On Modesty

Tertullian (c. AD 155–220)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Introduction

[Translated by the Rev. S. Thelwall.] Modesty, the flower of manners, the honour of our bodies, the grace of the sexes, the integrity of the blood, the guarantee of our race, the basis of sanctity, the pre-indication of every. good disposition; rare though it is, and not easily perfected, and scarce ever retained in perpetuity, will yet up to a certain point linger in the world, if nature shall have laid the preliminary groundwork of it, discipline persuaded to it, censorial rigour curbed its excesses-on the hypothesis, that is, that every mental good quality is the result either of birth, or else of training, or else of external compulsion.

But as the conquering power of things evil is on the increase-which is the characteristic of the last times -things good are now not allowed either to be born, so corrupted are the seminal principles; or to be trained, so deserted are studies; nor to be enforced, so dined are the laws. In fact, (the modesty) of which we are now beginning (to treat) is by this time grown so obsolete, that it is not the abjuration but the moderation of the appetites which modesty is believed to be; and he is held to be chaste enough who has not been too chaste. But let the world's modesty see to itself, together with the world itself: together with its inherent nature, if it was wont to originate in birth; its study, if in training; its servitude, if in compulsion: except that it had been even more unhappy if it had remained only to prove fruitless, in that it had not been in God's household that its activities had been exercised. I should prefer no good to a vain good: what profits it that that should exist whose existence profits not? It is our own good things whose position is now sinking; it is the system of Christian modesty which is being shaken to its foundation-(Christian modesty), which derives its all from heaven; its nature, "through the layer of regeneration; " its discipline, through the instrumentality of preaching; its censorial rigour, through the judgments which each Testament exhibits; and is subject to a more constant external compulsion, arising from the apprehension or the desire of the eternal fire or kingdom.

In opposition to this (modesty), could I not have acted the dissembler? I hear that there has even been an edict set forth, and a peremptory one too. The Pontifex Maximus -that is, the bishop of bishops -issues an edict: "I remit, to such as have discharged (the requirements of) repentance, the sins both of adultery and of fornication." O edict, on which cannot be inscribed, "Good deed!" And where shall this liberality be posted up? On the very spot, I suppose, on the very gates of the sensual appetites, beneath the very titles of the sensual

appetites. There is the place for promulgating such repentance, where the delinquency itself shall haunt. There is the place to read the pardon, where entrance shall be made under the hope thereof. But it is in the church that this (edict) is read, and in the church that it is pronounced; and (the church) is a virgin! Far, far from Christ's betrothed be such a proclamation! She, the true, the modest, the saintly, shall be free from stain even of her ears. She has none to whom to make such a promise; and if she have had, she does not make it; since even the earthly temple of God can sooner have been called by the Lord a "den of robbers," than of adulterers and fornicators.

This too, therefore, shall be a count in my indictment against the Psychics; against the fellowship of sentiment also which I myself formerly maintained with them; in order that they may the more cast this in my teeth for a mark of fickleness. Repudiation of fellowship is never a pre-indication of sin. As if it were not easier to err with the majority, when it is in the company of the few that truth is loved But, however, a profitable fickleness shall no more be a disgrace to me, than I should wish a hurtful one to be an ornament. I blush not at an error which I have ceased to hold, because I am delighted at having ceased to hold it, because I recognise myself to be better and more modest. No one blushes at his own improvement. Even in Christ, knowledge had its stages of growth; through which stages the apostle, too, passed. "When I was a child," he says, "as a child I spake, as a child I understood; but when I became a man, those (things) which had been the child's I abandoned: " so truly did he turn away from his early opinions: nor did he sin by becoming an emulator not of ancestral but of Christian traditions, wishing even the precision of them who advised the retention of circumcision. And would that the same fate might befall those, too, who obtruncate the pure and true integrity of the flesh;

amputating not the extremest superficies, but the inmost image of modesty itself, while they promise pardon to adulterers and fornicators, in the teeth of the primary discipline of the Christian Name; a discipline to which heathendom itself bears such emphatic witness, that it strives to punish that discipline in the persons of our females rather by defilements of the flesh than tortures; wishing to wrest from them that which they hold dearer than life! But now this glory is being extinguished, and that by means of those who ought with all the more constancy to refuse concession of any pardon to defilements of this kind, that they make the fear of succumbing to adultery and fornication their reason for marrying as often as they please-since "better it is to marry than to burn. No doubt it is for continence sake that incontinence is necessary-the "burning" will be extinguished by "fires! Why, then, do they withal grant indulgence, under the name of repentance, to crimes for which they furnish remedies by their law of multinuptialism? For remedies will be idle while crimes are indulged, and crimes will remain if remedies are idle. And so, either way, they trifle with solicitude and negligence; by taking emptiest precaution against (crimes) to which they grant quarter, and granting absurdest quarter to (crimes) against which they take precaution: whereas either precaution is not to be taken where quarter is given, or quarter not given where precaution is taken; for they take precaution, as if they were unwilling that something should be committed;

but grant indulgence, as if they were willing it should be committed: whereas, if they be unwilling it should be committed, they ought not to grant indulgence; if they be willing to grant indulgence, they ought not to take precaution. For, again, adultery and fornication will not be ranked at the same time among the moderate and among the greatest sins, so that each course may be equally open with regard to them-the solicitude which takes precaution, and the security which grants indulgence. But since they are such as to hold the culminating place among crimes, there is no room at once for their indulgence as if they were moderate, and for their precaution as if they were greatest But by us precaution is thus also taken against the greatest, or, (if you will), highest (crimes, viz.,) in that it is not permitted, after believing, to know even a second marriage, differentiated though it be, to be sure, from the work of adultery and fornication by the nuptial and dotal tablets: and accordingly, with the utmost strictness, we excommunicate digamists, as bringing infamy upon the Paraclete by the irregularity of their discipline. The self-same liminal limit we fix for adulterers also and fornicators; dooming them to pour forth tears barren of peace, and to regain from the Church no ampler return than the publication of their disgrace.

Chapter II.-God Just as Well as Merciful; Accordingly, Mercy Must Not Be Indiscriminate.

”But,” say they, ”God is ‘good, ’and ‘most good, ’ and ‘pitiful-hearted, ’and ‘a pitier, ’and ‘abundant in pitiful-heartedness, ’ which He holds ‘dearer than all sacrifice, ’ ‘not thinking the sinner’s death of so much worth as his repentance’, ‘a Saviour of all men, most of all of believers.’ And so it will be becoming for ‘the sons of God’ too to be ‘pitiful-hearted’ and ‘peacemakers; ’ ‘giving in their turn just as Christ withal hath given to us; ’ ‘not judging, that we be not judged.’ For ‘to his own lord a man standeth or falleth; who art thou, to judge another’s servant? ’ ‘Remit, and remission shall be made to thee.’” Such and so great futilities of theirs wherewith they flatter God and pander to themselves, effeminating rather than invigorating discipline, with how cogent and contrary (arguments) are we for our part able to rebut,-(arguments) which set before us warningly the ”severity” of God, and provoke our own constancy? Because, albeit God is by nature good, still He is ”just” too. For, from the nature of the case, just as He knows how to ”heal,” so does He withal know how to ”smite; ” ”making peace,” but withal ”creating evils; ” preferring repentance, but withal commanding Jeremiah not to pray for the aversion of ills on behalf of the sinful People,-”since, if they shall have fasted,” saith He, ”I will not listen to their entreaty. And again:

”And pray not thou unto (me) on behalf of the People, and request not on their behalf in prayer and supplication, since I will not listen to (them) in the time wherein they shall have invoked me, in the time of their affliction. And further, above, the same preferrer of mercy above sacrifice (says): ”And pray not thou unto (me) on behalf of this People, and request not that they may obtain mercy, and approach not on their behalf unto me, since I will not listen to (them)” of course when they sue for mercy, when out of repentance they weep and fast, and when they offer their self-affliction to God. For God is ”jealous,” and is One who is not contemptuously derided -derided, namely, by such as flatter His goodness-and who, albeit ”patient,” yet threatens, through Isaiah, an end of (His) patience. ”I have held my peace; shall I withal always hold my peace and endure? I have been quiet as (a woman) in birth-throes; I will arise, and will make (them) to grow arid. For ”a fire shall proceed

before His face, and shall utterly burn His enemies; " striking down not the body only, but the souls too, into hell. Besides, the Lord Himself demonstrates the manner in which He threatens such as judge: "For with what judgment ye judge, judgment shall be given on you. Thus He has not prohibited judging, but taught (how to do it).

Whence the apostle withal judges, and that in a case of fornication, that "such a man must be surrendered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh; " chiding them likewise because "brethren" were not "judged at the bar of the saints: " for he goes on and says, "To what (purpose is it) for me to judge those who are without? ""But you remit, in order that remission may be granted you by God. The sins which are (thus) cleansed are such as a man may have committed against his brother, not against God. We profess, in short, in our prayer, that we will grant remission to our debtors; but it is not becoming to distend further, on the ground of the authority of such Scriptures, the cable of contention with alternate pull into diverse directions; so that one (Scripture) may seem to draw tight, another to relax, the reins of discipline-in uncertainty, as it were,-and the latter to debase the remedial aid of repentance through lenity, the former to refuse it through austerity. Further: the authority of Scripture will stand within its own limits, without reciprocal opposition. The remedial aid of repentance is determined by its own conditions, without unlimited concession; and the causes of it themselves are anteriorly distinguished without confusion in the proposition. We agree that the causes of repentance are sins. These we divide into two issues: some will be remissible, some irremissible: in accordance wherewith it will be doubtful to no one that some deserve chastisement, some condemnation.

Every sin is dischargeable either by pardon or else by penalty: by pardon as the result of chastisement, by penalty as the result of condemnation. Touching this difference, we have not only already premised certain antithetical passages of the Scriptures, on one hand retaining, on the other remitting, sins; but John, too, will teach us: "If any knoweth his brother to be sinning a sin not unto death, he shall request, and life shall be given to him; "because he is not "sinning unto death," this will be remissible. "(There) is a sin unto death; not for this do I say that any is to request" -this will be irremissible. So, where there is the efficacious power of "making request," there likewise is that of remission: where there is no (efficacious power) of "making request," there equally is none of remission either. According to this difference of sins, the condition of repentance also is discriminated. There will be a condition which may possibly obtain pardon,-in the case, namely, of a remissible sin: there will be a condition which can by no means obtain it,-in the case, namely, of an irremissible sin. And it remains to examine specially, with regard to the position of adultery and fornication, to which class of sins they ought to be assigned.

Chapter III.-An Objection Anticipated Before the Discussion Above Promised is Commenced.

But before doing this, I will make short work with an answer which meets us from the opposite side, in reference to that species of repentance which we are just defining as being without pardon. "Why, if," say they, "there is a repentance which lacks pardon, it immediately follows that such repentance must withal be wholly unpractised by you. For nothing is to be done in vain. Now repentance will be practised in vain, if it is without pardon. But all repentance is to be practised. Therefore let (us allow that) all obtains pardon, that it may not be practised in vain; because it will not be to be practised, if it be practised in vain. Now, in vain it is practised, if it shall lack pardon. Justly, then, do they allege (this argument) against us; since they have usurpingly kept in their own power the fruit of this as of other repentance-that is, pardon; for, so far as they are concerned, at whose hands (repentance) obtains man's peace, (it is in vain). As regards us, however, who remember that the Lord alone concedes (the pardon of) sins, (and of course of mortal ones,) it will not be practised in vain.

For (the repentance) being referred back to the Lord, and thenceforward lying prostrate before Him, will by this very fact the rather avail to win pardon, that it gains it by entreaty from God alone, that it believes not that man's peace is adequate to its guilt, that as far as regards the Church it prefers the blush of shame to the privilege of communion. For before her doors it stands, and by the example of its own stigma admonishes all others, and calls at the same time to its own aid the brethren's tears, and returns with an even richer merchandise-their compassion, namely-than their communion. And if it reaps not the harvest of peace here, yet it sows the seed of it with the Lord; nor does it lose, but prepares, its fruit. It will not fail of emolument if it do not fail in duty. Thus, neither is such repentance vain, nor such discipline harsh. Both honour God. The former, by laying no flattering unction to itself, will more readily win success; the latter, by assuming nothing to itself, will more fully aid.

Chapter IV.-Adultery and Fornication Synonymous.

Having defined the distinction (between the kinds) of repentance, we are by this time, then, able to return to the assessment of the sins-whether they be such as can obtain pardon at the hand of men. In the first place, (as for the fact) that we call adultery likewise fornication, usage requires (us so to do). ”Faith,” withal, has a familiar acquaintance with sundry appellations. So, in every one of our little works, we carefully guard usage. Besides, if I shall say ”adulterium,” and if ”stuprum,” the indictment of contamination of the flesh will be one and the same. For it makes no difference whether a man assault another’s bride or widow, provided it be not his own ”female; ”just as there is no difference made by places-whether it be in chambers or in towers that modesty is massacred. Every homicide, even outside a wood, is banditry. So, too, whoever enjoys any other than nuptial intercourse, in whatever place, and in the person of whatever woman, makes himself guilty of adultery and fornication. Accordingly, among us, secret connections as well-connections, that is, not first professed in presence of the Church-run risk of being judged akin to adultery and fornication; nor must we let them, if thereafter woven together by the covering of marriage, elude the charge. But all the other frenzies of passions-impious both toward the bodies and toward the sexes-beyond the laws of nature, we banish not only from the threshold, but from all shelter of the Church, because they are not sins, but monstrosities.

