possession which existed, according to the measure thereof doth it become a fetter to the mind, and a chain to the light wings of the understanding so that they cannot fly along the heavenly path. Whosoever hath riches must perforce meditate thereupon, and whosoever meditateth upon riches cannot meditate upon God, and if on an occasion the remembrance of God rise up in him, it is not lasting; for it is not possible that he should remember God when he is meditating upon [his] possessions, or if he imagine that he doth remember Him, the remembrance is borrowed and is not true, for it is not possible that these two remembrances should dwell together at one time in the soul, and if they dwell therein one of them must necessarily be borrowed, and the other be true. And if a man think truly that he meditateth upon God while he hath in his mind the anxious care of riches, [he doeth it] not with all the might of his soul, which it is seemly to us to give wholly to God;

for we are obliged to serve God not with one of our members, and the world with another, and to meditate upon Him at one time, and upon mammon at another, but it is right that we should give all our might [p. 225] to the service of the commandments, and that always the seasons may be helpful to us to remember Him, that we may become temples to Him alone, having poured out from us every meditation of the mind which is outside Him. And that man is not able to serve God worthily while he is in the world, and while he is a possessor of riches, and the owner of wealth, the word of our Redeemer Himself testifieth, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon; and forthwith the hearer thought that henceforth the door of righteousness was shut in the face of all the children of men, for they cannot be wholly free from the care of riches, and according to the decision of the word of Christ, whosoever careth for it cannot care for God. And it is necessary for us to understand the word as it was spoken, for according to the rule of those who are perfect, the man who careth for riches cannot care for God; but a man, being a possessor of wealth, is able to be justified by that other measure of righteousness which is worked in the world, if it be that he is not a servant who worshippeth his riches, but a master of the things which he possesseth.

Some men are slaves of their possessions, and some are masters of their wealth, and one man is worshipped by his possessions, and another man worshippeth them. Now the word of our Lord was spoken concerning the man who is a slave of his possessions, and who is not able to be a servant of God; "For ye cannot serve two masters. Thou seest [p. 226] that He shewed two masters in His discourse, and that in explaining who these were, He said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Behold then, whosoever hath made mammon his master cannot serve God, but he serveth that master whom he hath chosen of his own freewill, his service being especially dear unto

him, and his dominion over him being beloved by him, because he hath become subject unto, him of his own freewill. For the children of men are wont to love exceedingly that which they have chosen of their own freewill, and they love it much more than Him Who perforce and naturally is Master over them. And behold, if there were a few men who have pleased, or who please God, it is because they were and are masters of their wealth, and they sent it forth to [do] everything like a slave and subject, sometimes to feed the hungry, sometimes to clothe the naked, sometimes to redeem the captive, sometimes [to pay] vows and offerings unto God, and sometimes to free those who were in the bondage of debts; and wheresoever the will desired to rule over it, there it sent it like a servant, even as did Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Job, and Joseph, and David, and Hezekiah. And of these men some were rich, and some were princes, and some were kings, and collectively they all were owners of great possessions and wealth; but they were masters of their riches, and their riches were not [p. 227] masters of them, their riches worked for them in all the good things which they wished [to do], and they did not serve them in all the wickedness which mammon demanded.

Now there are distinctions between the commandments, and it must be understood to whom each was spoken. For this commandment, "Ye cannot serve two masters----God and mammon," must, according to the meaning of the passage, have been spoken to those who wished to be righteous while they were [still] in the world, and He advised and admonished them that because they had ceased from the path of perfection they should not become wholly and entirely servants of mammon, and forsake the dominion of God which was naturally set over their lives. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where the moth and the rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where the moth and the rust do not corrupt, and where thieves break not through nor steal. And it is evident that this commandment is not applicable to solitaries and to those who are perfect, for how could "Lay not up for thyself treasure upon earth" be said to him to whom it was commanded, "Take no thought for the morrow? And how could the words, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven of your alms," apply to the man to whom it was said, "Thou shalt not possess two coats, nor wallet, nor cloak, nor money in the wallet. And what hath the thief who stealeth, or the moth which destroyeth to do with him to whom it is commanded that, save himself, he should possess nothing?

So therefore the words, [p. 228] "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," are a command to those who have possessions, for because the Teacher saw that they could not. rise up to the grade of perfection, He brought Himself down in His speech to their level, and He ordained for them a law which was suitable to the position in which they stood, and said, "Since it is impossible for thee to be destitute, thou shalt not become a slave to thy wealth, and serve it like one subject thereto, but thou shalt be unto it a master in the ministration of all good things. For when it is thy master, whithersoever it wisheth it sendeth thee, at one time to plunder, at another to thieve, and at another to bear false witness, at another to oppress and to despoil, at another to swear false oaths, and sometimes [it sendeth thee] even to commit murder, and also to the participation with devils, and it omitteth no one of these wicked things which it will command thee to do so long, as it is thy lord, and thou art its servant.

And as, if thou be its master, it sendeth thee [to do] all good things, so also if it be thy master it sendeth thee [to do] all wickedness.

For it is the law that a master should give the command, and that the servant should be commanded, and so long as a man is the master he giveth the command, and so long as he is a servant he is commanded. And where there are those who give commands those who are commanded will be found, and things will be done according to the will of those who give the commands. And Jesus the Teacher did not lay a heavy command upon those who had possessions when He commanded them to be masters of their riches, but only that [p. 229] which they themselves should have desired, and because they did not know how to obtain it, He taught them in this manner. And it is like a man who eagerly desireth to become wise, but who knoweth not how to gather together knowledge, and another man is found who becometh his teacher and [sheweth him] how to collect it and to obtain possession thereof; or another man who loveth wealth, but who knoweth not how it is gathered together; or another man who loveth edifices which are richly furnished, but he knoweth not how they are to be built, or how they are to be furnished. In this manner the children of men desire to be masters of [their] riches, but unconsciously it is found that their wealth hath become their master; and the Teacher, having pity upon those who had possessions, taught them, [saying], "Be ye masters of your riches, according to your desire;

and together with this He shewed them in what way they should be masters. The desire [to obtain] things is one thing, and the knowledge of [how to obtain] them is another. One man desireth, but knoweth not how to obtain that which he desireth; and another knoweth how to find and to obtain [things], but he desireth [them] not. Now to those who desired to become masters of riches, and who had obtained them and they had turned and become their master, Jesus taught the knowledge of that thing which they desired; these then, Jesus commanded to be masters of [their] riches, and not to be servants thereof, while those who were perfect He commanded to be not even masters, [p. 230] and He counselled them not to humble themselves to be masters of dumb possessions. Those, however, who had possessions He freed from the bondage of senseless stuff, lest while they served it they should become servers of idols, concerning which it is written, "They have no breath in their mouth, and although they have eyes, and ears, and hands, they see not, and hear not, and work not. And for this reason the Apostle Paul called the love of mammon "idolatry," for as the heathen worship things which have no feeling, and in which there is neither life nor perception, even so do those who love riches worship the gold which is silent, and the silver which is dumb, together with all [their] possessions which have neither feeling nor knowledge.

One man Jesus commanded, [saying], "Be not a servant of riches," and to another He ordained the law, "Be not even a master of wealth; to one He said, "It is a disgrace to thy freedom that thou shouldst be subject unto gold," and to the other He said, "It is a contemptible thing for thy mastership to rule over natural things, for thou art humbled to the possessions which are the shells of natural things. For to him who had forsaken mastership over everything, and had been caught fast by the desire of little wealth, He said, "Possess,

only when thou hast become possessor of thy possession, let it not happen that thy possession possess thee; but the other whom He saw had been exalted from being a servant to wealth, He raised up to a higher grade than this, and said, "Be not a master unto it. For as [p. 231] it is a disgrace to him that wisheth to be master of his possessions to become a servant thereto, even so is it a disgrace also to him that hath been freed from the bondage of wealth, that there should be found with him the mastership of wealth.

The poor man possesseth the things of poverty, and the rich man the great and glorious things of wealth; now therefore since those which have possessions are poor, they possess poverty, [which is] riches and temporal possessions, but the destitute are rich, and it would be a disgrace to that excellent name if it became the possessor of the things of poverty, gold, and silver, and raiment, and if it exchanged the riches of eternity for the poverty of time, and heavenly possessions for human mammon. And that thou mightest not serve mammon our Lord said unto him that loved mammon, "Be thou its master, and let it be to thee a slave. It appeareth therefore that Jesus gave this commandment to those who were rich, but to all the others who wished to walk in the lofty path of perfection He said, "Possess not gold, nor silver, nor money in your wallets, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor staff, for the labourer is worthy of his food," that is to say, "Such freedom befitteth such labour. So then Jesus sent them from all the world, and then [p. 232] He brought them out of the world, saying, "Go forth, and leave everything in its place in the world, and take not out with you to the country of life things which are mortal. Ye have been called to put on purple, cast off first the filthy rags of the world, and then put on royal purple.

For who that wisheth to put on the glory which is for eternity would not first cast off the garments which are worn out, and then put on that glory which never becometh old? And whosoever wisheth to be enrolled in Jerusalem above will not have a dwelling in the earth, but he will dwell in that city. Whosoever wisheth not to be received in that world by Grace shall be received in this world graciously by every man; and whosoever wisheth to be a dweller in the marriage chamber, let him not possess in this world either a wallet or a cloak; and whosoever seeketh to obtain God, let him not possess money in his wallet; for it is an endless disgrace that together with God a man should be possessed of money. For he who possesseth the things of time, together with those of eternity, is not sensible of the greatness of his possession, and therefore he runneth to obtain poverty together with riches. And neither is it possible that these two treasures can be contained in one vessel, for no man ever put scourings together with gold in one vessel, nor did any one ever account straw and wood of equal value with precious stones. This commandment then was given by the Master to His disciples when He sent them to be fishers of men unto life;

[p.233] He cut off first from them all the fetters of the world, and He loosed from them all human ties, and then He sent them to loose others, for the man that is fettered cannot loose him that is in bondage. The possession of the things of the world is a fetter to all the members, and a curb of all the senses, and the whole man is bound and fettered in his inward and outward things thereby. And well did our Lord first loose the fetters of the world

from His disciples, and then send them to loose the bonds of others, that those who were in bonds might see that those whose bonds were loosed bore the mark of freedom, and the sign of the Kingdom, and that He that loosed them might be believed in by them, especially when they saw that those from whom they had cut off the bonds of the world were free.

This similitude then did our Lord set in the place of these commandments which He delivered to the Apostles when He commanded them to possess nothing; He made them destitute of everything, and then He sent them to be ministers of His will in the conversion of others, so that therefrom we might learn, that everyone who wisheth to be a minister unto God must deny himself all worldly possessions, and must be destitute of everything after the manner of the Apostles, and then he shall go forth and become a minister of the perfect will of God. For as long as the Apostles were with Jesus, and were going about with Him from place to place, they stood not in the position of perfection, [p. 234] and for this reason our Lord was silent about the [other] commandments, so long as they were Apostles with Him; and He allowed them to do the other things which followed closely upon their continuance with Him, and which were useful also to those who drew nigh to Him, either going about among the multitudes who were sitting down in the wilderness, or when they were sent by Him [to do] things which were of use for some visible purpose, even as when He sent Simon to the sea to catch a fish and to pay the poll tax, and as when they were also invited with Him in the body to the feast chamber.

And they wandered from city to city and went round about with Him, and they paid Him honour visibly before the crowds, and they kept back from Him the press of the multitudes that not every man might forcibly make his way to Him, even as it is written, "And certain people sought to bring little children to Him that He might bless them, and His disciples restrained them; and everywhere, according to the measure of their knowledge at that time they paid Him honour like unto this. And He humbled Himself and accepted these things from them from time to time, because He knew that they were only able to offer unto Him visible ministration. And although their ministration was feeble, still it was according to the measure of their knowledge; for He considered the willingness, and likewise accepted the ministration thereof. And it is the wont of Jesus, whether it be then or now, to demand service according to the power of the will, and He desireth not that the work should be above [p. 235] the will of him that doeth it, for if it be apparent that he doeth for Him a work which is above his intelligence, or above the law, either perfunctorily or slothfully, this Jesus wisheth not, nor to receive service from a rational man as if he were a dumb vessel.

For while He was humbling Himself to receive from all the measures of their intelligence, and the services which they offered to Him, He magnified them in His teaching, that they might be exalted to the ministration of those who are perfect from their former state, so that the first service might be a path for that which followed after it, and that the first virtue might become training and exercise for the other virtue which should be perfected therefrom. And together with the work the Teacher set forth doctrine, not only in deed but also by His word, even as He did to Mary and Martha, who both offered service unto Him,

but the service of Mary was more perfect than that of Martha, and both ministered unto Him, the one only according to the body, and the other according to the spirit, and our Lord received both services, and pronounced blessed the service which was superior to its fellow, [saying], "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her. As if a man should say, "Do thou also, O Martha, forsake that [service] which is imperfect, and be exalted in thy service to the more excellent grade. And Jesus did not reject the ministration of Martha, for according to the measure of her knowledge and of her love was [p. 236] the measure of her ministration; but He wished that she would offer great instead of little things, and instead of the service of the body the service of the spirit.

And the service of Mary and of Martha was like exactly unto the service of the holy Apostles of the old and of the latter times, for that bodily service which they also offered unto Him in one place after another was like unto that of Martha; but that other service which He taught them to offer unto Him in the commandment, "Ye shall possess nothing," was the counterpart of the service of the blessed Mary. For there are many who, like Martha and Zacchaeus, and those women who clave to Him, and who ministered unto Him from their possessions, are justified, and there are some whose service like that of Mary and the Apostles is wholly of the spirit; and Jesus wished and desired this service, so that all the children of men might arrive at perfection. And His coming into the world took place that He might deliver to the children of men the life and rule of spiritual beings, even as also the holy Apostle taught that it was meet that the man of God should be in all perfection, [saying], "The man of God shall be perfect [to do] every good and perfect thing."

Now this perfection Jesus delivered unto His disciples by those commandments concerning absolute poverty which He gave to them, when He denied to them the whole world, and everything that is therein, and not them only, but also, in them and with them, every man [p. 237] who followeth after perfection. For when He ordained the law for the persons of the Apostles, He delivered doctrine unto the multitude, and unto the whole race of the children of men, and He urged every one who wished to be obedient unto Him to [follow] this fair thing. And moreover, at the beginning of their election when He called them to go after Him, it is written of them that, "Immediately He called them they forsook everything and went after Him." They were casting nets' into the sea and He saw and called them, "and they left their nets and their ship, and went after Him." And He saw also James and John in a ship with Zebedee their father, and He called them also, and straightway they left the net with Zebedee their father, and went after Him.

Behold the law of the going forth after God! And behold the straight rule which hath been marked for us in the Holy Books! Therefore it is right that every man who desireth to go forth after God should emulate the going forth of the Apostles, and that he should despise and reject everything which is visible, and deny the whole world, for Christ hath said that the man who desireth to be a perfect disciple of Him must also deny himself. If a man denieth his life according to the word of our Redeemer, then will he be a disciple, but without this there is no means of a man arriving at perfection. [p. 238] And how can a man who denieth

not himself the possessions of the world, and who despiseth not all the riches which are seen, and bodily pleasures, arrive at that perfection which Jesus delivered? And I do not speak these things of myself, but I follow after the desire of the Holy Books, and I take my stand upon the law which hath been ordained by the King.

The disciples are the beginning of the discipleship of Christians, and their calling was such----as it is written concerning them----that immediately they were called they forsook everything, and went forth after Him. And whosoever wisheth to become a disciple let him consider this example, and let him look at this mark with all his mind and understanding, in order that inwardly and outwardly he may make himself destitute of everything, and then let him begin to journey along this heavenly path; for he will never be filled unless he first of all empty himself, and he will never lay his hand upon the riches of heaven unless he first let go the poverty which he holdeth. It is impossible for him to lay hold upon the one, unless he let go the other, especially as they are opposed to each other, and each of them when it draweth nigh destroyeth the other. And behold when we have made ourselves destitute of everything, if we have only emptied ourselves to the extent of keeping His commandments, our ministration is not yet worthy of God, inasmuch as the strength of our soul is divided and split asunder, and some thereof is occupied with the love of the things of the world, and it is not able to offer unto God the service [p. 239] of love.

For this command is grievous unto whomsoever is fettered with the love of riches, and although it be freedom from the world, yet to those who are held fast in the subjection of the world----those who are fettered, and whose fetters are pleasant unto them; and those who are fast bound, and their bonds are sweet unto them; those who have thrown the chains of anxious care upon all their members, and have taken upon them to become subject unto the world, and not servants of Christ----it is hard and difficult. For Jesus proclaimeth freedom unto thee, but the world hath prepared slavery for thee, and if the bondage of the world is sweet to thee, it is not because its nature is to be so, but because thy own desire hath been corrupted, and it hath lusted evilly. When a man longeth for something belonging to the world, his desire is not healthy, but he desireth, like a sick man, that which will not benefit him, and [his] desire is altogether to his own injury; for it is the custom with many sick persons to desire [things] for their own injury rather than for their good, and [to choose] that which will prevent their recovery rather than that which will heal their sickness.

For the healing which is in them is turned to illness, and the power of the natural appetite which is in them is also changed from its natural condition, for the strength of the appetite is preserved by the uniformity of admixture and by the healthy condition of the body, and when the admixture of the body is disturbed the bodily appetites are also confounded. [p. 240] The man who is being consumed with fever desireth a draught of cold water, and although it would do him harm to drink he asketh to drink, and is furious with those who will not give him [water]; but the wise physician answereth him not, because he knoweth that it is the blind craving that is in him which asketh for that which would prevent his recovery. Similarly the riches of the world are sweet, and the possessions thereof are much desired by

those who are diseased in their souls, and who are lacking the healing of divine knowledge, and they ask for everything which will do them harm;

but our heavenly Physician by His health-giving provisions warneth us against harm, and He commandeth us to do, not that which is sweet to us and in which we find satisfaction, but that which will be of benefit to us, even though we may not find satisfaction in the doing thereof, for the wise physician followeth not the desire of the sick, and he doth not submit himself to their appetites which will retard and injure their recovery, but he treateth them according to the beneficial law of healing, and teacheth them to fight against their desire that they may be healed.

Let us then receive the yoke of poverty according as our Redeemer commanded, even though it be heavy upon us, for it will not be heavy to the will which agreeth with the commandments of Christ. For there is no man who doth not desire to be a free man, and to be free from the yoke of bondage, and moreover, unto every man the name of "free" is more beloved than that of "slave. And our Lord, in that He commanded us to be aliens to the world, [p. 241] gave us true freedom, in which He Himself lived and moved while He was in the world, for although by nature inasmuch as He was God, He was free, yet in that He took the form of a slave He lived and moved in freedom, and He was above all the care of [this] world. For it is written that Jesus "took the form of a servant, and He became the likeness of the children of men, and He was found to be in form like unto a man," and He was truly as we are. But in one thing, which is outside of us, He did not participate, that is to say, He did not possess on [this] earth riches, and possessions, or mammon, or wealth, or buildings, or estates, or vineyards, for Jesus possessed none of these things in order that He might teach His own [disciples] that they should not possess them;

and that Being Who was free took no care for them, that He might free us also from care for them. And He was not bowed beneath the yoke of bondage to the world, that He might also take from off us the heavy yoke of the bondage of the world; and He was not fettered by human affairs that He might loose from off us the fetters thereof; and carking care did not chain Him, that He might raise His disciples above the care and anxiety concerning all the things which are visible. The free Man dwelt in creation in freedom in order that He might teach us in very deed also to live therein in freedom. Whosoever then wisheth to become a disciple to that Master let him regard the sojourn of His Master in the world, and as He was, even so let him himself be in creation. The Lord of the world was a stranger and an alien in the world, and as was the Lord, even so it is meet [p. 242] that the servants should be. And observe how destitute of human things was He in Whom all fulness was gathered together, for in all creation He had neither a nest nor a den which have even the beast and bird! "The foxes have holes, and the bird of heaven hath a covert, but the Son of Man hath not even where to lay His head".

Behold, O disciple, thy course of life and action are marked out by the words of thy Master: that which He had not, thou shalt not have, and that which He possessed not, thou shalt not possess. Disciples are not known by [their] outward appearance, but by the similarity

and agreement of works, and by their treading in the footsteps of their Master, and by their walking in the way which He trod for them; for if the path had not been trodden, and if the footsteps of our God were not visible therein, there would then have been an excuse for the slothful, those to whom the bonds of the world are dear, but behold the path is open, and the way is known, and the tracks therein can be seen by every man with the light of truth. But if a man seeth them not, although he setteth his footsteps upon them, it is manifest that it must be because he lacketh the light of faith which sheweth [them], and although he thinketh that he is journeying along the way, he is travelling away from it into error. And the words which Jesus spake to thee, [when He said] that He had not a place wherein to lay His head, were to teach thee that thou also shouldst not have a place wherein to lay thy head, for He said, "The foxes have holes, and the bird of heaven hath a covert";

therefore if thou possessest a house thou art like unto these, [p. 243] and if thou hast a dwelling-place in the world, thou art to be compared with the beasts and birds, for this is what the literal interpretation of the words teacheth. But if thou art destitute of everything which is in the world, and thou hast not upon earth a place wherein to rest thy head, thou art like unto God, for that which the Master wished the disciples to be, He depicted and showed to them in His own Person, and He confirmed His doctrine unto us by His deeds, even as it is written concerning Him, "From [the time of] His baptism by John He began to work and to teach",even until that day in which He was taken up [into heaven]. These were the fair deeds and the excellent manner of life which He shewed forth in His own Person. And although the raising of the dead, and the cleansing of the lepers, and the opening of the eyes of the blind, and the making the lame to walk, and the straightening of the crooked limbed, and the making upright of those bent double, and the driving away of devils, and the walking upon the waves, and the stilling of the winds, were also works, because they were signs and wonders, yet the writer calleth the spiritual life and conduct which appeared in the Person of Christ, the work which was closely united to teaching.

For if He came only for the sake of [doing] good deeds, and not to work wonders, His teaching also was for spiritual life and conduct, and to this He also united work, in order that He might show us in Himself the type of all perfection. And He forsook the world and all the conversation among the children of men immediately after the baptism of John, [p. 244] and went forth to the wilderness, for until [the time of] His baptism He was fulfilling another rule of life, and He kept everything of the old law, that He might pay that debt on account of which all our race had become subject unto the bondage of sin, and of the law, and of death. And Jesus in His own Person kept everything which it was meet for those who lived righteously in the world to do, for it is written concerning Him that He went up into the Temple, and offered up offerings, and that He was subject unto the priests, and that He fulfilled everything which was written in the law. And this [He did] for two reasons: firstly, that He might pay that which was due, and secondly that He might teach everyone in the world that the righteousness of the law should be a care to him, and that he should minister to the service of God by the observance of the law.

And He omitted not to keep the smallest jot or tittle of the law, in order that He might teach him that was still in the world to keep everything which he was commanded like one subject thereunto, for everyone who still leadeth the life of the world, and who is still fettered by the taking and giving of the cares of the children of men is still under the law; but whosoever hath made himself poor and goeth forth from the world is above the world, and he is of necessity also above the law, because the law hath not power to bring into subjection those who are above the law. For whosoever standeth in the country of bondage is perforce governed by the law, but whosoever standeth in the country [p. 245] of freedom, his whole life is like that of a free man, and of his own freewill, like a freeman, he doeth good deeds with power, and not like one who is bowed under the yoke of the law. And to speak briefly, wherever wickedness is wrought there also hath the law power to turn it back and to restrain it, according to the testimony of the teacher Paul, who saith, "The law was not laid down for the righteous, but for the wicked and unruly, and for the unclean, and for those who smite their fathers and mothers, and for murderers, and adulterers, and whoremongers"; over such as these hath the law power.

Now therefore, although our discourse was wishing to shew that the perfect who are led by the spirit are alone above the law, it is found that Paul teacheth that the righteous also, who are on a lower level than the perfect, are free from the law, for they do not do the good things of the law as if they were fearers thereof, but as those who are at peace with the law. For the man who killeth not, that he may die not, since murder is ready in his mind, is a murderer; and he who committeth not adultery, although he wisheth to do so, through fear of being condemned by the judge, and delivered over to the law, is an adulterer; and every one who deviseth harm, but who by reason of the fear of the punishments which are commanded by the law is held back, and doeth it not, is nevertheless, according to his own will, the worker of all wickedness. Now as for the righteous who are kept back from doing wickedness, it is not because they are afraid lest wickedness should happen through them, but because they may not provoke God to anger by a deed which is unpleasing to Him.

[p. 246] Therefore there are some who are held back from wickedness, because they are afraid of wickedness itself, and there are some who are held back therefrom because they would [rather] do the things which are good, for unless a man bringeth wickedness to nought, he is not able to do good things.

Up to [the time of] baptism our Lord delivered the rule and life of righteousness to the children of men that they might do the good things which are written in the law, and offer up offerings of their possessions to God, and vow vows and pay [them], and be constant in the Temple of God, and receive blessings in faith from the priests, that children might be subject unto parents and minister unto them, that they might also seek the word of life, and ask and learn from the teachers everything which is necessary for instruction in virtues, and that they might hear and be subject unto the prophets; these then, and things like unto them, and all the righteousness which befitteth believing men, did our Lord deliver in the life and conduct of His Gospel, from the beginning up to the time of of [His] baptism, to those

who had possessions, that they might gather together their possessions while they were in the world, and He Himself did everything that He might teach us to do likewise. He was purified according to the command of the law, that He might teach the faithful to be purified from iniquity; He was circumcised that they also might circumcise and cast away from them the foreskin of the heart, and that they might cut off from themselves the ministration unto every lust;

He went up to the Temple laden with offerings that He might tread for them the path in which they should run to the house of God bearing their vows and offerings, [p. 247] He drew nigh to the priest that he might bless Him and pray over Him, and although He was the Priest of the Spirit, he spake with Him other great things, that He might shew the faithful also to ask for the prayer of the priests, and to bow the heads of themselves and of their children to their blessing. He went up each year to the Temple, as it is written of Him, that He might teach the faithful to go to the Temple, of God always. He made feasts according to their proper times and ceremonies that He might stir thee up to keep the festivals of the Church with discretion, and that thou mightest fulfil in them all thy obligations. He sat among the teachers, and listened unto them, and asked them questions, and He bowed His ear, and received instruction, that thou also mightest hear and ask questions, and incline thine ear continually to the hearing of the divine commandments, and that thou mightest ask questions and learn those things which are beneficial to thy life, even from those who are inferior to thee in knowledge, even as our Lord Himself asked questions of those who were inferior to Him in knowledge, and He received doctrine from those who had gathered together doctrine from the law which He Himself had given.

And moreover, finally, when He saw all the sinners who were running to the baptism of John, the prophet of God, He also went with them, and He bowed His head under the hand of the Herald, and He received baptism from him as one who was in need thereof----from him who needed to be baptized of Him; and He forsook the habitation of man, and went forth to the wilderness to John with all the multitudes. [p. 248] And why [did He do] these things unless it were to teach those who were masters of wealth, and those who dwelt in the world, to go forth to the saints, and to run to the solitary dwellers, and to honour the prophets and righteous men, and to be obedient to the admonition of their words by the discretion of their faith?

Now therefore this righteousness did our Redeemer deliver, and this rule and conduct did He shew to the faithful - in the time which preceded [His] baptism, and He admonished those who had possessions to possess these virtues, for He did not give this rule and conduct of life to the solitary dwellers, neither did He deliver it to those who were perfect. What temple hath the spiritual man to go to, seeing that he himself is the temple of God? And what dwelling hath he from which to go to the house of God, seeing that He hath not even a shelter in the world wherein to dwell? And with what shall he offer offerings and pay vows, seeing that in [all] creation he possesseth nothing? And with what shall he clothe the naked and receive strangers, seeing that he himself is both a stranger and naked? And

what wickedness can the man who is perfect, and complete in all virtues, cut off and cast from him? And of whom shall the man who hath no conversation with the children of men ask, and from whom shall he learn? if he hath need to learn, the Spirit of God instead of a man will teach him.

Now therefore this doctrine until [the time of His] baptism was delivered unto righteous believers, [p. 249] and it was given unto righteous owners of possessions, and to those who had not entirely gone forth from the world, in order that those who were suitable for the condition in which they lived might not be deprived of good works. And Christ Himself Who is everything, in Whom is everything, in Whose hand is everything, and because of Whom everything is, manifested this rule and conduct of life in His own Person, and although it fell short of perfection, yet He nevertheless fulfilled it, in order that He might give unto every man his measure of instruction, and that according to his grade and position he might draw nigh to a fair life, for without virtues it is not possible for a man to live. Now these virtues are different from one another, and moreover the commandments which are given concerning them, are like the virtues, different each from each. For behold, it is written that before His baptism He was subject unto His parents; "He went back with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them". But observe that, after the baptism, when He was delivering a rule of life which was more perfect than this to the children of men, He was not persuaded to acknowledge parents after the body. "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? He said to him that spake of them to Him.

