

# Homily 2

by Clement of Rome

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of learning from the Prophet of truth, who is sinless, merciful, and all-knowing, in order to know the truth and receive guidance.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23, Proverbs 2:6, 2 Timothy 2:15, James 1:5, 1 John 4:1

**Topics:** "Discerning False Teachings", "Gods Providence"

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## Description

Clement of Rome recounts his interactions with Peter and his attendants, including discussions with Simon the magician who performs deceitful miracles and speaks against God. Peter emphasizes the importance of discerning false teachings and remaining steadfast in the truth about God's attributes and righteousness. He explains how some Scriptures contain falsehoods to test the faith of believers and warns against being misled by deceptive signs and doctrines. Peter encourages Clement to seek understanding and discernment, assuring him that God's providence works for the good of those who love Him.

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## Transcript

### CHAPTER 1. PETER'S ATTENDANTS

Therefore the next day, I Clement, awaking from sleep before dawn, and learning that Peter was astir, and was conversing with his attendants concerning the worship of God (there were sixteen of them, and I have thought good to set forth their names, as I subsequently learned them, that you may also know who they were. The first of them was Zacchæus, who was once a publican, and Sophonias his brother; Joseph and his foster-brother Michaias; also Thomas and Eliezer the twins; also Æneas and Lazarus the priests; besides also Elisæus, and Benjamin the son of Saphrus; as also Rubilus and Zacharias the builders; and Ananias and Haggæus the Jamminians; and Nicetas and Aquila the friends),--accordingly I went in and saluted him, and at his request sat down.

### CHAPTER 2. A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

And he, breaking off the discourse in which he was engaged, assured me, by way of apology, why he had not awakened me that I might hear his discourses, assigning as the reason the discomfort of my voyage. As he wished this to be dispelled, he had suffered me to sleep. For, said he, whenever the soul is distracted concerning some bodily want, it does not properly approach the instructions that are presented to it. On this account I am not willing to converse, either with those who are greatly grieving through some

calamity, or are immoderately angry, or are turned to the frenzy of love, or are suffering under bodily exhaustion, or are distressed with the cares of life, or are harassed with any other sufferings, whose soul, as I said, being downcast, and sympathizing with the suffering body, occupies also its own intelligence therewith.

### CHAPTER 3. FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

And let it not be said, Is it not, then, proper to present comforts and admonitions to those who are in any bad case? To this I answer, that if, indeed, any one is able, let him present them; but if not, let him bide his time. For I know that all things have their proper season. Wherefore it is proper to ply men with words which strengthen the soul in anticipation of evil; so that, if at any time any evil comes upon them, the mind, being forearmed with the right argument, may be able to bear up under that which befalls it: for then the mind knows in the crisis of the struggle to have recourse to him who succoured it by good counsel.

### CHAPTER 4. A REQUEST

However, I have learned, O Clement, how that in Alexandria Barnabas perfectly expounded to you the word respecting prophecy. Was it not so? I answered, Yes, and exceeding well. Then Peter: Therefore it is not necessary now to occupy with the instructions which you know, the time which may serve us for other instructions which you do not know. Then said I: You have rightly said, O Peter. But vouchsafe this to me, who purpose always to attend upon you, continuously to expound to me, a delighted hearer, the doctrine of the Prophet. For, apart from Him, as I learned from Barnabas, it is impossible to learn the truth.

### CHAPTER 5. EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE PROPHET

And Peter, being greatly pleased with this, answered: Already has the rectifying process taken its end, as regards you, knowing as you do the greatness of the infallible prophecy, without which it is impossible for any one to receive that which is supremely profitable. For of many and diverse blessings which are in the things which are or which may be, the most blessed of all--whether it be eternal life, or perpetual health, or a perfect understanding, or light, or joy, or immortality, or whatever else there is or that can be supremely good in the nature of things--cannot be possessed without first knowing things as they are; and this knowledge cannot be otherwise obtained than by first becoming acquainted with the Prophet of the truth.

### CHAPTER 6. THE TRUE PROPHET

Now the Prophet of the truth is He who always knows all things--things past as they were, things present as they are, things future as they shall be; sinless, merciful, alone entrusted with the declaration of the truth. Read, and you shall find that those were deceived who thought that they had found the truth of themselves. For this is peculiar to the Prophet, to declare the truth, even as it is peculiar to the sun to bring the day. Wherefore, as many as have even desired to know the truth, but have not had the good fortune to learn it from Him, have not found it, but have died seeking it. For how can he find the truth who seeks it from his own ignorance? And even if he find it, he does not know it, and passes it by as if it were not. Nor yet shall he be able to obtain possession of the truth from another, who, in like manner, promises to him knowledge from ignorance; excepting only the knowledge of morality and things of that sort, which can be known through reason, which affords to every one the knowledge that he ought not to wrong another, through his not wishing himself to be wronged.