Chapter V.-Of the Prohibition of Adultery in the Decalogue.

Of how deep guilt, then, adultery-which is likewise a matter of fornication, in accordance with its criminal function-is to be accounted, the Law of God first comes to hand to show us; if it is true, (as it is), that after interdicting the superstitious service of alien gods, and the making of idols themselves, after commending (to religious observance) the veneration of the Sabbath, after commanding a religious regard toward parents second (only to that) toward God, (that Law) laid, as the next substratum in strengthening and fortifying such counts, no other precept than "Thou shall not commit adultery. For after spiritual chastity and sanctity followed corporeal integrity. And this (the Law) accordingly fortified, by immediately prohibiting its foe, adultery. Understand, consequently, what kind of sin (that must be), the repression of which (the Law) ordained next to (that of) idolatry. Nothing that is a second is remote from the first; nothing is so dose to the first as the second. That which results from the first is (in a sense) another first. And so adultery is bordering on idolatry. For idolatry withal, often cast as a reproach upon the People under the name of adultery and fornication, will be alike conjoined therewith in fate as in following-will be alike co-heir therewith in condemnation as in co-ordination. Yet further: premising "Thou shalt not commit adultery," (the Law) adjoins, "Thou shalt not kill.

It honoured adultery, of course, to which it gives the precedence over murder, in the very fore-front of the most holy law, among the primary counts of the celestial edict, marking it with the inscription of the very principal sins. From its place you may discern the measure, from its rank the station, from its neighbourhood the merit, of each thing. Even evil has a dignity, consisting in being stationed at the summit, or else in the centre, of the superlatively bad. I behold a certain pomp and circumstance of adultery: on the one side, Idolatry goes before and leads the way; on the other, Murder follows in company. Worthily, without doubt, has she taken her seat between the two most conspicuous eminences of misdeeds, and has completely filled the vacant space, as it were, in their midst, with an equal majesty of crime. Enclosed by such flanks, encircled and supported by such ribs, who shall dislocate her from the corporate mass of coherencies, from the bond of neighbour crimes, from the embrace of kindred wickednesses, so as to set apart her alone for the enjoyment of repentance? Will not on one side Idolatry, on the other Murder, detain her, and (if they have any

voice) reclaim: ”This is our wedge, this our compacting power? By (the standard of) Idolatry we are measured; by her disjunctive intervention we are conjoined; to her, outjutting from our midst, we are united; the Divine Scripture has made us concorporate; the very letters are our glue;

herself can no longer exist without us. ‘Many and many a time do I, Idolatry, subminister occasion to Adultery; witness my groves and my mounts, and the living waters, and the very temples in cities, what mighty agents we are for overthrowing modesty.’ ‘I also, Murder, sometimes exert myself on behalf of Adultery. To omit tragedies, witness nowadays the poisoners, witness the magicians, how many seductions I avenge, how many rivalries I revenge; how many guards, how many informers, how many accomplices, I make away with. Witness the midwives likewise, how many adulterous conceptions are slaughtered.’ Even among Christians there is no adultery without us. Wherever the business of the unclean spirit is, there are idolatries; wherever a man, by being polluted, is slain, there too is murder. Therefore the remedial aids of repentance will not be suitable to them, or else they will likewise be to us. We either detain Adultery, or else follow her. These words the sins themselves do speak. If the sins are deficient in speech, hard by (the door of the church) stands an idolater, hard by stands a murderer; in their midst stands, too, an adulterer. Alike, as the duty of repentance bids, they sit in sackcloth and bristle in ashes; with the self-same weeping they groan; with the selfsame prayers they make their circuits; with the self-same knees they supplicate; the self-same mother they invoke. What doest thou, gentlest and humanest Discipline? Either to all these will it be thy duty so to be, for ”blessed are the peacemakers;

” or else, if not to all, it will be thy duty to range thyself on our side. Dost thou once for all condemn the idolater and the murderer, but take the adulterer out from their midst?-(the adulterer), the successor of the idolater, the predecessor of the murderer, the colleague of each? It is ”an accepting of person: ” the more pitiable repentances thou hast left (unpitied) behind!

Chapter VI.-Examples of Such Offences Under the Old Dispensation No Pattern for the Disciples of the New. But Even the Old Has Examples of Vengeance Upon Such Offences.

Plainly, if you show by what patronages of heavenly precedents and precepts it is that you open to adultery alone-and therein to fornication also-the gate of repentance, at this very line our hostile encounter will forthwith cross swords. Yet I must necessarily prescribe you a law, not to stretch out your hand after the old things, not to look backwards: for ”the old things are passed away,” according to Isaiah; and ”a renewing hath been renewed,” according to Jeremiah; and ”forgetful of former things, we are reaching forward,” according to the apostle; and ”the law and the prophets (were) until John,” according to the Lord. For even if we are just now beginning with the Law in demonstrating (the nature of) adultery, it is justly with that phase of the law which Christ has ”not dissolved, but fulfilled. For it is the ”burdens” of the law which were ”until John,” not the remedial virtues. It is the ”yokes” of ”works” that have been rejected, not those of disciplines. ”Liberty in Christ” has done no injury to innocence. The law of piety, sanctity, humanity, truth, chastity, justice, mercy, benevolence, modesty, remains in its entirety; in which law ”blessed (is) the man who shall meditate by day and by night. About that (law) the same David (says) again: ”The law of the Lord (is) unblameable converting souls; the statutes of the Lord (are) direct, delighting hearts; the precept of the Lord far-shining, enlightening eyes. Thus, too, the apostle:

”And so the law indeed is holy, and the precept holy and most good” -”Thou shalt not commit adultery,” of course. But he had withal said above: ”Are we, then, making void the law through faith? Far be it; but we are establishing the law ” -forsooth in those (points) which, being even now interdicted by the New Testament, are prohibited by an even more emphatic

precept: instead of, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Whoever shall have seen with a view to concupiscence, hath already committed adultery in his own heart; " and instead of, "Thou shalt not kill," "Whoever shall have said to his brother, Racha, shall be in danger of hell. Ask (yourself) whether the law of not committing adultery be still in force, to which has been added that of not indulging concupiscence. Besides, if any precedents (taken from the Old Dispensation) shall favour you in (the secrecy of) your bosom, they shall not be set in opposition to this discipline which we are maintaining. For it is in vain that an additional law has been reared, condemning the origin even of sins-that is, concupiscences and wills-no less than the actual deeds; if the fact that pardon was of old in some cases conceded to adultery is to be a reason why it shall be conceded at the present day. "What will be the reward attaching to the restrictions imposed upon the more fully developed discipline of the present day, except that the eider (discipline) may be made the agent for granting indulgence to your prostitution?

"In that case, you will grant pardon to the idolater too, and to every apostate, because we find the People itself, so often guilty of these crimes, as often reinstated in their former privileges. You will maintain communion, too, with the murderer: because Ahab, by deprecation, washed away (the guilt of) Naboth's blood; and David, by confession, purged Uriah's slaughter, together with its cause-adultery. That done, you will condone incests, too, for Lot's sake; and fornications combined with incest, for Judah's sake; and base marriages with prostitutes, for Hosea's sake; and not only the frequent repetition of marriage, but its simultaneous plurality, for our fathers' sakes: for, of come, it is meet that there should also be a perfect equality of grace in regard of all deeds to which indulgence was in days bygone granted, if on the ground of some pristine precedent pardon is claimed for adultery. We, too, indeed have precedents in the self-same antiquity on the side of our opinion,-(precedents) of judgment not merely not waived, but even summarily executed upon fornication. And of course it is a sufficient one, that so vast a number-(the number) of 24, 000-of the People, when they committed fornication with the daughters of Madian, fell in one plague. But, with an eye to the glory of Christ, I prefer to derive (my) discipline from Christ. Grant that the pristine days may have had-if the Psychics please-even a right of (indulging) every immodesty;

grant that, before Christ, the flesh may have disported itself, nay, may have perished before its Lord went to seek and bring it back: not yet was it worthy of the gift of salvation; not yet apt for the office of sanctity. It was still, up to that time, accounted as being in Adam, with its own vicious nature, easily indulging concupiscence after whatever it had seen to be "attractive to the sight," and looking back at the lower things, and checking its itching with fig-leaves. Universally inherent was the virus of lust-the dregs which are formed out of milk contain it-(dregs) fitted (for so doing), in that even the waters themselves had not yet been bathed. But when the Word of God descended into flesh,-(flesh) not unsealed even by marriage,-and "the Word was made flesh," -(flesh) never to be unsealed by marriage,-which was to find its way to the tree not of incontinence, but of endurance; which was to taste from that tree not anything sweet, but something bitter; which was to pertain not to the infernal

regions, but to heaven; which was to be precinct not with the leaves of lasciviousness, but the flowers of holiness; which was to impart to the waters its own purities-thenceforth, whatever flesh (is) ”in Christ” has lost its pristine soils, is now a thing different, emerges in a new state, no longer (generated) of the slime of natural seed, nor of the grime of concupiscence, but of ”pure water” and a ”clean Spirit.

And, accordingly, why excuse it on the ground of pristine precedent? It did not bear the names of ”body of Christ,” of ”members of Christ,” of ”temple of God,” at the time When it used to obtain pardon for adultery. And thus if, from the moment when it changed its condition, and ”having been baptized into Christ put on Christ,” and was ”redeemed with a great price”-”the blood,” to wit, ”of the Lord and Lamb” -you take hold of any one precedent (be it precept, or law, or sentence,) of indulgence granted, or to be granted, to adultery and fornication,-you have likewise at our hands a definition of the time from which the age of the question dates.

Chapter VII.-Of the Parables of the Lost Ewe and the Lost Drachma.

You shall have leave to begin with the parables, where you have the lost ewe re-sought by the Lord, and carried back on His shoulders. Let the very paintings upon your cups come forward to show whether even in them the figurative meaning of that sheep will shine through (the outward semblance, to teach) whether a Christian or heathen sinner be the object it aims at in the matter of restoration. For we put in a demurrer arising out of the teaching of nature, out of the law of ear and tongue, out of the soundness of the mental faculty, to the effect that such answers are always given as are called forth (by the question,-answers), that is, to the (questions) which call them forth. That which was calling forth (an answer in the present case) was, I take it, the fact that the Pharisees were muttering in indignation at the Lord's admitting to His society heathen publicans and sinners, and communicating with them in food. When, in reply to this, the Lord had figured the restoration of the lost ewe, to whom else is it credible that he configured it but to the lost heathen, about whom the question was then in hand,-not about a Christian, who up to that time had no existence? Else, what kind of (hypothesis) is it that the Lord, like a quibbler in answering, omitting the present subject-matter which it was His duty to refute, should spend His labour about one yet future?

"But a 'sheep' properly means a Christian, and the Lord's 'flock' is the people of the Church, and the 'good shepherd' is Christ; and hence in the 'sheep' we must understand a Christian who has erred from the Church's 'flock.'" In that case, you make the Lord to have given no answer to the Pharisees' muttering, but to your presumption. And yet you will be bound so to defend that presumption, as to deny that the (points) which you think applicable to Christians are referable to a heathen. Tell me, is not all mankind one flock of God? Is not the same God both Lord and Shepherd of the universal nations? Who more "perishes" from God than the heathen, so long as he "errs? "Who is more "re-sought" by God than the heathen, when he is recalled by Christ? In fact, it is among heathens that this order finds antecedent place; if, that is, Christians are not otherwise made out of heathens than by being first "lost," and "re-sought" by God, and "carried back" by Christ. So likewise ought this order to be kept, that we may interpret any such (figure) with reference to those in whom it finds prior place. But you, I take it, would wish this: that He should represent the

ewe as lost not from a flock, but from an ark or a chest! In like manner, albeit He calls the remaining number of the heathens "righteous," it does not follow that He shows them to be Christians;

dealing as He is with Jews, and at that very moment refuting them, because they were indignant at the hope of the heathens. But in order to express, in opposition to the Pharisees' envy, His own grace and goodwill even in regard of one heathen, He preferred the salvation of one sinner by repentance to theirs by righteousness; or else, pray, were the Jews not "righteous," and such as "had no need of repentance," having, as they had, as pilotages of discipline and instruments of fear, "the Law and the Prophets? "He set them therefore in the parable-and if not such as they were, yet such as they ought to have been-that they migh blush the more when they heard that repentance was necessary to others, and not to themselves.

Similarly, the parable of the drachma, as being called forth out of the same subject-matter, we equally interpret with reference to a heathen; albeit it had been "lost" in a house, as it were in the church; albeit "found" by aid of a "lamp," as it were by aid of God's word. Nay, but this whole world is the one house of all; in which world it is more the heathen, who is found in darkness, whom the grace of God enlightens, than the Christian, who is already in God's light. Finally, it is one "straying" which is ascribed to the ewe and the drachma: (and this is an evidence in my favour); for if the parables had been composed with a view to a Christian sinner, after the loss of his faith, a second loss and restoration of them would have been noted.

