

The Stromata (Book I)

Clement of Alexandria

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Ante-Nicene · Apology

STROMATA 18

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INTRODUCTION

Composed in late second-century Alexandria by a convert who became head of its catechetical school, the *Stromata*, literally "miscellanies" or "patchwork", proceeds by deliberate disorder, weaving Scripture, Greek philosophy, and Gnostic speculation into a single fabric. Book I opens with a defense of writing itself and a sustained argument that philosophy was, for the Greeks, what the Law was for the Hebrews: a divine pedagogy preparing the world for Christ. This claim seeded the long Christian tradition of engaging pagan learning as *preparatio evangelica*, a posture later inherited by figures from Origen to Aquinas. Expect a discursive, allusion-dense reading, closer to a learned man thinking aloud among his books than to a treatise marching toward conclusions.

Chapter 1. Preface — The Author's Object — The Utility of Written Compositions

[The beginning of this chapter is lost.]

...that you may read them under your hand, and may be able to preserve them. Whether written compositions are not to be left behind at all; or if they are, by whom? And if the former, what need there is for written compositions? And if the latter, is the composition of them to be assigned to earnest men, or the opposite? It were certainly ridiculous for one to disapprove of the writing of earnest men, and approve of those, who are not such, engaging in the work of composition. Theopompus and Timæus, who composed fables and slanders, and Epicurus the leader of atheism, and Hipponax and Archilochus, are to be allowed to write in their own shameful manner. But he who proclaims the truth is to be prevented from leaving behind him what is to benefit posterity. It is a good thing, I reckon, to leave to posterity good children. This is the case with children of our bodies. But words are the progeny of the soul. Hence we call those who have instructed us, fathers. Wisdom is a communicative and philanthropic thing. Accordingly, Solomon says, "My son, if you receive the saying of my commandment, and hide it with you, your ear shall hear wisdom." (*Proverbs 2:1–2*) He points out that the word that is sown is hidden in the soul of the learner, as in the earth, and this is spiritual planting. Wherefore also he adds, "And you shall apply your heart to understanding, and apply it for the admonition of your son." For soul, methinks, joined with soul, and spirit with spirit, in the sowing of the word, will make that which

is sown grow and germinate. And every one who is instructed, is in respect of subjection the son of his instructor. "Son," says he, "forget not my laws." (*Proverbs 3:1*)

And if knowledge belong not to all (set an ass to the lyre, as the proverb goes), yet written compositions are for the many. "Swine, for instance, delight in dirt more than in clean water." "Wherefore," says the Lord, "I speak to them in parables: because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not, and do not understand;" (*Matthew 13:13*) not as if the Lord caused the ignorance: for it were impious to think so. But He prophetically exposed this ignorance, that existed in them, and intimated that they would not understand the things spoken. And now the Saviour shows Himself, out of His abundance, dispensing goods to His servants according to the ability of the recipient, that they may augment them by exercising activity, and then returning to reckon with them; when, approving of those that had increased His money, those faithful in little, and commanding them to have the charge over many things, He bade them enter into the joy of the Lord. But to him who had hid the money, entrusted to him to be given out at interest, and had given it back as he had received it, without increase, He said, "You wicked and slothful servant, you ought to have given my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own." Wherefore the useless servant "shall be cast into outer darkness." "You, therefore, be strong," says Paul, "in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard of me among many witnesses, commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (*2 Timothy 2:1–2*) And again: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

If, then, both proclaim the Word — the one by writing, the other by speech — are not both then to be approved, making, as they do, faith active by love? It is by one's own fault that he does not choose what is best; God is free of blame. As to the point in hand, it is the business of some to lay out the word at interest, and of others to test it, and either choose it or not. And the judgment is determined within themselves. But there is that species of knowledge which is characteristic of the herald, and that which is, as it were, characteristic of a messenger, and it is serviceable in whatever way it operates, both by the hand and tongue. "For he that sows to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing." (*Galatians 6:8–9*) On him who by Divine Providence meets in with it, it confers the very highest advantages — the beginning of faith, readiness for adopting a right mode of life, the impulse towards the truth, a movement of inquiry, a trace of knowledge; in a word, it gives the means of salvation. And those who have been rightly reared in the words of truth, and received provision for eternal life, wing their way to heaven. Most admirably, therefore, the apostle says, "In everything approving ourselves as the servants of God; as poor, and yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. Our mouth is opened to you." "I charge you," he says, writing to Timothy, "before God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that you observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." (*1 Timothy 5:21*)

Both must therefore test themselves: the one, if he is qualified to speak and leave behind him written records; the other, if he is in a right state to hear and read: as also some in the dispensation of the Eucharist, according to custom, enjoin that each one of the people individually should take his part. One's own conscience is best for choosing accurately or shunning. And its firm foundation is a right life, with suitable instruction. But the imitation of those who have already been proved, and who have

led correct lives, is most excellent for the understanding and practice of the commandments. "So that whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (*1 Corinthians 11:27–28*) It therefore follows, that every one of those who undertake to promote the good of their neighbours, ought to consider whether he has betaken himself to teaching rashly and out of rivalry to any; if his communication of the word is out of vainglory; if the only reward he reaps is the salvation of those who hear, and if he speaks not in order to win favour: if so, he who speaks by writings escapes the reproach of mercenary motives. "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know," says the apostle, "nor a cloak of covetousness. God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children."

In the same way, therefore, those who take part in the divine words, ought to guard against betaking themselves to this, as they would to the building of cities, to examine them out of curiosity; that they do not come to the task for the sake of receiving worldly things, having ascertained that they who are consecrated to Christ are given to communicate the necessities of life. But let such be dismissed as hypocrites. But if any one wishes not to seem, but to be righteous, to him it belongs to know the things which are best. If, then, "the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers few," it is incumbent on us "to pray" that there may be as great abundance of labourers as possible. (*Matthew 9:37–38; Luke 10:2*)

But the husbandry is twofold — the one unwritten, and the other written. And in whatever way the Lord's labourer sow the good wheat, and grow and reap the ears, he shall appear a truly divine husbandman. "Labour," says the Lord, "not for the meat which perishes, but for that which endures to everlasting life." (*John 6:27*) And nutriment is received both by bread and by words. And truly "blessed are the peace-makers," (*Matthew 5:9*) who instructing those who are at war in their life and errors here, lead them back to the peace which is in the Word, and nourish for the life which is according to God, by the distribution of the bread, those "that hunger after righteousness." For each soul has its own proper nutriment; some growing by knowledge and science, and others feeding on the Hellenic philosophy, the whole of which, like nuts, is not eatable. "And he that plants and he that waters," "being ministers" of Him "that gives the increase, are one" in the ministry. "But every one shall receive his own reward, according to his own work. For we are God's husbandmen, God's husbandry. You are God's building," (*1 Corinthians 3:8–9*) according to the apostle. Wherefore the hearers are not permitted to apply the test of comparison. Nor is the word, given for investigation, to be committed to those who have been reared in the arts of all kinds of words, and in the power of inflated attempts at proof; whose minds are already pre-occupied, and have not been previously emptied. But whoever chooses to banquet on faith, is steadfast for the reception of the divine words, having acquired already faith as a power of judging, according to reason. Hence ensues to him persuasion in abundance. And this was the meaning of that saying of prophecy, "If you believe not, neither shall you understand." (*Isaiah 7:9*) "As, then, we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to the household of faith." (*Galatians 6:10*) And let each of these, according to the blessed David, sing, giving thanks:

"You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed. You shall wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow. You shall make me to hear gladness and joy, and the bones which have been

humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face from my sins. Blot out mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in my inward parts. Cast me not away from Your face, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and establish me with Your princely spirit." (*Psalms 51:9–14*)

He who addresses those who are present before him, both tests them by time, and judges by his judgment, and from the others distinguishes him who can hear; watching the words, the manners, the habits, the life, the motions, the attitudes, the look, the voice; the road, the rock, the beaten path, the fruitful land, the wooded region, the fertile and fair and cultivated spot, that is able to multiply the seed. But he that speaks through books, consecrates himself before God, crying in writing thus: Not for gain, not for vainglory, not to be vanquished by partiality, nor enslaved by fear, nor elated by pleasure; but only to reap the salvation of those who read, which he does not at present participate in, but awaiting in expectation the recompense which will certainly be rendered by Him, who has promised to bestow on the labourers the reward that is meet. But he who is enrolled in the number of men ought not to desire recompense. For he that vaunts his good services, receives glory as his reward. And he who does any duty for the sake of recompense, is he not held fast in the custom of the world, either as one who has done well, hastening to receive a reward, or as an evil-doer avoiding retribution? We must, as far as we can, imitate the Lord. And he will do so, who complies with the will of God, receiving freely, giving freely, and receiving as a worthy reward the citizenship itself. "The hire of a harlot shall not come into the sanctuary," it is said: accordingly it was forbidden to bring to the altar the price of a dog. And in whomsoever the eye of the soul has been blinded by ill-nurture and teaching, let him advance to the true light, to the truth, which shows by writing the things that are unwritten. "You that thirst, go to the waters," (*Isaiah 55:1*) says Esaias. And "drink water from your own vessels," (*Proverbs 5:15*) Solomon exhorts. Accordingly in *The Laws*, the philosopher who learned from the Hebrews, Plato, commands husbandmen not to irrigate or take water from others, until they have first dug down in their own ground to what is called the virgin soil, and found it dry. For it is right to supply want, but it is not well to support laziness. For Pythagoras said that, "although it be agreeable to reason to take a share of a burden, it is not a duty to take it away."

