

Catechetical Lecture VI

Cyril of Jerusalem

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Nicene & Post-Nicene · Catechesis

STROMATA 42

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INTRODUCTION

Delivered to candidates preparing for baptism in mid-fourth-century Jerusalem, this lecture takes up the opening article of the creed — belief in one God — and uses it as an occasion to survey the heresies a new Christian would encounter in the Eastern Mediterranean: Simonians, Marcionites, Valentinians, Manichaeans, and others Cyril names by founder and error. The catalogue is not antiquarian; Cyril is arming the newly enlightened against teachers they might actually meet, and his account preserves details about these groups that survive in few other sources. The reading is plainspoken and pastoral by turns, alternating between exhortations to humility before the divine nature and pointed warnings about specific named adversaries. Expect the cadence of a bishop addressing people he knows by face, not a treatise.

Concerning the Unity of God. On the Article, I Believe in One God. Also Concerning Heresies.

Isaiah 45:16, 17. (Sept.)

Sanctify yourselves unto Me, O islands. Israel is saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed, neither shall they be confounded for ever, etc.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed also be His Only-begotten Son. For with the thought of _God_ let the thought of _Father_ at once be joined, that the ascription of glory to the Father and the Son may be made indivisible. For the Father has not one glory, and the Son another, but one and the same, since He is the Father's Only-begotten Son; and when the Father is glorified, the Son also shares the glory with Him, because the glory of the Son flows from His Father's honour: and again, when the Son is glorified, the Father of so great a blessing is highly honoured.

Now though the mind is most rapid in its thoughts, yet the tongue needs words, and a long recital of intermediary speech. For the eye embraces at once a multitude of the 'starry quire;' but when any one wishes to describe them one by one, which is the Morning-star, and which, the Evening-star, and which each one of them, he has need of many words. In like manner again the mind in the briefest moment compasses earth and sea and all the bounds of the universe; but what it conceives in an instant, it uses many words to describe. Yet forcible as is the example I have mentioned, still it is after all weak and

inadequate. For of God we speak not all we ought (for that is known to Him only), but so much as the capacity of human nature has received, and so much as our weakness can bear. For we explain not what God is but candidly confess that we have not exact knowledge concerning Him. For in what concerns God to confess our ignorance is the best knowledge. Therefore magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together — all of us in common, for one alone is powerless; nay rather, even if we be all united together, we shall yet not do it as we ought. I mean not you only who are here present, but even if all the nurslings of the whole Church throughout the world, both that which now is and that which shall be, should meet together, they would not be able worthily to sing the praises of their Shepherd.

A great and honourable man was Abraham, but only great in comparison with men; and when he came before God, then speaking the truth candidly he says, *‘I am earth and ashes’*. Genesis 18:27 He did not say ‘earth,’ and then cease, lest he should call himself by the name of that great element; but he added *‘and ashes,’* that he might represent his perishable and frail nature. Is there anything, he says, smaller or lighter than ashes? For take, says he, the comparison of ashes to a house, of a house to a city, a city to a province, a province to the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire to the whole earth and all its bounds, and the whole earth to the heaven in which it is embosomed;— the earth, which bears the same proportion to the heaven as the centre to the whole circumference of a wheel, for the earth is no more than this in comparison with the heaven : consider then that this first heaven which is seen is less than the second, and the second than the third, for so far Scripture has named them, not that they are only so many, but because it was expedient for us to know so many only. And when in thought you have surveyed all the heavens, not yet will even the heavens be able to praise God as He is, nay, not if they should resound with a voice louder than thunder. But if these great vaults of the heavens cannot worthily sing God's praise, when shall *‘earth and ashes,’* the smallest and least of things existing, be able to send up a worthy hymn of praise to God, or worthily to speak of God, *‘that sits upon the circle of the earth, and holds the inhabitants thereof as grasshoppers’* Isaiah 40:22 .