I will now withdraw for a short time from this position; in order that I may, even by withdrawing, the more recommend it, when I shall have succeeded even thus also in confuting the presumption of the opposite side. I admit that the sinner portrayed in each parable is one who is already a Christian; yet not that on this account must he be affirmed to be such an one as can be restored, through repentance, from the crime of adultery and fornication. For although he be said to "have perished," there will be the kind of perdition to treat of; inasmuch as the "ewe" "perished" not by dying, but by straying; and the "drachma" not by being destroyed, but by being hidden. In this sense, a thing which is safe may be said to "have perished. Therefore the believer, too, "perishes," by lapsing out of (the right path) into a public exhibition of charioteering frenzy, or gladiatorial gore, or scenic foulness, or athletic vanity; or else if he has lent the aid of any special "arts of curiosity" to sports, to the convivialities of heathen solemnity, to official exigence, to the ministry of another's idolatry; if he has impaled himself upon some word of ambiguous denial, or else of blasphemy. For some such cause he has been driven outside the flock; or even himself, perhaps, by anger, by pride, by jealousy, (or)-as, in fact, often happens-by disdaining to submit to chastisement, has broken away (from it). He ought to be re-sought and recalled.

That which can be recovered does not "perish," unless it persist in remaining outside. You will well interpret the parable by recalling the sinner while he is still living. But, for the adulterer and fornicator, I who is there who has not pronounced him to be dead immediately

upon commission of the crime? With what face will you restore to the flock one who is dead, on the authority of that parable which recalls a sheep not dead?

Finally, if you are mindful of the prophets, when they are chiding the shepherds, there is a word-I think it is Ezekiel's: "Shepherds, hold, ye devour the milk, and clothe you with the fleeces: what is strong ye have slain; what is weak ye have not tended; what is shattered ye have not bound; what has been driven out ye have not brought back; what has perished ye have not re-sought." Pray, does he withal upbraid them at all concerning that which is dead, that they have taken no care to restore that too to the flock? Plainly, he makes it an additional reproach that they have caused the sheep to perish, and to be eaten up by the beasts of the field; nor can they either "perish mortally," or be "eaten up," if they are left remaining. "Is it not possible-(granting) that ewes which have been mortally lost, and eaten up, are recovered-that (in accordance also with the example of the drachma (lost and found again) even within the house of God, the Church) there may be some sins of a moderate character, proportionable to the small size and the weight of a drachma, which, lurking in the same Church, and by and by in the same discovered, forthwith are brought to an end in the same with the joy of amendment? "But of adultery and fornication it is not a drachma, but a talent, (which is the measure); and for searching them out there is need not of the javelin-light of a lamp, but of the spear-like ray of the entire sun. No sooner has (such a) man made his appearance than he is expelled from the Church; nor does he remain there; nor does he cause joy to the Church which discovers him, but grief; nor does he invite the congratulation of her neighbours, but the fellowship in sadness of the surrounding fraternities.

By comparison, even in this way, of this our interpretation with theirs, the arguments of both the ewe and the drachma will all the more refer to the heathen, that they cannot possibly apply to the Christian guilty of the sin for the sake of which they are wrested into a forced application to the Christian on the opposite side.

Chapter VIII.-Of the Prodigal Son.

But, however, the majority of interpreters of the parables are deceived by the self-same result as is of very frequent occurrence in the case of embroidering garments with purple. When you think that you have judiciously harmonized the proportions of the hues, and believe yourself to have succeeded in skilfully giving vividness to their mutual combination; presently, when each body (of colour) and (the various) lights are fully developed, the convicted diversity will expose all the error. In the self-same darkness, accordingly, with regard to the parable of the two, sons also, they are led by some figures (occurring in it), which harmonize in hue with the present (state of things), to wander out of the path of the true light of that comparison which the subject-matter of the parable presents. For they set down, as represented in the two sons, two peoples-the eider the Jewish, the younger the Christian: for they cannot in the sequel arrange for the Christian sinner, in the person of the younger son, to obtain pardon, unless in the person of the eider they first portray the Jewish. Now, if I shall succeed in showing that the Jewish fails to suit the comparison of the elder son, the consequence of course will be, that the Christian will not be admissible (as represented) by the joint figure of the younger son. For although the Jew withal be called ”a son,” and an ”elder one,” inasmuch as he had priority in adoption;

although, too, he envy the Christian the reconciliation of God the Father,-a point which the opposite side most eagerly catches at,-still it will be no speech of a Jew to the Father: ”Behold, in how many years do I serve Thee, and Thy precept have I never transgressed. For when has the Jew not been a transgressor of the law; hearing with the ear, and not hearing; holding in hatred him who reproveth in the gates, and in scorn holy speech? So, too, it will be no speech of the Father to the Jew: ”Thou art always with Me, and all Mine are thine. For the Jews are pronounced ”apostate sons, begotten indeed and raised on high, but who have not understood the Lord, and who have quite forsaken the Lord, and have provoked unto anger the Holy One of Israel. That all things, plainly, were conceded to the Jew, we shall admit; but he has likewise had every more savoury morsel torn from his throat, not to say the very land of paternal promise. And accordingly the Jew at the present day, no less than the younger son, having squandered God’s substance, is a beggar in alien territory, serving even until now its princes, that is, the princes of this world. Seek, therefore, the Christians some other as their brother; for the Jew the parable does not admit.

Much more aptly would they have matched the Christian with the elder, and the Jew with the younger son, "according to the analogy of faith," if the order of each people as intimated from Rebecca's womb permitted the inversion: only that (in that case) the concluding paragraph would oppose them; for it will he fitting for the Christian to rejoice, and not to grieve, at the restoration of Israel, if it he true, (as it is), that the whole of our hope is intimately united with the remaining expectation of Israel. Thus, even if some (features in the parable) are favourable, yet by others of a contrary significance the thorough carrying out of this comparison is destroyed; although (albeit all points be capable of corresponding with mirror-like accuracy) there he one cardinal danger in interpretations-the danger lest the felicity of our comparisons be tempered with a different aim from that which the subject-matter of each particular parable has bidden us (temper it). For we remember (to have seen) actors withal, white accommodating allegorical gestures to their ditties, giving expression to such as are far different from the immediate plot, and scene, and character, and yet with the utmost congruity. But away with extraordinary ingenuity, for it has nothing to do with our subject. Thus heretics, too, apply the self-same parables where they list, and exclude them (in other cases)-not where they ought-with the utmost aptitude. Why the utmost aptitude?

Because from the very beginning they have moulded together the very subject-matters of their doctrines in accordance with the opportune incidences of the parables. Loosed as they are from the constraints of the rule of truth, they have had leisure, of course, to search into and put together those things of which the parables seem (to be symbolical).

Chapter IX.-Certain General Principles of Parabolic Interpretation. These Applied to the Parables Now Under Consideration, Especially to that of the Prodigal Son.

We, however, who do not make the parables the sources whence we devise our subject-matters, but the subject-matters the sources whence we interpret the parables, do not labour hard, either, to twist all things (into shape) in the exposition, while we take care to avoid all contradictions. Why "an hundred sheep? "and why, to be sure, "ten drachmas? "And what is that "besom? "Necessary it was that He who was desiring to express the extreme pleasure which the salvation of one sinner gives to God, should name some special quantity of a numerical whole from which to describe that "one" had perished. Necessary it was that the style of one engaged in searching for a "drachma" in a "house," should be aptly fitted with the helpful accompaniment of a "besom" as well as of a "lamp. For curious niceties of this kind not only render some things suspected, but, by the subtlety of forced explanations, generally lead away from the truth. There are, moreover, some points which are just simply introduced with a view to the structure and disposition and texture of the parable, in order that they may be worked up throughout to the end for which the typical example is being provided. Now, of course the (parable of) the two sons will point to the same end as (those of) the drachma and the ewe: for it has the self-same cause (to call it forth) as those to which it coheres, and the selfsame "muttering," of course, of the Pharisees at the intercourse between the Lord and heathens.

Or else, if any doubts that in the land of Judea, subjugated as it had been long since by the hand of Pompey and of Lucullus, the publicans were heathens, let him read Deuteronomy: "There shall be no tribute-weigher of the sons of Israel. Nor would the name of publicans

have been so execrable in the eyes of the Lord, unless as being a ”strange” name,-a (name) of such as put up the pathways of the very sky, and earth, and sea, for sale. Moreover, when (the writer) adjoins ”sinners” to ”publicans,” it does not follow that he shows them to have been Jews, albeit some may possibly have been so; but by placing on a par the one genus of heathens-some sinners by office, that is, publicans; some by nature, that is, not publicans-he has drawn a distinction between them. Besides, the Lord would not have been censured for partaking of food with Jews, but with heathens, from whose board the Jewish discipline excludes (its disciples).

Now we must proceed, in the case of the prodigal son, to consider first that which is more useful; for no adjustment of examples, albeit in the most nicely-poised balance, shall be admitted if it shall prove to be most hurtful to salvation. But the whole system of salvation, as it is comprised in the maintenance of discipline, we see is being subverted by that interpretation which is affected by the opposite side. For if it is a Christian who, after wandering far from his Father, squanders, by living heathenishly, the ”substance” received from God his Father,-(the substance), of course, of baptism-(the substance), of course, of the Holy Spirit, and (in consequence) of eternal hope; if, stripped of his mental ”goods,” he has even handed his service over to the prince of the world -who else but the devil?-and by him being appointed over the business of ”feeding swine”-of tending unclean spirits, to wit-has recovered his senses so as to return to his Father,-the result will be, that, not adulterers and fornicators, but idolaters, and blasphemers, and renegades, and every class of apostates, will by this parable make satisfaction to the Father; and in this way (it may) rather (be said that) the whole ”substance” of the sacrament is most truly wasted away. For who will fear to squander what he has the power of afterwards recovering? Who will be careful to preserve to perpetuity what he will be able to lose not to perpetuity? Security in sin is likewise an appetite for it.

Therefore the apostate withal will recover his former ”garment,” the robe of the Holy Spirit; and a renewal of the ”ring,” the sign and seal of baptism; and Christ will again be ”slaughtered; ” and he will recline on that couch from which such as are unworthily clad are wont to be lifted by the torturers, and cast away into darkness, -much more such as have been stripped. It is therefore a further step if it is not expedient, (any more than reasonable), that the story of the prodigal son should apply to a Christian. Wherefore, if the image of a ”son” is not entirely suitable to a Jew either, our interpretation shall be simply governed with an eye to the object the Lord had in view. The Lord had come, of course, to save that which ”had perished; ” ”a Physician. necessary to ”the sick” ”more than to the whole. This fact He was in the habit both of typifying in parables and preaching in direct statements. Who among men ”perishes,” who falls from health, but he who knows not the Lord? Who is ”safe and sound,” but he who knows the Lord? These two classes-”brothers” by birth-this parable also will signify. See whether the heathen have in God the Father the ”substance” of origin, and wisdom, and natural power of Godward recognition; by means of which power the apostle withal notes that ”in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God,” -(wisdom) which, of course, it had received originally from God.

This (”substance”), accordingly, he ”squandered; ”having been cast by his moral habits far from the Lord, amid the errors and allurements and appetites of the world, where, compelled by hunger after truth, he handed himself over to the prince of this age. He set him over ”swine,” to feed that flock familiar to demons, where he would not be master of a supply of vital food, and at the same time would see others (engaged) in a divine work, having abundance of heavenly bread. He remembers his Father, God; he returns to Him when he has been satisfied; he receives again the pristine ”garment,”-the condition, to wit, which Adam by transgression had lost. The ”ring” also he is then Wont to receive for the first time, wherewith, after being interrogated, he publicly seals the agreement of faith, and thus thenceforward feeds upon the ”fatness” of the Lord’s body,-the Eucharist, to wit. This will be the prodigal son, who never in days bygone was thrifty; who was from the first prodigal, because not from the first a Christian. Him withal, returning from the world to the Father’s embraces, the Pharisees mourned over, in the persons of the ”publicans and sinners. And accordingly to this point alone the elder brother’s envy is adapted: not because the Jews were innocent, and obedient to God, but because they envied the nation salvation; being plainly they who ought to have been ”ever with” the Father.

And of course it is immediately over the first calling of the Christian that the Jew groans, not over his second restoration: for the former reflects its rap even upon the heathen; but the latter, which takes place in the churches, is not known even to the Jews. I think that I have advanced interpretations more consonant with the subject-matter of the parables, and the congruity of things, and the preservation of disciplines. But if the view with which the opposite party is eager to mould the ewe, and the drachma, and the voluptuousness of the son to the shape of the Christian sinner, is that they may endow adultery and fornication with (the gift of) repentance; it will be fitting either that all other crimes equally capital should be conceded remissible, or else that their peers, adultery and fornication, should be retained inconcessible.

But it is more (to the point) that it is not lawful to draw conclusions about anything else than the subject which was immediately in hand. In short, if it were lawful to transfer the parables to other ends (than they were originally intended for), it would be rather to martyrdom that we would direct the hope drawn from those now in question; for that is the only thing which, after all his substance has been squandered, will be able to restore the son; and will joyfully proclaim that the drachma has been found, albeit among all (rubbish) on a dungheap; and will carry back into the flock on the shoulders of the Lord Himself the ewe, fugitive though she have been over all that is rough and rugged. But we prefer, if it must be so, to be less wise in the Scriptures, than to be wise against them. We are as much bound to keep the sense of the Lord as His precept. Transgression in interpretation is not lighter than in conversation.

Chapter X.-Repentance More Competent to Heathens Than to Christians.