Now the Scripture kindles the living spark of the soul, and directs the eye suitably for contemplation; perchance inserting something, as the husbandman when he ingrafts, but, according to the opinion of the divine apostle, exciting what is in the soul. "For there are certainly among us many weak and sickly, and many sleep. But if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged." Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear, and of blessed and truly remarkable men.

Of these the one, in Greece, an Ionic; the other in Magna Græcia: the first of these from Cœle-Syria, the second from Egypt, and others in the East. The one was born in the land of Assyria, and the other a Hebrew in Palestine.

When I came upon the last (he was the first in power), having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found rest. He, the true, the Sicilian bee, gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a deathless element of knowledge.

Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will

exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it. For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from escape the blessed tradition. "In a man who loves wisdom the father will be glad." (*Proverbs 29:3*) Wells, when pumped out, yield purer water; and that of which no one partakes, turns to putrefaction. Use keeps steel brighter, but disuse produces rust in it. For, in a word, exercise produces a healthy condition both in souls and bodies. "No one lights a candle, and puts it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to those who are regarded worthy of the feast." (*Matthew 5:15; Mark 4:21*) For what is the use of wisdom, if it makes not him who can hear it wise? For still the Saviour saves, "and always works, as He sees the Father." (*John 5:17*) For by teaching, one learns more; and in speaking, one is often a hearer along with his audience. For the teacher of him who speaks and of him who hears is one — who waters both the mind and the word. Thus the Lord did not hinder from doing good while keeping the Sabbath; but allowed us to communicate of those divine mysteries, and of that holy light, to those who are able to receive them. He did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom He knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing, as is the case with God.

And if one say that it is written, "There is nothing secret which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be disclosed," let him also hear from us, that to him who hears secretly, even what is secret shall be manifested. This is what was predicted by this oracle. And to him who is able secretly to observe what is delivered to him, that which is veiled shall be disclosed as truth; and what is hidden to the many, shall appear manifest to the few. For why do not all know the truth? Why is not righteousness loved, if righteousness belongs to all? But the mysteries are delivered mystically, that what is spoken may be in the mouth of the speaker; rather not in his voice, but in his understanding. "God gave to the Church, some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (*Ephesians 4:11–12*)

The writing of these memoranda of mine, I well know, is weak when compared with that spirit, full of grace, which I was privileged to hear. But it will be an image to recall the archetype to him who was struck with the thyrsus. For "speak," it is said, "to a wise man, and he will grow wiser; and to him that has, and there shall be added to him." And we profess not to explain secret things sufficiently — far from it — but only to recall them to memory, whether we have forgot anything, or whether for the purpose of not forgetting. Many things, I well know, have escaped us, through length of time, that have dropped away unwritten. Whence, to aid the weakness of my memory, and provide for myself a salutary help to my recollection in a systematic arrangement of chapters, I necessarily make use of this form. There are then some things of which we have no recollection; for the power that was in the blessed men was great. There are also some things which remained unnoted long, which have now escaped; and others which are effaced, having faded away in the mind itself, since such a task is not easy to those not experienced; these I revive in my commentaries. Some things I purposely omit, in the exercise of a wise selection, afraid to write what I guarded against speaking: not grudging — for that were wrong — but fearing for my readers, lest they should stumble by taking them in a wrong sense; and, as the

proverb says, we should be found "reaching a sword to a child." For it is impossible that what has been written should not escape, although remaining unpublished by me. But being always revolved, using the one only voice, that of writing, they answer nothing to him that makes inquiries beyond what is written; for they require of necessity the aid of some one, either of him who wrote, or of some one else who has walked in his footsteps. Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger; some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently. The dogmas taught by remarkable sects will be adduced; and to these will be opposed all that ought to be premised in accordance with the profoundest contemplation of the knowledge, which, as we proceed to the renowned and venerable canon of tradition, from the creation of the world, will advance to our view; setting before us what according to natural contemplation necessarily has to be treated of beforehand, and clearing off what stands in the way of this arrangement. So that we may have our ears ready for the reception of the tradition of true knowledge; the soil being previously cleared of the thorns and of every weed by the husbandman, in order to the planting of the vine. For there is a contest, and the prelude to the contest; and there are some mysteries before other mysteries.

Our book will not shrink from making use of what is best in philosophy and other preparatory instruction. "For not only for the Hebrews and those that are under the law," according to the apostle, "is it right to become a Jew, but also a Greek for the sake of the Greeks, that we may gain all." (*1 Corinthians* 9:20–21) Also in the Epistle to the Colossians he writes, "Admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ." (*Colossians* 1:28) The nicety of speculation, too, suits the sketch presented in my commentaries. In this respect the resources of learning are like a relish mixed with the food of an athlete, who is not indulging in luxury, but entertains a noble desire for distinction.

By music we harmoniously relax the excessive tension of gravity. And as those who wish to address the people, do so often by the herald, that what is said may be better heard; so also in this case. For we have the word, that was spoken to many, before the common tradition. Wherefore we must set forth the opinions and utterances which cried individually to them, by which those who hear shall more readily turn.

And, in truth, to speak briefly: Among many small pearls there is the one; and in a great take of fish there is the beauty-fish; and by time and toil truth will gleam forth, if a good helper is at hand. For most benefits are supplied, from God, through men. All of us who make use of our eyes see what is presented before them. But some look at objects for one reason, others for another. For instance, the cook and the shepherd do not survey the sheep similarly: for the one examines it if it be fat; the other watches to see if it be of good breed. Let a man milk the sheep's milk if he need sustenance: let him shear the wool if he need clothing. And in this way let me produce the fruit of the Greek erudition.

For I do not imagine that any composition can be so fortunate as that no one will speak against it. But that is to be regarded as in accordance with reason, which nobody speaks against, with reason. And that course of action and choice is to be approved, not which is faultless, but which no one rationally finds fault with. For it does not follow, that if a man accomplishes anything not purposely, he does it through force of circumstances. But he will do it, managing it by wisdom divinely given, and in accommodation to circumstances. For it is not he who has virtue that needs the way to virtue, any more than he, that is strong, needs recovery. For, like farmers who irrigate the land beforehand, so we also water with the liquid stream of Greek learning what in it is earthy; so that it may receive the spiritual seed cast into it, and may be capable of easily nourishing it. The *Stromata* will contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy, or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell. For, in my opinion, it is fitting that the seeds of truth be kept for the husbandmen of faith, and no others. I am not oblivious of what is babbled by some, who in their ignorance are frightened at every noise, and say that we ought to occupy ourselves with what is most necessary, and which contains the faith; and that we should pass over what is beyond and superfluous, which wears out and detains us to no purpose, in things which conduce nothing to the great end. Others think that philosophy was introduced into life by an evil influence, for the ruin of men, by an evil inventor. But I shall show, throughout the whole of these *Stromata*, that evil has an evil nature, and can never turn out the producer of anything that is good; indicating that philosophy is in a sense a work of Divine Providence.

Chapter 2. Objection to the Number of Extracts from Philosophical Writings in These Books Anticipated and Answered

In reference to these commentaries, which contain as the exigencies of the case demand, the Hellenic opinions, I say thus much to those who are fond of finding fault. First, even if philosophy were useless, if the demonstration of its uselessness does good, it is yet useful. Then those cannot condemn the Greeks, who have only a mere hearsay knowledge of their opinions, and have not entered into a minute investigation in each department, in order to acquaintance with them. For the refutation, which is based on experience, is entirely trustworthy. For the knowledge of what is condemned is found the most complete demonstration. Many things, then, though not contributing to the final result, equip the artist. And otherwise erudition commends him, who sets forth the most essential doctrines so as to produce persuasion in his hearers, engendering admiration in those who are taught, and leads them to the truth. And such persuasion is convincing, by which those that love learning admit the truth; so that philosophy does not ruin life by being the originator of false practices and base deeds, although some have calumniated it, though it be the clear image of truth, a divine gift to the Greeks; nor does it drag us away from the faith, as if we were bewitched by some delusive art, but rather, so to speak, by the use of an ampler circuit, obtains a common exercise demonstrative of the faith. Further, the juxtaposition of doctrines, by comparison, saves the truth, from which follows knowledge.