If any man attempt to speak of God, let him first describe the bounds of the earth. You dwell on the earth, and the limit of this earth which is your dwelling you know not: how then shall you be able to form a worthy thought of its Creator? You behold the stars, but their Maker you behold not: count these which are visible, and then describe Him who is invisible, *‘Who tells the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names’*. Violent rains lately came pouring down upon us, and nearly destroyed us: number the drops in this city alone: nay, I say not in the city, but number the drops on your own house for one single hour, if you can, but you can not. Learn then your own weakness; learn from this instance the mightiness of God: for *‘He has numbered the drops of rain’* , which have been poured down on all the earth, not only now but in all time. The sun is a work of God, which, great though it be, is but a spot in comparison with the whole heaven; first gaze steadfastly upon the sun, and then curiously scan the Lord of the sun. *‘Seek not the things that are too deep for you, neither search out the things that are above your strength: what is commanded you, think thereupon’* Sirach 3:21-22 .

But some one will say, If the Divine substance is incomprehensible, why then do you discourse of these things? So then, because I cannot drink up all the river, am I not even to take in moderation what is expedient for me? Because with eyes so constituted as mine I cannot take in all the sun, am I not even to look upon him enough to satisfy my wants? Or again, because I have entered into a great garden,

and cannot eat all the supply of fruits, would you have me go away altogether hungry? I praise and glorify Him that made us; for it is a divine command which says, *“Let every breath praise the Lord.”* I am attempting now to glorify the Lord, but not to describe Him, knowing nevertheless that I shall fall short of glorifying Him worthily, yet deeming it a work of piety even to attempt it at all. For the Lord Jesus encourages my weakness, by saying, *“No man has seen God at any time.”*

What then, some man will say, is it not written, *“The little ones’ Angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.”* Matthew 18:10? Yes, but the Angels see God not as He is, but as far as they themselves are capable. For it is Jesus Himself who says, *“Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is of God, He has seen the Father.”* John 6:46 The Angels therefore behold as much as they can bear, and Archangels as much as they are able; and Thrones and Dominions more than the former, but yet less than His worthiness: for with the Son the Holy Ghost alone can rightly behold Him: for *“He searches all things, and knows even the deep things of God.”* 1 Corinthians 2:10: as indeed the Only-begotten Son also, with the Holy Ghost, knows the Father fully: For *“neither,”* says He, *“knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”* Matthew 11:27 For He fully beholds, and, according as each can bear, reveals God through the Spirit: since the Only-begotten Son together with the Holy Ghost is a partaker of the Father's Godhead. He, who was begotten knows Him who begot; and He Who begot knows Him who is begotten. Since Angels then are ignorant (for to each according to his own capacity does the Only-begotten reveal Him through the Holy Ghost, as we have said), let no man be ashamed to confess his ignorance. I am speaking now, as all do on occasion: but how we speak, we cannot tell: how then can I declare Him who has given us speech? I who have a soul, and cannot tell its distinctive properties, how shall I be able to describe its Giver?

For devotion it suffices us simply to know that we have a God; a God who is One, a living, an ever-living God; always like Himself; who has no Father, none mightier than Himself, no successor to thrust Him out from His kingdom: Who in name is manifold, in power infinite, in substance uniform. For though He is called Good, and Just, and Almighty and Sabaoth, He is not on that account diverse and various; but being one and the same, He sends forth countless operations of His Godhead, not exceeding here and deficient there, but being in all things like Himself. Not great in loving-kindness only, and little in wisdom, but with wisdom and loving-kindness in equal power: not seeing in part, and in part devoid of sight; but being all eye, and all ear, and all mind: not like us perceiving in part and in part not knowing; for such a statement were blasphemous, and unworthy of the Divine substance. He foreknows the things that be; He is Holy, and Almighty, and excels all in goodness, and majesty, and wisdom: of Whom we can declare neither beginning, nor form, nor shape. For *“you have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.”* John 5:37, says Holy Scripture. Wherefore Moses says also to the Israelites: *“And take good heed to your own souls, for you saw no similitude.”* Deuteronomy 4:15 For if it is wholly impossible to imagine His likeness, how shall thought come near His substance?