When, therefore, the yoke which forbade the discussion of these parables with a view to the heathens has been shaken off, and the necessity Once for all discerned or admitted of not interpreting otherwise than is (suitable to) the subject-matter of the proposition; they contend in the next place, that the official proclamation of repentance is not even applicable to heathens, since their sins are not amenable to it, imputable as they are to ignorance, which nature alone renders culpable before God. Hence the remedies are unintelligible to such to whom the perils themselves are unintelligible: whereas the principle of repentance finds there its corresponding place where sin is committed with conscience and will, where both the fault and the favour are intelligible; that he who mourns, he who prostrates himself, is he who knows both what he has lost and what he will recover if he makes to God the offering of his repentance-to God who, of course, offers that repentance rather to sons than to strangers.

Was that, then, the reason why Jonah thought not repentance necessary to the heathen Ninevites, when he tergiversated in the duty of preaching? or did he rather, foreseeing the mercy of God poured forth even upon strangers, fear that that mercy would, as it were, destroy (the credit of) his proclamation? and accordingly, for the sake of a profane city, not yet possessed of a knowledge of God, still sinning in ignorance, did the prophet well-nigh perish? except that he suffered a typical example of the Lord's passion, which was to redeem heathens as well (as others) on their repentance. It is enough for me that even John, when "strewing the Lord's ways," was the herald of repentance no less to such as were on military service and to publicans, than to the sons of Abraham. The Lord Himself presumed repentance on the part of the Sidonians and Tyrians if they had seen the evidences of His "miracles."

Nay, but I will even contend that repentance is more competent to natural sinners than to voluntary. For he will merit its fruit who has not yet used more than he who has already withal abused it; and remedies will be more effective on their first application than when

outworn. No doubt the Lord is "kind" to "the unthankful," rather than to the ignorant! and "merciful" to the "reprobates" sooner than to such as have yet had no probation! so that in-suits offered to His clemency do not rather incur His anger than His caresses! and He does not more willingly impart to strangers that (clemency) which, in the case of His own sons, He has lost, seeing that He has thus adopted the Gentiles while the Jews make sport of His patience! But what the Psychics mean is this-that God, the Judge of righteousness, prefers the repentance to the death of that sinner who has preferred death to repentance! If this is so, it is by sinning that we merit favour.

Come, you rope-walker upon modesty, and chastity, and every kind of sexual sanctity, who, by the instrumentality of a discipline of this nature remote from the path of truth, mount with uncertain footstep upon a most slender thread, balancing flesh with spirit, moderating your animal principle by faith, tempering your eye by fear; why are you thus wholly engaged in a single step? Go on, if you succeed in finding power and will, while you are so secure, and as it were upon solid ground. For if any wavering of the flesh, any distraction of the mind, any wandering of the eye, shall chance to shake you down from your equipoise, "God is good. To His own (children), not to heathens, He opens His bosom: a second repentance will await you; you will again, from being an adulterer, be a Christian! These (pleas) you (will urge) to me, most benignant interpreter of God. But I would yield my ground to you, if the scripture of" the Shepherd," which is the only one which favours adulterers, had deserved to find a place in the Divine canon; if it had not been habitually judged by every council of Churches (even of your own) among apocryphal and false (writings); itself adulterous, and hence a patroness of its comrades; from which in other respects, too, you derive initiation;

to which, perchance, that" Shepherd," will play the patron whom you depict upon your (sacramental) chalice, (depict, I say, as) himself withal a prostitutor of the Christian sacrament, (and hence) worthily both the idol of drunkenness, and the brize of adultery by which the chalice will quickly be followed, (a chalice) from which you sip nothing more readily than (the flavour of) the "ewe" of (your) second repentance! I, however, imbibe the Scriptures of that Shepherd who cannot be broken. Him John forthwith offers me, together with the layer and duty of repentance; (and offers Him as) saying, "Bear worthy fruits of repentance: and say not, We have Abraham (as our) father"-for fear, to wit, lest they should again take flattering unctions for delinquency from the grace shown to the fathers-"for God is able from these stones to raise sons to Abraham. Thus it follows that we too (must judge) such as "sin no more" (as) "bearing worthy fruits of repentance. For what more ripens as the fruit of repentance than the achievement of emendation? But even if pardon is rather the" fruit of repentance," even pardon cannot co-exist without the cessation from sin. So is the cessation from sin the root of pardon, that pardon may be the fruit of repentance.

Chapter XI.-From Parables Tertullian Comes to Consider Definite Acts of the Lord.

From the side of its pertinence to the Gospel, the question of the parables indeed has by this time been disposed of. If, however, the Lord, by His deeds withal, issued any such proclamation in favour of sinners; as when He permitted contact even with his own body to the ”woman, a sinner,”-washing, as she did, His feet with tears, and wiping them with her hair, and inaugurating His sepulture with ointment; as when to the Samaritaness-not an adulteress by her now sixth marriage, but a prostitute-He showed (what He did show readily to any one) who He was; -no benefit is hence conferred upon our adversaries, even if it had been to such as were already Christians that He (in these several cases) granted pardon. For we now affirm: This is lawful to the Lord alone: may the power of His indulgence be operative at the present day! At those times, however, in which He lived on earth we lay this down definitively, that it is no prejudgment against us if pardon used to be conferred on sinners-even Jewish ones. For Christian discipline dates from the renewing of the Testament, and (as we have premised) from the redemption of flesh-that is, the Lord’s passion. None was perfect before the discovery of the order of faith; none a Christian before the resumption of Christ to heaven; none holy before the manifestation of the Holy Spirit from heaven, the Determiner of discipline itself.

Chapter XII.-Of the Verdict of the Apostles, Assembled in Council, Upon the Subject of Adultery.

Accordingly, these who have received ”another Paraclete” in and through the apostles,-(a Paraclete) whom, not recognising Him even in His special prophets, they no longer possess in the apostles either;-come, now, let them, even from the apostolic instrument, teach us the possibility that the stains of a flesh which after baptism has been repolluted, can by repentance be washed away. Do we not, in the apostles also, recognise the form of the Old Law with regard to the demonstration of adultery, how great (a crime) it is; lest perchance it be esteemed more trivial in the new stage of disciplines than in the old? When first the Gospel thundered and shook the old system to its base, when dispute was being held on the question of retaining or not the Law; this is the first rule which the apostles, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, send out to those who were already beginning to be gathered to their side out of the nations: ”It has seemed (good),” say they, ”to the Holy Spirit and to us to cast upon you no ampler weight than (that) of those (things) from which it is necessary that abstinence be observed; from sacrifices, and from fornications, and from blood: by abstaining from which ye act rightly, the Holy Spirit carrying you. Sufficient it is, that in this place withal there has been preserved to adultery and fornication the post of their own honour between idolatry and murder:

for the interdict upon ”blood” we shall understand to be (an interdict) much more upon human blood. Well, then, in what light do the apostles will those crimes to appear which alone they select, in the way of careful guarding against, from the pristine Law? which alone they prescribe as necessarily to be abstained from? Not that they permit others; but that these alone they put in the foremost rank, of course as not remissible; (they,) who, for the heathens’ sake, made the other burdens of the law remissible. Why, then, do they release our neck from so heavy a yoke, except to place forever upon those (necks) these compendia of discipline? Why do they indulgently relax so many bonds, except that they may wholly bind us in perpetuity to such as are more necessary? They loosed us from the more numerous, that we might be bound up to abstinence from the more noxious. The matter has been

settled by compensation: we have gained much, in order that we may render some-what. But the compensation is not revocable; if, that is, it will be revoked by iteration-(iteration) of adultery, of course, and blood and idolatry: for it will follow that the (burden of) the whole law will be incurred, if the condition of pardon shall be violated. But it is not lightly that the Holy Spirit has come to an agreement with us-coming to this agreement even without our asking; whence He is the more to be honoured. His engagement none but an ungrateful man will dissolve.

In that event, He will neither accept back what He has discarded, nor discard what He has retained. Of the latest Testament the condition is ever immutable; and, of course the public recitation of that decree, and the counsel embodied therein, will cease (only) with the word. He has definitely enough refused pardon to those crimes the careful avoidance whereof He selectively enjoined; He has claimed whatever He has not inferentially conceded. Hence it is that there is no restoration of peace granted by the Churches to ”idolatry” or to ”blood. From which final decision of theirs that the apostles should have departed, is (I think) not lawful to believe; or else, if some find it possible to believe so, they will be bound to prove it.

Chapter XIII.-Of St. Paul, and the Person Whom He Urges the Corinthians to Forgive.

We know plainly at this point, too, the suspicions which they raise. For, in fact, they suspect the Apostle Paul of having, in the second (Epistle) to the Corinthians, granted pardon to the self-same fornicator whom in the first he has publicly sentenced to be ”surrendered to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh,” -impious heir as he was to his father’s wedlock; as if he subsequently erased his own words, writing: ”But if any hath wholly saddened, he hath not wholly saddened me, but in part, lest I burden you all. Sufficient is such a chiding which is given by many; so that, on the contrary, ye should prefer to forgive and console, lest, perhaps, by more abundant sadness, such an one be devoured. For which reason, I pray you, confirm toward him affection. For to this end withal have I written, that I may learn a proof of you, that in all (things) ye are obedient to me. But if ye shall have forgiven any, so (do) I; for I, too, if I have forgiven ought, have forgiven in the person of Christ, lest we be overreached by Satan, since we are not ignorant of his injections. What (reference) is understood here to the fornicator? what to the contaminator of his father’s bed? what to the Christian who had overstepped the shamelessness of heathens?-since, of course, he would have absolved by a special pardon one whom he had condemned by a special anger. He is more obscure in his pity than in his indignation.

He is more open in his austerity than in his lenity. And yet, (generally), anger is more readily indirect than indulgence. Things of a sadder are more wont to hesitate than things of a more joyous cast. Of course the question in hand concerned some moderate indulgence; which (moderation in the indulgence) was now, if ever, to be divined, when it is usual for all the greatest indulgences not to be granted without public proclamation, so far (are they from being granted) without particularization. Why, do you yourself, when introducing into the church, for the purpose of melting the brotherhood by his prayers, the repentant adulterer, lead into the midst and prostrate him, all in haircloth and ashes, a compound of disgrace and horror, before the widows, before the elders, suing for the tears of all, licking the footprints of all, clasping the knees of all? And do you, good shepherd and blessed father

that you are, to bring about the (desired) end of the man, grace your harangue with all the allurements of mercy in your power, and under the parable of the "ewe" go in quest of your goats? do you, for fear lest your "ewe" again take a leap out from the flock-as if that were no more lawful for the future which was not even once lawful-fill all the rest likewise full of apprehension at the very moment of granting indulgence?

And would the apostle so carelessly have granted indulgence to the atrocious licentiousness of fornication burdened with incest, as not at least to have exacted from the criminal even this legally established garb of repentance which you ought to have learned from him? as to have uttered no commination on the past? no allocution touching the future? Nay, more; he goes further, and beseeches that they "would confirm toward him affection," as if he were making satisfaction to him, not as if he were granting an indulgence! And yet I hear (him speak of) "affection," not "communion; "as (he writes) withal to the Thessalonians "But if any obey not our word through the epistle, him mark; and associate not with him, that he may feel awed; not regarding (him) as an enemy, but rebuking as a brother. Accordingly, he could have said that to a fornicator, too, "affection" only was conceded, not "communion "as well; to an incestuous man, however, not even "affection; "whom he would, to be sure, have bidden to be banished from their midst -much more, of course, from their mind. "But he was apprehensive lest they should be 'overreached by Satan' with regard to the loss of that person whom himself had cast forth to Satan; or else lest, 'by abundance of mourning, he should be devoured' whom he had sentenced to 'destruction of the flesh.'" Here they go so far as to interpret "destruction of the flesh" the office of repentance;

in that by fasts, and squalor, and every species of neglect and studious ill-treatment devoted to the extermination of the flesh, it seems to make satisfaction to God; so that they argue that that fornicator-that incestuous person rather-having been delivered by the apostle to Satan, not with a view to "perdition," but with a view to "emendation," on the hypothesis that subsequently he would, on account of the "destruction" (that is, the general affliction) "of the flesh," attain pardon, therefore did actually attain it. Plainly, the selfsame apostle delivered to Satan Hymenaeus and Alexander, "that they might be emended into not blaspheming," as he writes to his Timotheus. "But withal himself says that 'a stake was given him, an angel of Satan, 'by which he was to be buffeted, lest he should exalt himself" If they touch upon this (instance) withal, in order to lead us to understand that such as were "delivered to Sam" by him (were so delivered) with a view to emendation, not to perdition; what similarity is there between blasphemy and incest, and a soul entirely free from these,-nay, rather elated from no other source than the highest sanctity and all innocence; which (elation of soul) was being restrained in the apostle by "buffets," if you will, by means (as they say) of pain in the ear or head? Incest, however, and blasphemy, deserved to have delivered the entire persons of men to Satan himself for a possession, not to "an angel" of his. And (there is yet another point):

for about this it makes a difference, nay, rather withal in regard to this it is of the utmost consequence, that we find those men delivered by the apostle to Satan, but to the apostle

himself an angel of Satan given. Lastly, when Paul is praying the Lord for its removal, what does he hear? "Hold my grace sufficient; for virtue is perfected in infirmity. This they who are surrendered to Satan cannot hear. Moreover, if the crime of Hymenaeus and Alexander-blasphemy, to wit-is irremissible in this and in the future. age, of course the apostle would not, in opposition to the determinate decision of the Lord, have given to Satan, under a hope of pardon, men already sunken from the faith into blasphemy; whence, too, he pronounced them "shipwrecked with regard to faith," having no longer the solace of the ship, the Church. For to those who, after believing, have struck upon (the rock of) blasphemy, pardon is denied; on the other hand, heathens and heretics are daily emerging out of blasphemy. But even if he did say, "I delivered them to Satan, that they might receive the discipline of not blaspheming," he said it of the rest, who, by their deliverance to Satan-that is, their projection outside the Church-had to be trained in the knowledge that there must be no blaspheming. So, therefore, the incestuous fornicator, too, he delivered, not with a view to emendation, but with a view to perdition, to Satan, to whom he had already, by sinning above an heathen, gone over;

that they might learn there must be no fornicating. Finally, he says, "for the destruction of the flesh," not its "torture"-condemning the actual substance through which he had fallen out (of the faith), which substance had already perished immediately on the loss of baptism-" in order that the spirit," he says, "may be saved in the day of the Lord. And (here, again, is a difficulty): for let this point be inquired into, whether the man's own spirit will be saved. In that case, a spirit polluted with so great a wickedness will be saved; the object of the perdition of the flesh being, that the spirit may be saved in penalty. In that case, the interpretation which is contrary to ours will recognise a penalty without the flesh, if we lose the resurrection of the flesh. It remains, therefore, that his meaning was, that that spirit which is accounted to exist in the Church must be presented "saved," that is, untainted by the contagion of impurities in the day of the Lord, by the ejection of the incestuous fornicator; if, that is, he subjoins: "Know ye not, that a little leaven spoileth the savour of the whole lump? " And yet incestuous fornication was not a little, but a large, leaven.