Philosophy came into existence, not on its own account, but for the advantages reaped by us from knowledge, we receiving a firm persuasion of true perception, through the knowledge of things com-

prehended by the mind. For I do not mention that the *Stromata*, forming a body of varied erudition, wish artfully to conceal the seeds of knowledge. As, then, he who is fond of hunting captures the game after seeking, tracking, scenting, hunting it down with dogs; so truth, when sought and got with toil, appears a delicious thing. Why, then, you will ask, did you think it fit that such an arrangement should be adopted in your memoranda? Because there is great danger in divulging the secret of the true philosophy to those, whose delight it is unsparingly to speak against everything, not justly; and who shout forth all kinds of names and words indecorously, deceiving themselves and beguiling those who adhere to them. "For the Hebrews seek signs," as the apostle says, "and the Greeks seek after wisdom." (1 Corinthians 1:22)

Chapter 3. Against the Sophists

There is a great crowd of this description: some of them, enslaved to pleasures and willing to disbelieve, laugh at the truth which is worthy of all reverence, making sport of its barbarousness. Some others, exalting themselves, endeavour to discover calumnious objections to our words, furnishing captious questions, hunters out of paltry sayings, practicers of miserable artifices, wranglers, dealers in knotty points, as that Abderite says:

"For mortals' tongues are glib, and on them are many speeches; And a wide range for words of all sorts in this place and that."

And —

"Of whatever sort the word you have spoken, of the same sort you must hear."

Inflated with this art of theirs, the wretched Sophists, babbling away in their own jargon; toiling their whole life about the division of names and the nature of the composition and conjunction of sentences, show themselves greater chatterers than turtle-doves; scratching and tickling, not in a manly way, in my opinion, the ears of those who wish to be tickled.

"A river of silly words — not a dropping;"

just as in old shoes, when all the rest is worn and is falling to pieces, and the tongue alone remains. The Athenian Solon most excellently enlarges, and writes:

"Look to the tongue, and to the words of the glozing man, But you look on no work that has been done; But each one of you walks in the steps of a fox, And in all of you is an empty mind."

This, I think, is signified by the utterance of the Saviour, "The foxes have holes, but the Son of man has not where to lay His head." (*Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58*) For on the believer alone, who is separated entirely from the rest, who by the Scripture are called wild beasts, rests the head of the universe, the kind and gentle Word, "who takes the wise in their own craftiness. For the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain;" the Scripture calling those the wise (*Matthew 23:23*) who are skilled in words and arts, sophists (*Matthew 23:23*). The Greeks also applied the denominative appellation of wise and sophists to those

who were versed in anything. Cratinus accordingly, having in the *Archilochii* enumerated the poets, said:

"Such a hive of sophists have you examined."

And similarly Iophon, the comic poet, in *Flute-playing Satyrs*, says:

"For there entered A band of sophists, all equipped."

Of these and the like, who devote their attention to empty words, the divine Scripture most excellently says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (*Isaiah 29:14; 1 Corinthians 1:19*)

Chapter 4. Human Arts as Well as Divine Knowledge Proceed from God

Homer calls an artificer wise; and of Margites, if that is his work, he thus writes:

"Him, then, the Gods made neither a delver nor a ploughman, Nor in any other respect wise; but he missed every art."

Hesiod further said the musician Linus was "skilled in all manner of wisdom;" and does not hesitate to call a mariner wise, seeing he writes:

"Having no wisdom in navigation."

And Daniel the prophet says, "The mystery which the king asks, it is not in the power of the wise, the Magi, the diviners, the Gazarenes, to tell the king; but it is God in heaven who reveals it." (*Daniel 2:27–28*)

Here he terms the Babylonians wise. And that Scripture calls every secular science or art by the one name wisdom (there are other arts and sciences invented over and above by human reason), and that artistic and skilful invention is from God, will be clear if we adduce the following statement: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, See, I have called Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Or, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the divine spirit of wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to devise and to execute in all manner of work, to work gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and in working stone work, and in the art of working wood," and even to "all works." (*Exodus 31:2–5*) And then He adds the general reason, "And to every understanding heart I have given understanding;" (*Exodus 31:6*) that is, to every one capable of acquiring it by pains and exercise. And again, it is written expressly in the name of the Lord: "And speak to all that are wise in mind, whom I have filled with the spirit of perception." (*Exodus 28:3*)

Those who are wise in mind have a certain attribute of nature peculiar to themselves; and they who have shown themselves capable, receive from the Supreme Wisdom a spirit of perception in double measure. For those who practice the common arts, are in what pertains to the senses highly gifted: in hearing, he who is commonly called a musician; in touch, he who moulds clay; in voice the singer, in smell the

perfumer, in sight the engraver of devices on seals. Those also that are occupied in instruction, train the sensibility according to which the poets are susceptible to the influence of measure; the sophists apprehend expression; the dialecticians, syllogisms; and the philosophers are capable of the contemplation of which themselves are the objects. For sensibility finds and invents; since it persuasively exhorts to application. And practice will increase the application which has knowledge for its end. With reason, therefore, the apostle has called the wisdom of God "manifold," and which has manifested its power "in many departments and in many modes" (*Ephesians 3:10; Hebrews 1:1*) — by art, by knowledge, by faith, by prophecy — for our benefit. "For all wisdom is from the Lord, and is with Him for ever," as says the wisdom of Jesus. (*Sirach 1:1*)

"For if you call on wisdom and knowledge with a loud voice, and seek it as treasures of silver, and eagerly track it out, you shall understand godliness and find divine knowledge." (*Proverbs 2:3–5*) The prophet says this in contradiction to the knowledge according to philosophy, which teaches us to investigate in a magnanimous and noble manner, for our progress in piety. He opposes, therefore, to it the knowledge which is occupied with piety, when referring to knowledge, when he speaks as follows: "For God gives wisdom out of His own mouth, and knowledge along with understanding, and treasures up help for the righteous." For to those who have been justified by philosophy, the knowledge which leads to piety is laid up as a help.

Chapter 5. Philosophy the Handmaid of Theology

Accordingly, before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration. "For your foot," it is said, "will not stumble, if you refer what is good, whether belonging to the Greeks or to us, to Providence." (*Proverbs 3:23*) For God is the cause of all good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament; and of others by consequence, as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For this was a schoolmaster to bring "the Hellenic mind," as the law, the Hebrews, "to Christ." (*Galatians 3:24*) Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.

"Now," says Solomon, "defend wisdom, and it will exalt you, and it will shield you with a crown of pleasure." (*Proverbs 4:8–9*) For when you have strengthened wisdom with a cope by philosophy, and with right expenditure, you will preserve it unassailable by sophists. The way of truth is therefore one. But into it, as into a perennial river, streams flow from all sides. It has been therefore said by inspiration: "Hear, my son, and receive my words; that yours may be the many ways of life. For I teach you the ways of wisdom; that the fountains fail you not," which gush forth from the earth itself. Not only did He enumerate several ways of salvation for any one righteous man, but He added many other ways of many righteous, speaking thus: "The paths of the righteous shine like the light." (*Proverbs 4:18*) The commandments and the modes of preparatory training are to be regarded as the ways and appliances of life.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children, as a hen her chickens!" (*Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34*) And Jerusalem is, when interpreted, "a vision of peace." He therefore shows prophetically, that those who peacefully contemplate sacred things are in manifold ways trained to their calling. What then? He "would," and could not. How often, and where? Twice; by the prophets, and by the advent. The expression, then, "how often," shows wisdom to be manifold; and in every mode of quantity and quality, it by all means saves some, both in time and in eternity. "For the Spirit of the Lord fills the earth." And if any should violently say that the reference is to the Hellenic culture, when it is said, "Give not heed to an evil woman; for honey drops from the lips of a harlot," let him hear what follows: "who lubricates your throat for the time." But philosophy does not flatter. Who, then, does He allude to as having committed fornication? He adds expressly, "For the feet of folly lead those who use her, after death, to Hades. But her steps are not supported." Therefore remove your way far from silly pleasure. "Stand not at the doors of her house, that you yield not your life to others." And He testifies, "Then shall you repent in old age, when the flesh of your body is consumed." For this is the end of foolish pleasure. Such, indeed, is the case. And when He says, "Be not much with a strange woman," (*Proverbs 5:2–20*) He admonishes us to use indeed, but not to linger and spend time with, secular culture. For what was bestowed on each generation advantageously, and at seasonable times, is a preliminary training for the word of the Lord.

"For already some men, ensnared by the charms of handmaidens, have despised their consort philosophy, and have grown old, some of them in music, some in geometry, others in grammar, the most in rhetoric." "But as the encyclical branches of study contribute to philosophy, which is their mistress; so also philosophy itself co-operates for the acquisition of wisdom. For philosophy is the study of wisdom, and wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human; and their causes." Wisdom is therefore queen of philosophy, as philosophy is of preparatory culture. For if philosophy "professes control of the tongue, and the belly, and the parts below the belly, it is to be chosen on its own account. But it appears more worthy of respect and pre-eminence, if cultivated for the honour and knowledge of God."