### CHAPTER 7. UNAIDED QUEST OF TRUTH PROFITLESS

All therefore who ever sought the truth, trusting to themselves to be able to find it, fell into a snare. This is what both the philosophers of the Greeks, and the more intelligent of the barbarians, have suffered. For, applying themselves to things visible, they have given decisions by conjecture on things not apparent, thinking that that was truth which at any time presented itself to them as such. For, like persons who know the truth, they, still seeking the truth, reject some of the suppositions that are presented to them, and lay hold of others, as if they knew, while they do not know, what things are true and what are false. And they dogmatize concerning truth, even those who are seeking after truth, not knowing that he who seeks truth cannot learn it from his own wandering. For not even, as I said, can he recognise her when she stands by him, since he is unacquainted with her.

#### CHAPTER 8. TEST OF TRUTH

And it is by no means that which is true, but that which is pleasing, which persuades every one who seeks to learn from himself. Since, therefore, one thing is pleasing to one, and another to another, one thing prevails over one as truth, and another thing over another. But the truth is that which is approved by the Prophet, not that which is pleasant to each individual. For that which is one would be many, if the pleasing were the true; which is impossible. Wherefore also the Grecian philologers--rather than philosophers--going about matters by conjectures, have dogmatized much and diversely, thinking that the apt sequence of hypotheses is truth, not knowing that when they have assigned to themselves false beginnings, their conclusion has corresponded with the beginning.

#### CHAPTER 9. THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD.

Whence a man ought to pass by all else, and commit himself to the Prophet of the truth alone. And we are all able to judge of Him, whether he is a prophet, even although we be wholly unlearned, and novices in sophisms, and unskilled in geometry, and uninitiated in music. For God, as caring for all, has made the discovery concerning Himself easier to all, in order that neither the barbarians might be powerless, nor the Greeks unable to find Him. Therefore the discovery concerning Him is easy; and thus it is:--

#### CHAPTER 10. TEST OF THE PROPHET

If he is a Prophet, and is able to know how the world was made, and the things that are in it, and the things that shall be to the end, if He has foretold us anything, and we have ascertained that it has been perfectly accomplished, we easily believe that the things shall be which He says are to be, from the things that have been already; we believe Him, I say, as not only knowing, but foreknowing. To whom then, however limited an understanding he may have, does it not appear, that it behooves us, with respect to the things that are pleasing to God, to believe beyond all others Him who beyond all men knows, even though He has not learned? Wherefore, if any one should be unwilling to concede the power of knowing the truth to such an one--I mean to Him who has foreknowledge through the divinity of the Spirit that is in Him--conceding the power of knowing to any one else, is he not void of understanding, in conceding to him who is no prophet, that power of knowing which he would not concede to the Prophet?

#### CHAPTER 11. IGNORANCE, KNOWLEDGE, FOREKNOWLEDGE

Wherefore, before all things, we must test the Prophet with all judgment by means of the prophetic promise; and having ascertained Him to be the Prophet, we must undoubtingly follow the other words of His teaching; and having confidence concerning things hoped for, we must conduct ourselves according to the first judgment, knowing that He who tells us these things has not a nature to lie. Wherefore, if any of

the things that are afterwards spoken by Him do not appear to us to be well spoken, we must know that it is not that it has been spoken amiss, but that it is that we have not conceived it aright. For ignorance does not judge knowledge, and so neither is knowledge competent truly to judge foreknowledge; but foreknowledge affords knowledge to the ignorant.

#### CHAPTER 12. DOCTRINE OF THE TRUE PROPHET

Hence, O beloved Clement, if you would know the things pertaining to God, you have to learn them from Him alone, because He alone knows the truth. For if any one else knows anything, he has received it from Him or from His disciples. And this is His doctrine and true proclamation, that there is one God, whose work the world is; who being altogether righteous, shall certainly at some time render to every one according to his deeds.

#### CHAPTER 13. FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

For there is every necessity, that he who says that God is by His nature righteous, should believe also that the souls of men are immortal: for where would be His justice, when some, having lived piously, have been evil-treated, and sometimes violently cut off, while others who have been wholly impious, and have indulged in luxurious living, have died the common death of men? Since therefore, without all contradiction, God who is good is also just, He shall not otherwise be known to be just, unless the soul after its separation from the body be immortal, so that the wicked man, being in hell, as having here received his good things, may there be punished for his sins; and the good man, who has been punished here for his sins, may then, as in the bosom of the righteous, be constituted an heir of good things. Since therefore God is righteous, it is fully evident to us that there is a judgment, and that souls are immortal.