Chapter XIV.-The Same Subject Continued.

And-these intervening points having accordingly been got rid of-I return to the second of Corinthians; in order to prove that this saying also of the apostle, ”Sufficient to such a man be this rebuke which (is administered) by many,” is not suitable to the person of the fornicator. For if he had sentenced him ”to be surrendered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,” of course he had condemned rather than rebuked him. Some other, then, it was to whom he willed the ”rebuke” to be sufficient; if, that is, the fornicator had incurred not ”rebuke” from his sentence, but ”condemnation. For I offer you withal, for your investigation, this very question: Whether there were in the first Epistle others, too, who ”wholly saddened” the apostle by ”acting disorderly,” and ”were wholly saddened” by him, through incurring (his) ”rebuke,” according to the sense of the second Epistle; of whom some particular one may in that (second Epistle) have received pardon. Direct we, moreover, our attention to the entire first Epistle, written (that I may so say) as a whole, not with ink, but with gall; swelling, indignant, disdainful, comminatory, invidious, and shaped through (a series of) individual charges, with an eye to certain individuals who were, as it were, the proprietors of those charges? For so had schisms, and emulations, and discussions, and presumptions, and elations, and contentions required, that they should be laden with invidiousness, and rebuffed with curt reproof, and filed down by haughtiness, and deterred by austerity.

And what kind of invidiousness is the pungency of humility? ”To God I give thanks that I have baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, lest any say that I have baptized in mine own name. ”For neither did I judge to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And, ”(I think) God hath selected us the apostles (as) hindmost, like men appointed to fight with wild beasts; since we have been made a spectacle to this world, both to angels and to men: ”And, ”We have been made the offscourings of this world, the refuse of all: ”And, ”Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Christ Jesus our Lord? ” With what kind of superciliousness, on the contrary, was he compelled to declare, ”But to me it is of small moment that I be interrogated by you, or by a human court-day; for neither am I conscious to myself (of any guilt); ”and, ”My glory none shall make empty. ”Know ye not that we are to judge angels? ” Again, of how open censure (does) the free expression (find utterance), how manifest the edge of the spiritual sword, (in words like these): ”Ye

are already enriched! ye are already satiated! ye are already reigning! and, ”If any thinks himself to know, he knoweth not yet how it behaves him to know I” Is he not even then ”smiting some one’s face,” in saying, ”For who maketh thee to differ? What, moreover, hast thou which thou hast not received?

Why gloriest thou as if thou have not received? ” Is he not withal ”smiting them upon the mouth,” (in saying): ”But some, in (their) conscience, even until now eat (it) as if (it were) an idol-sacrifice. But, so sinning, by shocking the weak consciences of the brethren thoroughly, they will sin against Christ. By this time, indeed, (he mentions individuals) by name: ”Or have we not a power of eating., and of drinking, and of leading about women, just as the other apostles withal, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? ”and, ”If others attain to (a share) in power over you, (may) not we rather? ”In like manner he pricks them, too, with an individualizing pen: ”Wherefore, let him who thinketh himself to be standing, see lest he fall; ”and, ”If any seemeth to be contentious, we have not such a custom, nor (has) the Church of the Lord. With such a final clause (as the following), wound up with a malediction, ”If any loveth not the Lord Jesus, be he anathema maranatha,” he is, of course, striking some particular individual through.

But I will rather take my stand at that point where the apostle is more fervent, where the fornicator himself has troubled others also. ”As if I be not about to come unto you, some are inflated. But I will come with more speed, if the Lord shall have permitted, and will learn not the speech of those who are inflated, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power. And what will ye? shall I come unto you in a rod, or in a spirit of lenity? ”For what was to succeed? ”There is heard among you generally fornication, and such fornication as (is) not (heard) even among the Gentiles, that one should have his own father’s wife. And are ye inflated, and have ye not rather mourned, that he who hath committed such a deed may be taken away from the midst of you? ”For whom were they to ”mourn? ”Of course, for one dead. To whom were they to mourn? Of course, to the Lord, in order that in some way or other he may be ”taken away from the midst of them; ”not, of course in order that he may be put outside the Church. For a thing would not have been requested of God which came within the official province of the president (of the Church);

but (what would be requested of Him was), that through death-not only this death common to all, but one specially appropriate to that very flesh which was already a corpse, a tomb leprous with irremediable uncleanness-he might more fully (than by simple excommunication) incur the penalty of being ”taken away” from the Church. And accordingly, in so far as it was meantime possible for him to be ”taken away,” he ”adjudged such an one to be surrendered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. For it followed that flesh which was being cast forth to the devil should be accursed, in order that it might be discarded from the sacrament of blessing, never to return into the camp of the Church.

And thus we see in this place the apostle’s severity divided, against one who was ”inflated,” and one who was ”incestuous: ”(we see the apostle) armed against the one with ”a rod,” against the other with a sentence,-a ”rod,” which he was threatening; a sentence, which he

was executing: the former (we see) still brandishing, the latter instantaneously hurtling; (the one) wherewith he was rebuking, and (the other) wherewith he was condemning. And certain it is, that forthwith thereafter the rebuked one indeed trembled beneath the menace of the uplifted rod, but the condemned perished under the instant infliction of the penalty. Immediately the former retreated fearing the blow, the latter paying the penalty. When a letter of the self-same apostle is sent a second time to the Corinthians, pardon is granted plainly; but it is uncertain to whom, because neither person nor cause is advertised. I will compare the cases with the senses. If the ”incestuous” man is set before us, on the same platform will be the ”inflated” man too. Surely the analogy, of the case is sufficiently maintained, when the ”inflated” is rebuked, but the ”incestuous” is condemned. To the ”inflated” pardon is granted, but after rebuke; to the ”incestuous” no pardon seems to have been granted, as under condemnation. If it was to him for whom it was feared that he might be ”devoured by mourning” that pardon was being granted, the ”rebuked” one was still in danger of being devoured, losing heart on account of the commination, and mourning on account of the rebuke.

The ”condemned” one, however, was permanently accounted as already devoured, alike by his fault and by his sentence; (accounted, that is, as one) who had not to ”mourn,” but to suffer that which, before suffering it, he might have mourned. If the reason why pardon was being granted was ”lest we should be defrauded by Satan,” the loss against which precaution was being taken had to do with that which had not yet perished. No precaution is taken in the use of a thing finally despatched, but in the case of a thing still safe. But the condemned one-condemned, too, to the possession of Satan-had already perished from the Church at the moment when he had committed such a deed, not to say withal at the moment of being forsworn by the Church itself. How should (the Church) fear to suffer a fraudulent loss of him whom she had already lost on his ereption, and whom, after condemnation, she could not have held? Lastly, to what will it be becoming for a judge to grant indulgence? to that which by a formal pronouncement he has decisively settled, or to that which by an interlocutory sentence he has left in suspense? And, of course, (I am speaking of) that judge who is not wont ”to rebuild those things which he has destroyed, lest he be held a transgressor.”

Come, now, if he had not ”wholly saddened” so many persons in the first Epistle; if he had ”rebuked” none, had ”terrified” none; if he had ”smitten” the incestuous man alone; if, for his cause, he had sent none into panic, had struck (no) ”inflated” one with consternation,-would it not be better for you to suspect, and more believing for you to argue, that rather some one far different had been in the same predicament at that time among the Corinthians; so that, rebuked, and terrified, and already wounded with mourning, he therefore-the moderate nature of his fault permitting it-subsequently received pardon, than that you should interpret that (pardon as granted) to an incestuous fornicator? For this you had been bound to read, even if not in an Epistle, yet impressed upon the very character of the apostle, by (his) modesty more clearly than by the instrumentality of a pen:

not to steep, to wit, Paul, the ”apostle of Christ,” the ”teacher of the nations in faith and verity,” the ”vessel of election,” the founder of Churches, the censor of discipline, (in the guilt of) levity so great as that he should either have condemned rashly one whom he was presently to absolve, or else rashly absolved one whom he had not rashly condemned, albeit on the ground of that fornication which is the result of simple immodesty, not to say on the ground of incestuous nuptials and impious voluptuousness and parricidal lust,-(lust) which he had refused to compare even with (the lusts of) the nations, for fear it should be set down to the account of custom; (lust) on which he would sit in judgment though absent, for fear the culprit should ”gain the time; ” (lust) which he had condemned after calling to his aid even ”the Lord’s power,” for fear the sentence should seem human. Therefore he has trifled both with his own ”spirit,” and with ”the angel of the Church,” and with ”the power of the Lord,” if he rescinded what by their counsel he had formally pronounced.

Chapter XV.-The Same Subject Continued.

If you hammer out the sequel of that Epistle to illustrate the meaning of the apostle, neither will that sequel be found to square with the obliteration of incest; lest even here the apostle be put to the blush by the incongruity of his later meanings. For what kind (of hypothesis) is it, that the very moment after making a largess of restoration to the privileges of ecclesiastical peace to an incestuous fornicator, he should forthwith have proceeded to accumulate exhortations about turning away from impurities, about pruning away of blemishes, about exhortations to deeds of sanctity, as if he had decreed nothing of a contrary nature just before? Compare, in short, (and see) whether it be his province to say, "Wherefore, having this ministration, in accordance with (the fact) that we have obtained mercy, we faint not; but renounce the secret things of disgrace," who has just released from condemnation one manifestly convicted of, not "disgrace" merely, but crime too: whether it be province, again, to excuse a conspicuous immodesty, who, among the counts of his own labours, after" straits and pressures," after" fasts and vigils," has named "chastity" also: whether it be, once more, his province to receive back into communion whatsoever reprobates, who writes, "For what society (is there) between righteousness and iniquity? what communion, moreover, between light and darkness? what consonance between Christ and Belial? or what part for a believer with an unbeliever? or what agreement between the temple of God and idols? "Will he not deserve to hear constantly (the reply);

"And in what manner do you make a separation between things which, in the former part of your Epistle, by restitution of the incestuous one, you have joined? For by his restoration to concorporate unity with the Church, righteousness is made to have fellowship with iniquity, darkness has communion with light, Belial is consonant with Christ, and believer shares the sacraments with unbeliever. And idols may see to themselves: the very vitiator of the temple of God is converted into a temple of God: for here, too, he sap, 'For ye are a temple of the living God. For He saith, That I will dwell in you, and will walk in (you), and will be their God, and they shall be to Me a people. Wherefore depart from the midst of them, be separate, and touch not the unclean.' This (thread of discourse) also you spin out, O apostle, when at the very moment you yourself are offering your hand to so huge a whirlpool of impurities; nay, you superadd yet further, 'Having therefore this promise, beloved, cleanse

we ourselves out from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting chastity in God's fear.'" I pray you, had he who fixes such (exhortations) in our minds been recalling some notorious fornicator into the Church? or is his reason for writing it, to prevent himself from appearing to you in the present day to have so recalled him?

These (words of his) will be in duty bound alike to serve as a prescriptive rule for the foregone, and a prejudgment for the following, (parts of the Epistle). For in saying, toward the end of the Epistle, "Lest, when I shall have come, God humble me, and I bewail many of those who have formerly sinned, and have not repented of the impurity which they have committed, the fornication, and the vileness," he did not, of course, determine that they were to be received hack (by him into the Church) if they should have entered (the path of) repentance, whom he was to find in the Church, but that they were to be bewailed, and indubitably ejected, that they might lose (the benefit of) repentance. And, besides, it is not congruous that he, who had above asserted that there was no communion between light and darkness, righteousness and iniquity, should in this place have been indicating somewhat touching communion. But all such are ignorant of the apostle as understand anything in a sense contrary to the nature and design of the man himself, contrary to the norm and rule of his docrines; so as to presume that he, a teacher of every sanctity, even by his own example, an execrator and expiator of every impurity, and universally consistent with himself in these points, restored ecclesiastical privileges to an incestuous person sooner than to some more mild offender.

Chapter XVI.-General Consistency of the Apostle.