And Scripture will afford a testimony to what has been said in what follows. Sarah was at one time barren, being Abraham's wife. Sarah having no child, assigned her maid, by name Hagar, the Egyptian, to Abraham, in order to get children. Wisdom, therefore, who dwells with the man of faith (and Abraham was reckoned faithful and righteous), was still barren and without child in that generation, not having brought forth to Abraham aught allied to virtue. And she, as was proper, thought that he, being now

in the time of progress, should have intercourse with secular culture first (by Egyptian the world is designated figuratively); and afterwards should approach to her according to divine providence, and beget Isaac.

And Philo interprets Hagar to mean "sojourning." For it is said in connection with this, "Be not much with a strange woman." (*Proverbs 5:20*) Sarah he interprets to mean "my principedom." He, then, who has received previous training is at liberty to approach to wisdom, which is supreme, from which grows up the race of Israel. These things show that that wisdom can be acquired through instruction, to which Abraham attained, passing from the contemplation of heavenly things to the faith and righteousness which are according to God. And Isaac is shown to mean "self-taught;" wherefore also he is discovered to be a type of Christ. He was the husband of one wife Rebecca, which they translate "Patience." And Jacob is said to have consorted with several, his name being interpreted "Exerciser." And exercises are engaged in by means of many and various dogmas. Whence, also, he who is really "endowed with the power of seeing" is called Israel, having much experience, and being fit for exercise.

Something else may also have been shown by the three patriarchs, namely, that the sure seal of knowledge is composed of nature, of education, and exercise.

You may have also another image of what has been said, in Tamar sitting by the way and presenting the appearance of a harlot, on whom the studious Judas (whose name is interpreted "powerful"), who left nothing unexamined and uninvestigated, looked; and turned aside to her, preserving his profession towards God. Wherefore also, when Sarah was jealous at Hagar being preferred to her, Abraham, as choosing only what was profitable in secular philosophy, said, "Behold, your maid is in your hands: deal with her as it pleases you;" (*Genesis 16:6*) manifestly meaning, "I embrace secular culture as youthful, and a handmaid; but your knowledge I honour and reverence as true wife." And Sarah afflicted her; which is equivalent to corrected and admonished her. It has therefore been well said, "My son, despise not the correction of God; nor faint when you are rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." (*Proverbs 3:11–12; Hebrews 12:5–6*) And the foresaid Scriptures, when examined in other places, will be seen to exhibit other mysteries. We merely therefore assert here, that philosophy is characterized by investigation into truth and the nature of things (this is the truth of which the Lord Himself said, "I am the truth" (*John 14:6*)); and that, again, the preparatory training for rest in Christ exercises the mind, rouses the intelligence, and begets an inquiring shrewdness, by means of the true philosophy, which the initiated possess, having found it, or rather received it, from the truth itself.

Chapter 6. The Benefit of Culture

The readiness acquired by previous training conduces much to the perception of such things as are requisite; but those things which can be perceived only by mind are the special exercise for the mind. And their nature is triple according as we consider their quantity, their magnitude, and what can be predicated of them. For the discourse which consists of demonstrations, implants in the spirit of him

who follows it, clear faith; so that he cannot conceive of that which is demonstrated being different; and so it does not allow us to succumb to those who assail us by fraud. In such studies, therefore, the soul is purged from sensible things, and is excited, so as to be able to see truth distinctly. For nutriment, and the training which is maintained gentle, make noble natures; and noble natures, when they have received such training, become still better than before both in other respects, but especially in productiveness, as is the case with the other creatures. Wherefore it is said, "Go to the ant, you sluggard, and become wiser than it, which provides much and varied food in the harvest against the inclemency of winter." (*Proverbs 6:6–8*) Or go to the bee, and learn how laborious she is; for she, feeding on the whole meadow, produces one honey-comb. And if "you pray in the closet," as the Lord taught, "to worship in spirit," (*Matthew 6:6; John 4:23*) your management will no longer be solely occupied about the house, but also about the soul, what must be bestowed on it, and how, and how much; and what must be laid aside and treasured up in it; and when it ought to be produced, and to whom. For it is not by nature, but by learning, that people become noble and good, as people also become physicians and pilots. We all in common, for example, see the vine and the horse. But the husbandman will know if the vine be good or bad at fruit-bearing; and the horseman will easily distinguish between the spiritless and the swift animal. And that some are naturally predisposed to virtue above others, certain pursuits of those, who are so naturally predisposed above others, show. But that perfection in virtue is not the exclusive property of those, whose natures are better, is proved, since also those who by nature are ill-disposed towards virtue, in obtaining suitable training, for the most part attain to excellence; and, on the other hand, those whose natural dispositions are apt, become evil through neglect.

Again, God has created us naturally social and just; whence justice must not be said to take its rise from implantation alone. But the good imparted by creation is to be conceived of as excited by the commandment; the soul being trained to be willing to select what is noblest.

But as we say that a man can be a believer without learning, so also we assert that it is impossible for a man without learning to comprehend the things which are declared in the faith. But to adopt what is well said, and not to adopt the reverse, is caused not simply by faith, but by faith combined with knowledge. But if ignorance is want of training and of instruction, then teaching produces knowledge of divine and human things. But just as it is possible to live rightly in penury of this world's good things, so also in abundance. And we avow, that at once with more ease and more speed will one attain to virtue through previous training. But it is not such as to be unattainable without it; but it is attainable only when they have learned, and have had their senses exercised. (*Hebrews 5:14*) "For hatred," says Solomon, "raises strife, but instruction guards the ways of life;" (*Proverbs 10:12–17*) in such a way that we are not deceived nor deluded by those who are practised in base arts for the injury of those who hear. "But instruction wanders reproachless," it is said. (*Proverbs 10:19*) We must be conversant with the art of reasoning, for the purpose of confuting the deceitful opinions of the sophists. Well and felicitously, therefore, does Anaxarchus write in his book respecting *Kingly Rule*: "Erudition benefits greatly, and hurts greatly him who possesses it; it helps him who is worthy, and injures him who utters readily every word, and before the whole people. It is necessary to know the measure of time. For this is the end of wisdom. And those who sing at the doors, even if they sing skilfully, are not reckoned wise, but have the reputation of folly." And Hesiod:

"Of the Muses, who make a man loquacious, divine, vocal."

For him who is fluent in words he calls loquacious; and him who is clever, vocal; and "divine," him who is skilled, a philosopher, and acquainted with the truth.

Chapter 7. The Eclectic Philosophy Paves the Way for Divine Virtue

The Greek preparatory culture, therefore, with philosophy itself, is shown to have come down from God to men, not with a definite direction, but in the way in which showers fall down on the good land, and on the dunghill, and on the houses. And similarly both the grass and the wheat sprout; and the figs and any other reckless trees grow on sepulchres. And things that grow, appear as a type of truths. For they enjoy the same influence of the rain. But they have not the same grace as those which spring up in rich soil, inasmuch as they are withered or plucked up. And here we are aided by the parable of the sower, which the Lord interpreted. For the husbandman of the soil which is among men is one; He who from the beginning, from the foundation of the world, sowed nutritious seeds; He who in each age rained down the Lord, the Word. But the times and places which received such gifts, created the differences which exist. Further, the husbandman sows not only wheat (of which there are many varieties), but also other seeds — barley, and beans, and peas, and vetches, and vegetable and flower seeds. And to the same husbandry belongs both planting and the operations necessary in the nurseries, and gardens, and orchards, and the planting and rearing of all sorts of trees.

In like manner, not only the care of sheep, but the care of herds, and breeding of horses, and dogs, and bee-craft, all arts, and to speak comprehensively, the care of flocks and the rearing of animals, differ from each other more or less, but are all useful for life. And philosophy — I do not mean the Stoic, or the Platonic, or the Epicurean, or the Aristotelian, but whatever has been well said by each of those sects, which teach righteousness along with a science pervaded by piety — this eclectic whole I call philosophy. But such conclusions of human reasonings, as men have cut away and falsified, I would never call divine.

And now we must look also at this, that if ever those who know not how to do well, live well; for they have lighted on well-doing. Some, too, have aimed well at the word of truth through understanding. "But Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith." (*Romans 4*) It is therefore of no advantage to them after the end of life, even if they do good works now, if they have not faith. Wherefore also the Scriptures were translated into the language of the Greeks, in order that they might never be able to allege the excuse of ignorance, inasmuch as they are able to hear also what we have in our hands, if they only wish. One speaks in one way of the truth, in another way the truth interprets itself. The guessing at truth is one thing, and truth itself is another. Resemblance is one thing, the thing itself is another. And the one results from learning and practice, the other from power and faith. For the teaching of piety is a gift, but faith is grace. "For by doing the will of God we know the will of God." (*John 7:17*) "Open, then," says the Scripture, "the gates of righteousness; and I will enter in, and confess to the Lord." (*Psalms 118:19*) But the paths to righteousness (since God saves in many ways, for He is good) are many and various, and lead to the Lord's way and gate. And if you ask the royal and true entrance, you will hear, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in by it." (*Psalms 118:20*) While there are many gates open, that in righteousness is in Christ, by which all the blessed enter, and direct their steps in the sanctity of knowledge. Now Clemens, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, while expounding the differences of those who are approved according to the church, says expressly, "One may be a believer; one may be powerful in uttering knowledge; one may be wise in discriminating between words; one may be terrible in deeds."