#### CHAPTER 14. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

But if any one, according to the opinion of this Simon the Samaritan, will not admit that God is just, to whom then can any one ascribe justice, or the possibility of it? For if the Root of all have it not, there is every necessity to think that it must be impossible to find it in human nature, which, is, as it were, the fruit. And if it is to be found in man, how much more in God! But if righteousness can be found nowhere, neither in God nor in man, then neither can unrighteousness. But there is such a thing as righteousness, for unrighteousness takes its name from the existence of righteousness; for it is called unrighteousness, when righteousness is compared with it, and is found to be opposite to it.

#### CHAPTER 15. PAIRS

Hence therefore God, teaching men with respect to the truth of existing things, being Himself one, has distinguished all principles into pairs and opposites, Himself being one and sole God from the beginning, having made heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death. But man alone amongst these He made self-controlling, having a fitness to be either righteous or unrighteous. To him also he has varied the figures of combinations, placing before him small things first, and great ones afterwards, such as the world and eternity. But the world that now is, is temporary; that which shall be, is eternal. First is ignorance, then knowledge. So also has He arranged the leaders of prophecy. For, since the present world is female, as a mother bringing forth the souls of her children, but the world to come is male, as a father receiving his children from their mother, therefore in this world there come a succession of prophets, as being sons of the world to come, and having knowledge of men. And if pious men had understood this mystery, they would never have gone astray, but even now they should have known that

Simon, who now enthralls all men, is a fellow-worker of error and deceit. Now, the doctrine of the prophetic rule is as follows.

#### CHAPTER 16. MAN'S WAYS OPPOSITE TO GOD'S

As in the beginning God, who is one, like a right hand and a left, made the heavens first and then the earth, so also He constituted all the combinations in order; but upon men He no more does this, but varies all the combinations. For whereas from Him the greater things come first, and the inferior second, we find the opposite in men--the first worse, and the second superior. Therefore from Adam, who was made after the image of God, there sprang first the unrighteous Cain, and then the righteous Abel. Again, from him who amongst you is called Deucalion, two forms of spirits were sent forth, the impure namely, and the pure, first the black raven, and then the white dove. From Abraham also, the patriarchs of our nation, two firsts sprang--Ishmael first, then Isaac, who was blessed of God. And from Isaac himself, in like manner, there were again two--Esau the profane, and Jacob the pious. So, first in birth, as the first born in the world, was the high priest Aaron, then the lawgiver Moses.

#### CHAPTER 17. FIRST THE WORSE, THEN THE BETTER

In like manner, the combination with respect to Elias, which behooved to have come, has been willingly put off to another time, having determined to enjoy it conveniently hereafter. Wherefore, also, he who was among those born of woman came first; then he who was among the sons of men came second. It were possible, following this order, to perceive to what series Simon belongs, who came before me to the Gentiles, and to which I belong who have come after him, and have come in upon him as light upon darkness, as knowledge upon ignorance, as healing upon disease. And thus, as the true Prophet has told us, a false prophet must first come from some deceiver; and then, in like manner, after the removal of the holy place, the true Gospel must be secretly sent abroad for the rectification of the heresies that shall be. After this, also, towards the end, Antichrist must first come, and then our Jesus must be revealed to be indeed the Christ; and after this, the eternal light having sprung up, all the things of darkness must disappear.

#### CHAPTER 18. MISTAKE ABOUT SIMON MAGUS

Since, then, as I said, some men do not know the rule of combination, thence they do not know who is my precursor Simon. For if he were known, he would not be believed; but now, not being known, he is improperly believed; and though his deeds are those of a hater, he is loved; and though an enemy, he is received as a friend; and though he be death, he is desired as a saviour; and though fire, he is esteemed as light; and though a deceiver, he is believed as a speaker of truth.

Then I Clement, when I heard this, said, Who then, I pray you, is this who is such a deceiver? I should like to be informed. Then said Peter: If you wish to learn, it is in your power to know it from those from whom I also got accurate information on all points respecting him.

#### CHAPTER 19. JUSTA, A PROSELYTE

There is amongst us one Justa, a Syro-Phœnician, by race a Canaanite, whose daughter was oppressed with a grievous disease. And she came to our Lord, crying out, and entreating that He would heal her daughter. But He, being asked also by us, said, 'It is not lawful to heal the Gentiles, who are like to dogs on account of their using various meats and practices, while the table in the kingdom has been given to

the sons of Israel.' But she, hearing this, and begging to partake like a dog of the crumbs that fall from this table, having changed what she was, by living like the sons of the kingdom, she obtained healing for her daughter, as she asked. For she being a Gentile, and remaining in the same course of life, He would not have healed had she remained a Gentile, on account of its not being lawful to heal her as a Gentile.

#### CHAPTER 20. DIVORCED FOR THE FAITH

She, therefore, having taken up a manner of life according to the law, was, with the daughter who had been healed, driven out from her home by her husband, whose sentiments were opposed to ours. But she, being faithful to her engagements, and being in affluent circumstances, remained a widow herself, but gave her daughter in marriage to a certain man who was attached to the true faith, and who was poor. And, abstaining from marriage for the sake of her daughter, she bought two boys and educated them, and had them in place of sons. And they being educated from their boyhood with Simon Magus, have learned all things concerning him. For such was their friendship, that they were associated with him in all things in which he wished to unite with them.