And although He was obedient and subject unto His parents before baptism, in the time which followed, when He was delivering the rule and course of life of spiritual beings, He said, "I know them not"; and they called Him to go forth to them, but He would not be persuaded. [p. 250] And His mother spake to Him, and He listened not unto her then because He was perfecting the will of the Father Who sent Him, and was not fulfilling the humble commandments. Now if our Lord had done this before baptism when He was keeping the law, that is, if He had been called by His mother, and He had not obeyed, He would have transgressed the law; but in this case, He did not [transgress] except to shew that He was more obedient to the Father of nature than to the parents of grace, and that He might also teach those who are perfect to be more obedient unto the Father of grace than unto natural parents. "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And I did not come down from heaven to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me".

These things were spoken when He was fulfilling within Himself perfection, in order that spiritual beings who are outside the world might understand that not only to natural parents should they not be obedient and keep in subjection unto them, but also that they should not be persuaded by their own will, neither by their own wants and pleasures in any thing, but that they should deny themselves, even as it was said by the Redeemer, "Whosoever denieth not himself cannot be My disciple".Now therefore it is written that three days after our Lord had returned from the wilderness, He was bidden to a feast, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and, His disciples. [p. 251] And when wine was lacking for the guests,

His mother said to Jesus, "They have no wine", and she began on this occasion also to speak to Him with authority, even as a mother doth from early habit; but Jesus restrained that freedom of speech, teaching that the obligation of parental reverence had been paid by Him, and that henceforth He would not be subject unto His parents as He had been of yore. And observe what a severe rebuke He brought against that early authority thereby! "What have I to do with thee, woman?

The words are full of rebuke, and the whole speech is full of indignation, and rightly so, because by this speech He was giving an example to those who are perfect of not being governed by the law of natural parents when they have come out from the world in which [their] parents still live. For Mary stood in one rule of life, and Jesus stood in another, that is to say, she lived the life of the law, and He lived the life of the Spirit; and it was not well that He Who lived the life of the Spirit should be commanded by one who was still governed by the law. Mary gave the command like a woman in authority, and Jesus answered her like a free man; "They have no wine", said Mary, and these are words of authority, and like a mother she spake with a command. "What have I to do with thee, O woman? He replied like one who was not subject [unto her], and He spake as unto a strange woman who was not His mother. For He did not say, "What hast thou to do with me, My mother?", but, "What hast thou to do with Me, O woman? By grace thou hast become my mother, [p. 252] and through Divine dispensation I have been born of thee; and I have been subject unto thee, and I have been obedient, but not because I am bound [to be so] to thee naturally.

My beginning was not from thee, that I should receive grace from thee, for it was for thy sake that I came into being. Thou didst not become with child with suffering, neither didst thou bring me forth with the pangs of birth; thou didst not rear Me as one who was in need of rearing that I should give unto thee the reward of the fulfilling of My wants. Everything which thou didst give to Me I have given to thee. And if thou didst carry Me in thy womb, and didst grow great with Me, and didst bring Me forth, and didst care for Me, and didst bring Me up, these things took place by the power which came from Me. And that I have been obedient and subject unto thee was not a debt which I was bound to pay thee on My own behalf, but I paid the debt and I fulfilled the law on behalf of all the children who rebel against [their] parents. And now that the debt hath been paid, and dispensation of the law hath been fulfilled, what have I to do with thee, O woman? Now this speech is like unto the words, "Who is My mother? and unto that which He said to John, "Behold thy mother! and again He said to Mary, "Behold thy son!

And it is moreover like unto another speech which Jesus spake unto them when they sought to take Him with them to the feast as they were going up to Jerusalem, to that feast, according to [His] former wont before baptism, when He separated Himself from them, [saying], "Go ye up to the feast, but I will not go up to the feast", and after [p. 253] He had dismissed them, and had not gone up with them, He turned back, and went up in the midst of the feast. And His going up is not contrary to that which He said, "I will not go up", for He said, "I will not go up as one who is subject [unto the law]", because they were going up as men

who were subject to the law, that they might do the works of the law; but Jesus went up as one having authority, to gather together unto Him those who were bidden to the new feast. And in that He said, "I will not go up", He shewed two things; that He was subject neither unto parents, nor unto the law. For he that is subject unto parents doeth whatsoever they command him, and he also who is under the law must, together with the commandments, observe all its works.

He was from the beginning of the feast bound to go up, because at this feast all the Jews also were going up to the Temple, and, moreover, they went up thither a few days before [the feast], to purify themselves, that when they came to the first day of the feast they might be pure. But Jesus did none of these things, for He went not up with them in order that He might shew them that He was not subject unto them, and He did not [go up] at the beginning of the feast that He might teach them that He did not go up to keep the feast; but He went up in the middle thereof, going up of His own freewill.

And His going up after He had told His parents that He was not going up was like unto that which He did at the feast of Cana, for after He had said to Mary, "What hast thou to do with me, O woman"----a speech which seemed to indicate that He would not be obedient unto what she had said----He turned and did [p. 254] that thing which she had said, not because she had commanded Him, but because of His power, and because the time had come for Him to begin to work miracles, that thereby it might be seen Who He was, and that He might make His glory known and gather together unto Him disciples, and also that He might shew that henceforth He would do everything with authority like One that was free, and not according to the feebleness of human nature, and not according to the subjection of parents, and not according to the law's command.

Now we have shewn the power of these things which we have spoken from the Holy Book, and it is right, moreover, for him that readeth, that while he readeth our discourse, he should examine the Holy Book, and see that these matters are, in their several places, known to be thus; and in order that this meaning should be marked out for us the passages are distinct, each from the other, and one course of life and action is different from the other. This mystery, then, Jesus delivered unto us by the life which He led until [His] baptism, and from [His] baptism to the cross, because all righteousness is defined by these two courses: a man should work either in himself, or he should work with that which belongeth to him; the service which is of himself is the righteousness which is outside him, and the service which is in him is his own perfection. For the righteousness of the law is one thing, and the righteousness which Christ gave was another; the righteousness of the law [lasted] until [His] baptism, but that which was of Him was from baptism unto the Cross, and thenceforward it is the delight and life which is above the world. Therefore at the end of [His] baptism Jesus had attained [p. 255] unto the limit of the righteousness of the law, but from that time until the Cross He stood at the limit of the spiritual perfection in the perfect goodness which He Himself had brought unto creation.

Henceforth then it is meet for us to understand that all the children of men who, being still in the world, work good things, are even as the righteous men of old, that is to say, like Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the other just men and Prophets of old. And the righteousness of the law may be thus described: a man should labour while he is in the world, whether to clothe the naked, or relieve the afflicted, or receive strangers into his house, or visit the sick, or hasten to the help of the saints, and solitary dwellers, and monks, or whether he set apart for himself seasons of prayer, or whether he be constant in the temple of God, or whether he lend money without diminution of the amount and without exacting interest, or whether he covet not that which is his neighbour's, or whether he be subject unto his parents, or whether he be obedient unto, and honoureth the priests and teachers, or whether he do good deeds unto every man, that is to say, if as he would that men should do unto him, so he doeth unto them.

This is the righteousness which the old law taught, and Jesus fulfilled it until [His] baptism, and all believing men, who have not yet made themselves destitute of their riches, are bound to perform [it]; [p. 256] but the spiritual rule and conduct of life, and perfection, Jesus delivered unto us from [His] baptism unto the cross. May we all, through His grace, be accounted worthy by Him, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen. Here endeth the Eighth Discourse, which is on Poverty, and which was composed by the blessed Mâr Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 9 -- Second Discourse on Poverty

[P. 257] THE NINTH DISCOURSE: WHICH IS UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE PREVIOUS DISCOURSE, POVERTY, AND IS TAKEN FROM THE TESTIMONIES OF THE HOLY BOOKS, AND FROM THE EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY DISCIPLES, AND WHICH TEACHETH THAT, EXCEPT A MAN CASTETH AWAY THE WORLD ENTIRELY, HE IS NEITHER ABLE TO BECOME A PERFECT DISCIPLE OF CHRIST, NOR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

Let the going forth of Christ our Lord into the wilderness be an excellent example to us of the doctrine of poverty, and in that same manner in which He departed from dwelling with the children of men to the conflict with the power which was opposed to Him, let us also go forth from the world in the war which is against Satan. Let us take out with us from the world nothing, except our spiritual armour, which is not of the world. Now Jesus went forth immediately after baptism, and He left the world and all that is therein, and the dwelling [p. 258] with mankind, and everything that is therein, and went forth by Himself in His own strength to do battle with the Calumniator. It is written that He also had in Him the Holy Spirit, which brought Him out to the wilderness, but it was not because He, the counterpart of the Spirit, Who had given the Spirit unto others to conquer therewith, needed the power of the Spirit, but it was for the emulation of those who go forth from the world after perfection, that they might learn beforehand that the strengthening power of the Spirit accompanieth their going forth, and that He aideth them in their contest, and crowneth with victory the battle in which they are engaged. For the support of the Spirit straightway cleaveth to the disciples who forsake the company of the world; and when they have despised human helps, they find heavenly helps;

and when they reject the strength of the body, there straightway cleaveth unto them the power of the Spirit. In baptism then our Lord fulfilled the way of the righteousness of the law, and from the Jordan He made the beginning of the way of His own rule of life; for until the Jordan it was bondage, that is to say, He was subject unto the law as a servant, but from the Jordan and henceforth His life and conduct were in the freedom which He delivered, and not in the commandments of the law. For Jesus was born again by baptism, and from the

womb of the law the spiritual country received Him, even as He Himself said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot [p. 259] see the kingdom of God; and therefore, after His baptism, He began to preach the kingdom of heaven.

And in this manner also, everyone who wisheth to become a perfect disciple of Christ, when he hath left the world and hath come outside himself, is born again out of the world of the body into the world of the Spirit, and from riches into poverty, and from pleasures into afflictions, and from the possession of family into the lack of kith and kin, and from an abundance of friends into the life of a Solitary, and from happiness into trouble, from the life of the body into the life of the Spirit, from converse with men unto converse with God, and from one kind of knowledge unto another, and from one course unto another; and to speak briefly, a man is born from nothing into something when he departeth from worldly life to the discipleship of Christ, and from the state of being master of riches to that poverty which God commandeth. And as when a man is in the world the manner of life in which he standeth requireth him to do everything according to the manner of the world, so also when a man hath departed from the world and hath gone forth after Jesus, he is required to do everything which belongeth to a spiritual life, according to the rule of the country to which he hath come. It is one thing for a man to cast off the world, and to cast off the old man is another;

to cast off the thoughts of the soul is one thing, and to cast off error is another, and to cast off ignorance is another.

It is said that a man casteth off the world when he maketh himself remote from everything that therein is, and when he divideth [p. 260] his riches and possessions wholly among the needy, and forsaketh the world, and goeth forth naked in his person, even as he came forth from the womb; for the dwelling in this world is to a man even as the natural womb is to the child which is conceived therein. And as while he is still in the womb he is in darkness, and in a dark and moist place, and he perceiveth not any of the things of this world, and the things which are in creation and in the country of the world which is outside the womb enter not into his mind, even so is the man who is held fast in the bodily life of the world as in a womb, and his intelligence is covered by the darkness of its anxieties, and his understanding is obscured by the night of human care; he is unable to perceive the good things and the riches which exist in the Christian life, and spiritual things are not seen by him so long as his intelligence is obscured by the darkness of bodily things. And as the natural child, unless he be born from the womb, .goeth not unto creation, even so is it in this matter;

for unless a man departeth wholly from the world, he cometh not to the life and conversation of the spirit, and as in the one case he leaveth the womb, and cometh into existence outside thereof, so also in this it is meet for him to leave the world and to go forth therefrom. For the world is like the womb, and as the child casteth off the womb, so should a man cast off the world. And as the child when he is born is perfect and complete in his natural frame, and hath all his senses and members, and yet cannot make use of them in their natural service because they have not yet [p. 261] received growth and become strong, but when he hath

been born into the world, his body, and the senses and members which are therein receive growth.

And as he groweth and progresseth, he acquireth perception in his members and senses, and gaineth experience of everything which is in the world, and all his senses are employed healthily for their natural service, the eye to see, the ear to hear, the palate to taste, the nostrils to breathe, the tongue for speech, the hands for labour, the feet for walking, the whole body for touching, the heart for discernment, the liver for wrath, the gallbladder for enlightenment, the reins for intelligence, the spleen for fear, the brain for knowledge and understanding, and all the other members which are in the world by gradual growth arrive at the measure of their perfect stature, and are perfected in the power of their service in everything; and a son of man is perfected according to the body in the world to which he was born from the womb, and he receiveth and is made perfect in all the knowledge thereof; in like manner is it also wrought for the spiritual man who beginneth with unformed substance, and little by little he is completed, and he becometh a perfect man in the measure of the stature of the completion of Christ, even as it is written that at first the beginning of His conception took place like [that of] a natural child, for as the natural child is formed of seed and blood in the womb, even so was He formed of fire and of.

spirit by baptism, And as [p. 262] the natural child is born from non-existence into existence, even so is the child of the Spirit born from the state of not being a son, into that of being a son of God, and a spiritual being. And as the natural child is designed when as yet he existeth not, and is formed little by little, and all his members grow and increase according to the measure which is ordained that they should grow in the womb, even so also the child of man, who is born through baptism the son of God out of the state of being a slave and a creature of the body, beginneth to increase little by little in the world, as in the womb, in all the virtues which befit the believing men who are in the world. And when he hath increased and hath grown to the full, according to the measure of his unformed substance in the world, as in the womb, he becometh born again from the world, outside the world, in the same manner as the child is born from the womb into the world.

And when he hath been born, and he hath taken his stand in the country of the life and conduct of Christ as in another world, thenceforth he beginneth to receive other growth and to become full-grown, not with the body of righteousness the growth of which he received in the world, but in the person of the spirit with which he arriveth at the perfection of the completeness of Christ. Now therefore baptism fashioneth even like the womb, and whosoever hath been therein is [made] a son unto God, from the condition of not being a son, even as the natural child, from being uncreate, [is made] to exist. And that baptism giveth birth to a child [p. 263] of the spirit, who from being of the body, hath been made of the spirit, [is like unto the fact] that the [natural] child is made a body from seed and blood, and he receiveth the creation of all his members [therefrom]; in the same manner, in this case, is this child also born of baptism, all his members and senses being created and made of the Spirit.

And as the natural child, after he hath been created and formed, groweth little by little in all his members and senses until he hath completed the measure of his unformed substance which hath been defined for his being in the womb, and then cometh to the birth from the womb, even so here also the child of the Spirit groweth in the world after that he hath been born of baptism until he arriveth at that measure which is defined for spiritual children. And as the child who is in the womb cannot receive increase beyond the capacity of the womb, and cannot become a full-grown man in the womb----which is given him to do in the world after he hath been born----even so a man cannot become complete in the perfection of the Spirit, and stand in the stature of a full-grown man, so long as he dwelleth in the world as in the womb; but he must first of all be born, and must cast off the world entirely, as the child casteth off the womb, and then he shall begin to receive fresh increase which will bring [him] unto spirituality and perfection.

Now therefore all the righteousness of a man which is wrought by him m the world, and all the members of fair things which come into existence in him, are like the unformed substance of a child in the womb, and however much he may grow [p. 264] and become strong in this righteousness while he is in the world, he still existeth as unformed substance, because he is shut up in the world like a child in the womb. And as a child is not able to become a man in the womb, even so a man cannot be perfect in the world; and as however much the child may grow in the womb, the measure of his growth is limited there by the capacity of the womb, even so is it in the womb of our nature, for however much a man may be justified in the world, the measure of his righteousness is limited by the capacity of the womb of the world in which he liveth.

And as he that is conceived in the natural womb is called "child," and "conceived," so long as he is therein, but when he hath been born from the womb beginneth to receive other names [like] "infant," and "child," and "youth," and "young "man," and "full-grown man," even after this manner the child of the Spirit also, so long as he is in the world, and all the members of righteousness increase in him----however much he may wax strong, and be firmly knit together, and be made solid, and grow----will be called by the names of "righteous," and "just," and "merciful," and "giver," and all those other names which befit a good life in the world.

But when he hath been born from the world, after his lineaments have received completion in the former members which we have enumerated, and he hath gone forth to the other country of the rule and conduct of Christ, like the child that is born from the womb, these appellations are bestowed upon him and he is called by the other names which befit that country [p. 265] to which he hath gone forth, and so he is called:----"empty of possessions," "free-man," "ascetic," "labourer," "the carrier of a burden," "crucified to the world," "patient," "longsuffering," "spiritual," "the companion of Christ," "the perfect man," "the man of God," "beloved son," "heir of the possession of his Father," "the associate of Jesus," "the bearer of the cross upon his shoulder," "dead to the world," "living unto God," "the man who hath put on Christ" "the man of the spirit," "the angel of flesh," "the knower of the mysteries of Christ,"

"the divinely wise; with these and other similar names it befitteth the man who hath been born from the world to be called that he may grow up in the country of the knowledge of Christ.

And as with the natural child, when he hath been born from the womb, although he hath cast off the womb, the covering with which he hath been clothed in the womb cleaveth, and goeth forth with him----now when he hath been born this is cut off and cast away from him, together with the other superfluities which cleave unto him, and he appeareth in the person of a man by himself, being free from everything which is not of himself, and he is of and for himself, so also is it with a man when he goeth forth from the world, for although he casteth off the world like the womb, yet is he clothed with his own passions, and with the appetites of his body, and he goeth forth like a child with the after-birth. For as the after-birth cannot be taken from a child while he is in the womb, even so a man cannot cast away the old passions with which he is clothed [p. 266] as with the after-birth, while he is in the womb of the world.

And as in the one case [they wait] until the child is born, and then cast away from him his after-birth, even so is it in the other, for when a man hath been born from the life and conduct which are after the body in the world, and he hath come into existence in the other world of the spirit, outside the world, he is able to throw away and to cast off from him the hateful passions of the old man like the after-birth. And as the child is not able to receive the increase of manhood so long as he is rolled up in his afterbirth, yet when it hath been peeled off him, and he can appear in his own person without impediment, he can then begin to grow into his natural stature: so likewise the man who is still clothed with hateful passions is not able to increase in the stature of the spirit, but when he hath thrown them away and hath cast them from him, and hath cut off all the members of the body of sin, which are the hateful passions, his stature beginneth to receive increase, and other new members of the new man of the Spirit [begin] to spring up in him, in the place of the old members which have been cut off from him; for in the place of the former limbs which have been cut off, other new and spiritual members spring up.

And in proportion as the old man cometh to an end, and is destroyed, so is the new man discovered and revealed unto the light. For although in baptism we cast off the old man, according to the teaching of Paul, and put on the new man in his place, yet we do not perceive either when we cast [him] off or when we put [him] on, because Grace worketh both things, and it casteth off [p. 267] from us the old man, and putteth upon us the new man, and we receive the working of the mystery only at that time in the name of faith.

Now when we desire to cast off the old man, by our own labour and weariness we perceive that we are casting him off, not by the hearing of faith only, but also by the experience of works, and by the sufferings, and tears, and the love of God, and by pure prayers, and by constant entreaties, and by admiration of the greatness of the glory of God, and by constant admiration of Him, and by the urgent hastening of the inner man may be with God; with these and such like things, while we labour earnestly, we put on the new man, not by the

hearing of the ear, but by the perception of our soul, and by the true experience of the knowledge of the Spirit. Therefore in this country a man beginneth to grow in the knowledge which is above the world, where there is room for the stature to grow, and where he may attain unto the limit of the height of growth. For so long as abominable passions envelop a man like an after-birth, and fetter the limbs of the new man, his growth is impeded, and the man is not able to arrive at that measure of stature which is given by Christ, and concerning which Paul said, "We all grow and become one thing in the knowledge of the Son of God, and one perfect man, in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Now unless a man hath gone forth from the world he is not able [p. 268] to arrive at this measure, and unless he hath first cast off all the conversation of the body he is not able to arrive at the knowledge by which he will perceive the greatness of these things which are given in a mystery by Christ.

And the forms under which we cast off [the old man], and put on [the new man] are these:----in baptism we cast off the old man, and put on the new man; and [we cast off] bondage, and put on freedom; and [we cast off] corporeality, and put on spirituality; and [we cast off] sin, and put on righteousness; and so forth, but [we do them] all by the hearing of faith. And although they may all be with us in very truth at the birth by baptism, yet are they all strangers to our perception; but when we come to the measure of the stature of the body which is able to distinguish virtues from vices, by the good will and earnestness of our soul we begin to cast off vices and to put on virtues, and [to cast off] iniquity, and to put on righteousness, and [to cast off] oppression, and to become givers, and [to cast off] cruelty, and to become loving, and [to cast off] hardness, and to become gracious, and [to cast off] rapacity, and to become merciful. And all these things, and many others like unto them arise from the will which feareth God;

and which fighteth against the world, that little by little the man may grow through these things, until he casteth away the whole world entirely, and maketh himself destitute of everything that is therein, and standeth without impediment in his own person, and appeareth in the other world of the conversation of Christ like the natural child who casteth off the womb, and cometh into being outside thereof. And when a man hath cast off [p. 269] the world in the manner in which I have said, and hath become entirely destitute of everything which is visible, he beginneth to cast off the evil passions which are in him----the love of adultery, of whoredom, gluttony, prodigality, greediness, drunkenness----which are the lusts which destroy spiritual excellence; and when he hath indeed cast all these off from the bodily members, he also beginneth to cast [them] off from the motions of the thoughts, and as these [vices] are alien to the body, to cut them off also from the motions of the soul, so that they shall neither be ministered unto nor stirred up in the external members, nor in the hidden thoughts of the soul. And after he hath cast out from the soul the passions of hateful thoughts also, he beginneth henceforth to cast off ignorance, and error, and suspicion, things which are born of the service of the lusts, that is to say after the heart hath become gross through luxurious and dainty living.

For when a man casteth off the lusts of the body with a pure design towards God, he hasteth to diminish his bodily needs also, because the heart is not made gross by the ministration unto the lusts only, but even when the body taketh only that which it needeth in abundance, grossness of heart ariseth [therefrom], and the understanding is neither cleansed nor purified from carnality.

Now the need which is measured keepeth the mean place, and so long as the body standeth in the mean measure of health, it is not [p. 270] made subject wholly to the desires of the soul. And the middle sheweth the equality of that which is on both sides, like the pointer which is placed in the middle of the balance, and which sheweth the equality of the weight of both pans of the scales; and thus when the body standeth in the mean of health, it is of equal weight with the soul, and so long as the body standeth with it in equality of measure, it is not made subject unto the superfluity of its desires. Now therefore it is necessary for a man to break the strength of the body by diminishing the food, in order that it may become subject and obedient unto the soul thereby----but I refrain from the subject of diminution of food because I have planned to speak thereupon in the short Discourse which fol-loweth this----and here it is meet that we should understand that unless a man casteth off, he cannot put on. And let us all earnestly strive to cast off from us the conversation of the body, that we may put on the conversation of the spirit, and let us cast off the world, and all the care thereof, that we may travel along the way of perfection without impediment.

Now poverty is a light thing to those who possess it, and if a man were to call the poverty which is for the sake of God "riches," he would call it rightly, and even as it is. Therefore our Lord also lifted a heavy yoke from His disciples in that He made them destitute of the riches of the world, saying, "Come "unto Me, all ye that are weary and are laden with heavy "burdens, [p. 271] and I will give you rest. And who are these, unless it be those who are wearied by the superfluities of riches, and who bear the heavy yoke of the cares and anxieties of the world? And what weariness is so oppressive as this? for when thou hast come to enjoy thyself, thou art the more tired. The care for human riches is a path which hath no ending in [this] life, for however far a man may travel along it, it lengthened! out before his footsteps, and there is nothing which breaketh it except death. And when a man hath gathered together riches and mammon that he may enjoy himself, and live daintily and luxuriously, his enjoyment is weariness, and if the enjoyment of the world be weariness, what shall. weariness itself be called? And if the enjoyments and luxuries are heavy labours, what shall labour itself be called?

For the world is heavy in all its conversation, but because of the love thereof they who carry its burdens perceive them not, and they stumble therein like blind men, but discern it not, and though they carry heavy burdens, they are light unto them, and they weary and exert themselves painfully after the merchandise of loss, but know not [that it is loss]. And because our Lord saw them in this empty labour, He cried unto them, saying, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest, for in your weariness there is no rest. But your weariness begetteth weariness, and your labour bringeth forth labour, and your riches gather together

poverty, and your rest is tribulation, and your enjoyment is affliction, and your refreshing is toil; for the path of the desire of riches which ye have trodden of your own freewill hath no end; [p. 272] but if ye will come to Me by My road it will come to an end. And as ye have tasted the weariness of the world, taste ye together therewith also My weariness, and [see] if its freedom is not enjoyable to you. Ye have carried the heavy burdens of the world, and ye have felt how weighty they are; be persuaded then and take My yoke upon you, and learn by experience how pleasant and easy [it is]. I do not make you rich men that ye may feel the need of many things, but I make you indeed rich men who have need of nothing.

For it is not the man that hath acquired many possessions who is rich, but he that hath need of nothing. For in the world, however much ye acquire, ye become needy; but with Me, when ye are destitute of everything ye become rich. When a first want is satisfied, the place is prepared for a second want, and when the invention which a man seeketh to find hath been acquired, that very invention also searcheth out the invention of another possession. When the first craving of lust hath been satisfied, a wide void is thereby made for another lust which is greater than the first, because the satiety of the lusts maketh hunger, and however much lust devoureth it hungereth continually. And however wealthy the rich man becometh, he is poor; and how-ever much mammon may be gathered together [by him] he seeketh its fellow; and however much a man may increase his possessions, and become possessed of abundance, he coveteth yet another possession; and if it were possible for a man to possess the half of the world, his lust would not be satisfied therewith, but he would also lust after the possession of it all----if it were possible to have it.

And again, when he had acquired the whole of it----which is not [p. 273] possible ----his lust would not be restrained by the possession of the whole world, but he would likewise lust after the possession of another world----which doth not exist, and he would begin to be tortured by the quest of that which hath not yet been made. Who then would not not weep, that is to say, who would not laugh at the man who was fettered by the longing for the quest of the things which do not exist? Come then unto Me, all ye that are wearied with riches, and take your rest in poverty. Come, all ye masters of goods and possessions, and take enjoyment in destitution. Come, all ye that love this temporary world, and receive a taste of the world which is everlasting. Ye have experienced your own world, come and partake also of that of Mine. Ye have received a proof of your riches, come and test also My poverty. Your own riches are riches, but My poverty is riches. That riches should be called riches is not a very great thing, but it is a great and marvellous thing when poverty is riches, for the very opposite is pronounced a great thing. But when ye have experienced the things which are Mine, [and have seen] if they are not pleasanter and lighter than your own, turn ye and carry your former burdens.

And behold also, our Lord shewed us by this testimony that unless a man casteth away the burden of the world, he cannot bear the yoke of Christ, for the two yokes are opposed each to the other; for righteousness may be acquired even in wealth, but perfection is [only] to be found in being destitute of possessions. And all those who have earnestly followed

after perfection, whether in the New or whether in the Old Testament, have [first] made themselves destitute, [p. 274] and have then begun to walk in the path of perfection; and when the Apostles were called by our Lord, they stripped themselves of all the world, and then went forth after Him Who called them. And our Lord Himself also in His own Person depicted and shewed unto us the end of the path and the beginning thereof, and in the Jordan He laid down the boundary of them both; for He ended that path, which was after the law, in which He was journeying because He kept the law, and from it He began the path of perfection, which He shewed in His own Person, as it were for the teaching of those who love perfection. And after He had overcome the world, and had despised and rejected everything which was therein, He then went forth to fight against the god of the world, that as He had captured the castle of the Enemy, he might also conquer the Enemy himself.

And the Jordan became for Him a place of crossing from one world to the other, from the carnal world to the spiritual world, and from the conversation of the law to the conversation of the New Covenant. For what the sea was to the Hebrews, through which they ended the subjection to Egypt, and through which the fear of the Egyptians was removed from them, and through which they went forth to the land of freedom, where the rule of another might not have dominion over them, and where they would not perform the will of others, except of God alone, even so in the Jordan did Jesus accomplish the subjection of the law, and thence He began freedom of conversation. And as the desert received the Jews from the sea, even so did the wilderness receive Him from the Jordan----not henceforth having to fulfil the feeble will of the law, but the complete [p. 275] and perfect will of His Father----that He might give His healthful commandments, and shew forth the perfect and spiritual conversation which was His will. And know that when Jesus went forth to the wilderness, He went forth by Himself, without followers, without helpers, without friends in His train, without beloved friends, without riches, without possessions, without apparel, and without things.

And it is written that He went forth, having nothing belonging to the world with Him, entirely by Himself, being accompanied by the Holy Spirit, that from the going forth of thy Lord thou mightest take example for thine own going forth from the world, and that thou mightest also go forth like unto Him, having upon thee nothing belonging to the world, that the Holy Spirit might thereby accompany thee.

And observe also the freedom in which Jesus went forth, and do thou thyself also go forth like Him. Observe also unto what point human conversation came with Him, and at what point He forsook it, and do thou thyself also forsake the conversation of the world where thy Lord forsook the conversation of the law, and go forth with Him to war against the powers of error, that is to say, to the fight against the world. For when thou hast gone forth from the world, inasmuch as it is its custom to pursue after those who forsake it and depart from it, turn thee to fight against it, and be thou crucified to it, remembering that which Paul spake, "I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me". Lighten therefore from off thee the weight of the world, that the war which thou art preparing against it may be easy to thee, and instead of the Jordan, go down into the waters of knowledge, and

after thy submersion cleave unto the rule of the Spirit. And observe also that [p. 276] that which happened to the Jews is a type of the things which are performed unto thee, for as all the wickedness of the Egyptians towards the Hebrews came to an end, even so here also all the wickedness of the world shall perish and be destroyed from thee, together with its superfluities, and its weight, and its cares, and anxieties.