There have been many imaginations by many persons, and all have failed. Some have thought that God is fire; others that He is, as it were, a man with wings, because of a true text ill understood, *“You shall hide me under the shadow of Your wings.”* They forgot that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten, speaks in like manner concerning Himself to Jerusalem, *“How often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen does gather her chickens under her wings, and you would not.”*

Matthew 23:37 For whereas God's protecting power was conceived as wings, they failing to understand this sank down to the level of things human, and supposed that the Unsearchable exists in the likeness of man. Some again dared to say that He has seven eyes, because it is written, _seven eyes of the Lord looking upon the whole earth_. Zechariah 4:10 For if He has but seven eyes surrounding Him in part, His seeing is therefore partial and not perfect: but to say this of God is blasphemous; for we must believe that God is in all things perfect, according to our Saviour's word, which says, _Your Father in heaven is perfect_ Matthew 5:48: perfect in sight, perfect in power, perfect in greatness, perfect in foreknowledge, perfect in goodness, perfect in justice, perfect in loving-kindness: not circumscribed in any space, but the Creator of all space, existing in all, and circumscribed by none. _Heaven is His throne_, but higher is He that sits thereon: _and earth is His footstool_ Isaiah 66:1, but His power reaches unto things under the earth.

One He is, everywhere present, beholding all things, perceiving all things, creating all things through Christ: _For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made_. John 1:3 A fountain of every good, abundant and unfailing, a river of blessings, an eternal light of never-failing splendour, an insuperable power condescending to our infirmities: whose very Name we dare not hear. _Will you find a footstep of the Lord?_ says Job, _or have you attained unto the least things which the Almighty has made_? If the least of His works are incomprehensible, shall He be comprehended who made them all? _Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him_. 1 Corinthians 2:9 If the things which God has prepared are incomprehensible to our thoughts, how can we comprehend with our mind Himself who has prepared them? _O the depth of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out_ Romans 11:33! says the Apostle. If His judgments and His ways are incomprehensible, can He Himself be comprehended?

God then being thus great, and yet greater, (for even were I to change my whole substance into tongue, I could not speak His excellence: nay more, not even if all Angels should assemble, could they ever speak His worth), God being therefore so great in goodness and majesty, man has yet dared to say to a stone that he has graven, _You are my God_ Isaiah 44:17! O monstrous blindness, that from majesty so great came down so low! The tree which was planted by God, and nourished by the rain, and afterwards burnt and turned into ashes by the fire — this is addressed as God, and the true God is despised. But the wickedness of idolatry grew yet more prodigal, and cat, and dog, and wolf were worshipped instead of God: the man-eating lion also was worshipped instead of God, the most loving friend of man. The snake and the serpent, counterfeit of him who thrust us out of Paradise, were worshipped, and He who planted Paradise was despised. And I am ashamed to say, and yet do say it, even onions were worshipped among some. Wine was given _to make glad the heart of man_ : and Dionysus (Bacchus) was worshipped instead of God. God made grain by saying, _Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed after his kind and after his likeness_ Genesis 1:11, _that bread may strengthen man's heart_ : why then was Demeter (Ceres) worshipped? Fire comes forth from striking stones together even to this day: how then was Hephæstus (Vulcan) the creator of fire?

Whence came the polytheistic error of the Greeks? God has no body: whence then the adulteries alleged among those who are by them called gods? I say nothing of the transformations of Zeus into a swan: I am ashamed to speak of his transformations into a bull: for bellows are unworthy of a god. The god of the Greeks has been found an adulterer, yet are they not ashamed: for if he is an adulterer let him not be called a god. They tell also of deaths, and falls, and thunder-strokes of their gods. Do you see from how great a height and how low they have fallen? Was it without reason then that the Son of God came down from heaven? Or was it that He might heal so great a wound? Was it without reason that the Son came? Or was it in order that the Father might be acknowledged? You have learned what moved the Only-begotten to come down from the throne at God's right hand. The Father was despised, the Son must needs correct the error: for He Through Whom All Things Were Made must bring them all as offerings to the Lord of all. The wound must be healed: for what could be worse than this disease, that a stone should be worshipped instead of God?

Of Heresies.