#### CHAPTER 21. JUSTA'S ADOPTED SONS, ASSOCIATES WITH SIMON

These men having fallen in with Zacchæus, who sojourned here, and having received the word of truth from him, and having repented of their former innovations, and immediately denouncing Simon as being privy with him in all things, as soon as I came to sojourn here, they came to me with their foster-mother, being presented to me by him, Zacchæus, and ever since they continue with me, enjoying instructions in the truth. When Peter had said this, he sent for them, and charged them that they should accurately relate to me all things concerning Simon. And they, having called God to witness that in nothing they would falsify, proceeded with the relation.

#### CHAPTER 22. DOCTRINES OF SIMON

First Aquila began to speak in this wise: Listen, O dearest brother, that you may know accurately everything about this man, whose he is, and what, and whence; and what the things are which he does, and how and why he does them. This Simon is the son of Antonius and Rachel, a Samaritan by race, of the village of Gitthæ, which is six schoeni distant from the city. He having disciplined himself greatly in Alexandria, and being very powerful in magic, and being ambitious, wishes to be accounted a certain supreme power, greater even than the God who created the world. And sometimes intimating that he is Christ, he styles himself the Standing One. And this epithet he employs, as intimating that he shall always stand, and as not having any cause of corruption so that his body should fall. And he neither says that the God who created the world is the Supreme, nor does he believe that the dead will be raised. He rejects Jerusalem, and substitutes Mount Gerizzim for it. Instead of our Christ, he proclaims himself. The things of the law he explains by his own presumption; and he says, indeed, that there is to be a judgment, but he does not expect it. For if he were persuaded that he shall be judged by God, he would not dare be impious towards God Himself. Whence some not knowing that, using religion as a cloak, he spoils the things of the truth, and faithfully believing the hope and the judgment which in some way he says are to be, are ruined.

#### CHAPTER 23. SIMON A DISCIPLE OF THE BAPTIST

But that he came to deal with the doctrines of religion happened on this wise. There was one John, a day-baptist, who was also, according to the method of combination, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus; and as the Lord had twelve apostles, bearing the number of the twelve months of the sun, so also he, John,

had thirty chief men, fulfilling the monthly reckoning of the moon, in which number was a certain woman called Helena, that not even this might be without a dispensational significance. For a woman, being half a man, made up the imperfect number of the triacontad; as also in the case of the moon, whose revolution does not make the complete course of the month. But of these thirty, the first and the most esteemed by John was Simon; and the reason of his not being chief after the death of John was as follows:--

#### CHAPTER 24. ELECTIONEERING STRATAGEMS

He being absent in Egypt for the practice of magic, and John being killed, Dositheus desiring the leadership, falsely gave out that Simon was dead, and succeeded to the seat. But Simon, returning not long after, and strenuously holding by the place as his own, when he met with Dositheus did not demand the place, knowing that a man who has attained power beyond his expectations cannot be removed from it. Wherefore with pretended friendship he gives himself for a while to the second place, under Dositheus. But taking his place after a few days among the thirty fellow-disciples, he began to malign Dositheus as not delivering the instructions correctly. And this he said that he did, not through unwillingness to deliver them correctly, but through ignorance. And on one occasion, Dositheus, perceiving that this artful accusation of Simon was dissipating the opinion of him with respect to many, so that they did not think that he was the Standing One, came in a rage to the usual place of meeting, and finding Simon, struck him with a staff. But it seemed to pass through the body of Simon as if he had been smoke. Thereupon Dositheus, being confounded, said to him, 'If you are the Standing One, I also will worship you.' Then Simon said that he was; and Dositheus, knowing that he himself was not the Standing One, fell down and worshipped; and associating himself with the twenty-nine chiefs, he raised Simon to his own place of repute; and thus, not many days after, Dositheus himself, while he (Simon) stood, fell down and died.

#### CHAPTER 25. SIMON'S DECEIT

But Simon is going about in company with Helena, and even till now, as you see, is stirring up the people. And he says that he has brought down this Helena from the highest heavens to the world; being queen, as the all-bearing being, and wisdom, for whose sake, says he, the Greeks and barbarians fought, having before their eyes but an image of truth; for she, who really is the truth, was then with the chiefest god. Moreover, by cunningly explaining certain things of this sort, made up from Grecian myths, he deceives many; especially as he performs many signal marvels, so that if we did not know that he does these things by magic, we ourselves should also have been deceived. But whereas we were his fellow-labourers at the first, so long as he did such things without doing wrong to the interests of religion; now that he has madly begun to attempt to deceive those who are religious, we have withdrawn from him.