For until [the time of] the sea, the Hebrews were serving the Egyptians, but from the sea and henceforth they were set apart for the service of God by the word of God. The bondage of the Jews in Egypt is a type of the bondage of the world, and the freedom which they obtained in the wilderness is a similitude also of the freedom which thou shalt receive after thou hast come forth from the world. With mud, and bricks, and fatigue, and severe labour Egypt made the Hebrews work, and with anxieties, and cares, and afflictions, and groans, doth the world also make thee work; and the mud of Egypt was washed off the Jews when they had crossed the sea. And thou hast thyself also two baptisms: one is the baptism of grace which ariseth from the water, and the other is the baptism of thine own freewill, for when thou hast been baptized from the world in the love of God, thou hast gone out therefrom.

And as after the Hebrews had gone forth from the sea they received another rule, and were accounted worthy of other food, and new waters were made to gush forth to supply them with drink, and other commandments and laws were delivered unto them to keep, and they received heavenly revelations, and were accounted worthy of spiritual visions, and they heard the voice of God [p. 277] close at hand speaking with them, and angels also were mingled with them, and they arrived at connection with and participation in spiritual powers, and the tabernacle was pitched among them, and they were shewn the meaning of the service therein, and the serpent on a pole was lifted up for them in the wilderness for the healing and cure of the bites of poisonous serpents; and as their habitation was already in another world which was free from all the habits of this, so likewise must thou also, when thou hast gone out from this world, as from Egypt, cross over the sea of afflictions, and be in fear and suffering, because they also were filled with fear and trembling at the Egyptians [while they were] by and in the sea, and the terror of the sea tortured them, and until they had gone down into the sea, and had turned and gone up therefrom, and had seen the dead bodies of their enemies floating among the waves, they were not filled with gladness.

And thus is it with the disciple, for when he hath gone forth from the world, wishing to be free from the subjection thereof, he doth not immediately receive joy nor is he accounted worthy of the taste of spiritual enjoyments----even as the Hebrews did not receive joy immediately they had gone forth from Egypt, nor were accounted worthy of spiritual enjoyment. On the other hand, there shall meet thee, O disciple, after thy departure [p. 278] from the world, the fear of afflictions, and the oppression of the thoughts, and repentance because thou hast come forth from the world, and because thou hast scattered that which thou hadst, or because thou hast forsaken thine inheritance and hast departed from the dwelling of thy fathers. And devils shall gather themselves together secretly against thee like the Egyp-

tians, with Satan their master like Pharaoh, and as these thoughts move within thee they shall bury thee in the anxieties of care which are wont to make the soul dark, and they shall deprive thee of the sight of the light of the knowledge of Christ. And similarly there shall begin to move in thy mind thoughts as to why thou hast forsaken the world in which it was easy for thee to be justified, and why thou hast scattered thy riches by which, whilst thou hadst them with thee, thou didst appear to be especially benevolent, and moreover, inasmuch as thou didst divide them hastily, perchance they may be given unto those who are not worthy of them.

If thou hadst kept them in thine own hands they would have been dispensed by thee wisely, for thou wouldst have relieved the afflicted therewith; and thou wouldst have received strangers therewith; and thou wouldst have clothed the naked therewith; and the solitary dwellers and coenobites would have been visited by thy gifts; and thou wouldst have supported the widows and orphans; and thy dwelling would have been a haven of all fair things; and as long as thy riches were with thee thou wouldst have been longsuffering; and thou wouldst have given both pleasure to thyself and gratification unto many others therewith; and thy righteousness would have been like unto that of Abraham, and Job, [p. 279] and the other believing men who have been justified like unto them. And perhaps thou wouldst have wished that thy righteousness should be greater than theirs, and also that, according to the word of thy Lord, thou shouldst become like even unto God by thy loving kindness; and thou wouldst also have obtained a good name among the children of men, and thou wouldst have been called by every man the ”father of the orphans; and every one who saw or heard of thee would have ascribed blessing to thee because of thy good works. And as thy righteousness triumphed before God, even so would it have become manifest in the sight of the children of men; and moreover thou wouldst have been a pattern of good unto others that they might emulate thee.

For when the owners of possessions, like unto thyself, saw thee distributing thy wealth unto the needy, they also would be urged to become like unto thee, and they also would become givers; and thereby thou wouldst have acquired a twofold righteousness; firstly because of thine own gifts, and secondly because thou wast the cause of charity in others, who also became givers like unto thyself. And if thou hadst wished to become one who fasted, it would have been easy for thee to do so whilst thou wast in thé world, even as it is for all the other men who fast whom thbu seest in the world, and the triumph of thy fasting would have been the more increased because that while meats were nigh unto thee, and the foods which the belly eagerly desireth were laid out in thy sight, thou didst conquer them all by the might of thy temperance. And in this thing thou wouldst have excelled more than the solitary dwellers, for the victory of the man, who overcometh [p. 280] the things which he findeth near at hand, of which he may make use if he please, is greater than that of him that is abstemious because he hath nothing, for even if he sought to. take pleasure and to enjoy himself, the materials for his pleasure are not forthcoming.

And if thou wert a lover of prayer it would also have been easy for thee to pray secretly in thy house, and to go at all times to the temple of God, and to carry others with thee, and there is not one good thing which it would not have been especially easy for thee to do whilst thou wast in the world if thou hadst wished. For what man rejecteth pleasures with royalty, or who excuseth himself from taking pleasure if he be certain that the pleasure which is about to come be ready for him? And this pleasure would have been found to be thine because of thy loving kindness and alms to the poor.

And also after these things others will gather together and hem in thy soul, and they are the evil devils, together with Satan their master, who depict before thine eyes the labours of the ascetic life, and the cruel pains which befall those who fast, and the grievous sicknesses which are produced from meagreness of food, and which are neither easy of cure, nor will it be easy for thee to heal them because thou mayest not make use of the things which cure and heal them; and if thou submittest to bring human aids to them by reason of the pain [p. 281] of thy sufferings, thou wilt become a cause of stumbling to others who see thee. And moreover, the path of this rule of life is long, and it cannot be brought to an end except by death. And if thou wishest to make an end thereof whilst thou art in this life, and thou ceasest from thy labours, behold thou wilt be made a laughingstock and a mockery by all thine acquaintances:

and because thou mayest not cease, behold thou must bear the burden of the afflictions, and thy sufferings will be increased by many things----by the weight of thy labours, and by their length, and by the pains and sicknesses which are produced therefrom, and because it is not easy for thee to bring nigh things which would alleviate thy pains, and because if thou wouldst lighten thine afflictions by means of aids which thou couldst bring unto them, thou wouldst become a laughingstock to those who behold thee, and because thou hast become an alien to thy race and friends, and because the law of thy order of life doth not allow thee to draw nigh to speech and intercourse with them, and because thou, who wast formerly a giver of charity to others, hast become in need of receiving charity from others, and if thou submittest thyself to accept it, behold flattery of those from whom thou acceptest it is demanded of thee, and because thou acceptest it not, behold thou art tortured by the necessity of want.

These and such like things will the devils gather together and bring against the mind of the disciple immediately he hath gone forth from the world, and they cast him into a state of fear and trembling, and they disturb the balance of his thoughts, and drive him to smite his hands together, for what to do he knoweth not; [p. 282] and they sink his soul in sorrow and they set him between the things which are in the middle, and those which are at the end, in order that he may remember the things which he hath left behind, and may keep in mind those which are about to come, and he considereth their promises in his mind, as if they carried convincing proof [with them], and especially of those thoughts which move in thee at the beginning, not of wantonness, and of depravity, and of an evil rule of life, but of lovingkindness, and of the love of giving alms, and of all the other good deeds which a man

hath power to do while he is in the world. And these things do not rise up in thy soul as the friends of good deeds, but in order that they may bring thee down from the lofty grade of righteousness unto one which is more humble.

And when thou hast hearkened unto them, and thou hast gone down with them, they will also bring thee down from that grade to another which is lower, and little by little they will carry and lead thee down until they sweep thee into, and drown thee in the abyss of wickedness. And they are cunning in their promises, for where they see that thou keepest fast hold, there do they multiply thy sufferings. They do not straightway take and bring unto thee that which thou hatest in their promises, but that which is dear to thee, and next they persuade thee to desist only a little from the strictness of thy rule, and next by reason of all these things misery of thought groweth strong in thee, and sadness and outcrying are renewed in thy mind; and joy dwelleth apart from thee away in the distance, [p. 283] both the joy of the world, because thou hast forsaken it, and the joy of Christ, because thou hast not yet arrived thereat.

And thy soul remaineth in the middle of these storms, like a ship the steersman of which is asleep, and it is buffeted hither and thither, and it drifteth and is knocked about on all sides, and it is dashed upon every rock, and doubts of all kinds beat upon it, and the course of the way of thy understanding is perturbed, and the sign-posts of the paths for thy footsteps are destroyed, and heaviness crowdeth upon thee, and drowsiness layeth hold upon thy body and upon thy soul, and thou becomest sunk in the heavy sleep of negligence as in the night. And as fear increaseth in the night season in those who are therein, even so in thee fear increaseth, because thou hast thyself darkened thy soul from the light of knowledge; for knowledge in the soul, from which also joy is produced, takes the place of light in the world. And as at the departure of light darkness is produced in creation, even so when the knowledge of the spirit is lacking, the darkness of tribulation is spread abroad in the region of the soul, together with the black night of sorrow. And from this black night fear concerning what is passed and concerning what shall come beginneth to arise in the soul, and tribulation and trembling, and terror and feebleness, and cowardice, and misery of mind, and the perpetual affliction [p. 284] which ariseth thereby and therefrom are renewed therein at all times.

And it happeneth that it is afflicted when there is no need for fear of affliction, and its understanding is perturbed, though it knoweth not what is the cause of its perturbation, and no one of its motions is wholly and entirely pleasant unto it.

In this country then, O disciple who goest forth from the world, there is a place whereto thou mayest pass, for, like the people from Egypt, thou also art called to go forth after God. And as the sea stood like a hedge before the Hebrews, and the Egyptians followed after them, even so is placed before thee the fearful abyss of afflictions, and sufferings, and labours, and tribulations, and punishments, and want, and poverty, and pains, and sicknesses, and deprivation from friends, and remoteness from fellow-creatures, and removal from parents, and silence, and contemplation, and close confinement, and a humble garb, and meagre food,

and self-abnegation, and asceticism, and reproaches and insults if thou art slack and remiss, and labours and fatigue if thou art strenuous, and vigils which emaciate, and torturing thirst, and protracted bending in double; all these things, and others which are like unto them, stand up like a hedge against thy coming forth, while the devils, like the Egyptians, pursue thee from behind. But fear thou not, neither be thou afraid, for instead of Moses, Jesus is with thee, for like as Moses clave to the congregation, even so also doth Christ cleave to thy soul, [p. 285] and He saith unto thy tortured and afflicted mind that which was said by Moses to the Jews, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Therefore thou shalt not be in fear as were the people, but thou shalt rouse up, and watch like Moses, and cry out to the Lord even as he cried out; for it is thus written, "Moses prayed the whole night with much crying out and suffering, and at the morning watch the Lord said to him, Why criest thou before Me? Incline thy hand over the sea, and divide it, and the Hebrews shall pass over it, but the Egyptians shall be drowned therein; now all the things which happened at that time are a type of those which shall be done unto thee. And enemies, that is, evil devils, shall gather together and crowd against thy soul, even as the Egyptians who pursued after the Jews were gathered together and crowded upon them; but as Moses forsook the fear of the Egyptians and turned himself unto prayer and unto crying out to God, do thou also forsake the anxieties and thoughts which devilish enemies make to rise up in thee. And stand thou up in earnest prayer, and cry out with deep feeling from the heart, and from the depth of the thoughts of the soul let the voice of thy cry rise up, and straightway that answer which was returned unto Moses shall also be spoken unto thee, "Why dost thou cry out before Me? Incline thy hand over the sea, and divide it;

and straightway [thy] afflictions will give way, and the covering which was set before thy face will be rolled up, [p. 286] and the terrible depths of affliction will give way, and the things which thou didst think could not be crossed over with the foot, thou shalt tread upon, and thou shalt pass over the depth thereof. And difficult things shall become easy for thee, and that wall, which is built in such a manner that thou didst think it could not be broken through, shall be immediately swept away from before thee, and thy prayer shall rend and pass over the abyss of all the wickedness which is gathered together and laid before thee. And as the pillar stood in olden time behind the Hebrews, and afterwards came in front of them, and there was darkness between them and the Egyptians, so also here shineth before thee the' light of the Redemption, and darkness is placed between thee and trie devils who are thy enemies. And in that country through which thou art passing, they will be drowned, and the afflictions from which thou hast been freed will turn and fall upon the devils who are thy enemies, and sorrow and tribulation will turn upon them; and the joy which they had when they thought that they were fighting with thee and would overcome thee, like the pillar is taken from before them, and set before thee, like the pillar of light which was taken from the Egyptians, and which came in front of the Hebrews.

And as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, so also shall Satan and all his devils be drowned in the depths of the tribulation in which thou wast sinking. Therefore do

thou in thy thoughts repeat the words of Moses, "The Lord shall fight [p. 287] for you, and ye shall hold your peace; and as the Hebrews passed over with Moses, even so shall all thy triumphs pass over with thee.

Now in the night-season fear ruled over the Hebrews that it might be an example unto thee of the fear which is with thee when thy life is, as it were, in the night, and far away from the sight of the morning; and as when the night passeth away fear is removed, even so is it with thee, for immediately the light of the Redemption dawneth upon thee, at the end of thy prayer thy tribulations are blotted out, and thy thoughts become light,-like the members of the body in the morning. And the gloomy cloud is scattered, and a bright and glorious sky shineth in thy soul, and the sea of thy afflictions is passed over on foot, and the wall of grief which was built before thee is broken through, and thou walkest in confidence through a terrible country, and thou passest over a depth which was never [before] crossed by thee, and thou treadest with the foot a country which the old nature never trod, and thou art delivered from the yoke of subjection, and thou goest into the land of freedom, and thou forsakest Egypt with all its fatigue, and a desert which is full of heavenly blessings receiveth thee. And thou art conceived and brought forth again into the new world of the conversation of the Spirit, and in the country which conceived and gave thee birth are tied the wheels of thine enemies, and the violence of their onset is broken, and the progress of their advance is slackened, and the uproar of their voices sinketh down and dieth away, and afflictions return upon them like waves, and those who wished to overwhelm thee are themselves overwhelmed in the bottommost part of the abyss.

Do thou, then, when thou standest upon the shore of the sea of afflictions and tribulations after [p. 288] [thy] glorious passage, turn, and thou shalt see thine enemies smitten down therein, and thy passions, together with devils, drowned therein, and all the life of the old man sinking down into it. And when thou seest [this], let thy soul be gratified at the destruction of those who hate thee, and when thou hast also obtained confidence through the death of thine enemies, turn thyself and look upon the holy mountain of God, and begin to walk in a country through which thou hast not passed, and thy journey shall be through the spiritual world of a spiritual rule and conduct of life, through which thou shalt be held worthy to see the things which are above the world. And thou shalt eat spiritual manna which thy fathers ate not, and thou shalt drink the sweet and pleasant waters which flow down to thee from the rock of Christ, and thou shalt sit in a cloud of light, and the pillar of the Spirit shall shine upon thee, and thou shalt see things which thou didst never see before, and shalt hear voices which thou didst never hear before, and in thy journeying day by day thou shalt draw nigh unto Zion the heavenly mountain, where the Shekhinah of the hidden Being dwelleth.

And thou shalt be an associate of the knowledge of angels, and thou shalt feel spiritual things which are above the world, and thy clothing and thy sandals shall grow with thy stature ----that is to say with thy new manhood----every day. And the ornaments of thy clothing----which is Christ----shall be revealed unto thee, and thy sandals----which are the

preparation of the Gospel of peace----shall grow with thee. And thou shalt enter into the mysteries of the Spirit, [p. 289] and thou shalt participate in the fulness of the knowledge of Christ, moving at all times m the motions of life, and admiration of the unspeakable majesty of God will carry thee away, thou being dead unto all the visible world.

And thy habitation shall be completely in the world of the spirit, and thou shalt appear unto those who behold thee as a mere form of the outward appearance of the body, the whole motion of thy inner man dwelling in the heaven of heavens, and thou shalt live gloriously in the countries which have neither bounds nor limits, where there is neither carnal form, nor constitution of body, and where there is no change of natures, and no passing away of elements, and where there is only quietness and tranquillity, and where all the dwellers in the land of spiritual beings cry out with incorporeal voices, "Holy, Holy, Holy", to the adorable Being, and where thou shalt taste what thou hast never tasted with the palate of the body----now thou shalt feel that which never cometh to the senses of the body, and thou shalt know only that thou dost experience happiness, but what thy happiness is thou shalt not be able to explain----and where instead of the converse with man, thy converse will be spiritually with Jesus Christ. And thou shalt bear labours and not perceive the affliction thereof, for the perception of Christ will not allow thee to feel thine own afflictions, and. the plucking away of thy mind towards God will deprive thee of all the feeling which beings in the body have.

[And thy habitation shall be] where thou shalt see, and hear, and taste, and breathe, and with all the senses [p. 290] of thy inner man thou shalt receive the taste of the world of God, and according to the nature of [that] world, thy senses shall also spiritually taste it; and where, face to face, as unto Moses, they will give unto thee divine revelations, and within the Holy of Holies, which God, and not man, hath established, visions and wonders will receive thee, and the hiddenness of the glory of God which will live in thy thoughts. And thy life shall be among spiritual powers in the understanding of the spirit, where the ark of spiritual wonders and of divine knowledge is set, not as in a mystery but in the truth of knowledge, which cometh upon thy knowledge without the mediation of any [other] thing. [And thy habitation shall be] not where an altar of gold is established wherefrom there goeth up the incense which can be perceived by the body, but where is another altar of the spirit which receiveth the pure incense of all holy and rational thoughts; and where a chest of manna, wherein the food which was given by angels is preserved, is not placed as a type, but [where] is established a table of life, which is Christ Himself, from Whom all His spiritual members receive the food of the spirit, as do the members of the material body from the body.

[And thy habitation shall be] not where the rod, which was the sign of the election of Aaron, is laid up for a memorial, but where Jesus Christ Himself, the Prince of priests, performeth the office of priest before His Father, [and before] living and rational beings. [And thy habitation shall be] where thou art wholly and entirely dead unto the feeling of the things which are visible, and where thou shalt hear nothing of the things which are spoken and perceived

at the same time; [p. 291] and all the members of the old man shall die within thee, and thou shalt be clothed with the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the manner of his Creator.

In this conversation shall thy habitation be, O disciple, after thou hast departed from the conversation of the world which is after the flesh, if when thou hast entered into this country according to the law, thou labourest as the law of the country requireth, and thou clost not take with thee into the country of life dead members of the world which is dead; because a man goeth forth from the world in outward appearance he doth not [necessarily] go forth from the world, but he must cast off the world and all its rule and manner of life, inwardly as well as outwardly, and he must make himself a stranger unto all the remembrance thereof, and as he hath cut off and cast from him the life which is carnal, so also must he cut off and cast from him the dead thoughts which meditate upon dead things. Now as is the nature of the body in which the understanding is bound, so also must of necessity be the understanding in its thoughts, for when it meditateth upon the things of the world, its whole motion is dead, but when its objects of thought are the things of the spirit, it is moved with living and spiritual things as [with] life. And apply the example from the similitude of thy body also to the spiritual understanding in which thy thoughts move.

For as the body so long as it dwelleth in the carnal world is carnal, together with all its manner of life and deeds, but when the time for it to be removed to the world of the spirit hath come it is made new and becometh spiritual, and then [p. 292] entereth into the world of spiritual beings, even so also so long as the mind dwelleth in the world, and its thought and meditation are fixed thereupon, is it carnal, and is itself like unto the nature of the world in which it liveth. But if its habitation be in that world of the spirit, and it be moved in all its meditations according to that which is in that country, its thought henceforth becometh spiritual according to the ordering of that country in which its motions perform [their] actions.

Now therefore it is seemly that every disciple who goeth forth from the world should follow after this part, for this is our inheritance, and in this country is our conversation also, according to the teaching of Paul, who said, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence we wait for our Vivifier, our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change the body of our humility, [and] Who shall make it a counterpart of His glorious body, according to His great power by which everything hath been made subject unto Him. But as I have said, so long as a man is shut up in the womb of the world he per-ceiveth not this conversation, neither is he able to perceive it if he goeth forth from the world in the things which are manifest, and doeth it not in the things which are hidden; for this conversation cannot be experienced in the body, but the spiritual understanding tasteth it when it hath been purified from the thoughts and from the cares of the body. Now, as I have said, the beginning of this path is the end of the path of the world, for until a man hath ended that path which is carnal he cannot travel in this spiritual path;

but the end of the path of the world is absolute poverty of everything which is in this world [p. 293], and it is not being destitute of one thing and not of another, and letting go one thing and clinging fast unto another, but a man must set free and deliver his own members from all the carnal things of the world which lay hold upon a man. One man is held fast by the world in all his members, and another by two thirds of them, and another hath one half a slave, and the other half free. Another hath one third of himself free, and the other two thirds in bondage; and another hath only a small portion of him subjugated, while all his other members are free and unrestrained; and another hath one only of his members held fast and bound, and although all his members can move, his body remaineth in the same place. But whosoever is fettered in one of his members his whole person belongeth unto the world, even as the whole body of the bird, which is held fast in the snare by one foot only, is also held fast in the snare by its foot;

and although its other foot and its wings are unfettered, and it setteth them in motion to fly, yet the shackle and fetter which are upon one foot allow it not to mount up into the pure air, but it falleth down again upon the place where it was, and it quivereth spasmodically in death upon the ground, and bedraggleth its wings and whole body with the weight of the dust. And thus also is the man whose every member is unfettered by the shackles of the world save one, for that one member in which he is fettered [p. 294] fettereth his whole body, and although he is bound but a little strong chains are cast over his whole person completely.

Now therefore it is meet for those who desire to be freed from the fetters of the world to release themselves completely, and to put off and to cast away their old clothes and to put on new, which is the rule and conduct of Christ. And this apparel is the apparel of the kingdom, and it is meet that all the ornaments of an excellent rule and conduct of life should be found therein. It is meet that whosoever wisheth to change his apparel should put off wholly [the old], and put on completely [the new], and these similitudes are placed for thee as an example concerning that about which I am giving thee counsel, and from things which relate to the body thou must gain understanding concerning those of the spirit For behold, whosoever wisheth to pour anything into a vessel, until he hath emptied it of what there is already in it cannot pour therein that which he wisheth to pour; now if that which is emptied from the vessel, and that which is poured therein [in its place] be not similar, although the vessel be washed and scoured, the sweetness of the taste of that which is newly poured therein [is not able] to change the former smell and taste. And again, when the husbandman wisheth to cast into his ground good seed, and he seeth that there are therein brambles and briars, he uprooteth and hoeth them up first of all, and then he casteth the good seed into his field.

[p. 295] And again, whosoever wisheth to put on a new garment first of all casteth away the old one which is upon his body, and then he putteth on the new one. And thus also doth the physician, for he deviseth means and removeth skilfully the putrefaction which is upon the boil by means of acid and astringent medicines, and then he layeth on the bandage

which buildeth up the new flesh. And like unto these many things are performed in nature, for except the old things be cut off and cast away, men cannot bring those which are new, especially if they are the opposites of each other, and thus, in this case also, the disciple of Christ----if he wisheth to draw nigh to the perfect rule of the life of Christ----is bound to cut off and to cast from him all the life and conduct of the old world, and then he must draw near to the new life, and cast off ignorance, and put on the knowledge of the spirit; for the fettering which is in the things which abide not ariseth from ignorance, and the unloosing of them cometh from knowledge. Whosoever casteth off the world, casteth off ignorance, and whoso putteth on the world putteth on folly, for true knowledge is that which forgetteth not that which is not and which thinketh of it as if it existed; and ignorance is known by being fettered, and it thinketh that which abideth not is something which is true and enduring.

So therefore those who put on [p. 296] the world put it on as something which endureth, and it is justly said of those who are ignorant, "They have mistaken the shadow for the substance", and rightly have been called "wise" those who have made themselves strangers to the world, and have cast off early the old rag before it hath cast them off. Whosoever the world casteth off hath no happiness therewith, for the world hath fled from him, and hath rejected him, and thrown him away as something which is superfluous; but those are worthy of blessing and praise who of their own good freewill make themselves strangers to the world, and who go out from it that it may not be an impediment to their course. For as is a covering before the sight, even so is the care of the world before the Divine vision, and as our sight is not able to pierce and to pass through any dense body which may be before it, whether it be a mountain, or a building, or some other such like thing, and until a man cometh to the top of the mountain, or walketh over it, he is unable to see the things which are thereupon, even so our thought is unable to consider the things which are outside the world so long as the wall of the world is built before our vision, and its heavy shadows and the mountains and hills of its cares and anxieties hem us in on every side.

If then a man wisheth to see the spiritual rule which is outside the world, and to look closely at the heavenly things which are above it, let him go outside [p. 297] the world, or ascend above it, and behold two things will appear to him:----the spiritual rule of life which is established by the motion of living thoughts, and the kingdom of heaven which is above the world; for when a man is freed from the passions of the world, his habitation is, as it were, in the kingdom of heaven. And what is the happiness of the kingdom of heaven? Is it not the abrogation of afflictions, and the ministration of all things new, and is it not that misery and troubles shall be dissolved and flee away even as it is written, "We shall rejoice in the varieties of spiritual beings, and in the glorious life, and in the pleasures of the happiness which is sealed and laid up [for us], and we shall have neither expectation of grief, nor fear and terror of calamities which are to come, for that world consisteth wholly of new things; for the inhabitants thereof rejoice always in things which are new, and these are the joy which is laid up, and the happiness which is perpetual, and in these also is life found by the soul which is freed from passions, and which hath destroyed from itself the glooms of suspicion.

And well hath one of the spiritual teachers said, "The kingdom of heaven is the soul which is without passions, and which hath the knowledge of the things which exist in very truth, that is to say, words and motions which are not of. the body. For when the soul is freed from the passions of wickedness from which are produced fear, and trouble, and care, and want of confidence, it is immediately filled with the opposites of these things, that is hope, and courage, [p. 298] and gladness, and happiness of thought. For what is there that can trouble, or of whom shall be afraid the man who hath cut off and cast from him all the causes of trouble and of fear? For trouble ariseth by reason [of fear] lest he be deprived of the world, and of its pleasures, and of its delights, and fear ariseth [from the fear] lest he become a stranger to the life in the body which belongeth to time. And when a man by the philosophy of Christ casteth off these two things, that is, the love of the world and the love of life, he is freed from trouble and fear, in the front of which are the Gehenna of the future, and the judgment which is prepared; these things are the Gehenna which giveth torment.

And if freedom from passions be the kingdom of heaven, according to the word of that spiritually wise man, then the bondage of the passions must also be the Gehenna which giveth torture, and the outer darkness and the worm which gnaweth into the heart and the thoughts. For the taste of both things is given therefrom because the kingdom of the thoughts is a sign of that kingdom which is to come, and the Gehenna of the torture of fear and tribulation is a pledge of the Gehenna which is for ever, because that pledge also which is given for [both these] things hath an affinity with that thing for which it is given, as in this world everything which is given in advance as a pledge for something hath an affinity with that for which it is given as a pledge. And so also the spiritual mysteries, which [p. 299] here in this world have been delivered unto us in the place of a pledge, have a great affinity with that true incarnation of Christ, for here in this world we receive the Body and Blood of Christ that they may be unto us a pledge of that of which we shall eat spiritually in the next world from the Person of Christ, and from them, like the members from the body, we receive strength and sustenance, and this pledge, through spiritual interchange, hath an affinity with the Person; and thus also the Body and Blood are called [the affinity] of the Person.

And again we receive the Holy Spirit by baptism, that it may be unto us the first-fruits of the perfect intercourse which is about to come unto us in the Mysteries of the Spirit, and how great is the affinity of the pledge with that which maketh it perfect the very name itself testifieth; for two spirits are mentioned by the word of the Book. And again, concerning Christ it is written, "He was to us the first-fruits of the good things "which are to come", and Christ the first-fruits hath an affinity with us, and with the good things which are to come unto us, for He became man, and with the good things which are about to be unto us, which by the fore-knowledge of the Father were prepared aforetime for us, for He was God, and He Himself together with God, by His will, which nothing preceded, prepared aforetime these good things for us. So likewise the joy of this world which is born of the freedom from passions hath an affinity with that joy which is about to be given unto those who are worthy

[p. 300] thereof, and again the Gehenna of tribulation and sorrow which is born in this world of the ministration of the evil passions is akin unto that Gehenna which is to come.