Necessary it is, therefore, that the (character of the) apostle should be continuously pointed out to them; whom I will maintain to be such in the second of Corinthians withal, as I know (him to be) in all his letters. (He it is) who even in the first (Epistle) was the first of all (the apostles) to dedicate the temple of God: ”Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that in you the Lord dwells? ” -who likewise, for the consecrating and purifying (of) that temple, wrote the law pertaining to the temple-keepers: ”If any shall have marred the temple of God, him shall God mar; for the temple of God is holy, which (temple) are ye. Come, now; who in the world has (ever) redintegrated one who has been ”marred” by God (that is, delivered to Satan with a view to destruction of the flesh), after subjoining for that reason, ”Let none seduce himself; ” that is, let none presume that one ”marred” by God can possibly be redintegrated anew? Just as, again, among all other crimes-nay, even before all others-when affirming that ”adulterers, and fornicators, and effeminates, and co-habitors with males, will not attain the kingdom of God,” he premised, ”Do not err” -to wit, if you think they will attain it. But to them from whom ”the kingdom” is taken away, of course the life which exists in the kingdom is not permitted either. Moreover, by superadding, ”But such indeed ye have been;

but ye have received ablution, but ye have been sanctified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God; ” in as far as he puts on the paid side of the account such sins before baptism, in so far after baptism he determines them irremissible, if it is true, (as it is), that they are not allowed to ”receive ablution” anew. Recognise, too, in what follows, Paul (in the character of) an immoveable column of discipline and its rules: ”Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: God maketh a full end both of the one and of the others; but the body (is) not for fornication, but for God: ” for ”Let Us make man,” said God, ”(conformable) to Our image and likeness. ”And God made man; (conformable) to the image and likeness of God made He him. ”The Lord for the body: ”yes; for ”the Word was made flesh. ”Moreover, God both raised up the Lord, and will raise up us through His own power; ” on account, to wit, of the union of our body with Him. And accordingly, ”Know ye not your bodies (to be) members of Christ? ”because Christ, too, is God’s temple. ”Overturn this temple, and I will in three days’ space resuscitate it. ”Taking away the members of Christ,

shall I make (them) members of an harlot? Know ye not, that whoever is agglutinated to an harlot is made one body? (for the two shall be (made) into one flesh):

but whoever is agglutinated to the Lord is one spirit? Flee fornication. If revocable by pardon, in what sense am I to flee it, to turn adulterer anew? I shall gain nothing if I do flee it: I shall be "one body," to which by communion I shall be agglutinated. "Every sin which a human being may have committed is extraneous to the body; but whoever fornicateth, sinneth against his own body. And, for fear you should fly to that statement for a licence to fornication, on the ground that you will be sinning against a thing which is yours, not the Lord's, he takes you away from yourself, and awards you, according to his previous disposition, to Christ: "And ye are not your own; "immediately opposing (thereto), "for bought ye are with a price"-the blood, to wit, of the Lord: "glorify and extol the Lord in your body. See whether he who gives this injunction be likely to have pardoned one who has disgraced the Lord, and who has cast Him down from (the empire of) his body, and this indeed through incest. If you wish to imbibe to the utmost all knowledge of the apostle, in order to understand with what an axe of censorship he lops, and eradicates, and extirpates, every forest of lusts, for fear of permitting aught to regain strength and sprout again; behold him desiring souls to keep a fast from the legitimate fruit of nature-the apple, I mean, of marriage:

"But with regard to what ye wrote, good it is for a man to have no contact with a woman; but, on account of fornication, let each one have his own wife: let husband to wife, and wife to husband, render what is due. Who but must know that it was against his will that he relaxed the bond of this "good," in order to prevent fornication? But if he either has granted, or does grant, indulgence to fornication, of course he has frustrated the design of his own remedy. and will be bound forthwith to put the curb upon the nuptials of continence, if the fornication for the sake of which those nuptials are permitted shall cease to be feared. For (a fornication) which has indulgence granted it will not be feared. And yet he professes that he has granted the use of marriage "by way of indulgence, not of command. For he "wills" all to be on a level with himself. But when things lawful are (only) granted by way of indulgence, who hope for things unlawful? "To the unmarried" also, "and widows," he says, "It is good, by his example, to persevere" (in their present state); "but if they were too weak, to marry; because it is preferable to marry than to bum. With what fires, I pray you, is it preferable to "burn"-(the fires) of concupiscence, or (the fires) of penalty? Nay, but if fornication is pardonable, it will not be an object of concupiscence.

But it is more (the manner) of an apostle to take forethought for the fires of penalty. Wherefore, if it is penalty which "burns," it follows that fornication, which penalty awaits, is not pardonable. Meantime withal, while prohibiting divorce, he uses the Lord's precept against adultery as an instrument for providing, in place of divorce, either perseverance in widowhood, or else a reconciliation of peace: inasmuch as "whoever shall have dismissed a wife (for any cause) except the cause of adultery, maketh her commit adultery; and he who marrieth one dismissed by a husband committeth adultery. What powerful remedies does the Holy

Spirit furnish, to prevent, to wit, the commission anew of that which He wills not should anew be pardoned!

Now, if in all cases he says it is best for a man thus to be; "Thou art joined to a wife seek not loosing" (that you may give no occasion to adultery); "thou art loosed from a wife, seek not a wife," that you may reserve an opportunity for yourself: "but withal, if thou shalt have married a wife, and if a virgin shall have married, she sinneth not; pressure, however, of the flesh such shall have,"-even here he is granting a permission by way of "sparing them." On the other hand, he lays it down that "the time is wound up," in order that even "they who have wives may be as if they had them not." "For the fashion of this world is passing away,"-(this world) no longer, to wit, requiting (the command), "Grow and multiply." Thus he wills us to pass our life "without anxiety," because "the unmarried care about the Lord, how they may please God; the married, however, muse about the world, how they may please their spouse." Thus he pronounces that the "preserver of a virgin" doeth" better" than her "giver in marriage." Thus, too, he discriminatingly judges her to be more blessed, who, after losing her husband subsequently to her entrance into the faith, lovingly embraces the opportunity of widowhood. Thus he commends as Divine all these counsels of continence: "I think," he says, "I too have the Spirit of God."

Who is this your most audacious asserter of all immodesty, plainly a "most faithful" advocate of the adulterous, and fornicators, and incestuous, in whose honour he has undertaken this cause against the Holy Spirit, so that he recites a false testimony from (the writings of) His apostle? No such indulgence granted Paul, who endeavours to obliterate "necessity of the flesh" wholly from (the list of) even honourable pretexts (for marriage unions). He does grant "indulgence," I allow;-not to adulteries, but to nuptials. He does "spare," I allow;-marriages, not harlotries. He tries to avoid giving pardon even to nature, for fear he may flatter guilt. He is studious to put restraints upon the union which is heir to blessing, for fear that which is heir to curse be excused. This (one possibility) was left him-to purge the flesh from (natural) dregs, for (cleanse it) from (foul) stains he cannot. But this is the usual way with perverse and ignorant heretics; yes, and by this time even with Psychics universally: to arm themselves with the opportune support of some one ambiguous passage, in opposition to the disciplined host of sentences of the entire document:

Chapter XVII.-Consistency of the Apostle in His Other Epistles.

Challenge me to front the apostolic line of battle; look at his Epistles: they all keep guard in defence of modesty, of chastity, of sanctity; they all aim their missiles against the interests of luxury, and lasciviousness, and lust. What, in short, does he write to the Thessalonians withal? ”For our consolation (originated) not of seduction, nor of impurity: ”and, ”This is the will of God, your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, as (do) the nations which are ignorant of God. What do the Galatians read? ”Manifest are the works of the flesh. What are these? Among the first he has set ”fornication, impurity, lasciviousness: ”” (concerning) which I foretell you, as I have foretold, that whoever do such acts are not to attain by inheritance the kingdom of God. The Romans, moreover,-what learning is more impressed upon them than that there must be no dereliction of the Lord after believing? ”What, then, say we? Do we persevere in sin, in order that grace may superabound? Far be it. We, who are dead to sin, how shall we live in it still? Are ye ignorant that we who have been baptized in Christ have been baptized into His death? Buried with Him, then, we have been, through the baptism into the death, in order that, as Christ hath risen again from the dead, so we too may walk in newness of life.

For if we have been buried together in the likeness of His death, why, we shall be (in that) of (His) resurrection too; knowing this, that our old man hath been crucified together with Him. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall live, too, with Him; knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, no more dieth, (that) death no more hath domination over Him. For in that He died to sin, He died once for all; but in that He liveth, to God He liveth. Thus, too, repute ye yourselves dead indeed to sin, but living to God through Christ Jesus. Therefore, Christ being once for all dead, none who, subsequently to Christ, has died, can live again to sin, and especially to so heinous a sin. Else, if fornication and adultery may by possibility be anew admissible, Christ withal will be able anew to die. Moreover, the apostle is urgent in prohibiting” sin from reigning in our mortal body,” whose ”infirmity of the flesh” he knew. ”For as ye have tendered your members to servile impurity and iniquity, so too now tender them servants to righteousness unto holiness. For even if he has affirmed that ”good dwelleth not in his flesh,” yet (he means) according to ”the law of

the letter," in which he "was: "but according to "the law of the Spirit," to which he annexes us, he frees us from the "infirmity of the flesh.

"For the law," he says, "of the Spirit of life hath manumitted thee from the law of sin and of death. For albeit he may appear to be partly disputing from the standpoint of Judaism, yet it is to us that he is directing the integrity and plenitude of the rules of discipline,-(us), for whose sake soever, labouring (as we were) in the law, "God hath sent, through flesh, His own Son, in similitude of flesh of sin; and, became of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteousness of the law," he says, "might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to flesh, but according to (the) Spirit. For they who walk according to flesh are sensible as to those things which are the flesh's, and they who (walk) according to (the) Spirit those which (are) the Spirit's. Moreover, he has affirmed the "sense of the flesh" to be "death; " hence too, "enmity," and enmity toward God; and that "they who are in the flesh," that is, in the sense of the flesh, "cannot please God: " and, "If ye live according to flesh," he says, "it will come to pass that ye die. But what do we understand "the sense of the flesh" and "the life of the flesh" (to mean), except whatever "it shames (one) to pronounce? " for the other (works) of the flesh even an apostle would have named. Similarly, too, (when writing) to the Ephesians, while recalling past (deeds), he warns (them) concerning the future:

"In which we too had our conversation, doing the concupiscences and pleasures of the flesh. Branding, in fine, such as had denied themselves-Christians, to wit-on the score of having "delivered themselves up to the working of every impunity," "But ye," he says, "not so have learnt Christ. And again he says thus: "Let him who was wont to steal, steal no more. But, similarly, let him who was wont to commit adultery hitherto, not commit adultery; and he who was wont to fornicate hitherto, not fornicate: for he would have added these (admonitions) too, had he been in the habit of extending pardon to such, or at all willed it to be extended-(he) who, not willing pollution to be contracted even by a word, says, "Let no base speech proceed out of your mouth. Again: "But let fornication and every impurity not be even named among you, as becometh saints," -so far is it from being excused,-"knowing this, that every fornicator or impure (person) hath not God's kingdom. Let none seduce you with empty words: on this account cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of unbelief. Who "seduces with empty words" but he who states in a public harangue that adultery is remissible? not seeing into the fact that its very foundations have been dug out by the apostle, when he puts restraints upon drunkennesses and revellings, as withal here: "And be not inebriated with wine, in which is voluptuousness. He demonstrates, too, to the Colossians what "members" they are to"mortify" upon earth:

"fornication, impurity, lust, evil concupiscence," and "base talk. Yield up, by this time, to so many and such sentences, the one (passage) to which you cling. Paucity is cast into the shade by multitude, doubt by certainty, obscurity by plainness. Even if, for certain, the apostle had granted pardon of fornication to that Corinthian, it would be another instance of his once for all contravening his own practice to meet the requirement of the time. He circumcised Timotheus alone, and yet did away with circumcision.

Chapter XVIII.-Answer to a Psychical Objection.

”But these (passages),” says (our opponent), ”will pertain to the interdiction of all immodesty, and the enforcing of all modesty, yet without prejudice to the place of pardon; which (pardon) is not forthwith quite denied when sins are condemned, since the time of the pardon is concurrent with the condemnation which it excludes.” This piece of shrewdness on the part of the Psychics was (naturally) sequent; and accordingly we have reserved for this place the cautions which, even in the times of antiquity, were openly taken with a view to the refusing of ecclesiastical communion to cases of this kind.