#### CHAPTER 26. HIS WICKEDNESS

For he even began to commit murder as himself disclosed to us, as a friend to friends, that, having separated the soul of a child from its own body by horrid incantations, as his assistant for the exhibition of anything that he pleased, and having drawn the likeness of the boy, he has it set up in the inner room where he sleeps, saying that he once formed the boy of air, by divine arts, and having painted his likeness, he gave him back again to the air. And he explains that he did the deed thus. He says that the first soul of man, being turned into the nature of heat, drew to itself, and sucked in the surrounding air, after the fashion of a gourd; and then that he changed it into water, when it was within the form of the spirit; and he said that he changed into the nature of blood the air that was in it, which could not be poured out on account of the consistency of the spirit, and that he made the blood solidified into flesh; then, the

flesh being thus consolidated, that he exhibited a man not made from earth, but from air. And thus, having persuaded himself that he was able to make a new sort of man, he said that he reversed the changes, and again restored him to the air. And when he told this to others, he was believed; but by us who were present at his ceremonies he was religiously disbelieved. Wherefore we denounced his impieties, and withdrew from him.

#### CHAPTER 27. HIS PROMISES

When Aquila had thus spoken, his brother Nicetas said: It is necessary, O Clement our brother, for me to mention what has been left out by Aquila. For, in the first place, God is witness that we assisted him in no impious work, but that we looked on while he wrought; and as long as he did harmless things, and exhibited them, we were also pleased. But when, in order to deceive the godly, he said that he did, by means of godhead, the things that were done by magic, we no longer endured him, though he made us many promises, especially that our statues should be thought worthy of a place in the temple, and that we should be thought to be gods, and should be worshipped by the multitude, and should be honoured by kings, and should be thought worthy of public honours, and enriched with boundless wealth.

#### CHAPTER 28. FRUITLESS COUNSEL

These things, and things reckoned greater than these, he promised us, on condition only that we should associate with him, and keep silence as to the wickedness of his undertaking, so that the scheme of his deceit might succeed. But still we would not consent, but even counselled him to desist from such madness, saying to him: 'We, O Simon, remembering our friendship towards you from our childhood, and out of affection for you, give you good counsel. Desist from this attempt. You cannot be a God. Fear Him who is really God. Know that you are a man, and that the time of your life is short; and though you should get great riches, or even become a king, few things accrue to the short time of your life for enjoyment, and things wickedly gotten soon flee away, and procure everlasting punishment for the adventurer. Wherefore we counsel you to fear God, by whom the soul of every one must be judged for the deeds that he has done here.'

#### CHAPTER 29. IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

When he heard this he laughed; and when we asked him why he laughed at us for giving him good counsel, he answered: 'I laugh at your foolish supposition, because you believe that the soul of man is immortal.' Then I said: 'We do not wonder, O Simon, at your attempting to deceive us, but we are confounded at the way in which you deceive even yourself. Tell me, O Simon, even if no one else has been fully convinced that the soul is immortal, at all events you and we ought to be so: you as having separated one from a human body, and conversed with it, and laid your commands upon it; and we as having been present, and heard your commands, and clearly witnessed the performance of what was ordered.' Then said Simon: 'I know what you mean; but you know nothing of the matters concerning which you reason.' Then said Nicetas: 'If you know, speak; but if you do not know, do not suppose that we can be deceived by your saying that you know, and that we do not. For we are not so childish, that you can sow in us a shrewd suspicion that we should think that you know some unutterable things, and so that you should take and hold us in subjection, by holding us in restraint through means of desire.'

#### CHAPTER 30. AN ARGUMENT

Then Simon said: 'I am aware that you know that I separated a soul from a human body; but I know that you are ignorant that it is not the soul of the dead person that ministers to me, for it does not exist; but a certain demon works, pretending to be the soul.' Then said Nicetas: 'Many incredible things we have heard in our lifetime, but something more senseless than this speech we do not expect ever to hear. For if a demon pretends to be the soul of the dead person, what is the use of the soul at all, that it should be separated from the body? Were not we ourselves present and heard you conjuring the soul from the body? And how comes it that, when one is conjured, another who is not conjured obeys, as if it were frightened? And you yourself, when at any time we have asked you why the conferences sometimes cease, did not you say that the soul, having fulfilled the time upon earth which it was to have passed in the body, goes to Hades? And you added, that the souls of those who commit suicide are not easily permitted to come, because, having gone home into Hades, they are guarded.'