Let us then be earnest to put off the world, and to put off therewith also the passions which spring up in us therefrom, and let us put off also the evil passions, and let us clothe ourselves after them with the living motions of joy and love. And if thou wishest to know, O disciple, that without the going forth from the world thou art not able to draw nigh unto the rule and life of perfection, thou mayest learn it from the things which are written in the Holy Books, and thou mayest be mindful also of the lives of the spiritual men which are written in the Holy Books. And who of all the ancients, who were accounted worthy of the sublime and wonderful gift, was like unto John the Baptist? According to the testimony, which Christ spake concerning him, "He was the greatest of all the Prophets"; and again He said, "Verily I say unto you, among those born of women there is none greater than John the Baptist. Now let us understand and [see how and what was the rule and conduct of life of this marvellous man who arrived at such greatness as this, and why he was accounted worthy of all this gift, and with what increase and with how great labours, and after what asceticism, and for how long a time he lived a solitary life away from human intercourse;

and when we have seen and have understood these matters of his life, let us consider the greatness [p. 301] of the things which, were unto him, and let us understand first of all the things which concern the will, and afterwards the things which concern grace, for until the will shewed its fruits the Spirit gave not its gift.

Observe then the life of this marvellous man, who from the time of his childhood was set apart from dwelling in the world, and from intercourse with the children of men; and he was not first of all denied and polluted, and afterwards cleansed and purified, but his youth passed in purity before it arrived at the motions of nature which distinguish between good and evil things. And he was brought up in the wilderness, and he had not in him any worldly care whatsoever; and he did not taste by experience the wickedness of the children of men, and then cast it away, neither was he first moved by lusts and by passions, and afterwards came to peace of the thoughts by the labours of his freewill. Now that a man, who would stand in this rule of life, should depart from his own wickedness before he receiveth the taste of the wickedness of the world helpeth the purity of the soul of those who are worthy thereof in no slight degree, even as Adam remained for a very short time in purity of soul before he transgressed the commandment.

And John, because he was about to be set apart for the ministration of Divine mysteries, and because a gift which had not been [hitherto] given to the children of men was about to come unto him, separated himself from his childhood and went forth into the desert, that being untempted by evil things, and his mind receiving not the impress of the likeness of the remembrances of the body, and being neither disturbed nor troubled by the cares and anxieties of the world, he might receive spiritual revelations and the doctrines of Divine mysteries in purity of spirit, and might feel that to which the whole race of mortal beings arriveth not; [p. 302] and for this reason he received also the Holy Spirit while he was in

his mother's womb, in order that the thoughts of his soul, by the instigation of the Spirit, might be stirred up in a spiritual manner. That he should be born without the union of his parents was not right, for this belonged to Jesus God alone, but because he was about to receive visions and revelations which were above the old nature, he received the Spirit while he was in the womb, after he had been conceived by the union of his parents.

That it would have been easy for God to have created him newly, like Adam and Eve, there can be no doubt, but by this [act] He would have made him a stranger to the old creation, and the Creator did not desire to do this, lest it might be thought that He was rejecting the former creation. And it hath been said that it befitted Christ only to be conceived out of the old nature without carnal union, and that being brought up moreover in the world, and receiving experience of the wickedness thereof, He might be suddenly worthy of the grace which is above the world, by election after the manner of the Apostles, which was to be given after the Crucifixion, when the old nature was dead, and sin also and all the evil passions had died therewith.

Now because John was to be worthy of the knowledge of the Apostles before the dissolution of the curse, and the abrogation of sin, and the matter of the Cross, he rightly received the Spirit in the womb, and he had the growth which was outside the world in order that by these means [p. 303] he might attain unto the natural innocency which the first man possessed before he transgressed the commandment, and that by this innocency of soul he might receive the knowledge of Divine mysteries; for where through grace these marvellous things took place, by these marks and means sufferings took place. And when in the unspeakable depth of the love of God the Redemption was completed, the Person of God Himself stood in the midst like a freeman with power, and with His own hand He annulled the things which were old, and inaugurated those which were new, and the old man died upon the Cross, according to that which is written by Paul, "Our old man "was crucified with Him", and the new man was revealed, and made known, and became visible, and not only that which was worthy of the dwelling of Paradise, after the manner of the first Adam, but that which was worthy to dwell also in heaven, and to go round about among spiritual beings, and to be like unto them in every thing.

And therefore after this those who are experienced in all wicknessess, and tax-gatherers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and thieves, and worshippers of creatures, Grace seizeth suddenly, and without either plans or preparations maketh them worthy of the wealth of its mysteries, as in a new nature, it work-eth in whomsoever it pleaseth, because the old man hath been crucified, and is dead, according to the word of Paul. And again that Apostle saith from the whole person of his human nature, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death"? And after he has asked questioningly who is able to deliver him, [p. 304] he revealeth, and confesseth and teacheth by his word Who He is that shall deliver him from the old and mortal nature, saying, "I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ Who hath delivered me from this body of death".

And after these things then in which it hath been made known unto us that there are the death, and dissolution, and abrogation, and destruction of the old man, and the vivification, and the renewal, and the appearance, and the revelation of the new man, Divine Grace worketh mightily all things which are efficacious, and all powers, and all knowledge, and all mysteries and revelations, and all the dispensation of the spirit, and the work which is above nature, in whomsoever it pleaseth. These things which have been spoken by us briefly are [intended] to shew the cause of the going forth of John as a preacher in the wilderness, and why he received the Spirit from the womb, and why he was brought up in the desert from his childhood. Do thou then, O disciple, at the hearing of these things be strenuous to cast off the world, and draw nigh unto the freedom of a pure rule and conduct of life; and love perpetual converse with God, and flee earnestly from all human speech, and take heed unto the good things of this rule of life through that which happened unto John the Baptist.

For if some time before the Crucifixion He, through Whom old things were dissolved and abrogated, and new things were made to appear, and [Who] discovered the solitary life, and the freedom and alienation from the world, gave unto John the Baptist the knowledge of the Apostles, through which things he possessed the wisdom which is above human nature, how much more now can this [p. 365] spiritual life stablish thee in the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, and render thee unspeakably happy in the feeling of spiritual revelations! Accept thou as a proof [of this] the life of this righteous man, and learn also therefrom that a man cannot become a perfect disciple of Christ unless he make himself a stranger to the whole world after the manner of this righteous man, even as the word of Christ also hath taught us openly, "Except a man renounce the whole world, and his brethren, and his kinsfolk, and his family, and his father, and his mother, and everything that he hath, and that which is greater than them all, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple". And again in another place He restrained that man who wished to perform two things in one, that is, honour to [his] parents and discipleship to Himself, and told him that it was impossible that two things which were the opposites of each other could happen at the same time:

"Teacher, suffer me to go and bury my father and my mother, and I will come after Thee", that is to say, "I will keep the first commandment which God commanded me, Honour thy parents and be obedient unto them, and then I will come after Thee and minister unto Thee". And what answer did Jesus return to this? "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; and go thou and preach the kingdom of God. It is not necessary [p. 306] for thee to keep the law, for it hath been kept and is dissolved, neither hast thou any need to minister unto natural parents, because I have been obedient unto parents according to the body, and I have ministered unto them on behalf of everyone. The yoke of the law and nature is henceforth lifted from off thee, and thou art left a free man unto thyself, there being no worldly power that can subdue thee, for thou art dead unto the world, and thou art dead unto it. Dead bodies have not service paid unto them, they are only wrapped in shrouds and buried; leave the dead then to bury their dead, and do thou go and preach the kingdom of God".

Behold also we learn from this testimony that the man who becometh a disciple of Jesus hath not even power to minister unto [his] natural parents, because he hath a true Father, Who by His grace hath enrolled him for Himself [as] a son, and Who hath set him apart for the ministration of His will. Hear also again another proof, which like the preceding will bring instruction nigh unto thee, and the example of the testimony of which will urge thee to deny thyself everything, and to go forth after Jesus. "And one of His disciples drew nigh and said unto Jesus, Suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house, and I will come after Thee". Hear also in this case what the Master answered the disciple, and receive it as if it had been spoken unto thee by that disciple: "No man, having put his hand upon the ploughshare, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God",[that is to say]," Whosoever fulfilleth this work in nature, and who guideth the plough with oxen according to the custom [p. 307] of man, and who suffereth himself to look behind him instead of in front----now in this manner the work would never be completed----is not able to advance, nor are his furrows cut straight, and the oxen also do not travel forwards; and although this work be visible, and one which can be seen, and it taketh place in the very earth itself, yet if the ploughman look behind him, his labour is spoiled.

Now as concerning My own discipleship, one labour differeth from another, even as world differeth from world, and life from life, and immortal from mortal beings, and God from the children of men; if then thou takest the yoke of My discipleship upon thy soul and body, thou must perform the service of My commandments, and thou must turn thyself back to the world, and it must not be a care to thee to make peace with thy kinsfolk, and thou must not be anxious to pay unto them the obligation of honour according to the body, and to fulfil unto them the law of the fulness of the world, and then to come after Me. For if thou wouldest pay the obligations of the world, those which are due unto Me cannot be paid; and if thou art anxious not to offend the world in anything, why then shouldst thou set thyself to provoke Me? Let there be no peace between thee and the world, in order that thou thyself mayest have peace with Me; thou hast neither house nor household, why then shouldst thou hasten to bid them farewell? For enmity is set between thee and them, why then shouldst thou be anxious to be a friend unto them? I have not come to cast peace upon the earth, [p. 308] why then dost thou hasten to have peace with the children of the earth? I cry War, and yet thou hastenest to peace; I preach Division, and thou hastenest to strengthen concord.

I have come to set a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the bridegroom against the bride, and thou hastenest to salute the children of thy house, and to sew together with thy folly the rent which I have made in the world. I have rent this garment of concord because it was woven wholly of error, and in its place I have woven another garment of heavenly peace; do thou also weave this garment, and hasten not to sew an old garment. I have put an end to the world which was wont to increase wickedness in every man, and I have scattered that brotherhood which was assembled for the gathering together of sins; hasten thou not to become a companion of those who work iniquity". [The disciple said], "I will go and bid farewell to the children of my house," but Christ said unto him, "Thou hast no peace with them", [for] "Ye shall salute no man by the way"; and the

meaning of this speech is that Christ thereby denied His disciples also that salutation of the peace of the world. These things were said in the person of one disciple unto every man, that is to say, unto [all] those who have dedicated themselves unto discipleship, for it is better that a man should not be a disciple unto God in name, being in truth a disciple of the world, and that he should not hire himself unto One, and serve the other.

It is not necessary that the world should arrive at perfection, because its habit [p. 309] and its life are not dedicated unto perfection; but the disciple by the very mark of his garb preacheth perfection concerning himself, and in the things according to which he appeareth openly unto the children of men he hath given the promise concerning himself to appear also inwardly unto God. The marks of discipleship which are inscribed upon thee outwardly urge that all virtues should be written for thee upon thy soul, and in the manner in which thou appearest unto the children of men outwardly is it necessary for thee to appear also unto God inwardly. Thou hast put off the care for the apparel of the world, put off also the love of adornment inwardly from thy soul. Thou art remote from the marriage which is manifest, make thyself to be remote also from the secret lust of the thoughts. Thou abstainest from the eating of flesh, and from the pleasures and rewards which are visible, abstain thou also in thy soul from the wish that would desire meats. Thou hast removed the hair of the secular life of the world from off thy head, and this is a proof that thou shalt neither be fettered by the cares thereof, nor bound in its anxieties, and that thou shalt not be held fast by any of its passions, which are many and without number.

Thou hast gone out from the world, and thou hast made thyself a stranger unto it by [thy] outward garb, go forth then from it, and be unto it a stranger also in thy innermost thoughts. Thou hast in outward appearance made thyself destitute of riches, be thou also destitute of the love of riches in thy innermost mind. Thou hast rejected the sounds of song and the pleasures of the world, delight thyself then diligently, and with all [p. 310] thy soul in the sounds of the psalms of the Spirit of God. Let thy discipleship be known more from within than without, and as the children of men discern that thou art a disciple of Christ by thy outward appearance, even so let Christ know thee to be His disciple from thy inward appearance.

Take heed that thy discipleship be not be unto thee for trafficking and for buying and selling, and do not place upon thyself the noble garb of discipleship, neither for vainglory, nor for the pleasures which pass away. Thou shalt not sell spiritual for carnal things, and thou shalt not exchange heavenly things for the corruptible treasures which are laid up on earth; to Him only to Whom thou wast promised [by] thy covenant be thou a disciple. For God taught thee of old, and He removed from before thy sight this deceitful expectation, [say ing], "A servant cannot serve two masters", and again by another testimony He warned thee if thou couldst not become a perfect disciple to remain in the life of the world, and it is better for thee, lest when thou hast begin to build, thou art not able to finish, and thou becomest a mockery unto every man. "What man beginneth to build a tower, and doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have [wherewith] to finish it? Lest haply, having begun to

build, and being unable to finish, every man who passeth by and seeth him shall laugh and mock at him, saying, This man began [to build], but was not able to finish. Or what king who goeth to war to fight [p. 311] with a fellow king, [doth not sit down first and take counsel whether] he can meet with ten thousand [men] him that cometh against him with twenty thousand, or who doth not send ambassadors and seek for peace if he be unable to meet in war the multitude of his forces?"

And behold, by these things He Who called thee to be His disciple hath taught thee that thou shouldst not begin in this path unless thou art determined to finish in it, and that thou shouldst not lay the foundations to build a tower, if thou hast it not in thy mind to finish it, and that thou shouldst not go forth to war against Satan, unless the hosts of mighty thoughts be gathered together about thee, lest having gone forth to war the Enemy overcome thee, and [thy] discipleship be blasphemed. Whosoever hath not made a promise is not required by the word of rectitude to do the things which he hath not promised [to do]; for until the promise [hath been made, the matter] is voluntary, but from [the time of] the promise and onwards [the matter] becometh a law. So long as the yoke of promise hath not been laid upon the freewill of thy soul, thy service is voluntary, but if thou takest the sign of discipleship, and the promise of the . covenant of Christ, thy life is no longer according to thine own will, but it must be according as the law demandeth, which of thine own freewill thou hast laid upon thyself.

Now if whilst thou wast in the world thou didst the things which belong unto a disciple, this is a matter for praise in thee, but if [being] in discipleship thou doest the things which befit it, thou only payest [thy] obligation, and thou only fulfillest that which is incumbent upon thee. And observe unto what height the tower shall rise, and of what stones and slabs [p. 312] its building shall be composed when thou layest the foundation. Thou shalt not begin a building which will make thee the laughingstock of those who see thee, and thou shalt not construct for thyself a mark of contempt and of mockery in the sight of many, and thou shalt not give a cause for those who pass by to speak against thee, if thou hast determined to become a disciple according to what the will of thy Lord demandeth; and if not, remain in the world. Seek not to be honoured by a name of which thou art not worthy, and lay not hold upon the pure pearl with unclean hands; and put not on the purple of discipleship so long as thou possessest not the knowledge which will keep it [unspotted]. Consider in thy soul what things discipleship requireth thee to do, and then lay the yoke thereof upon thyself. Many become disciples that they may be honoured by the name of Christ, and not that they may honour Him.

and that they may enjoy carnal pleasures they hire themselves unto Him, and not that they may bear the afflictions of His commandments. And others [have become disciples] because of their lust for mammon, and they have drawn nigh unto this life which demandeth poverty, in order that that which they have not been able to acquire from the world, they may go forth and acquire outside the world. And by the hand of that one feeble disciple, [concerning whom] it is written in the Gospel of our Redeemer, Jesus hath rebuked this wicked thought

in all [His] foot-soldiers. "And one came and drew nigh and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever thou goest. Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. Depart thou from me, O disciple of iniquity, for I have not that to give [p. 313] unto thee which thou desirest, and that which I can give thee thou dost not wish to receive. I know that which thy desire asketh, and that which thou seekest, but I will not give [them unto thee], for through the love of the thought of riches thou hast been pleased to come after Me, and [being] in the light thou hast come forth to seek darkness, and having the true possession [to seek] poverty, and having life [to seek] death.

That which I command every man, to forsake [the world] and to cleave unto Me, I desire that thou shouldst possess in thy coming unto Me. By the door through which I desire to bring thee out, by that same door thou pressest to come in unto Me, and therefore I will not receive thee. For in My outward appearance I am poor, and for this reason I have not things which are manifest to give in the world into which I have come. I am in appearance a stranger, for I have neither house nor roof, and whosoever seeketh to be My disciple must inherit poverty from Me. Why dost thou wish to inherit from Me that of the possession of which I have made thee destitute?"

Now therefore, many go forth after Jesus with thoughts of the love of mammon, and they put on the honourable garb of His discipleship like a profession. And He hath exposed of old this deceitful thought in His word, and by the hand of that one hath rebuked all the disciples of falsehood, and prevented them from being His disciples by His saying, "I possess nothing, but I will give unto you that which ye desire," and "I have not even [p. 314] a house or a roof." And those who were slack, and slothful, and feeble, either through the love of pleasure, or through the labour of the building, He kept back by saying, "If thou hast money sufficient for [building] the tower, [build it], but if not, it is better that thou shouldst not begin, than that thou shouldst begin and not finish." And the perfection which Jesus demandeth He shewed us here by all the disciples who went forth after Him, because this tower which mounteth up to heaven is completed by perfection, and it is finished by the gathering together [into it] of all virtues. And Jesus Himself said, "If thou canst finish it, begin [to build], and if not, do not begin," which is as if a man were to say, "If thou canst be a perfect disciple, and complete in all triumphs, [well]; but if not, remain in the world, and work that other righteousness of justice which is inferior to spirituality."

Now each of those who did not seek [Him] with noble purpose He kept back by an answer which befitted them. To the man who had compunction about grieving his folk, and who, wishing to pay unto them human love, asked Him that he might go and bid farewell unto his household, and [then] follow Him, He said, "No man, putting his hand upon the ploughshare, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." And unto the man who sought to honour his parents according to the body, so long as they were alive, and after their death to become His disciple, He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." And unto another, who by the perfection of the doctrine of Christ wished to satisfy his lust for oppression [p. 315], He answered, "Who

hath made Me a judge and a ruler over you?" And unto another who, in His name, wished to gather together riches, and who was scheming that by the mighty deeds, and the signs, and the wonders, which he wrought by His power, he might become the owner of possessions, He said, "I am poor, and I have not where to lay my head." And unto another, who sought to draw nigh to this service with the skin of outward appearance only, He said, "Do not begin the tower if thou hast not the money to finish it." And unto yet another who was weak and feeble, who, though he had not yet gained purity of thoughts and innocency of soul, wished to fight against the powers which opposed him, He said, "No king goeth forth to war against a fellow king unless he hath gathered together hosts which will be sufficient to meet the enemy which opposeth him."

Now therefore by these Jesus rebuked all diseased thoughts, and He made the disciple to lay hold upon the true healing of discipleship, and upon the body of the spiritual life. And as in worldly matters, if a man cannot perform properly the piece of work which he wisheth to do without setting himself free from all other work, and occupying himself with that alone, how much less can a man finish this spiritual labour [p. 316] unless he set himself free from the service of everything which is visible? even as the blessed Paul also saith, "Every man who maketh a contest, keepeth his mind from everything; and of what contest did he speak except the exercising of the body in the world? And if to a contest in which the body is engaged the service of carnal things is a hindrance, how much more will it be so to a spiritual contest?

For in the one case, as regards the contest of the world, the contest, and the struggling therein, and the conquest therein, and also the things which retard the conquest therein, are one in nature, and they are all the children of one country, and although all these things are related to each other, the world with its cares and anxieties becometh an obstacle unto those who maintain, the strife, How can a man fulfil the life here, then, which is a spiritual contest, and a service, and a life which is above the world, if he be tied unto and held fast by the things of the world? And again Paul himself saith, "No soldier on service who entangleth himself in the affairs of the world is able to please Him Who elected him. And if he contendeth, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully. What then? If the soldiers of the kingdom of the world empty themselves of everything that they may learn the arts of their service, and may thereby please the king who elected them, what disciple who hath been elected to the [p. 317] spiritual service, is able to become captain if he be bound by the things of the world?

And, moreover, let us also see from the speech of Simon to our Lord, and let us also learn from the first disciple how it is meet for us to become disciples. "Behold we have left everything, and have come after thee. What then shall we have? Thou hast heard what this disciple said, and how he hath revealed unto thee the truth of his absolute poverty, and that they (i.e., the disciples) possessed nothing besides Jesus. "We have left everything, and have come after thee. Behold the definite law of discipleship. They did not have one thing and not the other, and they did not renounce one thing and hold fast to the other; but they left

everything, and followed Jesus. Do thou then forsake everything and go forth after Him, and observe, immediately the might of the Apostles clotheth thee, that thou wilt feel and know in very deed that the Word is not a lie; for thou canst not ask Him to make thee worthy of the sight of His hidden and spiritual riches whilst thou hast not made thyself destitute of everything which is visible. So long as thou boldest fast that which is thine own, He will not shew thee the things which are His. Give everything that thou hast for the love of Him only, being in thy gift watchful against the thought that seeketh human praise, and go forth and travel along the road a little, bearing afflictions and labours with purity of the thoughts;

and observe, immediately His glory riseth in thy soul, and He mingleth the spirit in thee, how thy whole being will be smitten with the love of Him, and thou wilt also forget the weight of thy afflictions, and He will suddenly change thee from one being into another, that is to say, from the old into the new. And if [p. 318] [thou wilt] not [do this], what dost thou desire? Thy purse being full perhaps it may happen that thou demandest also discount and interest, and thou wouldst spare that which is thine own, and wouldst eat of His bounty. Or perhaps thou wishest to become a disciple unto Him that He may place thee in authority over the treasures of His wealth; far be it from Him to cast the knowledge of His revelations into the soul which is not worthy thereof! What then? Since those who are held fast by the trafficking and cares of human riches are retarded in many things by the knowledge of the world, wouldst thou desire to possess the knowledge of the spirit, together with the cares of riches in the worn out vessel of thyself which is pierced with passions and lusts? Wouldst thou desire to pour in the new wine of the wisdom of His mysteries, and wouldst thou not pour upon the ground this knowledge if it had come into thee? I mean, thy old vessel is unable to receive it.

Now this our Redeemer Himself shewed aforetime in His luminous teaching, saying, "No man poureth new wine into old bottles, lest the wine burst the skins, and the wine be poured out, and the skins be destroyed; but they pour new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. So long as sin liveth or is wrought in thee by deed or in thought, or a carnal wish belonging to the world ariseth in thee, thou art still an old vessel, and thou art not able to receive the new wine of the wisdom of Christ. Make new thyself then by the dismissal of thy passions, and thou shalt be able to take within thee immediately the new wine of the doctrine of Christ. Forsake everything, even as the Apostles forsook everything, [p. 319] and then thou mayest seek boldly to be set to rule over the treasures of the spirit. Turn not thy face backwards, and behold the furrows shall be straight before thee, and let thy hand be put upon the ploughshare of the service of difficult and laborious commandments. Turn not thy face backwards to the sight of pleasures, [and] if thou hast [once] denied a thing, do not again confess that which thou hast denied. And again, do not look before thee at one time, and behind thee at another, but let there be unto thee one straight look before thee;

for the man who looketh behind and in front of him is like unto a man who steppeth forwards and backwards, and he returneth to the same place, and departeth not from the place upon which he standeth; and no man can say concerning this man either that he travelleth along

the road, or that he completeth his journey by his steps. And thus also is the disciple who at one time looketh in front of him, and at another turneth his face backwards; who is at one time filled with suffering, and at another with laughter; who at one time cleanseth his thoughts, and at another fouleth them with the cares of iniquity; who at one time beareth the weight of affliction, and at another enjoyeth pleasures; who at one time fasteth much, and at another eateth immoderately; who at one time occupieth himself with the conversation ot prayer, and at another with the speech which breaketh forth in empty things; who at one time hath in him the remembrance of God, and at another hath his soul dead unto the memorial of Him; who at one time desireth to put off his life and to be with Christ, and at another is clothed with carnal delights, and they are pleasant unto him; whose whole mind at one time is moved by the Spirit, and at another he quaketh with empty cares; who at one time is filled with admiration of God, [p. 320] and at another maketh dark his mind with carnal meditation;

who at one time purifieth his thoughts from the motion of lust, and at another lusteth for the act of adultery; who at one time fasteth without measure, and at another eateth immoderately; who at one time scattereth his possessions in the love of God, and at another is held fast by grief because he hath scattered them; who at one time is filled with the love of man, and at another burneth because he is not able to take vengeance upon his enemies; in whom at one time the light of knowledge dawneth, and at another his thoughts are dark through the error of the world; who at one time travelleth onwards uprightly: and at another walketh backwards; who at one time is mingled wholly and entirely with the spirit, and at another wholly and entirely with the body. Now therefore if a man in this manner goeth, and then cometh; and travelleth on, and then turneth back; and marcheth forward, and then cometh back; and goeth up, and then cometh down; and groweth meagre, and then becometh gross; and becometh clean, and then defileth himself; and purifieth himself, and then becometh polluted; and washeth himself white, and then becometh covered with dust and ashes; and maketh himself chaste, and then becometh wanton; and maketh himself destitute, and then waxeth greedy; and denieth, and then confesseth; and embraceth abstinence, and then lusteth; through these and such like things the path of discipleship is not perfected;

but whosoever liveth in these things remaineth in his place and he advanceth not from the spot on which he standeth, and by reason of this also he doth not attain unto that after which he hasteneth, for how can he attain unto it since he runneth not? And even though this man who set out to go forward may travel on and march forward, and may have spent the half of his life, so to say, in the rule and conduct of discipleship, since he served hath two things he is not [p. 321] able to lay hold upon one; and how can the man who hath not wholly and entirely sought after good, except in name, find it? and how can the man who hath not experienced, even for a short time, the love of Christ, obtain the mastery over the limit of love? If then the man who walketh as a living man is found to be dead, what shall become of the man who is absolutely dead?

Thou hast gone forth after Jesus, follow Him then and turn not back, and remember Lot's wife, who, because the love of her kinsfolk and the outcries of her beloved ones constrained her, turned and looked back behind her, and became a pillar of salt, even as is written concerning her; and because her soul had not been salted with the fear of the Highest she became a destructible salted thing. Remember then this woman who was in doubt, and who perished, and be thou not in doubt like unto her, and turn not thyself backwards, lest thou remain in the place where thou art, and thou wilt arrive at this condition, although not in thy body, yet in thy soul. For the soul that turneth and looketh backward after it hath gone forth on the journey in this path becometh a senseless pillar, and as in the case above, the wife of Lot ceased from bodily feeling, and thereby became a pillar of salt, even so also here the mind, which looketh behind it always at corruptible things, ceaseth to feel, and becometh stupefied at spiritual things; because the remembrance of the world maketh us to possess dulness of heart, and it defileth the purity and innocency of the soul, and this carnal mind blackeneth and [p. 322] darkeneth that pure sight which worked for the understanding by the constant vision of God. And if the thought which is [set] upon carnal things removeth us from the sight of spiritual things, how much more will the possession of them absolutely remove us? And if, in looking upon them whilst they are in the hands of others, they bind us to them, how much more shall we be bound so long as they are found in our hands?

Go forth then from the world, O disciple, in the manner in which the Apostles went forth, in deed, and not in word; in thought, and not in borrowed guise; in will, and not in form (or garb); with desire, and not delay; with discretion, and not through tradition; in freedom, and not in the law. Renew in thee from day to day the desire of this spiritual life, and taste life, all deadness being dead unto thee. Be of good courage and pass over this terrible country which is set in the midst, for it is fearful and deep, and it is a ravine which is filled with evil beasts, and noxious and murderous reptiles. And if thou hast determined in thy mind to pass over this terrible country, and thy desire be wholly ready, straightway grace will receive thee, and will accompany thee. Thou must not consider that the soul and body are linked together, and that the one is mingled with the other by nature, [p. 323] for there is much room between them, and it is a terrible depth which not every man is able to search out and to pass over; but if thou wilt constrain the body with its lusts, and suffering, and prayer, and lovingkindness accompany thee, thou wilt be able to pass over this terrible country. But since our discourse is upon the going forth from the world, and not upon the going forth from indwelling passions, we will not speak upon this subject. "We have left everything, and have followed Thee;

behold the words which are the instruction common unto all disciples! Take them perpetually into the remembrance of thy soul, and at the beginning of thy discipleship let them be the subject of thy meditation, and in remembrance of their exhortation go forth from the world; and when thou travellest along the path of the going forth, they shall accompany thee. And meditate upon them at all times, and if anything of riches entice thee to let it abide with thee, or the love of friends and family bind thee thereunto, remember the word of

Simon, who forsook everything, and do thou also like him forsake everything; for Jesus is as near to thee as to Simon, and nearer to thee than to him when He spake the word, because they had not as yet received the power to be mingled spiritually with the love of Jesus, but in the simplicity of their faith they went forth after the sight of His works, and after the sweetness of His speech. And while He linked them unto Himself by word, they clung fast unto Him in very deed, for [His] words were, [p. 324] "Follow Me," and immediately they heard the word they began to do so in very deed. Now thy own union with Jesus to-day is in deed, because He hath mingled thee in the life of the spirit by baptism;

and while He brought the Apostles unto Him at that time by word, He hath to-day mingled thee with Himself in deed, because He hath made thee a spiritual limb through baptism. And however much thou wouldst cleave unto Him in thy works, He hath already cleaved unto thee; and if thou wouldst hasten unto Him, He hath already been dwelling in thee; and if thou wouldst go unto Him in thy prudence, He first cometh unto thee. And however earnestly thou rnayest work, and run, and although thy love and service should surpass the love and service of the Apostles----which is not possible----thou wouldst fall behind them in many things, and thou couldst not attain unto the measure of the mingling of their love with Jesus; but although thine own works cannot attain thereunto, He by His grace will make thee to attain unto it. The love of the Apostles was a wonderful thing, for while as yet the Holy Spirit was not mingled in their nature, they accompanied Jesus in all fervour, and without His stimulating or flattering them---- as He to-day flattereth thee with all manner of entreaties----but He spake unto them haughtily, and from outward signs it might be thought that He was driving them away from Him. "If ye wish to go away, depart", He once said unto them, and by reason of the hardness of His word many left him and departed. Simon saith unto Him, "Unto whom shall we go?