Chapter 8. The Sophistical Arts Useless

But the art of sophistry, which the Greeks cultivated, is a fantastic power, which makes false opinions like true by means of words. For it produces rhetoric in order to persuasion, and disputation for wrangling. These arts, therefore, if not conjoined with philosophy, will be injurious to every one. For Plato openly called sophistry "an evil art." And Aristotle, following him, demonstrates it to be a dishonest art, which abstracts in a specious manner the whole business of wisdom, and professes a wisdom which it has not studied. To speak briefly, as the beginning of rhetoric is the probable, and an attempted proof the process, and the end persuasion, so the beginning of disputation is what is matter of opinion, and the process a contest, and the end victory. For in the same manner, also, the beginning of sophistry is the apparent, and the process twofold; one of rhetoric, continuous and exhaustive; and the other of logic, and is interrogatory. And its end is admiration. The dialectic in vogue in the schools, on the other hand, is the exercise of a philosopher in matters of opinion, for the sake of the faculty of disputation. But truth is not in these at all. With reason, therefore, the noble apostle, depreciating these superfluous arts occupied about words, says, "If any man do not give heed to wholesome words, but is puffed up by a kind of teaching, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes contention, envy, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth." (*1 Timothy 6:3–5*)

You see how he is moved against them, calling their art of logic — on which those, to whom this garrulous mischievous art is dear, whether Greeks or barbarians, plume themselves — a disease. Very beautifully, therefore, the tragic poet Euripides says in the *Phoenissae*:

“But a wrongful speech Is diseased in itself, and needs skilful medicines.”

For the saving Word is called "wholesome," He being the truth; and what is wholesome remains ever deathless. But separation from what is healthful and divine is impiety, and a deadly malady. These are rapacious wolves hid in sheep-skins, men-stealers, and glozing soul-seducers, stealing secretly, but proved to be robbers; striving by fraud and force to catch us who are unsophisticated and have less power of speech.

“Often a man, impeded through want of words, carries less weight
In expressing what is right,
than the man of eloquence. But now in fluent mouths the weightiest truths
They disguise, so that
they do not seem what they ought to seem,”

says the tragedy. Such are these wranglers, whether they follow the sects, or practise miserable dialectic arts. These are they that "stretch the warp and weave nothing," says the Scripture: prosecuting a bootless task, which the apostle has called "cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (*Ephesians 4:14*) "For there are," he says, "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers." (*Titus 1:10*) Wherefore it was not said to all, "You are the salt of the earth." (*Matthew 5:13*) For there are some even of the hearers of the word who are like the fishes of the sea, which, reared from their birth in brine, yet need salt to dress them for food. Accordingly I wholly approve of the tragedy, when it says:

"O son, false words can be well spoken, And truth may be vanquished by beauty of words. But this is not what is most correct, but nature and what is right; He who practises eloquence is indeed wise, But I consider deeds always better than words."

We must not, then, aspire to please the multitude. For we do not practise what will please them, but what we know is remote from their disposition. "Let us not be desirous of vainglory," says the apostle, "provoking one another, envying one another." (*Galatians 5:26*)

Thus the truth-loving Plato says, as if divinely inspired, "Since I am such as to obey nothing but the word, which, after reflection, appears to me the best." Accordingly he charges those who credit opinions without intelligence and knowledge, with abandoning right and sound reason unwarrantably, and believing him who is a partner in falsehood. For to cheat one's self of the truth is bad; but to speak the truth, and to hold as our opinions positive realities, is good.

Men are deprived of what is good unwillingly. Nevertheless they are deprived either by being deceived or beguiled, or by being compelled and not believing. He who believes not, has already made himself a willing captive; and he who changes his persuasion is cozened, while he forgets that time imperceptibly takes away some things, and reason others. And after an opinion has been entertained, pain and anguish, and on the other hand contentiousness and anger, compel. Above all, men are beguiled who are either bewitched by pleasure or terrified by fear. And all these are voluntary changes, but by none of these will knowledge ever be attained.

Chapter 9. Human Knowledge Necessary for the Understanding of the Scriptures

Some, who think themselves naturally gifted, do not wish to touch either philosophy or logic; nay more, they do not wish to learn natural science. They demand bare faith alone, as if they wished, without bestowing any care on the vine, straightway to gather clusters from the first. Now the Lord is figuratively described as the vine, from which, with pains and the art of husbandry, according to the word, the fruit is to be gathered.

We must lop, dig, bind, and perform the other operations. The pruning-knife, I should think, and the pick-axe, and the other agricultural implements, are necessary for the culture of the vine, so that it may produce eatable fruit. And as in husbandry, so also in medicine: he has learned to purpose, who has practised the various lessons, so as to be able to cultivate and to heal. So also here, I call him truly learned who brings everything to bear on the truth: so that, from geometry, and music, and grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault. Now, as was said, the athlete is despised who is not furnished for the contest. For instance, too, we praise the experienced helmsman who "has seen the cities of many men," and the physician who has had large experience; thus also some describe the empiric. And he who brings everything to bear on a right life, procuring examples from the Greeks and barbarians, this man is an experienced searcher after truth, and in reality a man of much counsel, like the touchstone (that is, the Lydian), which is believed to possess the power of distinguishing the spurious from the genuine gold. And our much-knowing gnostic can distinguish sophistry from philosophy, the art of decoration from gymnastics, cookery from physic, and rhetoric from dialectics, and the other sects which are according to the barbarian philosophy, from the truth itself. And how necessary is it for him who desires to be partaker of the power of God, to treat of intellectual subjects by philosophising! And how serviceable is it to distinguish expressions which are ambiguous, and which in the Testaments are used synonymously! For the Lord, at the time of His temptation, skilfully matched the devil by an ambiguous expression. And I do not yet, in this connection, see how in the world the inventor of philosophy and dialectics, as some suppose, is seduced through being deceived by the form of speech which consists in ambiguity. And if the prophets and apostles knew not the arts by which the exercises of philosophy are exhibited, yet the mind of the prophetic and instructive spirit, uttered secretly, because all have not an intelligent ear, demands skilful modes of teaching in order to clear exposition. For the prophets and disciples of the Spirit knew infallibly their mind. For they knew it by faith, in a way which others could not easily, as the Spirit has said. But it is not possible for those who have not learned to receive it thus. "Write," it is said, "the commandments doubly, in counsel and knowledge, that you may answer the words of truth to them who send to you." (*Proverbs 22:20–21*) What, then, is the knowledge of answering? or what that of asking? It is dialectics. What then? Is not speaking our business, and does not action proceed from the Word? For if we act not for the Word, we shall act against reason. But a rational work is accomplished through God. "And nothing," it is said, "was made without Him" — the Word of God. (*John 1:3*)

And did not the Lord make all things by the Word? Even the beasts work, driven by compelling fear. And do not those who are called orthodox apply themselves to good works, knowing not what they do?

Chapter 10. To Act Well of Greater Consequence than to Speak Well

Therefore the Saviour, taking the bread, first spoke and blessed. Then breaking the bread, He presented it, that we might eat it, according to reason, and that knowing the Scriptures we might walk obediently. And as those whose speech is evil are no better than those whose practice is evil (for calumny is the servant of the sword, and evil-speaking inflicts pain; and from these proceed disasters in life, such being

the effects of evil speech); so also those who are given to good speech are near neighbours to those who accomplish good deeds. Accordingly discourse refreshes the soul and entices it to nobleness; and happy is he who has the use of both his hands. Neither, therefore, is he who can act well to be vilified by him who is able to speak well; nor is he who is able to speak well to be disparaged by him who is capable of acting well. But let each do that for which he is naturally fitted. What the one exhibits as actually done, the other speaks, preparing, as it were, the way for well-doing, and leading the hearers to the practice of good. For there is a saving word, as there is a saving work. Righteousness, accordingly, is not constituted without discourse. And as the receiving of good is abolished if we abolish the doing of good; so obedience and faith are abolished when neither the command, nor one to expound the command, is taken along with us. But now we are benefited mutually and reciprocally by words and deeds; but we must repudiate entirely the art of wrangling and sophistry, since these sentences of the sophists not only bewitch and beguile the many, but sometimes by violence win a Cadmian victory.

For true above all is that psalm, "The just shall live to the end, for he shall not see corruption, when he beholds the wise dying." (*Psalms* 49:9–10) And whom does he call wise? Hear from the Wisdom of Jesus: "Wisdom is not the knowledge of evil." Such he calls what the arts of speaking and of discussing have invented. "You shall therefore seek wisdom among the wicked, and shall not find it." (*Proverbs* 14:6) And if you inquire again of what sort this is, you are told, "The mouth of the righteous man will distil wisdom." (*Proverbs* 10:31) And similarly with truth, the art of sophistry is called wisdom.