#### CHAPTER 31. A DILEMMA

Nicetas having thus spoken, Aquila himself in turn said: This only should I wish to learn of you, Simon, whether it is the soul or whether it is a demon that is conjured: what is it afraid of, that it does not despise the conjuration? Then Simon said: 'It knows that it should suffer punishment if it were disobedient.' Then said Aquila: 'Therefore, if the soul comes when conjured, there is also a judgment. If, therefore, souls are immortal, assuredly there is also a judgment. As you say, then, that those which are conjured on wicked business are punished if they disobey, how are you not afraid to compel them, when those that are compelled are punished for disobedience? For it is not wonderful that you do not already suffer for your doings, seeing the judgment has not yet come, when you are to suffer the penalty of those deeds which you have compelled others to do, and when that which has been done under compulsion shall be pardoned, as having been out of respect for the oath which led to the evil action.' And he hearing this was enraged, and threatened death to us if we did not keep silence as to his doings.

#### CHAPTER 32. SIMON'S PRODIGIES

Aquila having thus spoken, I Clement inquired: What, then, are the prodigies that he works? And they told me that he makes statues walk, and that he rolls himself on the fire, and is not burnt; and sometimes he flies; and he makes loaves of stones; he becomes a serpent; he transforms himself into a goat; he becomes two-faced; he changes himself into gold; he opens lockfast gates; he melts iron; at banquets he produces images of all manner of forms. In his house he makes dishes be seen as borne of themselves to wait upon him, no bearers being seen. I wondered when I heard them speak thus; but many bore witness that they had been present, and had seen such things.

#### CHAPTER 33. DOCTRINE OF PAIRS

These things having been thus spoken, the excellent Peter himself also proceeded to speak: You must perceive, brethren, the truth of the rule of conjunction, from which he who departs not cannot be misled. For since, as we have said, we see all things in pairs and contraries, and as the night is first, and then the day; and first ignorance, then knowledge; first disease, then healing, so the things of error come first into our life, then truth supervenes, as the physician upon the disease. Therefore straightway, when our God-loved nation was about to be ransomed from the oppression of the Egyptians, first diseases were produced by means of the rod turned into a serpent, which was given to Aaron, and then remedies were superinduced by the prayers of Moses. And now also, when the Gentiles are about to be ransomed from the superstition with respect to idols, wickedness, which reigns over them, has by anticipation sent forth

her ally like another serpent, even this Simon whom you see, who works wonders to astonish and deceive, not signs of healing to convert and save. Wherefore it behooves you also from the miracles that are done to judge the doers, what is the character of the performer, and what that of the deed. If he do unprofitable miracles, he is the agent of wickedness; but if he do profitable things, he is a leader of goodness.

#### CHAPTER 34. USELESS AND PHILANTHROPIC MIRACLES

Those, then, are useless signs, which you say that Simon did. But I say that the making statues walk, and rolling himself on burning coals, and becoming a dragon, and being changed into a goat, and flying in the air, and all such things, not being for the healing of man, are of a nature to deceive many. But the miracles of compassionate truth are philanthropic, such as you have heard that the Lord did, and that I after Him accomplish by my prayers; at which most of you have been present, some being freed from all kinds of diseases, and some from demons, some having their hands restored, and some their feet, some recovering their eyesight, and some their hearing, and whatever else a man can do, being of a philanthropic spirit.

#### CHAPTER 35. DISCUSSION POSTPONED

When Peter had thus spoken, towards dawn Zacchæus entered and saluted us, and said to Peter: Simon puts off the inquiry till tomorrow; for today is his Sabbath, which occurs at intervals of eleven days. To him Peter answered: Say to Simon, Whenever you wish; and know that we are always in readiness to meet you, by divine providence, when you desire. And Zacchæus hearing this, went out to return the answer.

#### CHAPTER 36. ALL FOR THE BEST

But he (Peter) saw me disheartened, and asked the reason; and being told that it proceeded from no cause but the postponement of the inquiry, he said: He who has apprehended that the world is regulated by the good providence of God, O beloved Clement, is not vexed by things howsoever occurring, considering that things take their course advantageously under the providence of the Ruler. Whence, knowing that He is just, and living with a good conscience, he knows how by right reason to shake off from his soul any annoyance that befalls him, because, when complete, it must come to some unknown good. Now then, let not Simon the magician's postponement of the inquiry grieve you; for perhaps it has happened from the providence of God for your profit. Wherefore I shall not scruple to speak to you as being my special friend.

#### CHAPTER 37. SPIES IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

Some of our people attend feignedly upon Simon as companions, as if they were persuaded by his most atheistic error, in order that they may learn his purpose and disclose it to us, so that we may be able to encounter this terrible man on favourable terms. And now I have learned from them what arguments he is going to employ in the discussion. And knowing this, I give thanks to God on the one hand, and I congratulate you on the other, on the postponement of the discussion; for you, being instructed by me before the discussion, of the arguments that are to be used by him for the destruction of the ignorant, will be able to listen without danger of falling.