We have once and for all gone forth after Thee, [p. 325] and we have no place to go away from following Thee. "For Thou hast the words of eternal life," that is to say, "Thy words are life, and how shall we forsake life and go after death? For we have forsaken everything and come after Thee, because we believe and know that Thou art the Son of the Living God. Therefore then, O disciple, if thou believest as Simon believed, go thou also forth even as Simon went forth; forsake everything and follow after thy rich Lord. He Himself lacketh nothing, therefore thou needest not provisions from the riches of a strange country, and His riches are not by measure that thou shouldst support Him by the superfluities of thy wealth lest He should want; for this reason be thou strenuous to leave everything. For it belongeth unto Him to give thee everything, even as He promised thee by the hand of Simon. What then? Perhaps Simon became a disciple to one Lord, and thou to another, that thou dost not go forth after thy Lord as he went forth? If now thou dost not go forth like him, it is evident that thou hast become a disciple to another Lord, although thou imaginest concerning thyself that thou art a disciple unto Jesus. And behold both the manner of thy going forth, and the wages thereof are inscribed in one place;

and as to how thou shouldst go forth, thou mayest learn from the words, "We have left everything, and come after Thee. And what the wages of this going forth are the word of our Lord sheweth thee, saying, "Verily I say unto you, that in the new world, when the Son of Man sitteth upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, [p. 326] and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Behold the wages of going forth is participation with Jesus in sublime honour! For He will set the thrones for the disciples opposite to His own throne; and that which with nature is impossible He shewed by His word that it cometh to pass. For He did not promise those disciples who loved His word to honour them like servants and like men who were in subjection, but to make them worthy of the majesty of thrones like unto friends and like unto those who were similar unto Him in His glory. And this which is written concerning the angels also is a marvel of unspeakable love: "A thousand thousand stand before Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand minister unto Him; now this concerneth the Seraphim who stand above Him, having their wings spread out to fly, and this one crieth to this, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy.

And concerning the Cherubim it is written that they were yoked unto a chariot, and while their faces looked downwards, the motions of their spiritual natures were directed whither was the Most High, and they likewise were crying out, "Blessed be the honour of the Lord from His country. And spiritual beings stand in this service, and the hosts and ranks of heaven are obedient unto the word of Jesus, even as Paul said, "They are ministering spirits, who are sent to minister unto those who are about to inherit life."

And concerning the Apostles it is written, "They shall sit upon thrones", and this indicateth to us the greatness of their honour, [p. 327] and [their] equality with Him in inheritance, even as Paul saith, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him." And again he saith, "Heirs of God, and children of the inheritance of Jesus Christ." And again he saith, "If we endure with Him, we shall reign with Him." And again he saith, "He shall change the body of our humility, and shall make it like unto His glorious body, according to His great power through which all things are subject unto Him." Now therefore unto this greatness will the disciple attain if he travelleth completely in his Master's footsteps, but in order that thou mayest not think that this portion of honour came only to the Apostles, Paul said, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him, and if we endure we shall also reign with Him." And our Lord Himself said unto the Apostles, "Not ye only, but every man who leaveth houses, or family, or brethren, or sisters, or children, for My sake, and for My Gospel's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting."

What sleeper would not wake up at the sound of these promises? What dead man would not come to life at this breath of spiritual life? And what sluggard would not be quickened at the pointing out of this path which goeth up to heaven? And who would not wish to despise himself and to make himself of no account at the hearing of His incomparable promise? Who would not deny the whole world----[p. 328] even if it happened that he possessed it----to become a consort of God upon the throne? And who would not be willing to exchange

the things of time for those of eternity? For even if the things which we leave were equal in value unto those which shall be given unto us, since it is God who commandeth, it is right that we should leave them. Leave then the things which should be rejected and despised, and though we renounce them not through the word of Christ, it is for us to make ourselves strangers by nature unto them, and to be beyond them, and to exchange the things which are useless for that which is of value. Who would not hasten to the fair at which this exchange is to be made?

For behold rags are exchanged for purple, and worthless pebbles for pearls, and common stones for beryls, and unending poverty for immeasurable riches, and the dross which is rejected for fine gold, and darkness for light, and death for life, and bitter for sweet, and sickness for health, and the place of the despised one for power, and a lowly condition for dominion, and the things which are corruptible for those which are beyond corruption, and that which is transitory for that which passeth not away, and shadows for the substance, and hunger for fulness, and error for knowledge, and the life of beasts for the life of angels, and the things of the body for the things of the spirit, and unending misery for happiness without measure. And moreover, if we had the words wherewith to describe these things as they deserve, [p. 329] who would not exchange the things which are here for those which are there, and who would not give all the neediness of this world for that kingdom? For the word of the Spirit, even when it speaketh in a simple way, is exalted above all the wisdom of the world, and Paul revealed unto us the greatness of this exchange in one little word, and shewed us how inferior are the things which we have, and how great are those of God in one short verse, saying.

"The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal."Who then would not exchange the things of time for those of eternity, except ourselves, and fools like unto us?

Do not thou then, O thou who hast denied the things which are seen, ask what kind of riches thou wilt receive in exchange for thy poverty, but be thou in earnest only to forsake thy poverty, and to hasten to possess them. Now what these riches are, and unto what they are like, Paul explaineth not unto thee, nor of what kind they are, for there is nothing which can be compared with them, nor how much they are, because they cannot be measured. "That which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and what hath not gone up in the heart of man, [is] what God hath prepared for them that love Him;" and the greatness of the reward is made manifest by these and such like words.

Do thou then, O disciple, hearken unto the divine voices which exhort thee to go forth after Jesus, and to become [p. 330] absolutely destitute, and then thou wilt become a perfect disciple: "Whosoever denieth not everything that he hath cannot be My disciple."After this what hast thou to say or to answer? for behold with one word all thy doubts and all thy obscure ideas are destroyed; and the word of truth is a sublime path for thee in which to tread. And again in another place He said, "Whosoever doth not forsake everything that he hath, and doth not take up his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple. And again,

teaching [us] that we should not only forsake our possessions for the sake of His glory, and deny the world for the sake of confessing Him, but also our transitory life, He said, "Except a man deny himself he cannot be My disciple. And again He saith, "Whosoever wisheth to save his soul shall destroy it; and whosoever [wisheth] to destroy his soul for My sake shall make it to live. And again He saith, "Whosoever destroyeth his soul shall preserve it unto everlasting life; and whosoever ministereth unto Me the Father shall honour. And again He said unto His disciples, "Arise, let us go hence," and by this [speech] He shewed that this world was not the country either of Himself or of His disciples. Whither shall we go, O Lord? "Where I am there also shall My servant be.

If Jesus crieth unto us, "Arise, let us go hence," what fool would be persuaded to dwell with corpses in [p. 331] the graves, or to become a sojourner with the dead? Whensoever, therefore, the world wisheth to hold thee fast, or family, or kinsfolk, or friends, remember the word of Christ which said, "Arise, let us go hence," for this voice is sufficient to rouse thee up if thou art alive. Whensoever, therefore, thou wishest to sit down to rest thyself, or to delight thyself in the love of the country in which thou art, remember this word of exhortation, and say unto thyself, "Arise, let us go hence; thou must go at all cost, only go as Jesus went. Go because He hath told thee [to go], and not because it is nature which carrieth thee, whether thou wilt or no, being thyself unwilling. Thou standest on the path of travellers, set out on the way then because of thy Lord's word, and not by the force of necessity. "Arise, let us go hence," is a voice which will wake those buried in slumber; it is a horn the winding of which will drive away the sleep of slothfulness; it is a power and not a word;

and whosoever perceiveth it, suddenly it clotheth him with new power, and with the swiftness of the twinkling of the eye it plucketh him away from thing to thing, and these words of God, "Arise, let us go hence," make the disciple to leap up, and he is not stupefied at the pleasure of the place wherein he dwelleth. And behold He also goeth with thee to prevent thee from being stupefied, for He did not say unto thee, "Arise, go thou," but, "Arise, let us go, thou and I together; God calleth unto thee to go in company with Him, and who would not burn within himself, [p. 332] and be troubled lest he should be dazed at the company of his God Who called him? And in the way there is no fright, and no fear, neither injuries nor losses, nor plunderers, nor thieves, and if those who would restrain thee stand therein, so long as the Lord accompanieth thee they shall all flee before thee. For what robber will dare to shew himself in the garb of a robber in the way along which the king passeth? but when the workers of wickedness hear the rumour of him they either flee or hide themselves. And behold from this also thou mayest learn concerning the departure from the life of the world if thou wilt understand, and wilt attend with discretion unto the power of the word.

And to another, a teacher, who wished to follow Jesus, having the desire of a perfect rule of life and conduct in the manner of which He was worthy, He shewed this path of perfection, "And one drew nigh unto Him while He was teaching in the temple, and said unto Him, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit life? Now what did Jesus say unto this man?

"Why callest thou me 'Good'? There is none Good save One, [even] God. Thou knowest the commandments, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Behold I have taught thee restraint from wickedness, and to remove thy desire from the paths of sin; but if after this thou wishest to go forward, and also in addition to [the command] not to do [p. 333] wickedness thou wouldst come to the doing of good, and wouldst keep the commandments of the law, honour thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt keep all those which appertain unto this. But if also above the power of the law thou wishest to be in the dominion of thy righteousness, and of thy freewill to be led into fair deeds above the fear of the judgment, then love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and that which is hateful unto thee, do not unto thy neighbour.

This is the rule of conduct of the righteous, which is above the power of the law, and Moses and the Prophets taught this righteousness. Whosoever observeth this [rule], the law by [its] threat hath no power over his righteousness. Go and keep these things which are written, and lift thyself up above them also unto the love of God, and unto the love of thy neighbour, which is above the fear of the law, because it is of love. When thou hast kept these things, thou shalt inherit eternal life."

These things Jesus taught that proud doctor to do, although he did not wish to be held in restraint by them, for with a boastful mind he sought things which were greater than these, but things which Jesus did not teach him. Now for us disciples it is right that we should possess true doctrine, and that we should know from the Word how we must depart from wickedness, and how, little by little, we must march on and grow in the service of the things which are good. The commandments which Jesus spake unto him, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not [p. 334] steal, and Thou shalt not bear false witness", agree with the words of David, who said, "Depart from evil, and do good;" and with those which Paul spake, "Let not wickedness overcome you." And the commandments, "Honour thy father and thy mother", and, "That which is hateful unto thee, do not unto thy neighbour," agree with, "Do ye good," and, "Overcome evil with good;" and that commandment, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself," is like unto the words, "The law is not ordained for the righteous," because these commandments are above the fear of the law.

Now therefore Jesus laid down in these commandments the restrictions for conduct in life: firstly, a man must depart from evil, and restrain himself from the service of all abominable things; and secondly, he must do the things which are laid down under the fear of the law; and thirdly, the service of good things, which is above the fear of the law; and fourthly, he must set out on the path of the discipleship of Christ, which is the perfect going forth from the world; and fifthly, he must bear labours and sufferings, with which we may make the old man sick; and sixthly, we must bear the cross upon our shoulders, and we shall arrive at the fulness of the perfection of Christ. Now in these, two rules of life have been distinguished for us, and we learn therefrom two kinds of righteousness, each of which con-sisteth of three

degrees. We must restrain ourselves from [p. 335] wickedness, that we may obey and fear the law, and work the things which are good, in order that we may be above the law in the voluntary service of what is good, concerning which Paul taught us, saying, "The law is not ordained for the righteous," and for this reason he exalted the doers thereof above the power of the law. Now the three degrees of righteousness are wrought in the world, and those who perform them are just and righteous, and are neither spiritual beings nor perfect;

two degrees are set above the fear of the law, but the third is above both the power and the fear of the law, because it is fulfilled within the heart and inner mind, where the law can neither look nor see; for the eye of the law seeth matters which are external, and not the thoughts which are internal. Whosoever, then, loveth God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, his love is internal. He said particularly, "Love thy God"----which is above the law----and not, "Thou shalt fear God ," for the law hath dominion over fear, and not over love. Love is above the commandment of the law, and over those who are ruled thereby the law hath no power. Now the third degree [of righteousness], which is superior to the law, and inferior to the rule of Christ, occupieth a middle place, and thou must see from this how perfect is the doctrine of our Life-giver, for that [p. 336] which is above the law is the end of His teaching.

And our Lord taught the righteous children of men who are in the world to do these three things, in which are gathered together all the fair things which are wrought by lovingkindness, and which are done unto the needy by those who have possessions by means of their wealth, and in them is laid the whole force of that commandment. "That which is hateful unto thee thou shalt not do unto thy neighbour; this," even as the Teacher Himself explained, "is the law and the prophets." Now His own righteousness is that which is above the law, [and concerning it] He said, "Enter in at the narrow gate." In the one case, with the law, sometimes thou art afflicted, and sometimes thou hast ease, sometimes thou labourest, and sometimes thou restest, and by these and such like things all thy life of righteousness is woven; but as concerning the rule of Christ it is written, "Enter in at the narrow gate." For well did our Lord go step by step, and like a wise and good Teacher did He bring things from the Old Testament and things from the New Testament unto His disciples, that He might shew, firstly, that He was the Giver of that which was at the beginning and of that which was at the end, and secondly, that He might make His disciples go step by step from lesser unto greater things, and from the command, "Thou shalt love [thy God] as thyself," unto the command, "Thou shalt love [Him] more than thyself;" and from the command, "Give of what thou hast," unto the command, "Give away everything that thou hast;" and from the command, "[Give] a little of thy possessions," unto the command, "Give away all thy possessions."

Now the easiest commandment of all, that a man should not do evil, He made the first, for to him [p. 337] that is not kept back from the service of evil things merely by the penalties of the law it is easy to draw nigh unto the service of fair deeds which the law commandeth because of the fear of the law itself; and whosoever restraineth his outward man and doeth that which is good, he also draweth nigh unto loving God and his neighbour with all his

heart, not for appearance's sake, and not to boast thereof, and not through fear, but because it is seemly for a man to love God and his fellow man. And after He had laid down these limitations for us, and had explained unto us the various grades in the righteousness of the just, Jesus continued in His speech to teach us perfection, and said unto that learned man who asked Him, that is to say, in teaching him He taught all His disciples, "If thou wishest to be perfect, go, sell all thy possessions, and give [them] to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.

And here even we have not as yet begun to walk in the path of righteousness, for that a man should take up his cross and go forth after Jesus is one rule of life----for as the dwelling in the womb is one thing, and the going forth of the child from the belly is another, and the existence of a man in the world, after being born from the womb, is another, even so is it another thing for a man in the womb to gain form, and members and body, with all his senses and limbs, and it is another [p. 338] for him to be born, and it is another for him to exist in the world, for the righteousness which is in the world is like unto the substance of the child within the womb, and the commandment, "Go and sell all thy possessions, and give to the poor, and there shall be treasure for thee in heaven ," is the belly from which is born out of the old womb the new creation, and it is that door through which he goeth forth from one world to the other----but that commandment, "Take up thy cross and come after Me," belongs to the perfect rule and conduct, and it is the path of spiritual life.

Now it may be thought that it is a great thing for a man to sell everything that he hath, and to give it to the poor, and to go forth from the world like an apostle, and yet it is natural, and it is that creation into which we enter at our first birth, and the first man also was thus created. And for this reason Job also, when everything that he had was taken away from him, and he was stripped of possessions and heirs----now it was thought that something new, and which was above nature, had happened unto him----mitigated the violence of his suffering by his speech, saying, "Naked came I forth from my mother's womb, and naked will I return.What hath come upon me except that condition in which I came forth from the womb? For that a man should deny himself of everything that he hath, and should appear in the world in his own person only, is still a natural thing, but it is exalted above nature if it come to pass through good will for God's sake, just as when we die in the ordinary way it is [a matter] of nature, but if we die for God's sake it is martyrdom.

So likewise [p. 339] also is it a natural thing that a man should appear by himself in the world and possess nothing, because Adam was thus created, and Eve was thus formed, and they were not only destitute of the riches of the world, but also of the clothing and raiment of the world, and they were like unto the child who goeth forth naked from the womb into creation, even as Job said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked will I return; and as Paul also spake, "We brought nothing into the world, and it is evident that we are not able to take anything out from it. And as the after-birth in the womb envelopeth the child after he hath been fashioned and hath taken form to keep him alive, and when he is born from the womb it is cut off and cast away from him, because it belongeth not unto

his person, nor is reckoned with the man, so also do riches, and possessions, and all other human things cling unto a man after he hath been born like the after-birth, but when he cometh to be born from this world into the next by the hand of death, his possessions are cut off and cast away from him like the after-birth which is cut off from the body, and as the child appeareth in his own person without the after-birth, even so also man goeth forth from life, having cast off all his possessions.

And as a man when he is born is wrapped round in his after-birth, and the casting it off from him when he entereth the world, [p. 340] is natural, even so is it natural that a man should go forth naked from the world, and that he should become a stranger unto his possessions while he is in the world; and a man gaineth grace when he strippeth himself early of his riches, and before nature casteth them off, and when he forestalleth the time of his departure from this world by his own freewill.

What difficulty then existeth in the commandment that a man should renounce all his possessions? for behold it is a natural commandment. For let a man consider his beginning and his end, and let the time which is between these be taken [into consideration], that as he came in naked, and must go forth naked, even so let him strip himself of his riches the whole of the time of his sojourning in the world, and let him praise Him who decreed that that which was natural should be a matter of freewill. So, therefore, our Lord wisely did not make the renunciation of riches the beginning of the way of His discipleship, because it is a matter of nature, and His rule is above nature, even as our human death is not the beginning of the world which is to come, but the end of [our] path in [this] world, and our resurrection from the dead is the beginning of the path of the kingdom of heaven. And thus also being destitute of riches and of the possessions which are visible is the end of the path of the world, and likewise the casting away of the strange apparel which we put on in the world after we had entered therein.

And if it be thought that [this] is difficult, it is not because it is above nature, for behold it is easy unto those [p. 341] who stand in the freewill of nature, but it is difficult unto those who are in subjection unto passions, and who labour in bondage unto the lusts. And those who serve mammon as a lord are afraid to deny it, because of their own freewill they have already made it their god, and the children of men who have become subject unto this passion are not only afraid of it, but every passion under the power of which freewill is subdued is its master, and the strength of fear is cast over it and it is not able easily to cast it off. And from this thou mayest receive testimony that the passions do not of necessity bring us into subjection, but our freedom is brought into subjection under the passions, and they become masters thereof, for behold those, who stand in their own freedom and who cast off the garment of the care for wealth, if a man constrained them to be subject unto riches, would be more afraid of becoming its masters, than those who have possessions would be afraid to leave them.

And if the being destitute of riches were a thing to be afraid of, or difficult, every man would fear it, and its power would naturally rule over everything, but behold the children of

freedom are above its subjection, and it is esteemed by their dominant freedom to be bitter bondage.

Now therefore all. the commandments of righteousness and lovingkindness, which a man doeth while he is in the world, are still on this side of the border of nature, and therefore the whole old law and the commandments thereof are laid under nature, [p. 342] because it is imposible that the law should be above nature. And our Lord, when He was asked by Nicodemus, a man learned in the law, "What is thy doctrine?" said, "I preach a new birth unto the children of men." And although by those words He referred to that birth which is of baptism, yet they shew mightily that a man is born by the power of the grace of God, and also by the power of his will, from one world into the other, and that absolute poverty of everything which the eye can see becometh the womb which giveth him birth.

Now therefore it appeareth that the man of God is born three times; the first is the birth from the womb into creation, the second is from bondage into freedom, and from the condition of being a man into that of becoming a son unto God----now this taketh place through grace by baptism---- and the third is that a man himself is born of his own will from the carnal into the spiritual life; and utter poverty of everything becometh the womb which giveth him birth. And moreover, after this birth of poverty, a man is born by other births when he hath gone forth from the world, as, for example, from carnal mindedness into spiritual mindedness, and from suffering into impassibility, and from the going forth wholly and entirely from all the tremblings of the motion of the old man into the living motions of the man of the spirit; for these grades, and measures, and births exist in this rule of life. And however far a man may desire to walk on in front of him, [p. 343] there is room for his footsteps, for the country of spiritual mindedness is a wide country and without limit. What then?

Now if in this world, which is carnal, however far a man may walk there is still room for him to walk, for if a man travelleth the whole period of his life's duration he will not be able to walk over the whole world, even so in that world of the spirit we cannot journey too much because our journey therein is without end, and however much a man may penetrate therein, and ascend therein and enter therein, place after place, and step after step receive him, because it is a world which hath no limit. Now this world, however great it may be, is set within limits and boundaries, but that world is above a boundary, and beyond a limit, and blessed is he who is accounted worthy thereof, and hath entered therein by the change from the old man into the new, all carnal movement being dead in him, and the new living and spiritual motions welling up within him. And well did [our Lord] say, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," for except a man becometh destitute of everything which is in the world, and casteth off from him the carnal rule both outwardly and inwardly----after the manner that a child casteth off the natural womb, and is born into this world----he cannot see the kingdom of God, that is to say, he must feel the living motions of the spirit which are in the power of the body to perceive.

[p. 344] And let this be an example unto thee: as the child is shut up in the womb's belly, even so the man who is in the world is shut in by the carnal rule of the world, with all its

heaviness, and darkness, and density, and cares, and anxieties. And as the child is born from the womb by the door of the belly into the light of creation, and when he is born into the light, which he findeth before him, he seeth all things, the beauty of the world, and all the variety of created objects, and the diversity of natural things in this composite creation, and he receiveth this sight, and he feeleth the experiences thereof by the gradual growth of his bodily stature, even so he that is born again from the rule of the world, and who goeth forth to the other world of the spirit by the door of poverty, immediately he is born receiveth that world, and the light of knowledge beginneth to appear unto him;

and as the things of this world are seen by the light of nature, and each object is distinguished from its fellow thereby, even so also by that knowledge of the spirit which a man beginneth to receive, he seeth all spiritual things, and boundaries, and countries, and grades, and orders, and everything which is above the perception of the body, for as the body perceiveth the things of nature, because the perception of its senses is too weak for the things of the world, even so [p. 345] also by the mediation of the spirit doth the soul perceive all the things which are akin unto its nature, and which are above the world. This, then, is the new birth, which cometh from the baptism of which our Lord spake to Nicodemus.

Let us now consider the answer of our Lord unto that young man who drew nigh unto Him, and who asked Him to teach [him] the doctrine of perfection, from which he might also receive perfect knowledge, and be born from one rule of life into another. Now when in order to learn he asked, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life," Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness"----which things constitute remoteness from wickedness; and [He taught] after these the working of good by the word which He spake, saying, "Honour thy father and thy mother, and that which is hateful unto thee, thou shalt not do unto thy neighbour," and He said, "If a man keep these things, he shall inherit life everlasting. Now the inheritance of everlasting life was unto all the righteous, and just, and merciful, and doers of good works while they were in [this] world, and these are they who were also called "blessed" by the living word of our Lord, in the words which He spake unto them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from before the foundations of the world. I was an hungered, and ye gave me to eat;

I was athirst, and ye gave me to drink," together with the rest of the things which were spoken unto them by our Lord, for they all are applicable unto the righteous men of olden time, and unto the just who [p. 346] were also owners of possessions. And it is well known that clothing the naked, and receiving strangers, and setting a table for the hungry, and providing the needy with all things for their bodily wants, belong unto the owner of possessions, for without riches these things cannot be; the men who have embraced poverty have not riches wherewith they may do good works, how much less then have spiritual and perfect men [wherewith to do them].

Now therefore this promise which is here given by our Lord befitteth not only those who are spiritual and perfect, but also those who have embraced poverty, because with them also

the riches wherewith they might do these good things are not found; and however exalted above the righteous may be the grade of those who have embraced poverty it is well known from the admission of every man, that the man who hath absolutely nothing at all, and who hath entirely stripped himself of his riches for the love of God, is superior unto him that keepeth them and doeth good works with them. And, moreover, spiritually minded men are exalted above those who embrace poverty, and those who are perfect above those who are spiritually minded, for spiritual mindedness is an example in respect of spiritual powers, but perfection is a type of the fulness of Christ by which are perfected, in the spirit, all things which arrive at the stature of the knowledge of the fulness of Christ, even as Paul saith ; and how superior is the grade of perfect and spiritual men to that of the righteous and the merciful who are in the world the words of our Redeemer, which were spoken unto the lords of wealth in this world, are sufficient [to shew]: "Be strenuous to make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when it hath come to an end, they may receive you into their everlasting habitations." [p. 347]

Behold, therefore, the perfect, like the lords of the country and citizens, receive the righteous strangers who go into their world, because they are sons of the inheritance of Christ, and heirs of the Father Who is in heaven, even as Paul said concerning them, "Heirs of God, and joint heirs of Jesus Christ; and making known why those who bore the cross of Christ have arrived at this measure, he saith, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified with Him. And the participation in the sufferings of Christ [consisteth] not in a man giving alms, and in shewing his lovingkindness unto those who are needy, but in his dying wholly and entirely to the world, and to the body, and to the lusts, and to the passions, and in a man crucifying his old man with all the lusts thereof, even as Paul also spake concerning himself, "I am crucified unto the world. And the whole feeling of the world was annulled in him, after the manner in which it is annulled in those who are dead in nature, for as the dead body feeleth not any one thing which is brought high unto it, even so in that man, who hath been crucified with Christ, and who hath put to death in himself all the old man, is there no perception of anything which is in the world; and for this reason also Paul calleth "dead" those who stand in this rule of perfection.

For the righteous man who dwelleth in the world, and who hath a wife, and children, and riches, and possessions, [p. 348] cannot be called dead, because all his life is like unto that of a living man; for the dead man is not married, and he begetteth not, while the righteous are united unto their wives, and beget children, and [do] other things which follow in their train. "Ye are dead," crieth Paul unto the perfect, "and your lives are hid with Christ in God. And again he said, "Ye are dead unto the world, but alive unto God, in our Lord Jesus Christ. And again he said, "If ye died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as if ye were living in the world, do ye receive the commandments? Now a man arriveth at this rule of life after he hath stripped himself of his possessions, and beginneth to work good deeds in the members of his person, for so long as he hath riches, he justifieth himself by riches, and he emptieth not himself from the cares of riches which he serveth in himself.

And if it be imagined that he will also do these things while he liveth in riches, [he will not,] for his service will be confounded, that is to say, he advanceth, and turneth backwards, and in addition thereunto, although this man may labour in the world of the body, yet it is impossible for him to stand in the purity of the soul, from which a man entereth into spiritual love, from which is born knowledge, the mirror of everything, and from which [p. 349] the understanding riseth step by step unto divine conversation.

Now therefore for this reason those who desire perfection strip themselves of their riches, in order that they may be able to do their own labours, and that, being free from everything in the world, they may wage war with the lusts of the body; and a man should labour in his inner man, and not in his outer man, and when he hath rooted up the lusts of the body, and the passions of the soul, he should begin to sow in his own person the seed of living knowledge. Therefore whosoever wisheth to draw nigh unto this rule of life must be destitute of riches, and having been born again, he may enter therein, and the man who is not thus cannot enter therein, according to the testimony of Christ: "If thou wishest to be perfect, go and sell thy possessions, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and take up thy cross, and follow Me. Observe, then, how perfect is the doctrine of Christ, for not even when a man hath stripped himself of everything that he hath, hath he yet begun to walk in the way of His doctrine, for poverty is the end of the path of the righteousness which can be wrought in this world; but the words, "Take thy cross, and "follow Me," are the beginning of the path of the spiritual life.

Now the reward hath Jesus set in the midst between the righteous and the perfect, "Go, sell thy possessions, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; behold the reward for righteousness! And He calleth this reward "treasure," because the men who hasten after the righteousness of the world [p. 350] do good works on the condition that there is a reward, and well did Jesus in His words place the treasure at the end of the way of the righteousness which is in the world, that their wages being set before them they may run direct to where they are, even as do those who contend in a game, and before whom is set the crown which will make them to gain the victory. Into the land of the perfect our Lord did not make a reward to enter, because it would be a disgrace unto the perfect to labour in the rule of the spirit for wages; for behold the spiritual mindedness in which the perfect stand is the wages of the just and righteous, because they have wrought good things in the world on the condition that they should be changed and become spiritual beings, and be freed from all the carnal mindedness, and the passions, and the subjection of the world. This is the life of the perfect, for they are moved by the spirit, and they labour in the spirit, and they became changed from carnal mindedness unto spiritual mindedness already while they were in the world which is seen.