And not among the heathen only did the devil make these assaults; for many of those who are falsely called Christians, and wrongfully addressed by the sweet name of Christ, have ere now impiously dared to banish God from His own creation. I mean the brood of heretics, those most ungodly men of evil name, pretending to be friends of Christ but utterly hating Him. For he who blasphemes the Father of the Christ is an enemy of the Son. These men have dared to speak of two Godheads, one good and one evil! O monstrous blindness! If a Godhead, then assuredly good. But if not good, why called a Godhead? For if goodness is an attribute of God; if loving-kindness, beneficence, almighty power, are proper to God, then of two things one, either in calling Him God let the name and operation be united; or if they would rob Him of His operations, let them not give Him the bare name.

Heretics have dared to say that there are two Gods, and of good and evil two sources, and these unbegotten. If both are unbegotten it is certain that they are also equal, and both mighty. How then does the light destroy the darkness? And do they ever exist together, or are they separated? Together they cannot be; _for what fellowship has light with darkness?_ says the Apostle. But if they are far from each other, it is certain that they hold also each his own place; and if they hold their own separate places, we are certainly in the realm of one God, and certainly worship one God. For thus we must conclude, even if we assent to their folly, that we must worship one God. Let us examine also what they say of the good God. Hath He power or no power? If He has power, how did evil arise against His will? And how does the evil substance intrude, if He be not willing? For if He knows but cannot hinder it, they charge Him with want of power; but if He has the power, yet hinders not, they accuse Him of treachery. Mark too their want of sense. At one time they say that the Evil One has no communion with the good God in the creation of the world; but at another time they say that he has the fourth part only. Also they say that the good God is the Father of Christ; but Christ they call this sun. If, therefore according to them, the world was made by the Evil One, and the sun is in the world, how is the Son of the Good an unwilling slave in the kingdom of the Evil? We bemoire ourselves in speaking of these things, but we do it lest any of those present should from ignorance fall into the mire of the heretics. I know that I have defiled my own mouth and the ears of my listeners: yet it is expedient. For it is much better to hear absurdities charged against others, than to fall into them from ignorance: far better that thou know the mire and hate it, than unawares fall into it. For the godless system of the heresies is a road with many branches, and whenever a man has strayed from the one straight way, then he falls down precipices again and again.

The inventor of all heresy was Simon Magus : that Simon, who in the Acts of the Apostles thought to purchase with money the unsaleable grace of the Spirit, and heard the words, _You have neither part nor lot in this matter_ Acts 8:18-21, and the rest: concerning whom also it is written, _They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us_. 1 John 2:19 This man, after he had been cast out by the Apostles, came to Rome, and gaining over one Helena a harlot , was the first that dared with blasphemous mouth to say that it was himself who appeared on Mount Sinai as the Father, and afterwards appeared among the Jews, not in real flesh but in seeming , as Christ Jesus, and afterwards as the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as the Paraclete. And

he so deceived the City of Rome that Claudius set up his statue, and wrote beneath it, in the language of the Romans, *Simoni Deo Sancto*, which being interpreted signifies, To Simon the Holy God.

As the delusion was extending, Peter and Paul, a noble pair, chief rulers of the Church, arrived and set the error right ; and when the supposed god Simon wished to show himself off, they straightway showed him as a corpse. For Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a *dæmon*.¹ chariot on the air; but the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shown that agreement of which Jesus spoke, that *_If two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done unto them_* Matthew 18:19, they launched the weapon of their concord in prayer against Magus, and struck him down to the earth. And marvellous though it was, yet no marvel. For Peter was there, who carries the keys of heaven : and nothing wonderful, for Paul was there , who was *_caught up to the third heaven_, and *_into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter_*. These brought the supposed God down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads.*

For Cerinthus *_made havoc of the Church_,* and Menander , and Carpocrates , Ebionites also, and Marcion , that mouthpiece of ungodliness. For he who proclaimed different gods, one the Good, the other the Just, contradicts the Son when He says, *_O righteous Father_*. John 17:25 And he who says again that the Father is one, and the maker of the world another, opposes the Son when He says, *_If then God so clothes the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the furnace of fire_* Luke 12:28; and, *_Who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust_*. Matthew 5:45 Here again is a second inventor of more mischief, this Marcion. For being confuted by the testimonies from the Old Testament which are quoted in the New, he was the first who dared to cut those testimonies out , and leave the preaching of the word of faith without witness, thus effacing the true God: and sought to undermine the Church's faith, as if there were no heralds of it.