But it is my purpose, as I reckon, and not without reason, to live according to the Word, and to understand what is revealed; but never affecting eloquence, to be content merely with indicating my meaning. And by what term that which I wish to present is shown, I care not. For I well know that to be saved, and to aid those who desire to be saved, is the best thing, and not to compose paltry sentences like gewgaws. "And if," says the Pythagorean in the *Politicus* of Plato, "you guard against solicitude about terms, you will be richer in wisdom against old age." And in the *Theaetetus* you will find again, "And carelessness about names, and expressions, and the want of nice scrutiny, is not vulgar and illiberal for the most part, but rather the reverse of this, and is sometimes necessary." This the Scripture has expressed with the greatest possible brevity, when it said, "Be not occupied much about words." For expression is like the dress on the body. The matter is the flesh and sinews. We must not therefore care more for the dress than the safety of the body. For not only a simple mode of life, but also a style of speech devoid of superfluity and nicety, must be cultivated by him who has adopted the true life, if we are to abandon luxury as treacherous and profligate, as the ancient Lacedaemonians abjured ointment and purple, deeming and calling them rightly treacherous garments and treacherous unguents; since neither is that mode of preparing food right where there is more of seasoning than of nutriment; nor is that style of speech elegant which can please rather than benefit the hearers. Pythagoras exhorts us to consider the Muses more pleasant than the Sirens, teaching us to cultivate wisdom apart from pleasure, and exposing the other mode of attracting the soul as deceptive. For sailing past the Sirens one man has sufficient strength, and for answering the Sphinx another one, or, if you please, not even one. We ought never, then, out of desire for vainglory, to make broad the phylacteries. It suffices the gnostic if only one hearer is found for him. You may hear therefore Pindar the Bœotian, who writes, "Divulge not before all the ancient speech. The way of silence is sometimes the surest. And the mightiest word is a spur

to the fight." Accordingly, the blessed apostle very appropriately and urgently exhorts us "not to strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, but to shun profane and vain babblings, for they increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as does a canker." (*2 Timothy 2:14–17*)

Chapter 11. What Is the Philosophy Which the Apostle Bids Us Shun?

"This, then, the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God," and of those who are "the wise the Lord knows their thoughts that they are vain." (*1 Corinthians 3:19–20*) Let no man therefore glory on account of pre-eminence in human thought. For it is written well in Jeremiah, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the mighty man glory in his might, and let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows that I am the Lord, that executes mercy and judgment and righteousness upon the earth: for in these things is my delight, says the Lord." (*Jeremiah 9:23–24*) "That we should trust not in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead," says the apostle, "who delivered us from so great a death, that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "For the spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged of no man." (*1 Corinthians 2:5–15*) I hear also those words of his, "And these things I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words, or one should enter in to spoil you." (*Colossians 2:4–8*) And again, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;" branding not all philosophy, but the Epicurean, which Paul mentions in the Acts of the Apostles, (*Acts 17:18*) which abolishes providence and deifies pleasure, and whatever other philosophy honours the elements, but places not over them the efficient cause, nor apprehends the Creator. The Stoics also, whom he mentions too, say not well that the Deity, being a body, pervades the vilest matter. He calls the jugglery of logic "the tradition of men." Wherefore also he adds, "Avoid juvenile questions. For such contentions are puerile." "But virtue is no lover of boys," says the philosopher Plato. And our struggle, according to Gorgias Leontinus, requires two virtues — boldness and wisdom — boldness to undergo danger, and wisdom to understand the enigma. For the Word, like the Olympian proclamation, calls him who is willing, and crowns him who is able to continue unmoved as far as the truth is concerned. And, in truth, the Word does not wish him who has believed to be idle. For He says, "Seek, and you shall find." (*Matthew 7:7*) But seeking ends in finding, driving out the empty trifling, and approving of the contemplation which confirms our faith. "And this I say, lest any man beguile you with enticing words," (*Colossians 2:4*) says the apostle, evidently as having learned to distinguish what was said by him, and as being taught to meet objections. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith." (*Colossians 2:6–7*) Now persuasion is the means of being established in the faith. "Beware lest any man spoil you of faith in Christ by philosophy and vain deceit," which does away with providence, "after the tradition of men;" for the philosophy which is in accordance with divine tradition establishes and confirms providence, which, being done away with, the economy of the Saviour appears a myth, while we are influenced "after the elements of the world, and not after Christ." (*Colossians 2:8*) For the teaching which is agreeable to Christ deifies the Creator, and traces providence in particular events, and knows the nature of the elements to be capable of change and

production, and teaches that we ought to aim at rising up to the power which assimilates to God, and to prefer the dispensation as holding the first rank and superior to all training.

The elements are worshipped — the air by Diogenes, the water by Thales, the fire by Hippasus; and by those who suppose atoms to be the first principles of things, arrogating the name of philosophers, being wretched creatures devoted to pleasure. "Wherefore I pray," says the apostle, "that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent." (*Philippians 1:9–10*) "Since, when we were children," says the same apostle, "we were kept in bondage under the rudiments of the world. And the child, though heir, differs nothing from a servant, till the time appointed of the father." (*Galatians 4:1–2*) Philosophers, then, are children, unless they have been made men by Christ. "For if the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free," (*Galatians 4:30*) at least he is the seed of Abraham, though not of promise, receiving what belongs to him by free gift. "But strong meat belongs to those that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (*Hebrews 5:14*) "For every one that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe," (*Hebrews 5:13*) and not yet acquainted with the word, according to which he has believed and works, and not able to give a reason in himself. "Prove all things," the apostle says, "and hold fast that which is good," (*1 Thessalonians 5:21*) speaking to spiritual men, who judge what is said according to truth, whether it seem or truly holds by the truth.

Chapter 12. The Mysteries of the Faith Not to Be Divulged to All

But since this tradition is not published alone for him who perceives the magnificence of the word; it is requisite, therefore, to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken, which the Son of God taught. Now, therefore, Isaiah the prophet has his tongue purified by fire, so that he may be able to tell the vision. And we must purify not the tongue alone, but also the ears, if we attempt to be partakers of the truth.

Such were the impediments in the way of my writing. And even now I fear, as it is said, "to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot, and turn and rend us." (*Matthew 7:6*) For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light, to swinish and untrained hearers. For scarcely could anything which they could hear be more ludicrous than these to the multitude; nor any subjects on the other hand more admirable or more inspiring to those of noble nature. "But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him." (*1 Corinthians 2:14*) But the wise do not utter with their mouth what they reason in council. "But what you hear in the ear," says the Lord, "proclaim upon the houses;" (*Matthew 10:27*) bidding them receive the secret traditions of the true knowledge, and expound them aloft and conspicuously; and as we have heard in the ear, so to deliver them to whom it is requisite; but not enjoining us to communicate to all without distinction, what is said to them in parables. But there is only a delineation in the memoranda, which have the truth sowed sparse and broadcast, that it may escape the notice of those who pick up seeds like jackdaws; but when they find a good husbandman, each one of them will germinate and produce corn.

Chapter 13. All Sects of Philosophy Contain a Germ of Truth

Since, therefore, truth is one (for falsehood has ten thousand by-paths); just as the Bacchantes tore asunder the limbs of Pentheus, so the sects both of barbarian and Hellenic philosophy have done with truth, and each vaunts as the whole truth the portion which has fallen to its lot. But all, in my opinion, are illuminated by the dawn of Light. Let all, therefore, both Greeks and barbarians, who have aspired after the truth — both those who possess not a little, and those who have any portion — produce whatever they have of the word of truth.

Eternity, for instance, presents in an instant the future and the present, also the past of time. But truth, much more powerful than limitless duration, can collect its proper germs, though they have fallen on foreign soil. For we shall find that very many of the dogmas that are held by such sects as have not become utterly senseless, and are not cut out from the order of nature (by cutting off Christ, as the women of the fable dismembered the man), though appearing unlike one another, correspond in their origin and with the truth as a whole. For they coincide in one, either as a part, or a species, or a genus. For instance, though the highest note is different from the lowest note, yet both compose one harmony. And in numbers an even number differs from an odd number; but both suit in arithmetic; as also is the case with figure, the circle, and the triangle, and the square, and whatever figures differ from one another. Also, in the whole universe, all the parts, though differing one from another, preserve their relation to the whole. So, then, the barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth not from the mythology of Dionysus, but from the theology of the ever-living Word. And He who brings again together the separate fragments, and makes them one, will without peril, be assured, contemplate the perfect Word, the truth. Therefore it is written in Ecclesiastes: "And I added wisdom above all who were before me in Jerusalem; and my heart saw many things; and besides, I knew wisdom and knowledge, parables and understanding. And this also is the choice of the spirit, because in abundance of wisdom is abundance of knowledge." (*Ecclesiastes 1:16–18*) He who is conversant with all kinds of wisdom, will be pre-eminently a gnostic. Now it is written, "Abundance of the knowledge of wisdom will give life to him who is of it." And again, what is said is confirmed more clearly by this saying, "All things are in the sight of those who understand" — all things, both Hellenic and barbarian; but the one or the other is not all. "They are right to those who wish to receive understanding. Choose instruction, and not silver, and knowledge above tested gold," and prefer also sense to pure gold; "for wisdom is better than precious stones, and no precious thing is worth it." (*Proverbs 8:9–11*)