How then can they expect to receive wages, the thing for which they toiled when they lived in the world? For as an angel doth not expect the spirituality of his nature to be his wages, or that he is sent to perform the will of Him that existeth, because he also existeth therein and doeth it naturally, even so also the perfect man doth not look for wages in the change

of the spirit, because he standeth in that spiritual change, and all his motion is like that of the powers of heaven. [p. 351] And all his life is like unto theirs, and like unto them he crieth "Holy" in the spirit, and he singeth in the spirit, and he serveth God in spirit and in truth, even as it hath been said by the word of God concerning the perfect, "A Spirit is God, and those who serve Him in spirit and in truth serve Him; "A Spirit is God, and the service of the perfect is of the Spirit. Behold, then, they serve in a divine manner, and they are also exalted by the degree of spiritual beings, that, in the likeness of God, they also may serve in power and in the freedom which is not made subject, and which is above laws and commandments even as is God.

And to recount with our speech the service of the living motions of the perfect is impossible for us, because if a man were to arrive at the measure of them, he would be unable to speak concerning the perfection of their service. And, moreover, if they themselves wished to speak, and their living motions, and their divine service were sufficient therefor----for this service is not of the body----how could it be described by the tongue of the body? for they feel it only, and they serve in a divine manner with their inner man; and their service cometh not unto speech, nor their motions, nor their feeling, nor their constant admiration, nor the visions and revelations which they have. This is the end of the path to Christ, O disciple, and on this vision resteth thy journeying if thou wilt run therein, [p. 352] and this is the rule which was delivered unto us by Christ. Go forth then from the world, and make thyself destitute of everything which is therein, both in thy body and in thy soul, that thou mayest find the things which are above speech, and that thou mayest have pleasure thyself therein together with all the hosts of light, in the world of truth, in Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory from all generations of the world for ever and ever, Amen.

Here endeth the Second Discourse on Poverty and on the service of the spiritual commandments. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

Discourse 10 -- On Gluttony

[p. 353] THE TENTH DISCOURSE: WHICH IS AGAINST THE LUST OF THE BELLY, AND WHICH BRINGETH AN ACCUSATION AGAINST GREEDINESS, AND WHICH REVEALETH AND SHEWETH ALL ITS FORMS, AND WHICH ALSO BLAMETH THOSE WHO MAKE THEIR LIVES SUBJECT UNTO THIS PASSION, AND WHICH MAKETH KNOWN THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO LABOUR IN BONDAGE UNTO THEIR LUSTS TO DRAW NIGH UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE AND WORKING OF ANY OF THE TRIUMPHS OF VIRTUE.

Now although all the evil passions and the service of the lusts are abominated and detested by the word of Divine knowledge, the filthy passion of the lust of the belly, which is wont to make those men who are subject thereto like unto beasts, is more abominated and detested than they all, because it taketh away from them the motions of knowledge which are seemly unto rational beings, and it sinketh and darkeneth their mind under the weight of meats; for this stinking and filthy passion is the door of all wickedness, and wherever it hath power, like a great, wide door, is it open for the entrance [p. 354] of all abominable things. It is the destroyer of all excellence, it impedeth all righteousness, and it is the obstacle to all divine works in every shape and form. The man who is bent double beneath this abominable lust is not able to take up the yoke of the discipleship of Christ, because when the belly hath become the mistress of the body, it commandeth and subdueth it unto all its wishes, and instead of the way which ascendeth unto heaven, it sheweth unto him that other path which goeth down into Sheol.

And it hangeth upon him the weight of meats, and superfluities of foods, and it soaketh him, and maketh him heavy with the superabundance of drink, for when he carrieth the weight of meats, his lightness is weighed downwards, and when another body of lust is piled upon his own body, he goeth down easily, and descendeth the path the descent of which leadeth down into Sheol. For the passion of the lust of the belly is the filthiest of all the passions, and whosoever hath once become a slave thereunto, and hath borne upon his shoulder its heavy yoke, it never again giveth unto him rest from its service, but by day and by night it worketh in him, and it sendeth him, like a tired servant, whithersoever it pleaseth, not by smooth ways, but by paths which are filled with stumblingblocks, and into a country in which [only] harm can be found; and the lover of lusts hath no eyes to see the light, for

although paths exist, yet are they darkened by the weight of meats. Broad daylight is night unto him, and by night a second death sinketh his understanding in the heaviness of sleep. His thoughts are scattered abroad by the wandering of the moisture [p. 355] of the body; the fire of nature is also cold within him because the inordinate moisture in him extinguisheth it; his thoughts are eclipsed from knowledge because the eye of his soul, which should look earnestly after knowledge, is sealed up;

and a heavy weight is hung upon him at all times, because he hath joined another body of meats unto his own body like a twin. Now therefore the lust of the belly is an obstacle unto everything; it is the enemy of all contests of fortitude, it is the destroyer of fair renown, and it impedeth all triumphs, not only the triumphs of the spirit, but also those of the body. And, moreover, the lust of the belly is an obstacle also unto those who live in the world by bravery and strength, because manly endurance is of use to every thing which belongeth to name and fame, and health is necessary thereunto, and it hath need of lightness of limb, and of healthy strength; but to all these the lust of greediness is an obstacle. For when the strength diminisheth by reason of the abundance of meats, and the power of the members hath left them, they are no longer ready for work, nor are they active for the labours of righteousness, and, as I have said,----if a man will only look carefully with the eye of knowledge----the weight of meats is an obstacle unto everything, unto the power of the body, and unto the knowledge of the soul, and unto the works of righteousness, and unto the works of loving-kindness, and unto the gifts of alms.

Whosoever is subject unto his belly is a beast, and is without discretion, and all his doings are like unto those of the animals, and since his whole stability is moved by carnal passions, [p. 356] he is utterly unprofitable in those of the soul. And thou mayest understand from things themselves that the lust of the belly is an obstacle unto all the virtuous deeds of which I have spoken; to instruction, to knowledge, to the brave endurance of the world, to the labours of righteousness, to loving-kindness unto the children of men, to love, and to the knowledge of God. That it is an obstacle unto instruction the world also testifieth by the tradition which cometh down thereunto, for children who are set apart to receive instruction are kept by their parents from a superfluity of food, because gluttony is a fence against instruction, for when the the members bear the weight of food they are not able to carry the lightness of instruction, for lightness is the opposite of heaviness. So then the children who receive instruction take food by measure, that their mind may be [keen], and their thoughts are ready, and their memory clear both to receive and to retain, for superfluity of food preventeth both.

And not only are children who are receiving the learning of instruction prevented from taking a superfluity of food, [but other men also who are learning some handicraft of the world, for their masters watch them carefully, and schoolmasters take good heed unto them, and each is a watcher and a guardian against too much food and inordinate drink, for they eat and drink by measure; and thus also is it with those who learn the empty professions of the world, dancers, or charioteers, or athletes; or those who learn the art of war, or others

who receive the learning of books. And if these arts which are wrought by the body, and the knowledge which is received from the world need moderation in food----which if it be taken in superabundance becometh an obstacle unto them----how much more doth superfluity of food become an obstacle unto the things which are fulfilled in the spirit? And so also is it with those who receive [p. 357] instruction, and who exercise themselves in the endurance of the things of the world; and others also who possess the knowledge of the world have themselves need of endurance. There is no man who hath drawn nigh unto learning, or unto the writing of books, or unto oratory, who is not sure that superfluity of food is an obstacle thereunto.

For the thick smoke of food, when it increaseth and is not purified away, covereth the heart with gloom, and blackeneth the understanding, and confuseth the intelligence, and shutteth the door in the face of the production of fluency of speech, and it is like a covering spread over all the intellectual senses, and it pre-venteth and destroyeth the power of their working. The man who is endowed with the gift of speech cannot speak if he be heavy with food, neither can the man of knowledge know, nor the man of understanding understand; and so to say, all the inner man becometh dark through the smoke of the dulness which ariseth from food. And since a light and spiritual nature are mingled in us, the body should seek spirituality and lightness, and in proportion as the body becometh attenuated through abstinence, it gaineth association with the spirituality thereof; and so long as a too great weight [of food] be not laid thereupon, it acquireth the lightness wherewith it participateth in the lightness of the soul. Now therefore by a wise dispensation a portion of the spirit was placed in a portion of the body, [p. 358] and as the body becometh heavy with meats, it draweth and bringeth down the soul thereto, and it hangeth its own weight upon it, and it tieth and fettereth the wings of the thoughts of the soul;

but if the life of the body be maintained constantly by a sparing use of food, it becometh light, and purified, and refined, and the heaviness of its nature dwindleth away and it maketh bright the soul which is in it, and maketh it glad, and is, moreover, itself obedient readily unto its will. And because it is light and refined the soul leadeth it to whatsoever it desireth, and the body resisteth not the soul, and its heaviness doth not prevent the soul from stablishing it in the country which it seeketh. For each of these, whether it be the body, or the soul, draweth the other unto its own will, because they are contrary to each other in their natures, and also in their wills, according to the word of the Apostle, who said, "The body lusteth for that which injureth the spirit, and the spirit lusteth for that which injureth the body; and the two are contrary each to each. Now if, according to the word of the wise Apostle, all the lusts of the body are contrary to the soul, the lust of the belly must be more [contrary] than they all, because it is the door of all lusts, and among them all there is none so heavy as it is.

For as a weight which is light and volatile by nature, if suspended, inclineth downwards, even so is this lust of the belly, for it is composed of moisture and weight, and although the body naturally possesseth weight----for its nature is so to do----yet by a superabundance of

food, other weight is added thereunto, and when weight is added unto weight, [p. 359] and body is doubled upon body, that is to say, the body of food upon the body of nature, the weight upon the soul increaseth, and the mistress becometh a handmaid in subjection; for the soul cannot henceforth rule over the body like a free thing, but it beareth the weight thereof like a slave.

And the lust of the belly is also contrary to loving-kindness, because everything which is distributed by the gift thereof it turneth towards itself, and maketh it its own; and if it should happen that it would perform an act of loving-kindness----which is impossible----the thought of benevolence never moveth in it except it be already filled itself, and it is as if the greedy man were to give gifts, for it would appear that his gift is bestowed only when his own belly is full. And this is not loving-kindness, but is like unto the habit of a beast and wild animal, for even the beast, when it hath filled its belly, will leave its manger, and lie down; and thus also is it with the glutton, for until he hath filled his belly at the table of his lusts he will not permit himself to look upon any other man with the eye of compassion. And he will not give to him that is needy of what is set before him, because he is in such subjection unto his lust that he thinketh that no one is as needy as himself, and in very truth there is no one in such need as the man who is in subjection unto his own lust.

For however much a man may give unto the cravings of lust, it still abideth in its needy condition, and it is never satisfied even with a collection of meats, but in proportion as it eateth meats it raveneth for others, and in proportion as it drinketh it lusteth eagerly for draughts of clear and sparkling wine. [p. 360] In proportion as it hath food it hungereth and is not satisfied, and in proportion as it drinketh it thirsteth, and its thirst is not quenched; for however much the glutton eateth he still hungereth, and however much he drinketh, he still thirsteth. Unto the lust of the belly there is no end, for when it hath been filled by its first [supply of] food, inasmuch as it is not for its need's sake that it is determined to fill [itself], but for its lust's sake, it seeketh other food which is more dainty than the first. And again when it hath taken of this sufficient to please lust, it looketh out for other food which is more agreeable and more tasty, and thus its gluttony rangeth over all meats one by one, and it is not filled by them all. And if he thinketh that he is satisfied, and he stayeth his hand from the food, his lust is not satisfied, even though his belly be filled, and it can hold no more;

but he wisheth that his belly were as capacious as his lust, and that his stomach were even as his eye, in order that he might be able to gather together whatsoever he lusted after and to put it in his perforated storehouse. The lover of possessions is a greedy fool, for he gathereth together and layeth up the treasures of his lusts in a house with a rent therein which keepeth nothing that is placed therein, and the Creator also, in order to rebuke the lust of gluttons, made a fixed limit to the capacity of the belly, so that of sheer necessity, even though it were against their will, their lusts might be restrained. Now when the desire would load itself with much [food] although the cavity of the belly cannot receive it, behold desire is not kept back by force from its lust's quest; but though its desire lusteth, the small

cavity of the belly, which is not able to hold [much], restraineth it. For if [p. 361] the belly were large enough to receive all things which gluttons lust after, the sea, and land, and air, and sun, and all the other natural bodies would not be sufficient to satisfy their lusts.

And behold if, now that a vessel of small capacity hath been given unto their vast desire, sea and land are not sufficient for them, and they gather together all kinds [of food], and are not filled, and everything which they lust after, and are not satisfied, and they ask for and seek after all the meats which are remote from them, if they had a belly as large as their desire what would they not do?

Now therefore the glutton is worse than any wild animal, for the beast, when it hath filled its belly, leaveth what remains of its food in the manger, and it knoweth not how to keep it for another time or for another day; but with the glutton it is not so, for, because his lust is not satisfied when his belly is filled, when he hath filled that measure which is in him, and which is ordained by nature to receive food, his lust taketh what remaineth, and keepeth it for another day, that is to say for days and months. The glutton sitteth at the table of his need, and meditateth upon the times which are about to come; he taketh not only care to feed when food is at hand, but he thinketh upon what he shall eat to-morrow. His hand is upon the bread-basket which is near, and his mind is fixed upon the table which is far off; he beareth food in his right hand and in his left, but both of them are insufficient to bring fuel to the fire which is in him. All his members minister unto the cruel mistress which he hath voluntarily set over himself, [p. 362] and they are not by any means whatsoever able to satisfy her by their service; his eyes, and hands, and feet are made slaves unto her, and they suffice not. He thinketh concerning her with his inner man, and with his outer man he followeth her about earnestly;

but like a mistress who is to be ministered unto, she is not satisfied; and like Sheol she received stinkingness, and is not filled; and like the fire she receiveth fuel of meats, and she sayeth not, "Enough"; and like the earth she drinketh, and is not satisfied; and like the eye, she lusteth for everything, but is not filled with anything; and the glutton wisheth that he had other members which would be sufficient to minister unto the iniquitous mistress which he hath gotten. The gaze of the eye of the glutton is also fixed upon him that sitteth with him at the table, and he looketh upon him with a malignant eye lest he eat too much, and forthwith he either counteth his pieces of food in his mind, or [feareth] that peradventure the portion which is set before him is greater than his own; for his belly receiveth meats, but his mind meditateth upon his neighbour which sitteth with him. Now the evilness of the lust of the belly is spread out upon everything, and if its eye be evil upon him that is near him, how can it help being evil upon him that is his companion at table? What then? Though lust lay up [food] for days and months, yet is it envious of others who are remote therefrom; and it asketh about every man what food he eateth, and what preparations of food are made and set out on his table, and what is the measure of his food;

and when it hath made enquiries, and hath measured its own dainties and delicacies with that which it heareth concerning his, if its things are more [p. 363] than his it rejoiceth, and

if his are more than its own, it is immediately filled with grief, and with the grief there is also envy, and with the envy there is wrath of mind because a man existeth who hath more meats than he hath. What then? And although the greedy glutton is envious of those who are afar off, his eye looketh not away from him that is at the table with him, and although he may not say openly unto him, "Thou shalt not eat" ----now shame prevent eth him from saying this----yet his mind desireth this eagerly, saying, "How I wish that he would stay his hand", in order that that which is upon the table may be sufficient for his own gluttony. Now therefore the lust of the belly is more loathsome and disgusting than all the other lusts, and it hath not similitude among the other passions; but it is the mother and nurse of them all. For as a root of a tree beareth the branches and everything else which is on them, even so also is the gluttony of the belly the root of all wickednesses; and as the twigs and boughs spring from the roots, even so do all the passions of the lusts spring therefrom.

Gluttony giveth birth [to them], and reareth [them], and feedeth [them], and worketh [them], and all wickedness is perfected therefrom; with it a man beginneth the path of the left hand, and it becometh the first step which a man taketh outside the path of that which is right. For, as abstinence, that is to say the fasting from all meats, is the beginning [p. 364] of the way of the strife of righteousness, even so also is the lust of the belly the beginning of works of shame. And if thou wilt look with the eye of knowledge, O disciple, thou wilt see that all vices, one after the other, follow thereafter. For first of all it darkeneth the understanding from the meditation of God, and it obscureth the mind from the remembrance of Christ, and when the memorial of God hath been removed from the soul there can be no doubt that a man deviseth and doeth every kind of wickedness. For as the remembrance of the beginning of everything which is done in the world ariseth from us, and until we have received in our minds the remembrance of things we do not draw nigh to the doing thereof, even so also is the remembrance of God the beginning of all virtues; therefore when a mart hath God in remembrance he draweth nigh unto the service of things which are fair.

And if a man doeth that which is good, and is not mindful of God when he doeth it, his good deed is not of God, but of that which his memory brought into his mind when he did it.

Behold then, to this virtue which is the beginning of all virtues----I speak now of the remembrance of God----the lust of the belly is contrary, in addition also to its being the beginning of all wickedness, For as the remembrance of God standeth at the beginning of the path of virtues, even so also doth the lust of the belly stand at the beginning of the path of all wickedness; and when the two beginnings are contrary to each other, and one of them hath overcome the other, together with the first which is vanquished [p. 365] are vanquished also all those things which follow thereafter. For as it is impossible for a house to be built without foundations, even so also it is impossible for virtues to exist without the remembrance of God, And as a building which is not set upon a firm foundation is certainly nigh to fall, even so also a change which is nigh necessarily cleaveth unto the virtues which are not built upon the remembrance of God, and they abide not in the firmness of their fabric, because there is no sure foundation to sustain them.

Now gluttony and the filling of the belly first of all remove the remembrance of God from the soul, and when the foundation hath been uprooted, all the virtues are uprooted therewith. And gluttony is also the contrary of fasting, it is the destroyer of prayer, it is that which polluteth the purity of the thoughts, it obscureth the understanding, and darkeneth the mind, and defileth the intelligence, and abrogateth instruction, and killeth knowledge. It is the bane of wisdom, and leadeth astray the memory, it depicteth phantoms, and is the mother of things which are imagined, it is the drunkenness of the soul, and it abaseth the mind, it produceth slumber, and multiplieth disturbing dreams, it giveth birth unto fornication, and polluteth the body, it causeth an unnatural flow of seed, it is the fire of lust, it is the director of adultery, and it committeth whoredom even without members. It is the eye which lusteth after everything, it is the kinswoman of sloth, and thé mother of indifference, and the cause of the love of mammon; it is the enemy of the wise, [p. 366] and it hateth teachers.

It is the means of passage of all abominable things, it is the nurse of envy, the sickness of health, the feebleness of strength, the cowardice of the body, the grub [which destroyeth] the limbs, the worm [that eateth] the body, the diminution of the power of the senses, the wandering among empty cares, the kinswoman of animals, the associate of beasts, the foe of bold athletes, the envier of the prosperous, the overthrower of labours, the stumbling-block of the life of virtue, the lover of empty conversations, the seeker of pleasure always, the silencer of holy song. It lacketh all virtues, and is abundant in all vices, it is a noxious form, a stone set in the way to trip up many, a dangerous example which causeth slackness in all who behold it, the counsellor of vices, the fugitive from afflictions, the lover of pleasures, the seeker after feasts and banquets, the sickness alike of the body and of the soul, the vessel of stinkingness, the odour of filth, the fountain of the excrement of the body, the lover of darkness, the kinswoman of blackness, it eateth alone.

It is the enemy of those who do not give thereto, a filthy shape, a loathsome form which cannot be depicted, the enemy of God, the uprooting of belief, the beginning of the path of error, the door which leadeth into all abominable things, the exactor of tribute from all, the oppressor of all, the nurse of fear, the destroyer of courage, the cause of sorrow and sickness, the food of hardness of heart, and the consortof the gluttonous dog which returneth to its vomit. It is abounding in diseases, it is the possessor of sicknesses, the withholder [p. 367] of the produce of labours, the first cause of straying away from God, and the worshipper of idols. And if a man were to collect ten thousand times ten thousand of such names as these, and were to apply them unto the lust of the belly, they would be too few [to describe] it, and it would not have been called by the names which it deserveth; for it is a mistress who is opposed unto God. And as all great and glorious names, if applied to God, would still be too few [to describe] Him, and they would be insufficient to shew forth the fairness and the beauty of His nature, even so if the lust of the belly were to be called by every name possible, those names would not suffice to shew forth its loathsomeness, and its hideous appearance. For of what fair thing is not this vice the destroyer?

and naturally man calleth it the wickedness of all wickedness, the iniquity of the iniquitous, and the sin of sinners. Now therefore the glutton is not able to do any thing else except only to eat. For all matters are accounted empty by him except this, and he thinketh that a man was made for nothing else except to satisfy his lusts; for the conversation of the glutton is fixed wholly upon his belly, and the whole aim of his discourse is directed towards this. Whatever subject thou dost bring up before him, he avoideth, and bringeth thee to the discourse concerning the belly; for before the food [cometh] the remembrance thereof is sweet unto him, and although he is not yet at the table, his whole thought is set thereupon, and although he is not [p. 368] actually eating, in his thought and speech he is wholly [intent] upon food. The beginning and end of his speech are derived from his belly, with it he begins, and with it he ends, and it is the reason of all his speaking. If thou repeatest doctrine before him, it is accounted a vain thing by him, and if thou speakest, or if thou proclaimest spiritual things before him, he thinketh that he seeth a dream; and if he heareth of the noble deeds of holy men, and of the labours and life of virtue, and the strenuousness of righteous men, he doth not believe that they are true.

The explanations of the Holy Books are accounted idle and superfluous stones by him, for the word of interpretation sendeth him to sleep, and the discourse of admonition draweth sleep upon him; for the things which they cry and teach are not accounted work by him, because he thinketh that there is no work which is better than his own. The search after truth he nameth "debate", and conversation upon faith he calleth "seeking for proofs", and the man who hath his meditation fixed upon the Scriptures, he considereth audacious and curious. And if he seeth a man constant in reading he saith unto him, "Thou hast no work [to do]," and if he seeth another hastening, and asking questions, and seeking to gather and store up within himself the knowledge of Christ, his life is considered by him one of emptiness. He applieth the name "vices" to the virtues, so that in blaspheming them he may free himself from blame, and that he may not be blamed for not being constant in doing the things which are excellent. He holdeth virtues to be weaknesses, in order that his own loathsomeness may not be accused by those who see him; he maketh hateful by his speech the comeliness of good things, and he blasphemeth deeds which are subjects for glorifying, together with [p. 369] those who do them. He holdeth divine doctrine and those who learn it to be objects of rebuke, and he maketh an accusation against the wisdom of Christ and against those who seek it.

He repeateth evil things against knowledge and the disciples thereof, but because it is not easy for him to speak openly against wisdom and knowledge, reading and doctrine, faith and the quest of the truth, constant meditation upon the words of the Spirit, spiritual converse with the Holy Books, and secret communing with the mysteries of God, and the word of God, which is the sustenance of the soul, because it is not easy for him to blaspheme these things outwardly I say, he blasphemeth those who do them, and he thereby poureth contempt upon glorious things.

And he doth also blaspheme them openly, for he called the discoursing upon faith "prying", and the quest of truth "debate", and the doctrine of the Holy Books "superfluous seeking after proofs"; for behold, he is not aware that he calleth virtues vices, and that he nameth as abominations things which are comely. Zeal for God's sake is set down as contention by him, and the man who contendeth for the truth he considereth to be a disturber of the peace; and that a man receiveth not the persons of men for God's sake is called audacity by him. If a man counselleth him, saying, "Stand up, and shew zeal for God's sake," he crieth out to him, "I am not intended for this, and I do not subject myself to such like things; for these are vain things to me, and I do not devote my attention to vain things. And if he be asked by a man, "What dost thou desire? he returneth [p. 370] answer shamelessly, "To eat what God hath provided for us, and to lead a quiet life," that is to say, to minister unto our bellies, and to forsake faith----for this is the meaning of the words----although we may dress them in a humbler garb than this. And he is not ashamed to seek for the bread of God, and to deny the truth of His existence and to look upon His grace, and to despise faith in Him.

He feigneth to be as one who loveth a quiet life, and feigneth to flee from contention and trouble, even when things are not troubled; but in truth he is afraid to trouble that mistress of wickedness whom he serveth in anything, and to be deprived from any cause of the carnal pleasures which he hath once taken to himself. To cease from instruction is accounted wisdom unto him, and that a man should cease from [seeking] to know what faith is, is thought by him to be faith, and he saith, "It is not necessary for us to learn anything else, for it is sufficient for us to believe and to be silent"; and being an unbeliever, he taketh refuge in faith, not because he loveth it, but because he is fond of his belly, and loveth himself. He quieteth the course of faith, that the quest of his lusts may go forward; outwardly his speech is for truth's sake, but inwardly he speaketh against the truth, and his contention is on behalf of himself. Where he is called to shew forth earnestness, he bringeth forward the life of contemplation into the midst [as an excuse], and where zeal and courage for faith's sake are demanded, he teacheth and exhorteth every man to lead a quiet life unto himself. If a healthy word is let fall he goeth to sleep, but if baleful converse ariseth he waketh himself up;

if [p. 371] discourses concerning the interpretations of Scripture enter in, he slumbereth, but if riddles, and idle stories, and foolish parables of the world, and the foolish babbling of old women are mooted, behold he is ready and is the first to repeat them, and he is prepared and hath the habit to be the first to say them; for one knoweth not anything which will keep his lust in subjection, except it be boastful talk, because his soul lacketh fruit, and it is filled with a collection of leaves of senseless stories. He hasteth and taketh refuge in feigned ignorance when he heareth the truth spoken of, and being crafty for wickedness, and artful unto wrath, a man's ignorance of the truth he nameth simplicity, and his delivering his faith unto those who err is accounted faith by him. He commandeth every man to be silent from spiritual things in order that he may have the opportunity of repeating the vain things which he loveth; and to high and to low the story which he tells is of the lusts of

his belly, and of the pleasures of his body, for he neither knoweth nor perceiveth that there existeth anything else except the service of his belly.

Now therefore the glutton beareth a resemblance unto wild beasts in all his ways and manners, but his soul is, moreover, even more degraded and debased than theirs. For the beasts were created by their Maker to do two things: that sustaining their lives by their food, they should do work and service for the human race; but the glutton eateth and worketh not, and although he is diligent at the table, he is useless for every kind of work of excellence. The soul which ministereth unto the belly feeleth not God, because it is asleep unto [p. 372] all thoughts of knowledge, and unto the meditation of God, for the knowledge of the soul springeth from the lightness of the senses and of members of the body, and the lightness of the body ariseth from the sparing use of food; but it is well known that the glutton is bowed down beneath two things, the thick darkness of the thoughts and the heaviness of the body. For narratives of the labours of the strenuous [lie] heavy upon him, because they are contrary to his manner of life.

And if by chance he heareth that a certain man of abstinence by reason of love for his brother hath broken his rule of self-abnegation, either like a free man through the force of sickness, or through the necessity of weakness, to prop up his labour-bearing body, and hath passed a short time in living a less strict life, he layeth hold of this, and repeateth it at all times, saying, "Such and such an one eateth [meat]," and he uttereth this before everyone in order that it may be an excuse for his own lax way of living, and that he may thereby hide his abominable lusts. Now, O glutton, it is not thus, as thou thinkest, and the prosperous servants of Christ do not eat with the aim with which thou eatest, neither do they satisfy their lusts by their food; for they have not made themselves slaves of their belly, like unto thee, but they take food for their bare wants only. And thou must not deprive them even of the food which they abase themselves to eat for want's sake, but consider also their abstinence, and look closely into the protracted period of their self-denial, for they eat not to fulfil lust, but for need's sake. That a man eateth for lust's sake is one thing, and that he eateth for need's sake is another.

Whosoever eateth for his need's sake eateth unto his soul, and not unto his body, because [p. 373] he nourisheth his body that it may be found ready and prepared at all times for the soul which hath need thereof; but whosoever eateth for lust's sake, his eating is unto his body, and not unto his soul. For it never entereth into his mind that he hath in him a spiritual nature, but only, as from afar off, doth he hear by the word of others that he hath a soul in him; and the soul of the glutton is dead, and even while it is in him, it is as if it existed not. For when by reason of some cause of its own, it neither moveth, nor worketh, nor acteth, it is dead unto all the motions of knowledge, and all its acts and life are only of the body; for behold, since it existeth, it cannot be as if it existed not, and dwelling in the body, it cannot be thought to be not in the body.

For the body is known by two things, by its appearance, and by its works, but the soul can only be known by its works, because its nature is beyond the sight Hence it followeth that

the soul, being in the glutton by the act of the Creator, is not in him according to his own will, because the works by which it is known that the soul existeth in him are not found with him, and therefore the soul of the glutton maketh accusation against him and murmureth against him, even though he perceiveth not its murmurings, because he is dead thereunto. For as a living body may cleave unto a dead body perceiving it not, even so the soul of the glutton cleaveth unto his body while he per-ceiveth it not, and whoso liveth unto his lusts only, and not unto the soul, is a corpse which is borne and carried out to be buried.