He again was succeeded by another, Basilides, of evil name, and dangerous character, a preacher of impurities. The contest of wickedness was aided also by Valentinus , a preacher of thirty gods. The Greeks tell of but few: and the man who was called — but more truly was not — a Christian extended the delusion to full thirty. He says, too, that Bythus the Abyss (for it became him as being an abyss of wickedness to begin his teaching from the Abyss) begot Silence, and of Silence begot the Word. This Bythus was worse than the Zeus of the Greeks, who was united to his sister: for Silence was said to be the child of Bythus. Do you see the absurdity invested with a show of Christianity? Wait a little, and you will be shocked at his impiety; for he asserts that of this Bythus were begotten eight *Æons*; and of them, ten; and of them, other twelve, male and female. But whence is the proof of these things? See their silliness from their fabrications. Whence have you the proof of the thirty *Æons*? Because, says he, it is written, that *_Jesus was baptized_, *_being thirty years old_*. Luke 3:23 But even if He was baptized when thirty years old, what sort of demonstration is this from the thirty years? Are there then five gods, because He broke five loaves among five thousand? Or because he had twelve Disciples, must there also be twelve gods?*

And even this is still little compared with the impieties which follow. For the last of the deities being, as he dares to speak, both male and female, this, he says, is Wisdom. What impiety! For _the Wisdom of God_ 1 Corinthians 1:24 is Christ His Only-begotten Son: and he by his doctrine degraded the Wisdom of God into a female element, and one of thirty, and the last fabrication. He also says that Wisdom attempted to behold the first God, and not bearing His brightness fell from heaven, and was cast out of her thirtieth place. Then she groaned, and of her groans begot the Devil , and as she wept over her fall made of her tears the sea. Mark the impiety. For of Wisdom how is the Devil begotten, and of prudence wickedness, or of light darkness? He says too that the Devil begot others, some of whom created the world: and that the Christ came down in order to make mankind revolt from the Maker of the world.

But hear whom they say Christ Jesus to be, that you may detest them yet more. For they say that after Wisdom had been cast down, in order that the number of the thirty might not be incomplete, the nine and twenty Æons contributed each a little part, and formed the Christ : and they say that He also is both male and female. Can anything be more impious than this? Anything more wretched? I am describing their delusion to you, in order that you may hate them the more. Shun, therefore, their impiety, and _do not even give greeting to_ a man of this kind, lest you have _fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness_ Ephesians 5:11: neither make curious inquiries, nor be willing to enter into conversation with them.

Hate all heretics, but especially him who is rightly named after mania , who arose not long ago in the reign of Probus. For the delusion began full seventy years ago , and there are men still living who saw him with their very eyes. But hate him not for this, that he lived a short time ago; but because of his impious doctrines hate thou the worker of wickedness, the receptacle of all filth, who gathered up the mire of every heresy. For aspiring to become pre-eminent among wicked men, he took the doctrines of all, and having combined them into one heresy filled with blasphemies and all iniquity, he makes havoc of the Church, or rather of those outside the Church, roaming about like a lion and devouring. Heed not their fair speech, nor their supposed humility: for they are serpents, _a generation of vipers_. Matthew 3:7 Judas too _said Hail! Master_ , even while he was betraying Him. Heed not their kisses, but beware of their venom.

Now, lest I seem to accuse him without reason, let me make a digression to tell who this Manes is, and in part what he teaches: for all time would fail to describe adequately the whole of his foul teaching. But _for help in time of need_ Hebrews 4:16, store up in your memory what I have said to former hearers, and will repeat to those now present, that they who know not may learn, and they who know may be reminded. Manes is not of Christian origin, God forbid! nor was he like Simon cast out of the Church, neither himself nor the teachers who were before him. For he steals other men's wickedness, and makes their wickedness his own: but how and in what manner you must hear.