#### CHAPTER 38. CORRUPTION OF THE LAW

For the Scriptures have had joined to them many falsehoods against God on this account. The prophet Moses having by the order of God delivered the law, with the explanations, to certain chosen men, some

seventy in number, in order that they also might instruct such of the people as chose, after a little the written law had added to it certain falsehoods contrary to the law of God, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things in them; the wicked one having dared to work this for some righteous purpose. And this took place in reason and judgment, that those might be convicted who should dare to listen to the things written against God, and those who, through love towards Him, should not only disbelieve the things spoken against Him, but should not even endure to hear them at all, even if they should happen to be true, judging it much safer to incur danger with respect to religious faith, than to live with an evil conscience on account of blasphemous words.

#### CHAPTER 39. TACTICS

Simon, therefore, as I learn, intends to come into public, and to speak of those chapters against God that are added to the Scriptures, for the sake of temptation, that he may seduce as many wretched ones as he can from the love of God. For we do not wish to say in public that these chapters are added to the Bible, since we should thereby perplex the unlearned multitudes, and so accomplish the purpose of this wicked Simon. For they not having yet the power of discerning, would flee from us as impious; or, as if not only the blasphemous chapters were false, they would even withdraw from the word. Wherefore we are under a necessity of assenting to the false chapters, and putting questions in return to him concerning them, to draw him into a strait, and to give in private an explanation of the chapters that are spoken against God to the well-disposed after a trial of their faith; and of this there is but one way, and that a brief one. It is this.

#### CHAPTER 40. PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION

Everything that is spoken or written against God is false. But that we say this truly, not only for the sake of reputation, but for the sake of truth, I shall convince you when my discourse has proceeded a little further. Whence you, my most beloved Clement, ought not to be sorry at Simon's having interposed a day between this and the discussion. For today, before the discussion, you shall be instructed concerning the chapters added to the Scriptures; and then in the discussion concerning the only one and good God, the Maker also of the world, you ought not to be distracted. But in the discussion you will even wonder how impious men, overlooking the multitudes of things that are spoken in the Scriptures for God, and looking at those that are spoken against Him, gladly bring these forward; and thus the hearers, by reason of ignorance, believing the things against God, become outcasts from His kingdom. Wherefore you, by advantage of the postponement, learning the mystery of the Scriptures, and gaining the means of not sinning against God, will incomparably rejoice.

#### CHAPTER 41. ASKING FOR INFORMATION, NOT CONTRADICTION

Then I Clement, hearing this, said: Truly I rejoice, and I give thanks to God, who in all things does well. However, he knows that I shall be able to think nothing other than that all things are for God. Wherefore do not suppose that I ask questions, as doubting the words concerning God, or those that are to be spoken, but rather that I may learn, and so be able myself to instruct another who is ingenuously willing to learn. Wherefore tell me what are the falsehoods added to the Scriptures, and how it comes that they are really false. Then Peter answered: Even although you had not asked me, I should have gone on in order, and afforded you the exposition of these matters, as I promised. Learn, then, how the Scriptures misrepresent Him in many respects, that you may know when you happen upon them.

#### CHAPTER 42. RIGHT NOTIONS OF GOD ESSENTIAL TO HOLINESS

But what I am going to tell you will be sufficient by way of example. But I do not think, my dear Clement, that any one who possesses ever so little love to God and ingenuousness, will be able to take in, or even to hear, the things that are spoken against Him. For how is it that he can have a monarchic soul, and be holy, who supposes that there are many gods, and not one only? But even if there be but one, who will cherish zeal to be holy, that finds in Him many defects, since he will hope that the Beginning of all things, by reason of the defects of his own nature, will not visit the crimes of others?

#### CHAPTER 43. A PRIORI ARGUMENT ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Wherefore, far be it from us to believe that the Lord of all, who made the heaven and the earth, and all things that are in them, shares His government with others, or that He lies. For if He lies, then who speaks truth? Or that He makes experiments as in ignorance; for then who foreknows? And if He deliberates, and changes His purpose, who is perfect in understanding and permanent in design? If He envies, who is above rivalry? If He hardens hearts, who makes wise? If He makes blind and deaf, who has given sight and hearing? If He commits pilfering, who administers justice? If He mocks, who is sincere? If He is weak, who is omnipotent? If He is unjust, who is just? If He makes evil things, who shall make good things? If He does evil, who shall do good?

#### CHAPTER 44. THE SAME CONTINUED

But if He desires the fruitful hill, whose then are all things? If He is false, who then is true? If He dwells in a tabernacle, who is without bounds? If He is fond of fat, and sacrifices, and offerings, and drink-offerings, who then is without need, and who is holy, and pure, and perfect? If He is pleased with candles and candlesticks, who then placed the luminaries in heaven? If He dwells in shadow, and darkness, and storm, and smoke, who is the light that lightens the universe? If He comes with trumpets, and shoutings, and darts, and arrows, who is the looked-for tranquillity of all? If He loves war, who then wishes peace? If He makes evil things, who makes good things? If He is without affection, who is a lover of men? If He is not faithful to His promises, who shall be trusted? If He loves the wicked, and adulterers, and murderers, who shall be a just judge? If He changes His mind, who is stedfast? If He chooses evil men, who then takes the part of the good?