And although the passions, as I have already said, deserve blame by the word of righteousness, [p. 374] yet this unseemly passion deserveth blame most of all, not only because it is contrary unto knowledge, but because it is also the enemy of God. The man, who hath sunk into the useless life of the lust of the belly, is accounted as nothing, both by the world, and by God, and neither the one nor the other will receive him; because the world demandeth diligent exertion, and God also asketh for labour, and afflictions, and purity of soul, from the children of men, and if a man hath them not God will not receive him. Now gluttony is contrary unto these things, and it fleeth before labours and afflictions, and a man who would jest in speech at the vice of the lust of the belly cannot, I think, be found, especially one who has not had experience of the passions thereof; for fasting is its foe, and the report of abstinence and self-denial terrifieth and stupefieth it.

The glutton liveth for nothing except only to lead a life like unto that of the beasts, and although he is a beast in very deed, if a man calleth him by this name, he is wrathful, and the fool doth not understand that that which another man sayeth of him in words, is found to exist in him in very deed; it is not another who abuseth him, but he himself is the abuser, for when opprobrious words are removed from him, he himself is the root of his own disgrace. Whom can this wretched man blame? and how shall he chide those who speak against him? For behold, he hath set [p. 375] himself in the midst of the community to be the subject of the discourse of others, for every man meditateth upon him, and every man speaketh about him; one shooteth out the lip, and another winketh with his eye, and another pointeth [at him] with his finger, and others whisper and repeat stories of his lax life. Now the soul of the glutton is made to endure [more] than any other sufferer, and although all these things happen unto him, he endureth them, and rejoiceth, having made the pleasure of his belly his sole consolation. And the fool doth not understand that henceforth toil and trouble will come upon him from all sides, even though he would take upon himself to bear the labours of the ascetic life, rather than the reproaches of the lust of the belly.

So then, whether from laxity or whether from abstinence, from all sides weariness will come upon the man; but it is better to bear labours with praise for the sake of abstinence, than weariness with reproaches and disgrace for the sake of gluttony. Now the glutton [endureth] more than the ascetic, not in subduing his lusts, but in ministering thereunto; not in acquiring endurance, but in serving the bondage of his belly; not in bearing the afflictions which befit the life of brave exertion, but in serving, with weariness and fatigue, the lusts of his dissolute life, or in gathering together and in bringing to himself the materials of his

lusts----like fuel which is gathered together [and brought] to the fire----or in carrying the weight of meats after he hath eaten them.

For the meats are heavier to the belly which hath eaten [overmuch] than is a load of lead to the shoulder, and immediately a man hath eaten inordinately, the weight presseth upon his whole body, and all [p. 376] his members become sluggish, and the power of his senses dwindleth away, and the sight of his eye becometh darkened by the abundance of the flow of its moisture, and the hearing of the ear becometh heavy, and the speech of his tongue becometh halting, and the mind, which is the fountain of words, becometh clouded, and the understanding, which is the helms man of wisdom, becometh stupefied, and the flow of his words is involved and entangled, his bones shake away from their places, and the knees totter and the hands tremble; and the vessel of the person of the glutton breaketh up and becometh old before its time, by reason of the superfluous weights which he maketh it to carry.

Now the sicknesses which are born from an overabundance of food are many, and cannot be counted, but asceticism doth not make in the body any sickness like unto that which gluttony produceth. And gluttons "that they may not fall sick," as they say, devote themselves unto meats, and the fools do not perceive that that from which they flee will come upon them; for in the place whither they hasten to receive healing there shall they find sickness before them, and where they seek to flee from pains there shall be gathered together for them diseases. And who knoweth not that sparing food and meagre nourishment give health to the body? especially when to them moderate labour is united. And concerning this matter the learning of physicians also testifieth, and they, that is to say their learning, or art, which hath been discovered for the stablishing of the body, know better than all other arts, that the health and sickness of the body arise from the food, [p. 377] and if they be asked, they will always advise sparingness in the use of meat, and in addition to this also they will advise that the food of a man should be meagre, and that he should guard against drinking wine freely. And if they allow a man to drink wine for need's sake they break the strength thereof with much water, and then give it to him to drink.

And they command a man very fully to beware of idleness, and to love fatigue, and to seek work, and with exercises of all kinds which are akin to work they preserve the health of the bodies of the children of men. And these they advise "That the ducts of the body may not be filled with the living liquid which ariseth from the over-eating of meat, and that they may not be blocked up and prevent the passage through them of the living power of the food, which is the strengthener of the body. And this [passage] also is written in their works: "Meat is the cause of all the diseases of the body, and though by chance they may be produced from other causes, if thou increasest [the use of] meat it becometh a nurse unto them, and preventeth wholly the benefits of the art of the physician."

And in addition to the words of the physicians, it is right for us, like wise men, to understand from experience, that the cause of all wickedness, and of the pains and sicknesses of the body, ariseth from superfluity of food. And if thou wishest, consider carefully the rich, and the

poor, and those who lead a quiet life, and those who are vexed, and those who are weighted with care, and those who labour, and see which of these preserveth [p. 378] his body in a healthy condition, and which of them has many and frequent sicknesses; and in proportion to their frequency is the difficulty of healing them. Is it not the rich? is it not those who have rent their bellies by overeating? is it not those who, before they have digested and emptied themselves of the food which they have just eaten, hasten after more for gluttony's sake?

And theirs are sore and difficult sicknesses, and these are the wages which their gluttony giveth unto them, and they deserve to receive this reward from that mistress of iniquity whom they serve. They have pains in the hands, and pains in the legs; they have the sores and ulcers which arise from superfluity of food; they have trembling of the limbs, and dizziness in the head; they have sickness of the bowels, together with all the other afflictions which spring up for them out of this thorny land. They sink into sleep at all times; they slumber continually at all hours; they feel heaviness all over the body, and have sneezings and violent vomitings; and it is evident that even the speech of the glutton is sent forth from heavy limbs, and that it is produced from a mind which is buried in flesh. All these things happen unto gluttons, even though others may bring nigh helps for their bodies continually, purgatives, and cleansing draughts, and other means for relieving the body, and blood-letting, and medicines which open the bowels, and violent washing with water at all hours; but over-eating overcometh all these beneficial means, and createth for them in their bodies severe pains, [p. 379] and sore sicknesses, which it is difficult even for wise physicians to heal.

Now the poor man, who passeth his life in labour and weariness, possesseth health of body, and his body is light and ready for any piece of work, and there hangeth not therein the weight of superabundance. And if by chance, in ignorance he eateth immoderately of his meagre fare, the toil of his labour receiveth the weight of his food immediately, and his labour becometh unto him a constant physician, wherefrom, without the intervention of medicines, he receiveth healing. And what physician knoweth so well how to heal the body as the toil of labour? and besides this labour, without expenses and without medicines----not like a physician----removeth medicines from him, and bringeth nigh things which are beneficial. And labour is the physician and the medicine, and the bandager and the bandage, and the healer and the medicine which healeth, and from it cometh that which is beneficial, and in it is the healing of all the members.

Now in this labour, from which fleeth sluggishness by reason of the love of luxuries, poverty findeth healing. Now I do not say that pains never come unto the poor, nor that sicknesses never come [in the train of] labours and fatigues, but I do say that the pains of the rich are many and are difficult to heal, because they are idle all their lives, and because they have made themselves slaves unto their pampered bodies, either in ministering unto their lusts, or in reducing the superfluity thereof or in healing the sicknesses which are born of satiety; for in idleness these men pass all their lives, and besides [their bodies] they perceive not that anything else existeth. Now the illness of the poor man [p. 380] is quick in being cured, and

the superfluity of his body is little and meagre, and he receiveth healing quickly from the medicines which are brought unto him, because the causes which increase the superfluities in the body are cut off therefrom. And since these things are so, who would not reduce it by the sparing use of food, which is the mother of healing? But I am convinced that these words will be accounted unnecessary by the glutton, because his ear is closed by his lust, and he is unable to hear healthy doctrine, and it is as if his food were made curtains in front of his senses, and it prevented them from their natural service.

And who would not weep over this man who wasteth by his dishonourable indulgence the beautiful work of God? And rightly he meriteth punishment, not only because he ministereth unto his lusts, and provoketh God to wrath by his lust, but also because he, by his gluttony, destroyeth the healthy members which are established in a fair form by the Creator. Whosoever by reason of his gluttony destroyeth the members of his body is an associate of the murderer, and he is the consort of a destroying thief, and that which is written in the Law, "Everyone who slayeth shall be slain, and whosoever cutteth off a member of his neighbour, one of his members shall be cut off," applieth unto him. Now the glutton destroyeth his own members, and little by little he maketh to perish and consumeth the power of his body and of his members, and whosoever ruineth the fair creation of God, and throweth down the building of his body which the will of the Architect builded aforetime, bringeth together for every reason punishments [p. 381] upon himself, according to the word of righteousness, which was uttered before he had transgressed the command of God, Who had commanded man not to become a servant unto his lusts. And again, he is impeded [in doing] fair things, and in the service of all virtues, which the Holy Books exhort us continually to do; and again, he of his own freewill driveth out of himself the remembrance of spiritual things; and again, he rejecteth lovingkindness to the poor;

and his gluttony stirreth him up to go forth therefrom unto oppression; and again, together with these things, he with his own hands ruineth the fair building, and lusts destroy the members of the creation of God which He created in His grace for the service of His will.

See then, O glutton, the cause of thy being framed, and tremble before God, and waste not thyself; for there is another hope which is not seen, and why is thy hope bound up in thy belly? There is another spiritual food, then why dost thou depart after vain meats? There is a table of Christ which is promised unto His friends, then why doth thy expectation hang back and consider the season of the table [which is here]? There is another world with its heavenly blessings, then why hast thou bound the hope of thy life unto a world which is seen, and why have the excellent things which are therein been accounted loss by thee? The Maker did not create thee that thou mightest eat like the beasts, but that thou mightest eat like a rational being, and mightest glorify Him like a living being. He did not make thee live [only] to eat, but He gave thee the power to eat in moderation that thou mightest live thereby. O wretched man, thy life was framed not for meats, [p. 382] but that it might be established by food in moderation. Separate thy life from the life of the beasts, and be not a servant unto thy belly to make it draw nigh unto the service of lusts which destroy. Thou

art a wise man, let not thy soul be voluntarily bowed beneath the yoke of animals. Thou art the fair image of thy Creator, why shouldst thou carve upon thyself the form of animals?

The word of Him that created thee hath bidden thee unto equality with spiritual beings, then why dost thou wallow with the pigs in the mire of lusts, and make thyself filthy? Thou art a consecrated being ordained to be with the Seraphim, then why dost thou make thy life like unto that of the dumb animal in thy degraded conduct? Thou art the lord of creation by the will of thy Creator, then why hast thou made thyself a servant to thy belly of thine own freewill? The will of the Creator subdued for thee all creation, and yet a little belly leadeth thee in subjection! All things in nature are bowed beneath the yoke of thy subjection, and yet the yoke of a destroying mistress is set upon thy shoulder! All nations and works are obedient unto thy word, and yet thou hast made thyself a degraded servant unto a filthy lust! Thou hast been made a god by the God of truth, and yet thou hast made thy belly a god unto thee! Thou art a glorious ruler by His work, and yet thou in thy debased estate hast through thy lust brought thyself to be a man of no account. He created everything for thy glory, and thou hast changed His glory into thy belly. God calleth thee to converse with Him, but thy meditation is bound unto the table.

Thou wast made a rational vessel of holy and glorious things, but thou hast worn thyself out, and hast in thy degraded estate cut the strings of thy harp. Thy Lord loved thee so much that He gave thee all this, and also that thou shouldst eat, yet thou for love of Him wilt not make thyself to abstain from contemptible meats!

[p. 383] The Living One died, and was buried, that He might make thee to live, yet thou hast made thyself a grave for meats! He had no pity upon His own life, but gave it unto death for thy life, yet thou wilt not cause thyself to acquire a little forbearance for love of Him! O degraded one, consider the life which hath been promised to thee, and see what manner of life thou hast lived in the world, and be ashamed, even from thy very soul. Henceforth thou shalt not be a grave unto thyself whilst thou art alive, and thou shalt not destroy the person which is in thee before it be destroyed by the natural grave. Behold, thy soul is buried in thy body, like a body in the grave. The body was framed by the Creator to be a glorious vessel for the soul, and an associate in all virtues, why then hast thou made it a grave for the soul, which being therein is accounted to be in a place of corruption? The body of the glutton is destroyed by what he devoureth before natural death destroyeth it, and it groweth old and falleth away, little by little, before the habitation of Sheol weareth it out. The pains of the glutton are voluntary and not natural, for although they spring from his bodily nature, yet his will is the cause of them, and they are born of his own freedom through the superfluity of meats.

The man who loveth the things which are lusted after leadeth a life of stumbling, and not only doth he sin within himself, but also unto others is he a cause of loss. He himself is a disease which is set in the midst, and every one who passeth thereover stumbleth over it----the sluggish and the active, the wanton and the chaste, the pampered and the ascetic, the glutton and the abstemious man----and some are tripped up and fall, and some add unto

their dissolute habit of life. [p. 384] The glutton looketh at his consort, and again addeth unto his laxity, the dissolute man looketh upon him, and again clotheth himself with his laxity, like a garment above a garment, and he that is fast held by the lust of his belly looketh upon him, and tarrieth the more with the object of his love. Now those who are athletes and ascetics lose thereby, because they are made to stumble, and his affair leadeth them to the discourse which they love not. For on all sides he stirreth up war against them, either because they will not degrade themselves at the sight of his laxity and become like unto him, or because at the repetition of his laxity they will not cease from the converse which is with God, or because they cannot be exalted within themselves at their strenuousness when they compare their upright lives with his laxity.

In the manner in which the strenuous and the prosperous benefit both themselves and their companions do the slothful and the lovers of lusts injure both themselves and those who behold them; and their lives, which they live in the world, are found in every way to be the cause of loss unto the children of men. For the childhood of the glutton is a hateful thing, and his manhood is a thing to be laughed at, and his old age is a thing to be mocked at. His childhood is slothful, his manhood is wanton, and his old age is pampered; in his childhood he hath much sport and pleasure, in his manhood adultery and fornication, and in his old age the devouring of food and empty conversations. He not only hateth the doing of good works, but even hearing it repeated, and not only is the doing of them heavy upon him, but also speech concerning them if he heareth it. Therefore if a man repeateth to him the triumph of the saints, [p. 385] immediately sleepiness and gaping lay hold upon him, and his whole body beareth the weight of listlessness, and he sheweth forth the signs of the deadness of his soul in the stretching of the limbs and in the turning about of his body; and if he is able to do so he goeth and he leaveth [the narrator] and departeth, and if not, he immediately goeth to sleep where he is.

And the soul of the glutton is like unto a dog, and rightly should he be called by the name thereof; for as a dog sleepeth through all things, and the converse and speech of men are alien things in his hearing, and only the sound of the platter and the sight of the food wake him up, even so also like him is the glutton sunk in the sleep of listless inattention, and every profitable discourse is accounted a superfluity unto him, and divine words flow upon his ear like water upon a rock. But let only a man mention before him one word of the belly, or say anything about meats, and immediately his soul rouseth up itself, and his thoughts are roused, and his body becometh straightway active, and he leapeth to the speech which he loveth, like a dog to the beckoning [of his master].

Now therefore by such names as these is it right that the glutton should be called, that he may hear his names and be ashamed of his lust; for since he walloweth like a pig in the mire of lusts it is fitting for him to be called by its name. And because, like a dog which rouseth, itself at the sound of the platter, discourses concerning the belly stir him up, he is fittingly also called ”dog”; and because, like a beast to the manger, he runneth swiftly to the table, rightly is he called ”beast”; and because, like a wild beast, he is wanting in all

the conversations of wisdom [p. 386] and knowledge, and liveth unto his body only, he is rightly called by that name which is applicable to him by reason of his works. And if there existed other names which were more disgraceful and loathsome than these, they would be suitably applied unto him, without causing any disgrace to the word which calleth him such like names, because his disgrace ariseth from himself. For as the names which are derived from certain things are applied unto the men who are called by the names which are derived from them, even so are the names of the glutton rightly derived from him, and he is properly called by the names which are characteristic of him. For the man who disgraceth himself, who shall honour? And the man who runneth after that which is despicable, who shall praise? And the man who gathereth together upon himself mockery and abominable speech, unto whom more than himself should his fair name be a care?

Now therefore, even though I have spoken these things, it is right for me to speak further and make manifest the behaviour of gluttons that they may be recognized by all men of discretion, and be properly held in contempt, and be despised by all those who see them; and these are the manners and customs of him that is subject unto his belly. For man he hath no true love, and if by chance he doth love any one, it is the man who hath made himself a servant and a minister unto his lust that he loveth, and then only in proportion as he supplieth his pleasures. And if for any reason whatever it happeneth that this man changeth, and becometh inattentive, and diminisheth slightly his homage and service, straightway the glutton changeth also from his love, and his [former] praises of his friend turn [p. 387] into blame, because his love is bound up in his belly. Every one who ministereth thereto is his friend, and whosoever payeth no heed thereto appeareth to him to be an enemy; and moreover, he seeketh and searcheth out the friends who will be of use unto him, and who will be able to minister unto his lust. The upright he loveth not, for the chaste he hath no affection, those who are burdened with labours are accounted stupid by him, the righteous he counteth as fools, and those who are constant in prayer are said by him to be without work.

If he seeth a stranger he passeth by him as something alien, but he listeneth unto the mere report of any one of those who, he thinketh, can act as stewards unto his lust. He maketh himself ill by running after the desire of his lust, he beareth his belly upon his legs, and he goeth round about in every place. He maketh himself a friend unto the rich, and a slave and a servant unto nobles; conversation with them he considereth a matter of which to boast, and speech with them a thing of which to be proud. The report of the Gospel is not so dear unto him as the conversation of him who, he hopeth, hath laden himself, and hath brought that which will satisfy his lust. In very truth the feet of Abraham, laden with love, when he ran to the herd to bring a calf for the angels, were not as swift as those of the glutton when he runneth to meet him that hath brought him food; for his whole longing is to receive, and if it happen that he giveth, it is in order that more may be given back to him.

And moreover he knoweth not how to gain a friend without the belly, for he would that that which he loveth should be loved also by others. If indignation rise up against him

he thinketh that it may be quieted by a gift of the belly, and if he have provoked a man to wrath by his folly and envy, he hasteneth to appease him by a gift of food; [p. 388] upon it he resteth his hope, and through it he thinketh that the violence of his deeds my be dissolved. The madman thinketh that every man is, like himself, bowed in subjection unto the god which he himself serveth, and that, like himself, his belly is his god. He waiteth anxiously to see a friend, but if, when he hath come, he hath brought nothing, the expectation of his soul and the appearance of his face are changed. The hand of the glutton is spread out to receive, but is tightly clenched against [giving] gifts, and if by chance he giveth, it is that he may provide material for himself and be abundantly rewarded. Where he knoweth that custom directeth the gift, and that according thereunto a gift will be given unto him, he hath no care to give largess, for he knoweth that although he may not pay it back, custom and habit will direct the gift [to be made]. But he maketh a gift where [he knoweth] that it will be returned, and he layeth the foundation of love where it hath not been laid before.

And moreover he repeateth before new friends stories of the old ones, and he calleth to mind also the gifts which were given by them unto him, saying ”Such an one sent me such and such a thing, and such an one urged me, and although I did not wish it he forced me with [his] gifts, and I accepted,” as if a man were to say, ”Hearken, and learn, and do thou likewise. He teacheth unto his new friends the doings of his old ones, and he maketh them disciples of the customs of the friends of olden time. He putteth aside all the discourses of others and bringeth his own to the front, and if it happen that some [other] matter be spoken of, or some matter of work, or of divine instruction, he skilfully bringeth it to an end and expelleth it, in order that he may bring into the midst the subject of the belly; for he liveth for nothing else, neither in his conversation, [p. 389] nor in his speech, nor in his behaviour, nor in his works, nor in his meditations, nor in his thoughts.

The glutton considereth the lust of the belly the greatest of all happiness, and all his questions are moved thereupon. He knoweth also the varieties of meats, and he is acquainted with the luxuries of different places, what garden produceth beautiful fruits, and what river hath fish of fine flavour, and who [best] knoweth how to cook and to prepare dainty foods; for these are his questions and his explanations, and [his] two testicles are more dear unto him than the Old and New Testaments. The mention of fast and vigil terrifieth him, and a long prayer is torture unto him; if he kneeleth down he murmureth, and if prayer be prolonged he roareth. He turneth the gaze of his eye at all times towards the windows, he considereth the course of the sun, he reckoneth the period thereof, and counteth the hours, and one day is accounted two in his sight. His period of prayer is short, but his time for eating is long, and he will undertake nothing, except only to satisfy the lusts of his belly. Everything is accounted superfluous by htm, reading, instruction, fasting, abstinence, prayer, the singing of the Psalms, the [daily] service, and the ”Blessings”; and if by chance or by the law of custom he performeth them. it is through shamefacedness, and they are done by him listlessly and with the uttering of complaints. And what cause is not sufficient to make him cease from prayer?

He will seek converse with men or any other matter which may happen, that he may be prevented from the service and the singing of the Psalms. The things of God are done by him negligently, but those which belong to his lust are done with all [p. 390] diligence and love. If he hath a small sore in his body he holdeth it to be a malignant ulcer, and if he be slightly disordered he accounteth it a severe and difficult illness. Everything which is profitable he layeth hold upon as a reason only to cease from [the service of] the Cause of his life, and he is earnest in everything except the serving of God.

And also when the glutton hath no sickness, he planneth to appear to be sick, so that when he hath ceased from service and prayer he may not be greatly blamed. For he repeateth his illnesses before every man, and although the cause of his sickness is small and contemptible, he increaseth and magnifieth it, and he calleth God to witness, so that by this he may persuade those who listen to him that he is forcing himself to draw nigh unto the service of the monastery. The glutton acteth craftily concerning the health of his body, and although the cause which would seal up the fountain of his sicknesses is with him, that is, if he would curb his gluttony a little, he wandereth about and seeketh help outside him. If thou wert to advise him, saying, "Diminish thy food a little, and keep thyself from oil and wine," he would look upon thee as one who hated his life, and would say unto thee, "Sicknesses are better unto me than the restraint of the belly in anything; and I will take long illnesses upon me if only I may satisfy my lusts. If one wisheth me [to take] medicine to heal me [I will take it] with my food, but if not, it is better for me to eat than to become well. The glutton hath many carnal friends, whereby the needs of his lust may be gathered together unto him from all sides;

he is crafty and skilful in his planning, and he knoweth whom to chose and of whom to make [p. 391] friends. And, moreover, he is not persuaded accidentally to make unto himself friends among blessed men, or among those who are poor, or of those who endure labours, or of those who love excellence, or of any one of those who possess the knowledge of Christ, neither can he be entreated to become loving unto them either in fact (? or in name; and not only is he thus, but he is their secret enemy, for by their appearance, and speech, and works, they rebuke his gluttony, and for this reason he hateth and abominateth them.

And if thou seest the glutton doing honour unto one of the wise, or unto one of the righteous, he doeth this only in form, that he may not be blamed by the believing men who love the things that are good, and also that he may quiet the murmuring of the many against him, and turn away from him the force of the zeal of those who honour what is good. If he seeth one of those who are young in their discipleship clothed in the discretion of the zeal of faith, like an indulgent man he would make him to cease therefrom, and he counselleth him as one who loveth him, saying, "Be quiet, and do not disgrace thy kin, and forsake not thy life of tranquillity. Be thou silent, and behold, thou wilt be beloved. Occupy thyself in fasting and prayer only, and draw not nigh unto that which is not suitable unto thee. And he giveth the disciple this counsel that he may quiet his zeal, and not because he delighteth in the service of that which is good. And when he hath brought him down from the virtue of a man

standing up to fight for God's sake, he beginneth also to overthrow the good habits which follow upon this, that is to say, the severity of labours and afflictions [p. 392] for God's sake, and the fastings of the ascetic, and protracted prayers, saying, "These are unnecessary; a man should cleanse his soul and possess a good conscience;

For he layeth hold upon a reason [to set before] the things of the inner man that he may destroy its outward acts, and he would justify himself by the belief that such things are unnecessary, because his laxity rebuketh his outward works. Where it is not easy for the children of men to see, he maketh himself a righteous man, and where afflictions and labours are seen, he maketh plans to hide them, and giveth concerning them other explanations. "Our God doth not require from us," he is wont to say, "that a man should kill himself, and afflict his body beyond measure, but only that we should be righteous in our souls, and that our thoughts may be cleansed from wickedness; and while the life of the wretched man is upon a lower grade than that of the beasts, like a perfect man he speaketh of spiritual things. His discoursings about his manner of life are long, and if he heareth a word from a book which may be of use to him, he layeth hold upon it with all diligence, in order that he may make use thereof in the season of strife, when he wageth war with his speech against those who rebuke his gluttony. When he wisheth to eat everything, and not to restrain himself by forbearance from any meat, he beginneth to repeat that which was written by our Lord, "It is not that which goeth into a man which defileth him;

for his ear is only pierced to hear such things as can be thought to support his lust, and in the face of the hearing of other things he shutteth the door of his attention. For he is not willing to hearken unto the other verse which saith, "Whosoever wisheth to be My disciple, [p. 393] let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me; nor unto the other which saith, "Whosoever wisheth to make his life to live shall destroy it," nor that which He spake unto His disciples, saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulations; nor the words, "When the Bridegroom shall be taken from the children of the bridechamber, then shall ye fast. And therefore [he would remember the passage concerning] the eating of our Lord, where it is written of Him that, "He made the festival, and ate the passover; or where it is said that, "They set before Him a piece of broiled fish and [a piece] of honeycomb; or where again it is written, "They had fishes and bread. And these and such like things doth the glutton bring forward as proofs when he wisheth to eat everything freely, and the rule of the freedom of Christ, Who like God was above laws and commandments, doth he set forth to be a stumbling-block to his life, and he understandeth not the reason of that rule and conduct, and he perceiveth not that other types were inscribed therein.

And again, when the Apostle Paul is read, and he heareth from him, "Everything which was created by God is holy, and nothing is to be rejected if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer; or another verse, "The belly for meats, and meats for the belly; or that also which he spake, "Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth. And in the other things like unto these which are written in the doctrine

of Paul, [p. 394] the fool rejoiceth, and receiveth them gladly, without understanding the reason of the words.

And the glutton is not pleased to hear the other things which have been written by Paul upon fortitude and asceticism, either when he recounteth his numerous fastings, or when he crieth out to his disciples, saying, "Ye are dead unto the world," or when he writeth, "It is good for [a man] not to eat flesh, and not to drink wine," or his exhortation, "Through many tribulations it is meet for a man to enter into the kingdom of God," or his saying, "God shall bring both the belly and the food to nought;" and the reading of these and such like passages the glutton considereth unnecessary, and he is not pleased even to hear them.

Now therefore in this manner standeth the life of him that loveth lusts, and as the remembrance of God is high unto the perfect, even so also is nigh unto him at all times the care for his belly. He singeth songs thereto, and meditateth upon it in his prayer and praise, his memory is burdened [therewith] at all seasons, and upon it he thinketh continually, because outside it he hath no other life; the memory thereof maketh his prayers light, and his constant thinking thereupon bringeth to nought in him all right and proper things. The glutton hath no seasons set apart for eating, but he eateth by day and by night, and when he eateth not he still eateth. For thou must not consider that the times when he eateth are once or twice, but mark carefully that it is his care [to eat] at all seasons throughout the night and day, [p. 395] and when his body eateth not his thought eateth. And he hath not even, like the beasts, times set apart for eating, for although the beast eateth at all seasons, and hath no limit to its eating throughout the night and day, yet it doth not meditate upon its meat at all seasons; but the glutton eateth at all seasons because he thinketh about his belly always, and therefore, even when he sleepeth it appeareth to him in his dreams that he is eating.

Shamefacedness is removed from before the eyes of the glutton, because he hath endowed his face with impudence so that he may not be ashamed. He heareth the mockery of himself and is silent, and he heareth disgraceful words spoken of him, but he taketh them not to heart; for the love of his belly overcometh him, and in spite of all the blows which beat upon him he is empty of spiritual virtues, that is to say, he knoweth not even that they exist. He chooseth things which inflame him mightily, he seeketh purified wines, and he asketh for tasty meats. He hath no work in the world save this, and however much we were to describe him he would not cease from his lax habits; but in the things which we have spoken we have given a little example of his lax ways, wherefrom those who see him may recognize him.

Do thou then, O brave disciple, flee from such an example as this, and become not lax in thy strenuous rule of life through the sight of him. Thou thyself must know unto what thou hast become a disciple, and thy discipleship itself must be unto thee the cause of thy course; be not like unto that contemptible man, but emulate with success the brave. Let not the man who is a counterpart of the beasts be an example unto thee, and thou shalt not consider it good for a man to eat, and to drink, and to satisfy his lusts, but shalt consider it an evil which is worse than all other evils. Hear also the words [p. 396] of the prophecy, and the

"Woe" which was proclaimed for gluttons, "Woe unto those who rise up early in the morning and pursue strong drink, and who tarry long [over it] in the evening while wine inflameth them. With harps, and stringed instruments, and drums, and tabrets, they drink wine, and the works of God they understand not. And behold, the Spirit also hath taught thee that the man who ministereth unto his lusts is unable to understand the works of God. For as in our sleep we are not able to speak and to act as living beings who are awake, even so the man who is sunk in the sleep of lusts cannot understand the living works of God, neither doth he know how to contemplate His government, nor to wonder at the various forms of His dispensation;

and he knoweth not admiration of the majesty of God, nor is he awake unto the knowledge of Him, nor is he ready to respond unto His wisdom. For whosoever is sunk in the slumber of lust perceiveth not these things, because the remembrance of these things belongeth unto those who are awake and living. And blessedness is ascribed unto the man who understandeth these things. For if unto those who eat, and drink, and who do not understand the works of God "Woe" be given, contrariwise "Blessing" is ascribed unto those who are abstinent and self-denying, and who at all times meditate upon the works of God.