There was in Egypt one Scythianus , a Saracen by birth, having nothing in common either with Judaism or with Christianity. This man, who dwelt at Alexandria and imitated the life of Aristotle , composed four books , one called a Gospel which had not the acts of Christ, but the mere name only, and one other called the book of Chapters, and a third of Mysteries, and a fourth, which they circulate now, the Treasure. This man had a disciple, Terebinthus by name. But when Scythianus purposed to come

into Judæa, and make havoc of the land, the Lord smote him with a deadly disease, and stayed the pestilence.

But Terebinthus, his disciple in this wicked error, inherited his money and books and heresy, and came to Palestine, and becoming known and condemned in Judæa he resolved to pass into Persia: but lest he should be recognised there also by his name he changed it and called himself Buddas. However, he found adversaries there also in the priests of Mithras: and being confuted in the discussion of many arguments and controversies, and at last hard pressed, he took refuge with a certain widow. Then having gone up on the housetop, and summoned the dæmons of the air, whom the Manichees to this day invoke over their abominable ceremony of the fig, he was smitten of God, and cast down from the housetop, and expired: and so the second beast was cut off.

The books, however, which were the records of his impiety, remained; and both these and his money the widow inherited. And having neither kinsman nor any other friend, she determined to buy with the money a boy named Cubricus: him she adopted and educated as a son in the learning of the Persians, and thus sharpened an evil weapon against mankind. So Cubricus, the vile slave, grew up in the midst of philosophers, and on the death of the widow inherited both the books and the money. Then, lest the name of slavery might be a reproach, instead of Cubricus he called himself Manes, which in the language of the Persians signifies discourse. For as he thought himself something of a disputant, he surnamed himself Manes, as it were an excellent master of discourse. But though he contrived for himself an honourable title according to the language of the Persians, yet the providence of God caused him to become a self-accuser even against his will, that through thinking to honour himself in Persia, he might proclaim himself among the Greeks by name a maniac.

He dared too to say that he was the Paraclete, though it is written, *But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, has no forgiveness.* Mark 3:29 He committed blasphemy therefore by saying that he was the Holy Ghost: let him that communicates with those heretics see with whom he is enrolling himself. The slave shook the world, since *by three things the earth is shaken, and the fourth it cannot bear — if a slave became a king.* Proverbs 30:21-22 Having come into public he now began to promise things above man's power. The son of the King of the Persians was sick, and a multitude of physicians were in attendance: but Manes promised, as if he were a godly man, to cure him by prayer. With the departure of the physicians, the life of the child departed: and the man's impiety was detected. So the would-be philosopher was a prisoner, being cast into prison not for reproving the king in the cause of truth, not for destroying the idols, but for promising to save and lying, or rather, if the truth must be told, for committing murder. For the child who might have been saved by medical treatment, was murdered by this man's driving away the physicians, and killing him by want of treatment.

Now as there are very many wicked things which I tell you of him, remember first his blasphemy, secondly his slavery (not that slavery is a disgrace, but that his pretending to be free-born, when he was a slave, was wicked), thirdly, the falsehood of his promise, fourthly, the murder of the child, and fifthly, the disgrace of the imprisonment. And there was not only the disgrace of the prison, but also the flight from prison. For he who called himself the Paraclete and champion of the truth, ran away: he was no successor of Jesus, who readily went to the Cross, but this man was the reverse, a runaway.

Moreover, the King of the Persians ordered the keepers of the prison to be executed: so Manes was the cause of the child's death through his vain boasting, and of the jailers' death through his flight. Ought then he, who shared the guilt of murder, to be worshipped? Ought he not to have followed the example of Jesus, and said, _If you seek Me, let these go their way_ John 18:8? Ought he not to have said, like Jonas, _Take me, and cast me into the sea: for this storm is because of me_ Jonah 1:12?