#### CHAPTER 45. HOW GOD IS TO BE THOUGHT OF

Wherefore, Clement, my son, beware of thinking otherwise of God, than that He is the only God, and Lord, and Father, good and righteous, the Creator, long-suffering, merciful, the sustainer, the benefactor, ordaining love of men, counselling purity, immortal and making immortal, incomparable, dwelling in the souls of the good, that cannot be contained and yet is contained, who has fixed the great world as a centre in space, who has spread out the heavens and solidified the earth, who has stored up the water, who has disposed the stars in the sky, who has made the fountains flow in the earth, has produced faults, has raised up mountains, has set bounds to the sea, has ordered winds and blasts, who by the spirit of counsel has kept safely the body comprehended in a boundless sea.

#### CHAPTER 46. JUDGMENT TO COME

This is our Judge, to whom it behooves us to look. and to regulate our own souls, thinking all things in His favour, speaking well of Him, persuaded that by His long-suffering He brings to light the obstinacy of all, and is alone good. And He, at the end of all, shall sit as a just Judge upon every one of those who have attempted what they ought not.

## CHAPTER 47. A PERTINENT QUESTION

When I Clement heard this, I said, Truly, this is a godliness; truly this is piety. And again I said: I would learn, therefore, why the Bible has written anything of this sort? For I remember that you said that it was for the conviction of those who should dare to believe anything that was spoken against God. But since you permit us, we venture to ask, at your command: If any one, most beloved Peter, should choose to say to us, 'The Scriptures are true, although to you the things spoken against God seem to be false,' how should we answer him?

## CHAPTER 48. A PARTICULAR CASE

Then Peter answered: You speak well in your inquiry; for it will be for your safety. Therefore listen: Since there are many things that are spoken by the Scriptures against God, as time presses on account of the evening, ask with respect to any one matter that you please, and I will explain it, showing that it is false, not only because it is spoken against God, but because it is really false. Then I answered: I wish to learn how, when the Scriptures say that God is ignorant, you can show that He knows?

## CHAPTER 49. REDUCTIO A.D. ABSURDUM

Then Peter answered: You have presented us with a matter that can easily be answered. However, listen, how God is ignorant of nothing, but even foreknows. But first answer me what I ask of you. He who wrote the Bible, and told how the world was made, and said that God does not foreknow, was he a man or not? Then I said: He was a man. Then Peter answered: How, then, was it possible for him, being a man, to know assuredly how the world was made, and that God does not foreknow?

## CHAPTER 50. A SATISFACTORY ANSWER

Then I, already perceiving the explanation, smiled, and said that he was a prophet. And Peter said: If, then, he was a prophet, being a man, he was ignorant of nothing, by reason of his having received foreknowledge from God; how then, should He, who gave to man the gift of foreknowledge, being God, Himself be ignorant? And I said: You have spoken rightly. Then Peter said: Come with me one step further. It being acknowledged by us that God foreknows all things, there is every necessity that the scriptures are false which say that He is ignorant, and those are true which say that He knows. Then said I: It must needs be so.

## CHAPTER 51. WEIGH IN THE BALANCE

Then Peter said: If, therefore, some of the Scriptures are true and some false, with good reason said our Master, 'Be ye good money-changers,' inasmuch as in the Scriptures there are some true sayings and some spurious. And to those who err by reason of the false scriptures He fitly showed the cause of their error, saying, 'You therefore err, not knowing the true things of the Scriptures; for this reason you are ignorant also of the power of God.' Then said I: You have spoken very excellently.

## CHAPTER 52. SINS OF THE SAINTS DENIED

Then Peter answered: Assuredly, with good reason, I neither believe anything against God, nor against the just men recorded in the law, taking for granted that they are impious imaginations. For, as I am persuaded, neither was Adam a transgressor, who was fashioned by the hands of God; nor was Noah drunken, who was found righteous above all the world; nor did Abraham live with three wives at once,

who, on account of his sobriety, was thought worthy of a numerous posterity; nor did Jacob associate with four--of whom two were sisters--who was the father of the twelve tribes, and who intimated the coming of the presence of our Master; nor was Moses a murderer, nor did he learn to judge from an idolatrous priest--he who set forth the law of God to all the world, and for his right judgment has been testified to as a faithful steward.

#### CHAPTER 53. CLOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

But of these and such like things I shall afford you an explanation in due time. But for the rest, since, as you see, the evening has come upon us, let what has been said be enough for today. But whenever you wish, and about whatever you wish, ask boldly of us, and we shall gladly explain it at once. Thus having spoken, he rose up. And then, having partaken of food, we turned to sleep, for the night had come upon us.

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