For even in the Proverbs, which we call Paroemiae, Solomon specially (treats) of the adulterer (as being) nowhere admissible to expiation. ”But the adulterer,” he says, ”through indigence of senses acquireth perdition to his own soul; sustaineth dolors and disgraces. His ignominy, moreover, shall not be wiped away for the age. For indignation, full of jealousy, will not spare the man in the day of judgment. If you think this said about a heathen, at all events about believers you have already heard (it said) through Isaiah: ”Go out from the midst of them, and be separate, and touch not the impure. You have at the very outset of the Psalms, ”Blessed the man who hath not gone astray in the counsel of the impious, nor stood in the way of sinners, and sat in the state-chair of pestilence; ” whose voice, withal, (is heard) subsequently: ”I have not sat with the conclave of vanity; and with them who act iniquitously will I not enter”-this (has to do with ”the church” of such as act ill-”and with the impious will I not sit; ” and, ”I will wash with the innocent mine hands, and Thine altar will I surround, Lord” -as being” a host in himself”-inasmuch as indeed ”With an holy (man), holy Thou wilt be; and with an innocent man, innocent Thou wilt be; and with an elect, elect Thou wilt be; and with a perverse, perverse Thou wilt be. And elsewhere:

”But to the sinner saith the Lord, Why expoundest thou my righteous acts, and takest up my testament through thy mouth? If thou sawest a thief, thou rannest with him; and with adulterers thy portion thou madest. Deriving his instructions, therefore, from hence, the apostle too says: ”I wrote to you in the Epistle, not to be mingled up with fornicators: not, of course, with the fornicators of this world”-and so forth-” else it behoved you to go out from the world. But now I write to you, if any is named a brother among you, (being) a

fornicator, or an idolater" (for what so intimately joined?), "or a defrauder" (for what so near akin?), and so on, "with such to take no food even," not to say the Eucharist: because, to wit, withal "a little leaven spoileth the flavour of the whole lump. Again to Timotheus: "Lay hands on no one hastily, nor communicate with others' sins. Again to the Ephesians: "Be not, then, partners with them: for ye were at one time darkness. And yet more earnestly: "Communicate not with the unfruitful works of darkness; nay rather withal convict them. For (the things) which are done by them in secrecy it is disgraceful even to utter. What more disgraceful than immodesties? If, moreover, even from a "brother" who "walketh idly" he warns the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves, how much more withal from a fornicator!

For these are the deliberate judgments of Christ, "loving the Church," who "hath delivered Him self up for her, that He may sanctify her (purifying her utterly by the layer of water) in the word, that He may present the Church to Him self glorious, not having stain or wrinkle"-of course after the laver-"but (that) she may be holy and without reproach; " thereafter, to wit, being "without wrinkle" as a virgin, "without stain" (of fornication) as a spouse, "without disgrace" (of vileness), as having been "utterly purified."

What if, even here, you should conceive to reply that communion is indeed denied to sinners, very especially such as had been "polluted by the flesh," but (only) for the present; to be restored, to wit, as the result of penitential suing: in accordance with that clemency of God which prefers a sinner's repentance to his death? -for this fundamental ground of your opinion must be universally attacked. We say, accordingly, that if it had been competent to the Divine clemency to have guaranteed the demonstration of itself even to the post-baptismally lapsed, the apostle would have said thus: "Communicate not with the works of darkness, unless they shall have repented; "and, "With such take not food even, unless after they shall have wiped, with rolling at their feet, the shoes of the brethren; "and, "Him who shall have marred the temple of God, shall God mar, unless he shall have shaken off from his head in the church the ashes of all hearths. For it had been his duty, in the case of those things which he had condemned, to have equally determined the extent to which he had (and that conditionally) condemned them-whether he had condemned them with a temporary and conditional, and not a perpetual, seventy. However, since in all Epistles he both prohibits such a character, (so sinning) after believing, from being admitted (to the society of believers); and, if admitted, detrudes him from communion, without hope of any condition or time;

he sides more with our opinion, pointing out that the repentance which the Lord prefers is that which before believing, before baptism, is esteemed better than the death of the sinner,-(the sinner, I say,) once for all to be washed through the grace of Christ, who once for all has suffered death for our sins. For this (rule), even in his own person, the apostle has laid down. For, when affirming that Christ came for this end, that He might save sinners, of whom himself had been the "first," what does he add? "And I obtained mercy, because I did (so) ignorantly in unbelief. Thus that clemency of God, preferring the repentance of a sinner to his death, looks at such as are ignorant still, and still unbelieving, for the sake

of whose liberation Christ came; not (at such) as already know God, and have learnt the sacrament of the faith. But if the clemency of God is applicable to such as are ignorant still, and unbelieving, of course it follows that repentance invites clemency to itself; without prejudice to that species of repentance after believing, which either, for lighter sins, will be able to obtain pardon from the bishop, or else, for greater and irremissible ones, from God only.

Chapter XIX.-Objections from the Revelation and the First Epistle of St. John Refuted.

But how far (are we to treat) of Paul; since even John appears to give some secret countenance to the opposite side? as if in the Apocalypse he has manifestly assigned to fornication the auxiliary aid of repentance, where, to the angel of the Thyatirenes, the Spirit sends a message that He "hath against him that he kept (in communion) the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophet, and teacheth, and seduceth my servants unto fornicating and eating of idolsacrifice. And I gave her bounteously a space of time, that she might enter upon repentance; nor is she willing to enter upon it on the count of fornication. Behold, I will give her into a bed, and her adulterers with herself into greatest pressure, unless they shall have repented of her works. I am content with the fact that, between apostles, there is a common agreement in rules of faith and of discipline. For, "Whether (it be) I," says (Paul), "or they, thus we preach. Accordingly, it is material to the interest of the whole sacrament to believe nothing conceded by John, which has been taffy refused by Paul. This harmony of the Holy Spirit whoever observes, shall by Him be conducted into His meanings. For (the angel of the Thyatirene Church) was secretly introducing into the Church, and urging justly to repentance, an heretical woman, who had taken upon herself to teach what she had learnt from the Nicolaitans.

For who has a doubt that an heretic, deceived by (a spurious baptismal) rite, upon discovering his mischance, and expiating it by repentance, both attains pardon and is restored to the bosom of the Church? Whence even among us, as being on a par with an heathen, nay even more than heathen, an heretic likewise, (such an one) is purged through the baptism of truth from each character, and admitted (to the Church). Or else, if you are certain that that woman had, after a living faith, subsequently expired, and turned heretic, in order that you may claim pardon as the result of repentance, not as it were for an heretical, but as it were for a believing, sinner: let her, I grant, repent; but with the view of ceasing from adultery, not however in the prospect of restoration (to Church-fellowship) as well. For this

will be a repentance which we, too, acknowledge to be due much more (than you do); but which we reserve, for pardon, to God.

In short, this Apocalypse, in its later passages, has assigned "the infamous and fornicators," as well as "the cowardly, and unbelieving, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters," who have been guilty of any such crime while professing the faith, to "the lake of fire," without any conditional condemnation. For it will not appear to savour of (a bearing upon) heathens, since it has (just) pronounced with regard to believers, "They who shall have conquered shall have this inheritance; and I will be to them a God, and they to me for sons; "and so has subjoined: "But to the cowardly, and unbelieving, and infamous, and fornicators, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, (shall be) a share in the lake of fire and sulphur, which (lake) is the second death." Thus, too, again "Blessed they who act according to the precepts, that they may have power over the tree of life and over the gates, for entering into the holy city. Dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, out!" -of course, such as do not act according to the precepts; for to be sent out is the portion of those who have been within. Moreover "What have I to do to judge them who are without? " had preceded (the sentences now in question).

From the Epistle also of John they forthwith cull (a proof). It is said: "The blood of His Son purifieth us utterly from every sin. Always then, and in every form, we will sin, if always and from every sin He utterly purifies us; or else, if not always, not again after believing; and if not from sin, not again from fornication. But what is the point whence (John) has started? He had predicated "God" to be "Light," and that "darkness is not in Him," and that "we lie if we say that we have communion with Him, and walk in darkness. "If, however," he sap, "we walk in the light, we shall have communion with Him, and the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord purifieth us utterly from every sin. Walking, then, in the light, do we sin? and, sinning in the light, shall we be utterly purified? By no means. For he who sins is not in the light, but in darkness. Whence, too, he points out the mode in which we shall be utterly purified from sin-(by) "walking in the light," in which sin cannot be committed. Accordingly, the sense in which he says we "are utterly purified" is, not in so far as we sin, but in so far as we do not sin. For, "walking in the light," but not having communion with darkness, we shall act as they that are "utterly purified; "sin not being quite laid down, but not being wittingly committed.

For this is the virtue of the Lord's blood, that such as it has already purified from sin, and thenceforward has set "in the light," it renders thenceforward pure, if they shall continue to persevere walking in the light. "But he subjoins," you say, "If we say that we have not sin, we are seducing ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, faithful and just is He to remit them to us, and utterly purify us from every unrighteousness. Does he say "from impurity? "(No): or else, if that is so, then (He "utterly purifies" us) from "idolatry" too. But there is a difference in the sense. For see yet again: "If we say," he says, "that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. All the more fully: "Little children, these things have I written to you, lest ye sin; and if ye shall have sinned, an Advocate we

have with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and, He is the propitiation for our sins. "According to these words," you say, "it will be admitted both that we sin, and that we have pardon. What, then, will become (of your theory), when, proceeding (with the Epistle), I find something different? For he affirms that we do not sin at all; and to this end he treats at large, that he may make no such concession; setting forth that sins have been once for all deleted by Christ, not subsequently to obtain pardon;

in which statement the sense requires us (to apply the statement) to an admonition to chastity. "Every one," he says, "who hath this hope, maketh himself chaste, because He too is chaste. Every one who doeth sin, doeth withal iniquity; and sin is iniquity. And ye know that He hath been manifested to take away sins"-henceforth, of course, to be no more incurred, if it is true, (as it is,) that he subjoins, "Every one who abideth in Him sinneth not; every one who sinneth neither hath seen nor knoweth Him. Little children, let none seduce you. Every one who doeth righteousness is righteous, as He withal is righteous. He who doeth sin is of the devil, inasmuch as the devil sinneth from the beginning. For unto this end was manifested the Son of God, to undo the works of the devil: "for He has "undone" them withal, by setting man free through baptism, the "handwriting of death" having been "made a gift of" to him: and accordingly, "he who is being born of God doeth not sin, because the seed of God abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he hath been born of God. Herein are manifest the sons of God and the sons of the devil. Wherein? except it be (thus): the former by not sinning, from the time that they were born from God; the latter by sinning, because they are from the devil, just as if they never were born from God?

But if he says, "He who is not righteous is not of God," how shall he who is not modest again become (a son) of God, who has already ceased to be so?

"It is therefore nearly equivalent to saying that John has forgotten himself; asserting, in the former part of his Epistle, that we are not without sin, but now prescribing that we do not sin at all: and in the one case flattering us somewhat with hope of pardon, but in the other asserting with all stringency, that whoever may have sinned are no sons of God." But away with (the thought): for not even we ourselves forget the distinction between sins, which was the starting-point of our digression. And (a right distinction it was); for John has here sanctioned it; in that there are some sins of daily committal, to which we all are liable: for who will be free from the accident of either being angry unjustly, and retaining his anger beyond sunset; or else even using manual violence or else carelessly speaking evil; or else rashly swearing; or else forfeiting his plighted word or else lying, from bashfulness or "necessity? "In businesses, in official duties, in trade, in food, in sight, in hearing, by how great temptations are we plied! So that, if there were no pardon for such sins as these, salvation would be unattainable to any. Of these, then, there will be pardon, through the successful Suppliant of the Father, Christ. But there are, too, the contraries of these; as the graver and destructive ones, such as are incapable of pardon-murder, idolatry, fraud, apostasy, blasphemy; (and), of come, too, adultery and fornication; and if there be any other "violation of the temple of God." For these Christ will no more be the successful Header:

these will not at all be incurred by one who has been born of God, who will cease to be the son of God if he do incur them.

Thus John's rule of diversity will be established; arranging as he does a distinction of sins, while he now admits and now denies that the sons of God sin. For (in making these assertions) he was looking forward to the final clause of his letter, and for that (final clause) he was laying his preliminary bases; intending to say, in the end, more manifestly: "If any knoweth his brother to be sinning a sin not unto death, he shall make request, and the Lord shall give life to him who sinneth not unto death. For there is a sin unto death: not concerning that do I say that one should make request." He, too, (as I have been), was mindful that Jeremiah had been prohibited by God to deprecate (Him) on behalf of a people which was committing mortal sins. "Every unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin unto death. But we know that every one who hath been born of God sinneth not" -to wit, the sin which is unto death. Thus there is no course left for you, but either to deny that adultery and fornication are mortal sins; or else to confess them irremissible, for which it is not permitted even to make successful intercession.

Chapter XX.-From Apostolic Teaching Tertullian Turns to that of Companions of the Apostles, and of the Law.

The discipline, therefore, of the apostles properly (so called), indeed, instructs and determinately directs, as a principal point, the overseer of all sanctity as regards the temple of God to the universal eradication of every sacrilegious outrage upon modesty, without any mention of restoration. I wish, however, redundantly to superadd the testimony likewise of one particular comrade of the apostles,-(a testimony) aptly suited for confirming, by most proximate right, the discipline of his masters. For there is extant withal an Epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas-a man sufficiently accredited by God, as being one whom Paul has stationed next to himself in the uninterrupted observance of abstinence: ”Or else, I alone and Barnabas, have not we the power of working? ” And, of course, the Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the Churches than that apocryphal ”Shepherd” of adulterers. Warning, accordingly, the disciples to omit all first principles, and strive rather after perfection, and not lay again the foundations of repentance from the works of the dead, he says: ”For impossible it is that they who have once been illuminated, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have participated in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the word of God and found it sweet, when they shall-their age already setting-have fallen away, should be again recalled unto repentance, crucifying again for themselves the Son of God, and dishonouring Him.” ”For the earth which hath drunk the rain often descending upon it, and hath borne grass apt for them on whose account it is tilled withal, attaineth God’s blessing; but if it bring forth thorns, it is reprobate, and nighest to cursing, whose end is (doomed) unto utter burning.” He who learnt this from apostles, and taught it with apostles, never knew of any ”second repentance” promised by apostles to the adulterer and fornicator.