Chapter 14. Succession of Philosophers in Greece

The Greeks say, that after Orpheus and Linus, and the most ancient of the poets that appeared among them, the seven, called wise, were the first that were admired for their wisdom. Of whom four were of Asia — Thales of Miletus, and Bias of Priene, Pittacus of Mitylene, and Cleobulus of Lindos; and two of Europe, Solon the Athenian, and Chilon the Lacedaemonian; and the seventh, some say, was Periander of Corinth; others, Anacharsis the Scythian; others, Epimenides the Cretan, whom Paul knew

as a Greek prophet, whom he mentions in the Epistle to Titus, where he speaks thus: "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. And this witness is true." (*Titus 1:12–13*) You see how even to the prophets of the Greeks he attributes something of the truth, and is not ashamed, when discoursing for the edification of some and the shame of others, to make use of Greek poems. Accordingly to the Corinthians (for this is not the only instance), while discoursing on the resurrection of the dead, he makes use of a tragic iambic line, when he said, "What advantages it me if the dead are not raised? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners." (*1 Corinthians 15:32–33*)

Others have enumerated Acusilaus the Argive among the seven wise men; and others, Pherecydes of Syros. And Plato substitutes Myso the Chenian for Periander, whom he deemed unworthy of wisdom, on account of his having reigned as a tyrant. That the wise men among the Greeks flourished after the age of Moses, will, a little after, be shown. But the style of philosophy among them, as Hebraic and enigmatical, is now to be considered. They adopted brevity, as suited for exhortation, and most useful. Even Plato says, that of old this mode was purposely in vogue among all the Greeks, especially the Lacedaemonians and Cretans, who enjoyed the best laws.

The expression, "Know thyself," some supposed to be Chilon's. But Chamæleon, in his book *About the Gods*, ascribes it to Thales; Aristotle to the Pythian. It may be an injunction to the pursuit of knowledge. For it is not possible to know the parts without the essence of the whole; and one must study the genesis of the universe, that thereby we may be able to learn the nature of man. Again, to Chilon the Lacedaemonian they attribute, "Let nothing be too much." Strato, in his book *Of Inventions*, ascribes the apophthegm to Stratodemus of Tegea. Didymus assigns it to Solon; as also to Cleobulus the saying, "A middle course is best." And the expression, "Come under a pledge, and mischief is at hand," Cleomenes says, in his book *Concerning Hesiod*, was uttered before by Homer in the lines:

 | "Wretched pledges, for the wretched, to be pledged."

The Aristotelians judge it to be Chilon's; but Didymus says the advice was that of Thales. Then, next in order, the saying, "All men are bad," or, "The most of men are bad" (for the same apophthegm is expressed in two ways), Sotades the Byzantian says that it was Bias's. And the aphorism, "Practice conquers everything," they will have it to be Periander's; and likewise the advice, "Know the opportunity," to have been a saying of Pittacus. Solon made laws for the Athenians, Pittacus for the Mitylenians. And at a late date, Pythagoras, the pupil of Pherecydes, first called himself a philosopher. Accordingly, after the fore-mentioned three men, there were three schools of philosophy, named after the places where they lived: the Italic from Pythagoras, the Ionic from Thales, the Eleatic from Xenophanes.

Chapter 15. The Greek Philosophy in Great Part Derived from the Barbarians

These are the times of the oldest wise men and philosophers among the Greeks. And that the most of them were barbarians by extraction, and were trained among barbarians, what need is there to say?

Pythagoras is shown to have been either a Tuscan or a Tyrian. And Antisthenes was a Phrygian. And Orpheus was an Odrysian or a Thracian. The most, too, show Homer to have been an Egyptian. Thales was a Phoenician by birth, and was said to have consorted with the prophets of the Egyptians; as also Pythagoras did with the same persons, by whom he was circumcised, that he might enter the adytum and learn from the Egyptians the mystic philosophy. He held converse with the chief of the Chaldeans and the Magi; and he gave a hint of the church, now so called, in the common hall which he maintained.

And Plato does not deny that he procured all that is most excellent in philosophy from the barbarians; and he admits that he came into Egypt. Whence, writing in the *Phaedo* that the philosopher can receive aid from all sides, he said: "Great indeed is Greece, O Cebes, in which everywhere there are good men, and many are the races of the barbarians." Thus Plato thinks that some of the barbarians, too, are philosophers. But Epicurus, on the other hand, supposes that only Greeks can philosophise. And in the *Symposium*, Plato, lauding the barbarians as practising philosophy with conspicuous excellence, truly says: "And in many other instances both among Greeks and barbarians, whose temples reared for such sons are already numerous." And it is clear that the barbarians signally honoured their lawgivers and teachers, designating them gods. For, according to Plato, "they think that good souls, on quitting the super-celestial region, submit to come to this Tartarus, and assuming a body, share in all the ills which are involved in birth, from their solicitude for the race of men;" and these make laws and publish philosophy, "than which no greater boon ever came from the gods to the race of men, or will come."

And as appears to me, it was in consequence of perceiving the great benefit which is conferred through wise men, that the men themselves were honoured and philosophy cultivated publicly by all the Brahmins, and the Odrysi, and the Getæ. And such were strictly deified by the race of the Egyptians, by the Chaldeans and the Arabians, called the Happy, and those that inhabited Palestine, by not the least portion of the Persian race, and by innumerable other races besides these. And it is well known that Plato is found perpetually celebrating the barbarians, remembering that both himself and Pythagoras learned the most and the noblest of their dogmas among the barbarians.

Democritus appropriated the Babylonian ethic discourses, for he is said to have combined with his own compositions a translation of the column of Acicarus. And about himself, too, where, pluming himself on his erudition, he says, "I have roamed over the most ground of any man of my time, investigating the most remote parts. I have seen the most skies and lands, and I have heard of learned men in very great numbers. And in composition no one has surpassed me; in demonstration, not even those among the Egyptians who are called Arpenodaptæ, with all of whom I lived in exile up to eighty years." For he went to Babylon, and Persis, and Egypt, to learn from the Magi and the priests.

Zoroaster the Magus, Pythagoras showed to be a Persian. Numa the king of the Romans was a Pythagorean, and aided by the precepts of Moses, prohibited from making an image of God in human form, and of the shape of a living creature. Accordingly, during the first hundred and seventy years, though building temples, they made no cast or graven image. For Numa secretly showed them that the Best of Beings could not be apprehended except by the mind alone. Thus philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians, shedding its light over the nations. And afterwards it came to Greece. First in its ranks were the prophets of the Egyptians; and the Chaldeans among the Assyrians; and the Druids among the Gauls; and the Samansæans among the Bactrians; and the philosophers of the Celts; and the Magi of the Persians, who foretold the Saviour's birth, and came into the land of Judæa guided by a star. The Indian gymnosophists are also in the number, and the other barbarian philosophers.

Of all these, by far the oldest is the Jewish race; and that their philosophy committed to writing has the precedence of philosophy among the Greeks, the Pythagorean Philo shows at large; and, besides him,

Aristobulus the Peripatetic, and several others. Very clearly the author Megasthenes, the contemporary of Seleucus Nicanor, writes as follows in the third of his books, *On Indian Affairs*: "All that was said about nature by the ancients is said also by those who philosophise beyond Greece: some things by the Brahmins among the Indians, and others by those called Jews in Syria."

Chapter 16. That the Inventors of Other Arts Were Mostly Barbarians

And barbarians were inventors not only of philosophy, but almost of every art. The Egyptians were the first to introduce astrology among men. Similarly also the Chaldeans. The Egyptians first showed how to burn lamps, and divided the year into twelve months, prohibited intercourse with women in the temples, and enacted that no one should enter the temples from a woman without bathing. Again, they were the inventors of geometry. There are some who say that the Carians invented prognostication by the stars. The Phrygians were the first who attended to the flight of birds. And the Tuscans, neighbours of Italy, were adepts at the art of the Haruspex. The Isaurians and the Arabians invented augury, as the Telmesians divination by dreams. The Etruscans invented the trumpet, and the Phrygians the flute. For Olympus and Marsyas were Phrygians. And Cadmus, the inventor of letters among the Greeks, as Euphorus says, was a Phoenician; whence also Herodotus writes that they were called Phoenician letters. And they say that the Phoenicians and the Syrians first invented letters; and that Apis, an aboriginal inhabitant of Egypt, invented the healing art before Io came into Egypt. But afterwards they say that Asclepius improved the art. Atlas the Libyan was the first who built a ship and navigated the sea. Kelmis and Damnaneus, Idæan Dactyli, first discovered iron in Cyprus. The Thracians first invented what is called a scimitar — it is a curved sword — and were the first to use shields on horseback. Similarly also the Illyrians invented the shield. Besides, they say that the Tuscans invented the art of moulding clay. The Carthaginians were the first that constructed a trireme. Medea, the daughter of Æetas, a Colchian, first invented the dyeing of hair. In music, Olympus the Mysian practised the Lydian harmony: and the people called Troglodytes invented the sambuca, a musical instrument. The Doric was invented by Thamyras the Thracian. The Persians were the first who fashioned the chariot, and bed, and footstool; and the Sidonians the first to construct a trireme. The Sicilians, close to Italy, were the first inventors of the phorminx, which is not much inferior to the lyre. And they invented castanets.