He escapes from the prison, and comes into Mesopotamia: but there Bishop Archelaus, a shield of righteousness, encounters him : and having accused him before philosophers as judges, and having assembled an audience of Gentiles, lest if Christians gave judgment, the judges might be thought to show favour — Tell us what you preach, said Archelaus to Manes. And he, whose _mouth was as an open sepulchre_ , began first with blasphemy against the Maker of all things, saying, The God of the Old Testament is the author of evils, as He says of Himself, _I am a consuming fire_. Deuteronomy 4:24 But the wise Archelaus undermined his blasphemous argument by saying, If the God of the Old Testament, as you say, calls Himself a fire, whose Son is He who says, _I came to send fire on the earth_ Luke 12:49? If you find fault with Him who says, The Lord kills, and makes alive 1 Samuel 2:6, why do you honour Peter, who raised up Tabitha, but struck Sapphira dead? If again you find fault, because He prepared fire, wherefore do you not find fault with Him who says, _Depart from Me into everlasting fire_ Matthew 25:41? If you find fault with Him who says, _I am God that make peace, and create evil_ Isaiah 45:7, explain how Jesus says, I came not to send peace but a sword. Matthew 10:34 Since both speak alike, of two things one, either both are good, because of their agreement, or if Jesus is blameless in so speaking, why do you blame Him that says the like in the Old Testament?

Then Manes answers him: And what sort of God causes blindness? For it is Paul who says, _In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the Gospel should shine unto them_. But Archelaus made a good retort, saying, Read a little before: _But if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing_. 2 Corinthians 4:3 Do you see that in them that are perishing it is veiled? For it is not right _to give the things which are holy unto the dogs_. Matthew 7:6 Again, Is it only the God of the Old Testament that has blinded the minds of them that believe not? Hath not Jesus Himself said, _For this cause speak I unto them in parables, that seeing they may not see_ ? Was it from hating them that He wished them not to see? Or because of their unworthiness, since _their eyes they had closed_. Matthew 13:15 For where there is wilful wickedness, there is also a withholding of grace: _for to him that has shall be given; but from him that has not shall be taken even that which he seems to have_.

But if some are right in their interpretation, we must say as follows (for it is no unworthy expression)—If indeed He blinded the thoughts of them that believe not he blinded them for a good purpose, that they might look with new sight on what is good. For he said not, He blinded their soul, but, _the thoughts of them that believe not_. And the meaning is something of this kind: 'Blind the lewd thoughts of the lewd, and the man is saved: blind the grasping and rapacious thought of the robber, and the man is saved.' But will you not understand it thus? Then there is yet another interpretation. The sun also blinds those whose sight is dim: and they whose eyes are diseased are hurt by the light and blinded. Not that the sun's nature is to blind, but that the substance of the eyes is incapable of seeing. In like manner unbelievers being diseased in their heart cannot look upon the radiance of the Godhead. Nor has he said, _'He has blinded their thoughts_, that they should not hear the Gospel:' but, _that the light of the glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ should not shine unto them_. For to hear the Gospel is permitted to all: but the glory of the Gospel is reserved for Christ's true children only. Therefore the Lord spoke in parables to those who could not hear Matthew 13:13: but to the Disciples he explained the parables in private Mark 4:34: for the brightness of the glory is for those who have been enlightened, the blinding for them that believe not. These mysteries, which the Church now explains to you who art passing out of the class of Catechumens, it is not the custom to explain to heathen. For to a heathen we do not explain the mysteries concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, nor before Catechumens do we speak plainly of the mysteries: but many things we often speak in a veiled way, that the believers who know may understand, and they who know not may get no hurt.

By such and many other arguments the serpent was overthrown: thus did Archelaus wrestle with Manes and threw him. Again, he who had fled from prison flees from this place also: and having run away from his antagonist, he comes to a very poor village, like the serpent in Paradise when he left Adam and came to Eve. But the good shepherd Archelaus taking forethought for his sheep, when he heard of his flight, straightway hastened with all speed in search of the wolf. And when Manes suddenly saw his adversary, he rushed out and fled: it was however his last flight. For the officers of the King of Persia searched everywhere, and caught the fugitive: and the sentence, which he ought to have received in the presence of Archelaus, is passed upon him by the king's officers. This Manes, whom his own disciples worship, is arrested and brought before the king. The king reproached him with his falsehood and his flight: poured scorn upon his slavish condition, avenged the murder of his child, and condemned him also for the murder of the jailers: he commands him to be flayed after the Persian fashion. And while the rest of his body was given over for food of wild beasts, his skin, the receptacle of his vile mind, was hung up before the gates like a sack. He that called himself the Paraclete and professed to know the future, knew not his own flight and capture.