For excellently was he wont to interpret the law, and keep its figures even in (the dispensation of) the Truth itself. It was with a reference, in short, to this species of discipline that

the caution was taken in the case of the leper: ”But if the speckled appearance shall have become efflorescent over the skin, and shall have covered the whole skin from the head even unto the feet through all the visible surface, then the priest, when he shall have seen, shall utterly cleanse him: since he hath wholly turned into white he is clean. But on the day that there shall have been seen in such an one quick colour, he is defiled. (The Law) would have the man who is wholly turned from the pristine habit of the flesh to the whiteness of faith-which (faith) is esteemed a defect and blemish in (the eyes of) the world -and is wholly made new, to be understood to be ”clean; ”as being no longer ”speckled,” no longer dappled with the pristine and the new (intermixt). If, however, after the reversal (of the sentence of uncleanness), ought of the old nature shall have revived with its tendencies, that which was beginning to be thought utterly dead to sin in his flesh must again be judged unclean, and must no more be expiated by the priest. Thus adultery, sprouting again from the pristine stock, and wholly blemishing the unity of the new colour from which it had been excluded, is a defect that admits of no cleansing.

Again, in the case of a house: if any spots and cavities in the party-walls had been reported to the priest, before he entered to inspect that house he bids all (its contents) be taken away from it; thus the belongings of the house would not be unclean. Then the priest, if, upon entering, he had found greenish or reddish cavities, and their appearance to the sight deeper down within the body of the party-wall, was to go out to the gate, and separate the house for a period within seven days. Then, upon returning on the seventh day, if he should have perceived the taint to have become diffused in the party-walls, he was to order those stones in which the taint of the leprosy had been to be extracted and cast away outside the city into an unclean place; and other stones, polished and sound, to be taken and replaced in the stead of the first, and the house to be plastered with other mortar. For, in coming to the High Priest of the Father-Christ-all impediments must first be taken away, in the space of a week, that the house which remains, the flesh and the soul, may be clean;

and when the Word of God has entered it, and has found ”stains of red and green,” forthwith must the deadly and sanguinary passions ”be extracted” and ”cast away” out of doors-for the Apocalypse withal has set ”death” upon a ”green horse,” but a ”warrior” upon a ”red” -and in their stead must be under-strewn stones polished and apt for conjunction, and firm,-such as are made (by God) into (sons) of Abraham, -that thus the man may be fit for God. But if, after the recovery and reformation, the priest again perceived in the same house ought of the pristine disorders and blemishes, he pronounced it unclean, and bade the timbers, and the stones, and all the structure of it, to be pulled down, and cast away into an unclean place. This will be the man-flesh and soul-who, subsequently to reformation, after baptism and the entrance of the priests, again resumes the scabs and stains of the flesh, and ”is case away outside the city into an unclean place,”-” surrendered,” to wit, ”to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,”-and is no more rebuilt in the Church after his ruin. So, too, with regard to lying with a female slave, who had been betrothed to an husband, but not yet redeemed, not yet set free: ”provision,” says (the Law), shall be made for her, and she shall not die, because she was not yet manumitted for him for whom she was being kept.

CHAPTER XX.-FROM APOSTOLIC TEACHING TERTULLIAN TURNS TO THAT OF COMPANION

For flesh not yet manumitted to Christ, for whom it was being kept, used to be contaminated with impunity: so now, after manumission, it no more receives pardon.

Chapter XXI.-Of the Difference Between Discipline and Power, and of the Power of the Keys.

If the apostles understood these (figurative meanings of the Law) better, of course they were more careful (with regard to them than even apostolic men). But I will descend even to this point of contest now, making a separation between the doctrine of apostles and their power. Discipline governs a man, power sets a seal upon him; apart from the fact that power is the Spirit, but the Spirit is God. What, moreover, used (the Spirit) to teach? That there must be no communicating with the works of darkness. Observe what He bids. Who, moreover, was able to forgive sins? This is His alone prerogative: for "who remitteth sins but God alone? " and, of course, (who but He can remit) mortal sins, such as have been committed against Himself, and against His temple? For, as far as you are concerned, such as are chargeable with offence against you personally, you are commanded, in the person of Peter, to forgive even seventy times sevenfold. And so, if it were agreed that even the blessed apostles had granted any such indulgence (to any crime) the pardon of which (comes) from God, not from man, it would be competent (for them) to have done so, not in the exercise of discipline, but of power. For they both raised the dead, which God alone (can do), and restored the debilitated to their integrity, which none but Christ (can do); nay, they inflicted plagues too, which Christ would not do. For it did not beseem Him to be severe who had come to suffer.

Smitten were both Ananias and Elymas -Ananias with death, Elymas with blindness-in order that by this very fact it might be proved that Christ had had the power of doing even such (miracles). So, too, had the prophets (of old) granted to the repentant the pardon of murder, and therewith of adultery, inasmuch as they gave, at the same time, manifest proofs of seventy. Exhibit therefore even now to me, apostolic sir, prophetic evidences, that I may recognise your divine virtue, and vindicate to yourself the power of remitting such sins! If, however, you have had the functions of discipline alone allotted you, and (the duty) of presiding not imperially, but ministerially; who or how great are you, that you should grant indulgence, who, by exhibiting neither the prophetic nor the apostolic character, lack that virtue whose property it is to indulge?

CHAPTER XXI.-OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND POWER, AND OF THE POW

"But," you say, "the Church has the power of forgiving sins." This I acknowledge and adjudge more (than you; I) who have the Paraclete Himself in the persons of the new prophets, saying, "The Church has the power to forgive sins; but I will not do it, lest they commit others withal." "What if a pseudo-prophetic spirit has made that declaration? "Nay, but it would have been more the part of a subverter on the one hand to commend himself on the score of clemency, and on the other to influence all others to sin. Or if, again, (the pseudo-prophetic spirit) has been eager to affect this (sentiment) in accordance with "the Spirit of truth," it follows that "the Spirit of truth" has indeed the power of indulgently granting pardon to fornicators, but wills not to do it if it involve evil to the majority. I now inquire into your opinion, (to see) from what source you usurp this right to "the Church."

If, because the Lord has said to Peter, "Upon this rock will I build My Church," "to thee have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom; " or, "Whatsoever thou shale have bound or loosed in earth, shall be bound or loosed in the heavens," you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is, to every Church akin to Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring (as that intention did) this (gift) personally upon Peter? "On thee," He says, "will I build My Church; "and," I will give to thee the keys," not to the Church; and, "Whatsoever thou shall have loosed or bound," not what they shall have loosed or bound. For so withal the result teaches. In (Peter) himself the Church was reared; that is, through (Peter) himself; (Peter) himself essayed the key; you see what (key): "Men of Israel, let what I say sink into your ears: Jesus the Nazarene, a man destined by God for you," and so forth. (Peter) himself, therefore, was the first to unbar, in Christ's baptism, the entrance to the heavenly kingdom, in which (kingdom) are "loosed" the sins that were beforetime "bound; "and those which have not been "loosed" are "bound," in accordance with true salvation; and Ananias he "bound" with the bond of death, and the weak in his feet he "absolved" from his defect of health.

Moreover, in that dispute about the observance or non-observance of the Law, Peter was the first of all to be endued with the Spirit, and, after making preface touching the calling of the nations, to say, "And now why are ye tempting the Lord, concerning the imposition upon the brethren of a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to support? But however, through the grace of Jesus we believe that we shall be saved in the same way as they. This sentence both "loosed" those parts of the law which were abandoned, and "bound" those which were reserved. Hence the power of loosing and of binding committed to Peter had nothing to do with the capital sins of believers; and if the Lord had given him a precept that he must grant pardon to a brother sinning against him even "seventy times sevenfold," of course He would have commanded him to "bind"-that is, to "retain" -nothing subsequently, unless perchance such (sins) as one may have committed against the Lord, not against a brother. For the forgiveness of (sins) committed in the case of a man is a prejudgment against the remission of sins against God.

What, now, (has this to do) with the Church, and) your (church), indeed, Psychic? For, in accordance with the person of Peter, it is to spiritual men that this power will correspondently

appertain, either to an apostle or else to a prophet. For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity-Father, Son. and Holy Spirit. (The Spirit) combines that Church which the Lord has made to consist in "three." And thus, from that time forward, every number (of persons) who may have combined together into this faith is accounted "a Church," from the Author and Consecrator (of the Church). And accordingly "the Church," it is true, will forgive sins: but (it will be) the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the Church which consists of a number of bishops. For the right and arbitrament is the Lord's, not the servant's; God's Himself, not the priest's.

Chapter XXII.-Of Martyrs, and Their Intercession on Behalf of Scandalous Offenders.

But you go so far as to lavish this ”power” upon martyrs withal! No sooner has any one, acting on a preconceived arrangement, put on the bonds-(bonds), moreover, which, in the nominal custody now in vogue, are soft ones-than adulterers beset him, fornicators gain access to him; instantly prayers echo around him; instantly pools of tears (from the eyes) of all the polluted surround him; nor are there any who are more diligent in purchasing entrance into the prison than they who have lost (the fellowship of) the Church! Men and women are violated in the darkness with which the habitual indulgence of lusts has plainly familiarized them; and they seek peace at the hands of those who are risking their own! Others betake them to the mines, and return, in the character of communicants, from thence, where by this time another ”martyrdom” is necessary for sins committed after ”martyrdom. ”Well, who on earth and in the flesh is faultless? ”What ”martyr” (continues to be) an inhabitant of the world supplicating? pence in hand? subject to physician and usurer? Suppose, now, (your ”martyr”) beneath the glaive, with head already steadily poised; suppose him on the cross, with body already outstretched; suppose him at the stake, with the lion already let loose; suppose him on the axle, with the fire already heaped; in the very certainty, I say, and possession of martyrdom:

who permits man to condone (offences) which are to be reserved for God, by whom those (offences) have been condemned without discharge, which not even apostles (so far as I know)-martyrs withal themselves-have judged condonable? In short, Paul had already ”fought with beasts at Ephesus,” when he decreed ”destruction” to the incestuous person. Let it suffice to the martyr to have purged his own sins: it is the part of ingratitude or of pride to lavish upon others also what one has obtained at a high price. Who has redeemed another’s death by his own, but the Son of God alone? For even in His very passion He set the robber free. For to this end had He come, that, being Himself pure from sin, and in all respects holy, He might undergo death on behalf of sinners. Similarly, you who emulate Him in

condoning sins, if you yourself have done no sin, plainly suffer in my stead. If, however, you are a sinner, how will the oil of your puny torch be able to suffice for you and for me?

I have, even now, a test whereby to prove (the presence of) Christ (in you). If Christ is in the martyr for this reason, that the martyr may absolve adulterers and fornicators, let Him tell publicly the secrets of the heart, that He may thus concede (pardon to) sins; and He is Christ. For thus it was that the Lord Jesus Christ showed His power: "Why think ye evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say to the paralytic, Thy sins are remitted thee; or, Rise and walk? Therefore, that ye may know the Son of man to have the power upon earth of remitting sins, I say to thee, paralytic, Rise, and walk. If the Lord set so much store by the proof of His power as to reveal thoughts, and so impart health by His command, lest He should not be believed to have the power of remitting sins; it is not lawful for me to believe the same power (to reside) in any one, whoever he be, without the same proofs. In the act, however, of urgently entreating from a martyr pardon for adulterers and fornicators, you yourself confess that crimes of that nature are not to be washed away except by the martyrdom of the criminal himself, while you presume (they can be washed away) by another's If this is so, then martyrdom will be another baptism. For "I have withal," saith He, "another baptism.

Whence, too, it was that there flowed out of the wound in the Lord's side water and blood, the materials of either baptism. I ought, then, by the first baptism too to (have the fight of) setting another free if I can by the second: and we must necessarily force upon the mind (of our opponents this conclusion): Whatever authority, whatever reason, restores ecclesiastical peace to the adulterer and fornicator, the same will be bound to come to the aid of the murderer and idolater in their repentance,-at all events, of the apostate, and of course of him whom, in the battle of his confession, after hard struggling with torments, savagery has overthrown. Besides, it were unworthy of God and of His mercy, who prefers the repentance of a sinner to his death, that they should have easier return into (the bosom of) the Church who have fallen in heat of passion, than they who have fallen in hand-to-hand combat. Indignation urges us to speak. Contaminated bodies you will recall rather than gory ones! Which repentance is more pitiable-that which prostrates tickled flesh, or lacerated? Which pardon is, in all causes, more justly concessible-that which a voluntary, or that which an involuntary, sinner implores? No one is compelled with his will to apostatize; no one against his will commits fornication. Lust is exposed to no violence, except itself: it knows no coercion whatever. Apostasy, on the contrary, what ingenuities of butchery and tribes of penal inflictions enforce!

Which has more truly apostatized-he who has lost Christ amid agonies, or (he who has done so) amid delights? he who when losing Him grieved, or he who when losing Him sported? And yet those scars graven on the Christian combatant-scars, of course, enviable in the eyes of Christ, because they yearned after Conquest, and thus also glorious, because failing to conquer they yielded; (scars) after which even the devil himself yet sighs; (scars) with an infelicity of their own, but a chaste one, with a repentance that mourns, but blushes not, to

the Lord for pardon-will anew be remitted to such, because their apostasy was expiable! In their case alone is the ”flesh weak. Nay, no flesh so strong as that which crushes out the Spirit!

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.