Do thou then, O disciple, so run that thou mayest be worthy of blessing, and flee from the woe which is promised unto gluttons. And let those who are strenuous be unto thee an example for good, and not those who are fallen low, and those who fast instead of those who devour food, and those who lead ascetic lives instead of gluttons, and those who deny themselves instead of those who gorge, and those who serve God instead of those who serve their belly, and those who have fortitude instead of those who are slack, and the good instead of the bad; for [p. 397] good men are not wanting in the world to be an example unto thee of that which is good, and let us be like unto them and not unto the wicked. Thou shalt not examine closely those who stand beneath thee, but lift up thine eyes, and look at those who are greater than thou, and go up unto them; for as it is with matters of this world, every man choosing things which are great, even so is it with these divine things, and let us choose for ourselves that which is great and sublime. Now there is no man in the world who loveth poverty more than riches, but every man seeketh to be excused therefrom, and he followeth after riches, and he fleeth from pains, and he runneth after the health of the body.

So likewise let us pursue the things of the spirit, and let us love the riches of fortitude, and not the poverty of gluttony, and let us love the healing of our soul and of our thoughts more than the sicknesses of the lusts; for the soul which ministereth unto lusts is always a diseased thing, and it hath no power over its spiritual strength and healing. For as whosoever is sick in his body hath not power over his health to eat whatever he pleaseth, and he hath not power to do that which he wisheth, even so also the man whose soul is sick through gluttony neither hath power over the strength and healing of his soul, nor can he occupy himself in his actions with anything that he wisheth or seeketh to do. As the members of a sick man do not respond to him when he wisheth to move them for some purpose, so also the

thoughts of a glutton do not respond to him when he wisheth to work with them something that is good; for all [p. 398] beautiful things are difficult unto the man who is subject unto his belly, because he is the slave of all lusts.

If the passion of eating be moved in him he is not easily able to overcome it, because he himself is one in subjection, and if the lust of fornication stir in his members, or wrath, or anger, or envy, or wickedness, or any abominable passion, it is not easy for him to overcome it, because he is a slave and is in subjection unto them all, and they are to be subdued with difficulty, especially when they are many. And if, when one passion hath obtained power over our life, and it hath made us subject unto the labour of its bondage for a long time, it is difficult for us to overcome it, how much more shall we be overcome by many masters? For, as I have said, with gluttony all the other passions enter in, because it is the means of entrance for all lusts.

"Now our Redeemer said in His Gospel, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," and if in our subjection unto one lord----that is to say, unto mammon only----we are not able to serve also God therewith, how, when the masters who have brought us into subjection are many, and each one of them leadeth us forcibly after his own will, can we serve God, Who will not accept from man the service of any other thing together with His own service? What then? And if each one of all these sins, which collectwely are contrary to the righteousness of God, is a drawback to its fellow in the service of Him, [p. 399] how can the service of them collectively avoid being a hindrance to the keeping of the commandments of God? For they are different from one another in their actions, and the Will of God is contrary unto them all, and especially unto this lust of greediness, through which all other lusts are brought in and enter in.

Now therefore, when a man hath been led into subjection to minister unto the service of his belly, he must give himself over to much toil that he may gather together [material] from all sides and bring it to [supply] its needs, for it not only seeketh to eat, but it also seeketh in what way it may eat; for if it rested only upon the satisfying of its need, the need of the belly could be satisfied with very little, and with common and ordinary things of low price. How many times have many men satisfied their wants with roots and herbs because they sought things for their need, and not for the satisfying of their lusts? And although God, like a rich Creator, gave in abundance everything for our need, yet it is right for us to consider His will, and to be guided accordingly, and therefore He multiplied in the world many kinds of dainty meats that they might be a furnace wherewith to test lust, and that the mind of the children of men might be tried as to what they lust for, and after what do they haste. For where there is nothing to be lusted after the trial of lust existeth not; but it is right for the disciple to know himself, and he must not be subjected unto the lust of his body, [p. 400] and he must not open the door to bring in upon himself beasts which destroy.

For as when a strong door is closed fast, and evil beasts and noxious reptiles are kept outside of it, if by chance it be opened for any cause whatsoever, they are all found to come inside to injure the inhabitants of the place, even so also when the door of the lust of the belly is shut,

all the murderous passions of lusts which destroy the soul are shut out, and they cannot enter in to bite and destroy the spiritual nature of the soul; but if through our slackness this door be opened before them, and our will doeth for the belly that which it desireth, immediately all wickednesses are gathered together and go in against our soul, and destroy therein all thoughts of excellence. For immediately thou openest this door, at once there entereth in the destroying beast of fornication, which devoureth and destroyeth body and soul together; and after it the lust of the belly, for which two things are necessary, the love of the belly and fornication, which is also born of lusts. And from the love of money is born trouble, either because we do not possess it, or because by chance we have lost that which we had collected, either in whole or in part;

and from this is born in us also the passion of wrath, and we are provoked to anger and filled with wrath against those who do not give [unto us] that which, according to our opinion, they have wrested from us, or against those who do not obey and satisfy us with the service of our lives. And sometimes against slaves, and sometimes against hirelings, and sometimes against those whom we hold [p. 401] in contempt and think lightly of, are we filled with anger and wrath through various causes which come upon us. And again we are filled with envy against those who are greater and richer than we are, and also with the love of plunder and defrauding, and how many times are we led even unto murder through this cause? And through riches arrogance also layeth hold upon us, and through the spectre of riches we lust for vain glory from the children of men, and therefrom we learn to receive calumnies from those who are inferior to ourselves, and we also calumniate those who are greater than ourselves. And from this we go forth unto falsehoods and oaths continually, and to blasphemy against God, and when the remembrance of the Judgment hath perished entirely from the soul, it henceforth doeth without fear all manner of wickedness. Now of these things and of those like unto them the primary cause is gluttony. For who is there that doth not know that the lust of fornication burneth in the body which eateth, and drinketh, and fareth luxuriously?

And although it may not be ministered unto openly, and may not be apparent in deed unto the children of men, yet it inflameth the thoughts continually, and a man maketh plans and seeketh an exit for the fire which is in him; he lusteth after everything that is beautiful and he is tripped up by every form which is beautiful in appearance. For so long as the fire of lust is in his members his thoughts fly unto every face, and he committeth fornication secretly with every appearance. And although he fornicateth not outwardly, he fornicateth constantly inwardly, and although he is not an adulterer in his body, he committeth adultery within himself at all seasons and at every hour.

[p. 402] Now therefore meat and drink are the fuel of the fire of lust, and whosoever wisheth to quench in his members this fire which is hidden in them, must withhold this fuel from himself, and behold, it will be extinguished; for fasting, and abstinence, and self-denial are the water which quencheth the fire of lust. For what oil is to the fire wine is to lust, and as manure stimulateth the earth to bring forth fruit, even so doth the stinkingness of

meats excite the members with abominable lusts. A superabundance of food is a covering of the understanding, and food, of and by itself, maketh dark the mind unto the thoughts of fornication, and concerning how much the troubling of lust disturbeth a pure mind there is no doubt whatever, but those know it especially who have experienced it. But before this lust, is the lust of the belly which submergeth the understanding, and it is the covering of the mind which seeth, and it is the thick darkness of the thoughts which possess the light of truth, for the stink of meats is the night of the enlightened mind. And as blacknesses and smoke darken pure and clean air, even so doth the stink of meat disturb the purity of the mind.

Now therefore it is right for the disciple of Christ not only to excuse himself from dainty and costly meats, but also to eat sparingly of the commonest foods, for it is not because the meat is costly that it disturbeth the understanding and darkeneth the mind, but because of the abundance [that thou eatest], [p. 403] and this defect is found in respect of the commonest foods as well as of those that are costly. And well do the Holy Books admonish the children of men against the overfeeding of the belly in every place, for according to the teaching of Paul, "Those who occupied themselves with meats were not benefited by them," and not only were they deprived of any benefits, but they gathered together for their own persons loss and injury, but [he saith], "Gluttons and drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and read the passage, O disciple, and see unto what vices the Apostle compareth this wickedness---with soothsayers and destroyers, and other things like thereunto. And although the lust of the belly is not these, yet it leadeth unto them, for when the heart hath become gross through meats, straightway it driveth out from itself the remembrance of God, and when the memory of God hath departed from a man, what wickedness will he not do? and what iniquity will he be not moved to do?

Even as also the prophet Moses hath taught us that through this cause the people forgot their God, and that through the lust of the belly they went forth unto idolatry, and from eating meat they were led into blasphemies, and from dainty foods they arrived at all wickedness, [saying,] "He made him [i. e. Israel] to dwell upon the strength of the earth, and He made him to eat of the produce of the field. He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the rock of flint: butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with the fat of [p. 404] stalled beasts, rams, the offspring of ibexes, and kids, with the fat and fatty parts of wheat, and He made him to drink wine of the blood of grapes. And Israel waxed fat and kicked, he grew fat, and became thick, and acquired riches. And what happened unto him because of these things? and to what pass did he come by reason of these desirable things? and what country did he possess through these dainties with which he delighted himself? and into what sick-nessess did the overfeeding of the belly, and the superfluity of meats cast him? Now Moses himself hath explained and made known unto us what the people obtained from these possessions: "He forgot the God Who made him, and he blasphemed the Might which redeemed him. He moved Him to jealousy with strange things, and provoked Him to wrath with idols.

They sacrificed unto devils which were not gods, and unto gods which they had not known. These are the things which the people obtained from dainty foods, and this is the inheritance of the worship of devils which they inherited from the overabundance of the body. And from the table which was rich in meats they were drawn unto the unclean tables of idols, and from dainty foods they went forth to cast stinking things before graven images, and through the lust which taketh away the strength from nature they came to unclean thoughts which are alien unto nature.

Behold then, O disciple, and see how that people went from one thing to another, and uproot from thee patiently the root which putteth forth as a sprout the worship of idols, a root which having begun [to spring] from the belly cometh to an end in the worship of devils. The prophet doth not say unto thee simply that the people worshipped idols, but he first of all maketh thee to know the reason why they worshipped [them]; and he doth not relate unto thee concerning the severe and difficult sickness until he hath informed thee of the cause of the sickness, and whence it came. "He ate, [p. 405] and drank, and fared luxuriously," hence he forgot God who made him; and because error entered in, it gave birth to abuse and blasphemies, hence "he blasphemed the mighty One who redeemed him." And this was not sufficient for him, but he also made unto himself gods in opposition to God, and instead of One, he forged for himself many. "He provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, and he moved Him to wrath 'with idols." And together with the testimony of the Word we may also see from the fact itself how they came to offer praises before the calf in the wilderness, "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play;" until food had entered in blasphemies did not go forth, and until wine had been poured into them they were not clothed with the fornication which is against God.

These then are the injurious things which meat hath wrought, and who will not flee from the overabundance thereof? Whosoever hath determined to become corrupt will become a devourer, for the glutton taketh within himself thoughts of corruptness, and then he draweth nigh unto dainty meats. A man is led to become a servant unto his belly through the lust of the body, and it is manifest that the man who loveth lust is an enemy of the praise of Christ, for the lust of the body is opposed unto the lust of the spirit, and so long as the one liveth it is impossible for the other to live. From the time when the lust of the body liveth in him, the lust of the spirit is dead in him, and as the body is deprived of all [p. 406] the things for which it lusteth when it becometh an alien unto its own life, even so the soul becometh an alien unto all good when the lust of the spirit is removed from it: for the lust of the spirit is the beginning of the ascent unto all excellent things, but the lust of the body is the entrance of all wickedness. For even if the lust of the belly did not impede us in any fair thing, it would be right and seemly for us to excuse ourselves therefrom, both for its own sake and because it might not make us like unto the beasts;

but since it is the entrance of all vices, and the field which is wont to put forth as fruit brambles and briars, how much more should we do this? And if those who perform noble acts and deeds of the world, and those who wish to become famous in bodily skill sustain

their lives with little food, how much more especially have spiritual athletes need thereof, in order that they may possess fortitude, and run the course of their labours. Now if the body itself the natural life of which which is sustained by food, layeth hold upon the habit of abstinence and self-denial when it wisheth to be famous in some feat of bodily skill, how much more especially hath that soul, which is wont to diminish from the weight of the body, and which maketh it active and obedient unto the soul which dwelleth therein, need of abstinence and self-denial? So long as the body is heavy with the abundance of flesh, is it difficult for the soul to turn itself about, but when it becometh lighter and diminisheth through abstinence, the soul easily performeth therein [p. 407] all its desires, and it refineth it by its lightness; for so long as the body is heavy and gross it is contrary unto the soul, because the soul is a refined and rational thing.

And in proportion as it loveth the celestial country which is suitable unto its spiritual nature, so also doth the body love the grossness of earth and the heaviness of the dust, and while the soul leapeth to mount upwards, the body through its weight inclineth to go downwards, and also to crawl about upon the ground of lusts like a reptile.

The body which eateth overmuch maketh the soul an irrational thing, and it spoileth and carrieth away therefrom all the motions of wisdom, for the heart is the vessel of the discretion and intelligence of the soul, and when it hath become gross through the overabundance of meats, all the thoughts of the soul which are moved thereby become gross therewith. And because the fire which is mingled therein naturally becometh dead and cold, the heat of the knowledge of the soul also diminisheth, and the active movement of its thoughts ceaseth, because although the gift of rationality beginneth from the soul, yet its operation is made visible by the intervention of the members of the body, and all parts of its nature have need of all parts of the members of the body. And behold we see that when the soul wisheth to observe the world it looketh thereat through the eyes of the body, and when it wisheth to hear the voice of the body it receiveth it through the medium of the ears, or again if it seeketh to send without a word of its nature, it maketh it pass over to us by the tongue, the bridge of words; [p. 408] and [to speak] briefly, whenever it wisheth to perceive anything of this world, by means of the senses of the body it goeth out or cometh in.

But when it wisheth to see the country of spiritual beings, or to hear the living words of their spirituality, or when it seeketh to look with the vision which is above nature, it hath no need whatever of the senses, nay it even sendeth them away, and alone, and with its own members, it moveth with the living motions which are above nature. Therefore as we have learnt that the soul hath need of the external senses, so also [is it] concerning the members which are within, by which it is moved in all its parts, whether to wisdom, or to intelligence, or to enlightenment, or to thoughts, or to discretion, or to understanding and knowledge, or to the fear of God; of all these, then, by means of the members, doth the soul make use, and in proportion as these are active, and the weight of meats is not laid upon them, and they are not troubled by the excessive smell of food, the soul worketh actively through them. And as a light which is mingled with another light, for by the admixture therewith the light shineth

the more brightly, so also is the luminous soul mingled in the luminous members when they are active and free from the filth of meat; but if they are dense and heavy, they become like a dense body, and like a gross covering in front of its light, and instead of receiving help from them, they injure and impede the activity of its working.

And those who scrutinize subtilly the knowledge of nature [p. 409] recognize these things and also others which are like unto them.

Now therefore if thou, even thou, O disciple, desirest to be a participator in this natural knowledge, and to ascend from it unto the knowledge of the spirit, keep thyself from the weight of meats, and let the natural grossness of thy body be sufficient for thee, and do not make it more gross and heavy with overmuch meat, even though for the sake of thy health thou wouldst eat a quantity----now the man who thinketh thus erreth greatly ---- for an overabundance of food doth not give health but produceth pains and sicknesses in the body, and it only maketh healthy the body of lust. And as all the members become sick, and soft, and useless, even so be-cometh strong and sound the lust for phantasms in the body and soul, and together with the lust folly also groweth strong, for the lust of the belly increaseth this abominable passion of folly more than all other lusts, for folly is the thick darkness of the soul, even also as knowledge is the light of nature. And as a lamp is extinguished in winds or storms, or becometh dim and sheddeth its light dimly in a house wherein the air is damp and heavy, so also doth the light of the knowledge of the soul become dark in the heart which is black through the weight and moisture of meats.

And behold also the rays of the sun, the light of which is established in its own nature, and not by absorption from other substances like a lamp, become dark in an atmosphere which is troubled and disturbed, [p. 410] and although in the constitution of its sphere it is light with the riches of its fulness, yet to the body of [this] world it is black and dark. And thus also must thou think concerning the soul, in which is gathered together the light of knowledge in the manner in which the natural light [is gathered together] in the sphere of the sun. and when the heart becomes dull (or, cloudy) like the atmosphere, then all the members which are therein are disturbed by the smoke of meat, and the rays of the knowledge of the soul are prevented from shedding their light fully unto all the parts of the body, and all the motions of a man, whether of the external senses, or whether of the internal members, move stupidly and confusedly.

Now the knowledge of the soul is the hidden rudder of the whole body, which keepeth the eye in chasteness, [that is to say,] in orderliness, and the ear in vigilance, and the hand in watchfulness, and the tongue in correct balance, and the feet in a prudent gait; and as the charioteer [holdeth] the bridles of his steeds, even so doth the soul hold the reins of knowledge, and it guideth all the senses, and as the charioteer directeth his steeds so also doth the soul order the senses, and rule the inner members, and this good thing which is the light of the body, and the order of all the members, perisheth through gluttony in the man who is not vigilant and heedful. Let the disciple of Christ then flee from this foolish passion, and let him not be a slave unto his belly. For if we are not able to serve at one time

both God and mammon, [p. 411] according to the word of Christ, it is evident that we cannot [serve] both the belly and God, for it also was called "god" after the manner of mammon, and as Jesus called mammon "master", even so also did His Apostle call the belly god [in the words,] "Whose god is their belly, and whose glory their shame." And the word of God mocketh those who lay fast hold upon their art, who have hired themselves unto Christ for their belly's sake and not because of love for Him, even as there are also today many who are clothed with the precious garb of discipleship, and who feign to be teachers and good servants of God, not for love's sake, nor through discretion and fear, but only that they may minister unto their belly, which they have made a god unto themselves, and unto which they minister.

Now the Apostle of God teacheth us plainly that the heaviness of the belly boweth down the gaze of the soul from heaven to earth, saying, "Their whole mind is [set] upon earth." And he set forth first the words, "Whose god is their belly, and whose glory their shame," and afterwards he said, "Their whole mind is [set] upon earth," in order that he might make known that the reason why they were fettered unto earth, and why their mind was contaminated with the dust, was because they possessed the lust of the belly; and as the lust thereof chained them to the earth, even so also will it bind whosoever ministereth thereunto. For in what particular is the man who is befouled with the lusts of the belly different from the worms which crawl about in filth, or from the swine which wallow [p. 412] in the mire? For in this case also the service of this loathsome lust must needs be called loathsomeness, and filth, and mire, and shame, and if Paul called it so, how can we help calling it so likewise?

Now therefore we can see that the lust of the belly is the beginning of all wickedness, and that it leadeth us unto the ruin which [befell] Adam. For through it he transgressed the commandment of God, and through it he despised and cast away the law which [He had set] for him, and the Calumniator took it that it might be a helpmeet unto him, because he saw that it was the most powerful of all lusts, and that thereby he would be able to enter into him with all other wickedness. And the Enemy did not contend against the heads of our race with fornication, or with avarice, or with vain-glory, or with the adornment of apparel, or with envy and pride, or with any of the other passions, but only with the lust of the belly, because he saw that it was capable of becoming a leader of all the lusts; for the Tempter was crafty, and he saw which passion was the strongest and foremost in us, and he drew nigh thereunto, and stimulated it, and after that he sowed the seeds of laxity, and after that the seeds of lust, and then fornication also entered in, for immediately "they had eaten, the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked." And it is evident that it was because the lust for connexion moved in the members of union, that they also perceived [that they were naked], and were ashamed at the sight of each other, for until food had gone into them [p. 413] lust was not stirred up, and until lust had been stirred up shame and fear did not rule [over them].

Behold, then, the beginning of shame is the lust of the belly, and well hath the blessed Apostle also called it thus, saying, "The woman saw that the tree was fair, and that it was

a thing for which the eyes lusted, and that it was desirable to look upon; and she took of its fruit, and she ate and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat. Thus thou mayest see that the lust of the belly was the beginning of their common sin, and of the first transgression of the commandment, and that thereby all sins and all punishments were brought in and came upon us; for as envy was the beginning of wickedness with Satan, so also was the belly the beginning of the transgression of the commandment with the house of Adam. And through it sins came in, and through it all penalties followed;

it was the beginning of pains and sicknesses, through it the pains of childbirth entered in, through it was the earth cursed, and it brought forth briars and brambles, it hath made us aliens from the pleasures of Paradise, it hath cast us out as it were into exile in a cursed land, through it we have become slaves unto devils, through its dominion over us we serve in the bondage of Satan, through it evil spirits sport with us and laugh at us, it hath brought in death which dissolveth and scattereth our frames, through it this fair and beautiful image hath been made hideous and loathsome, it hath fed us with the bread of pain, and it hath collected for us food by the sweat of our face. Now the lust of the belly is a senseless and blind thing. It sought to eat, and yet was deprived of food; it lusted after pleasures, and destroyed the gratification and delight [p. 414] of Paradise, for though lusting to eat, it knew not how to eat; it possessed not patience, for the nature of this lust is to be hasty and impatient, and it made haste and plucked one fruit, and was henceforth deprived of the table which was full of all the luxuries of Paradise.

Now therefore let that lust which came unto Adam be a type of that which cometh to us, for as they, by of the eating of one fruit, were deprived of the food of the whole garden, even so also will one loaded table deprive us of the table of the kingdom of heaven. For as long as the belly is full, and is weighted with an abundance of meats, the soul is useless for the remembrance of the blessings which are about to come, and so long as the eye is fixed intently upon these meats, and it lusteth for them, the eye of the mind turneth away from the sight of spiritual delights. What then? If Adam, because he lusted for one fruit, lost the whole of Paradise, how can the man who is laden with the lust of many meats help being deprived of the table of the kingdom? For, because of his having eaten, Adam lost Paradise, and inherited death with all its curses. Esau, because of his meat, cast away the birthright together with the blessings, and he became a slave unto sin, and one who was subject under the hand of his brother. The people [of Israel], because of their meat, forgot God, and instead of God, worshipped the similitude of a dumb animal; and again, because of their meat, the wrath of God [p. 415] went up against them;

and again, because of their meat, they were led into the fornication with the Midianites, through which the pestilence had dominion over them suddenly, for it is written, "While the flesh was yet between their teeth the anger of God went up against them. And again, through meat and luxuries the Sodomites also were polluted with an unclean matter, and pleasures and the love of the belly brought them unto that limitless wickedness, even as the prophet of God maketh known concerning them, "This was the iniquity of thy luxurious

sister Sodom, who was satisfied with bread, and dwelt at ease; for by reason of being filled with bread, and delicacies they polluted themselves with unnatural lust. Let these things and others which are like unto them be in thy remembrance, O thou that wishest to travel in the path of heaven, and cut off and cast away from thee the fettering weight of the belly, which sinketh the soul into the depths of wickedness like a millstone in the sea. And do not imagine that [the lust for] dainty meats only is accounted gluttony, for behold, the gluttony of Esau was made manifest through a mess of pottage, and [it consisteth not] in flesh overmuch, nor in wine overmuch, nor in any other preparation of meats; for it was only because [Esau] desired greedily a mess of pottage, that the word of God rejected him, and cast him away.

In the meat which thou hast nigh unto thee shew thy forbearance, and contend with that which is near thee, and let there be war with thee against the contemptible and despicable things which are set before thee, lest thou make use of them for the filling of thy belly [only]; for no man [p. 416] leaveth the obstacles which are near and fighteth with those which are afar off, and no man leaveth the sickness which is at hand and which causeth him pain, and bringeth healing unto that which hath not yet appeared. And since the dainty meats, of which the rich and noble men of the world make use, are not nigh unto thee, forbear from the inferior kinds which are set before thee, and if thou canst conquer [the lust] for meats which are common thou mayest believe that thou wilt also be the conqueror over the lust for those which are more dainty, and that thou wilt gain the victory over those which are of great price.

The full belly produceth not pure prayer, and the stomach which is inflated with too much food giveth not forth wakeful melody. Now if its own loss only were found in overfilling the belly, even though it would be blameworthy, it would not perchance be over-wicked to palliate it, but because of the other wickednesses which spring therefrom, it is right for the disciple that he should take heed thereunto. The sleep of the over-eater is much, his dreams are disturbed, his visions are confused, the flow of his lust is copious, and his sleep is deep but not healthy. If he standeth up to sing a psalm, thou mayest consider that he standeth not up, for as he sinketh down upon his bed, even so doth he sink down in his standing up; he throweth himself against the walls, he layeth hold of the things which hang clown, he supporteth himself upon sticks that they may bear with him his heavy body, that is to say, that they may carry with him the weight of the meats which he beareth. And if it happen that he beginneth and endeth his service, he perceiveth not where he is, for although many voices cry in his ears he overcometh them by the depth of his sleep; [p. 417] his ear is closed by the weight of meats, his eye turneth away through sleepiness, and his whole body is weaned and exhausted, because he doth not eat in moderation.

The living stand by his side, and look upon him as dead, and those who are awake see him, and they laugh and mock after his own manner. He knoweth not which psalm is being sung, he is wrathful against the man who waketh him up, and he is filled with anger and threatenings against whomsoever rouseth him from his deep slumber. It happeneth too that he falleth down while he standeth, and through the noise of his fall he disturbeth the

service, and in the hour of quietness he maketh tumult, and at the season when God is hymned by the living and by the Watchers, he standeth before Him like a soulless corpse. And if one should say, "Is he not ashamed, and is he not brought to the blush? [I say,] how can the man, who doth not even know where he is, be ashamed? He despiseth God in his standing up, he casteth [looks of] hatred upon those who behold him, he heapeth reproaches also upon those who wake him up, he maketh himself a cause of falling and stumbling unto those who stand by his side, who leave off singing to speak about him, and who are irritated at the sight of the depth of sleep into which he hath fallen; for if the glutton sleepeth, he is drowned in sleep, and if he be awakened he sleepeth, and if he singeth he is dumb, and if he standeth up, he falleth prone.

Observe then these defects, O thou that lovest spiritual excellence, and excuse thyself from this wickedness, that thou mayest not forget God and thine own self thereby, and thy discernment be darkened against all that is seemly; and with these remember also that which was spoken by the prophet Moses to the Jews, saying, "Take heed when [p. 418] thou eatest, and art satisfied, lest thou forget the Lord thy God who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt." And behold the Spirit of God hath taught thee openly that error is born of fulness of food, and that, when a man hath forgotten God, he marcheth fearlessly into all wickedness, and associateth himself with all evils. For as the sight of a stern master is to riotous slaves, even so is the remembrance of God [unto the soul]; for it maketh the tumultuousness of the thoughts shamefaced, and immediately the thought of Him falleth into the mind all the perturbed thoughts hasten to put themselves in the order of fear, and the soul becometh suddenly a peaceful house, an ordered temple, a pure dwelling, and a holy mansion of the Trinity. Whosoever then wisheth to travel along the path of heaven should unfasten the shackles of lusts from his feet, and should remove every weight from the wings of his mind, in order that his person may travel easily towards greatness, and may hear the promise of the holy man Paul, who taught and admonished us, saying, "Take ye heed lest there be among you any man who is wanton or slack like Esau, who for one [mess of] meat sold his birthright; for also when he afterwards desired to inherit the blessings, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears."

Let then these remembrances be unto thee, [O disciple,] and let such testimonies as these be written in thy heart. Let us be active, that we may become spiritual beings; let us shut the door of the lust of the belly, that all wickedness may be shut outside; let us put to death in us the lust of the body, that the lust of the spirit may live in our soul; let us diminish by patience [p. 419] also the wants of our life, that we may be worthy by Grace of the life of glory; let us deny the foolish mistress, that we may confess fully the Holy and Eternal One; let us free our members from weight, that we may make our members light by pure prayer; let us cast out the smoke of lust, that the eye of our soul may be clear for the sight of knowledge; let us not lust after the loaded table and abundance of meats, that the table of the kingdom may receive us like famished folk; let us despise and reject the health of the body, that we may be able to obtain the health of the hidden man; let not the fear of sickness through [lack of] food fight against us lest wounds increase in our soul thereby; let us give

thanks unto the Provider for little food, that it may be seen that we are His sons and not slaves in the hire of the belly; let us overcome patiently the first lust, that we may thereby gain strength to vanquish all [other] lusts; let us say unto each other that which hath been said unto us by the Apostle, "The belly for meats, and meats for the belly, but God will bring them both to nought." The body then is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body, to Whom be glory from us all for ever. Amen.

Here endeth the First Discourse on the lust of the belly by the holy man Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh. [Footnotes renumbered and moved to the end. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Syriac text in vol. 1 of the printed edition.]

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.