This man has had three disciples, Thomas, and Baddas, and Hermas. Let none read the Gospel according to Thomas : for it is the work not of one of the twelve Apostles, but of one of the three wicked disciples of Manes. Let none associate with the soul-destroying Manicheans, who by decoctions of chaff counterfeit the sad look of fasting, who speak evil of the Creator of meats, and greedily devour the daintiest, who teach that the man who plucks up this or that herb is changed into it. For if he who crops herbs or any vegetable is changed into the same, into how many will husbandmen and the tribe of gardeners be changed ? The gardener, as we see, has used his sickle against so many: into which

then is he changed? Verily their doctrines are ridiculous, and fraught with their own condemnation and shame! The same man, being the shepherd of a flock, both sacrifices a sheep and kills a wolf. Into what then is he changed? Many men both net fishes and lime birds: into which then are they transformed?

Let those children of sloth, the Manicheans, make answer; who without labouring themselves eat up the labourers' fruits: who welcome with smiling faces those who bring them their food, and return curses instead of blessings. For when a simple person brings them anything, Stand outside a while, says he, and I will bless you. Then having taken the bread into his hands (as those who have repented and left them have confessed), I did not make you, says the Manichee to the bread: and sends up curses against the Most High; and curses him that made it, and so eats what was made. If you hate the food, why did you look with smiling countenance on him that brought it to you? If you are thankful to the bringer, why do you utter your blasphemy to God, who created and made it? So again he says, I sowed you not: may he be sown who sowed you! I reaped you not with a sickle: may he be reaped who reaped you! I baked you not with fire: may he be baked who baked you! A fine return for the kindness!

These are great faults, but still small in comparison with the rest. Their Baptism I dare not describe before men and women. I dare not say what they distribute to their wretched communicants. ...Truly we pollute our mouth in speaking of these things. Are the heathen more detestable than these? Are the Samaritans more wretched? Are Jews more impious? Are fornicators more impure? But the Manichee sets these offerings in the midst of the altar as he considers it. And do you, O man, receive instruction from such a mouth? On meeting this man do you greet him at all with a kiss? To say nothing of his other impiety, do you not flee from the defilement, and from men worse than profligates, more detestable than any prostitute?

Of these things the Church admonishes and teaches you, and touches mire, that you may not be bemired: she tells of the wounds, that you may not be wounded. But for you it is enough merely to know them: abstain from learning by experience. God thunders, and we all tremble; and they blaspheme. God lightens, and we all bow down to the earth; and they have their blasphemous sayings about the heavens. These things are written in the books of the Manichees. These things we ourselves have read, because we could not believe those who told of them: yes, for the sake of your salvation we have closely inquired into their perdition.

But may the Lord deliver us from such delusion: and may there be given to you a hatred against the serpent, that as they lie in wait for the heel, so you may trample on their head. Remember what I say. What agreement can there be between our state and theirs? _What communion has light with darkness_ 2 Corinthians 6:14? What has the majesty of the Church to do with the abomination of the Manichees? Here is order, here is discipline, here is majesty, here is purity: here even _to look upon a woman to lust after her_ Matthew 5:28 is condemnation. Here is marriage with sanctity, here steadfast continence, here virginity in honour like the Angels: here partaking of food with thanksgiving, here gratitude to the Creator of the world. Here the Father of Christ is worshipped: here are taught fear and trembling before Him who sends the rain: here we ascribe glory to Him who makes the thunder and the lightning.

Make thou your fold with the sheep: flee from the wolves: depart not from the Church. Hate those also who have ever been suspected in such matters: and unless in time thou perceive their repentance, do

not rashly trust yourself among them. The truth of the Unity of God has been delivered to you: learn to distinguish the pastures of doctrine. Be an approved banker, _holding fast that which is good, abstaining from every form of evil_. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Or if you have ever been such as they, recognise and hate your delusion. For there is a way of salvation, if you reject the vomit, if you from your heart detest it, if you depart from them, not with your lips only, but with your soul also: if you worship the Father of Christ, the God of the Law and the Prophets, if you acknowledge the Good and the Just to be one and the same God. And may He preserve you all, guarding you from falling or stumbling, established in the Faith, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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