Hellanicus says that Atossa queen of the Persians was the first who composed a letter. I have added a few details from them, in order to confirm the inventive and practically useful genius of the barbarians, by whom the Greeks profited in their studies. And if any one objects to the barbarous language, Anacharsis says, "All the Greeks speak Scythian to me." It was he who was held in admiration by the Greeks, who said, "My covering is a cloak; my supper, milk and cheese." You see that the barbarian philosophy professes deeds, not words.

Chapter 17. On the Saying of the Saviour, "All That Came Before Me Were Thieves and Robbers"

But, say they, it is written, "All who were before the Lord's advent are thieves and robbers." (*John 10:8*) All, then, who are in the Word (for it is these that were previous to the incarnation of the Word) are understood generally. But the prophets, being sent and inspired by the Lord, were not thieves, but servants. The Scripture accordingly says, "Wisdom sent her servants, inviting with loud proclamation to a goblet of wine." (*Proverbs 9:3*)

But philosophy, it is said, was not sent by the Lord, but came stolen, or given by a thief. It was then some power or angel that had learned something of the truth, but abode not in it, that inspired and taught these things, not without the Lord's knowledge, who knew before the constitution of each essence the issues of futurity, but without His prohibition.

For the theft which reached men then, had some advantage; not that he who perpetrated the theft had utility in his eye, but Providence directed the issue of the audacious deed to utility. I know that many are perpetually assailing us with the allegation, that not to prevent a thing happening, is to be the cause of it happening. For they say, that the man who does not take precaution against a theft, or does not prevent it, is the cause of it: as he is the cause of the conflagration who has not quenched it at the beginning; and the master of the vessel who does not reef the sail, is the cause of the shipwreck. We say to them, that causation is seen in doing, working, acting; but the not preventing is in this respect inoperative. Further, causation attaches to activity; as in the case of the shipbuilder in relation to the origin of the vessel, and the builder in relation to the construction of the house. But that which does not prevent is separated from what takes place.

Now the devil, being possessed of free will, was able both to repent and to steal; and it was he who was the author of the theft, not the Lord, who did not prevent him. But neither was the gift hurtful, so as to require that prevention should intervene.

But if strict accuracy must be employed in dealing with them, let them know, that that which does not prevent what we assert to have taken place in the theft, is not a cause at all; but that what prevents is involved in the accusation of being a cause. For he who protects with a shield is the cause of him whom he protects not being wounded; preventing him, as he does, from being wounded. And neither praises nor censures, neither rewards nor punishments, are right, when the soul has not the power of inclination and disinclination, but evil is involuntary. Whence he who prevents is a cause; while he who prevents not judges justly the soul's choice. So in no respect is God the author of evil. But since free choice and inclination originate sins, and a mistaken judgment sometimes prevails, from which, since it is ignorance and stupidity, we do not take pains to recede, punishments are rightly inflicted. Inasmuch, then, as evil is involuntary — for no one prefers evil as evil; but induced by the pleasure that is in it, and imagining it good, considers it desirable — such being the case, to free ourselves from ignorance, and from evil and voluptuous choice, and above all, to withhold our assent from those delusive phantasies, depends on ourselves. The devil is called "thief and robber;" having mixed false prophets with the prophets, as tares with the wheat. "All, then, that came before the Lord, were thieves

and robbers;" not absolutely all men, but all the false prophets, and all who were not properly sent by Him.

But among the lies, the false prophets also told some true things. And in reality they prophesied "in an ecstasy," as the servants of the apostate. All things, therefore, are dispensed from heaven for good, "that by the church may be made known the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal foreknowledge, which He purposed in Christ." (*Ephesians 3:10–11*) Nothing withstands God: nothing opposes Him: seeing He is Lord and omnipotent. Further, the counsels and activities of those who have rebelled, being partial, proceed from a bad disposition, as bodily diseases from a bad constitution, but are guided by universal Providence to a salutary issue, even though the cause be productive of disease. It is accordingly the greatest achievement of divine Providence, not to allow the evil, which has sprung from voluntary apostasy, to remain useless, and for no good, and not to become in all respects injurious.

There is then in philosophy, though stolen as the fire by Prometheus, a slender spark, capable of being fanned into flame, a trace of wisdom and an impulse from God. Well, be it so that "the thieves and robbers" are the philosophers among the Greeks, who from the Hebrew prophets before the coming of the Lord received fragments of the truth, not with full knowledge, and claimed these as their own teachings, disguising some points, treating others sophistically by their ingenuity, and discovering other things, for perchance they had "the spirit of perception." (*Exodus 28:3*) Aristotle, too, assented to Scripture, and declared sophistry to have stolen wisdom, as we intimated before. And the apostle says, "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches." (*1 Corinthians 2:13*) For of the prophets it is said, "We have all received of His fulness," (*John 1:16*) that is, of Christ's.

Chapter 18. He Illustrates the Apostle's Saying, "I Will Destroy the Wisdom of the Wise"

"And of such it is said, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise: I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.'" The apostle accordingly adds, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" setting in contradistinction to the scribes, the disputers of this world, the philosophers of the Gentiles. "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (*1 Corinthians 1:19–20*) which is equivalent to, showed it to be foolish, and not true, as they thought. And if you ask the cause of their seeming wisdom, he will say, "because of the blindness of their heart;" since "in the wisdom of God," that is, as proclaimed by the prophets, "the world knew not," in the wisdom "which spoke by the prophets," "Him," that is, God — "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching" — what seemed to the Greeks foolishness — "to save them that believe. For the Jews require signs," in order to faith; "and the Greeks seek after wisdom," plainly those reasonings styled "irresistible," and those others, namely, syllogisms. "But we preach Jesus Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling-block," because, though knowing prophecy, they did not believe the event: "to the Greeks, foolishness;" for those who in their own estimation are wise, consider it fabulous that the Son of God should speak by man and that God should have a Son, and especially that that Son should have suffered. Whence their preconceived idea inclines them to disbelieve. For the advent of the Saviour did not make people foolish, and hard of heart, and unbelieving, but made them understanding, amenable to persuasion, and believing. But those that would not believe, by separating themselves from the voluntary adherence of those who obeyed, were proved to be without understanding, unbelievers and fools. "But to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (*1 Corinthians 1:22–24*)

Chapter 19. That the Philosophers Have Attained to Some Portion of Truth

Since, then, the Greeks are testified to have laid down some true opinions, we may from this point take a glance at the testimonies. Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles, is recorded to have said to the Areopagites, "I perceive that you are more than ordinarily religious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription, To The Unknown God. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things; and has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him; though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we also are His offspring." (*Acts 17:22–28*) Whence it is evident that the apostle, by availing himself of poetical examples from the Phenomena of Aratus, approves of what had been well spoken by the Greeks; and intimates that, by the unknown God, God the Creator was in a roundabout way worshipped by the Greeks; but that it was necessary by positive knowledge to apprehend and learn Him by the Son.

"Wherefore, then, I send you to the Gentiles," it is said, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in me." (*Acts 26:17–18*) Such, then, are the eyes of the blind which are opened. The knowledge of the Father by the Son is the comprehension of the "Greek circumlocution;" and to turn from the power of Satan is to change from sin, through which bondage was produced. We do not, indeed, receive absolutely all philosophy, but that of which Socrates speaks in Plato. "For there are (as they say) in the mysteries many bearers of the thyrsus, but few bacchanals;" meaning, "that many are called, but few chosen." He accordingly plainly adds: "These, in my opinion, are none else than those who have philosophised right; to belong to whose number, I myself have left nothing undone in life, as far as I could, but have endeavoured in every way. Whether we have endeavoured rightly and achieved aught, we shall know when we have gone there, if God will, a little afterwards."

Does he not then seem to declare from the Hebrew Scriptures the righteous man's hope, through faith, after death? I do not think that philosophy directly declares the Word, although in many instances philosophy attempts and persuasively teaches us probable arguments; but it assails the sects. Such are the sects which deserted the primitive church. Now he who has fallen into heresy passes through an arid wilderness, abandoning the only true God, destitute of God, seeking waterless water, reaching an uninhabited and thirsty land, collecting sterility with his hands.

Chapter 20. In What Respect Philosophy Contributes to the Comprehension of Divine Truth

As many men drawing down the ship, cannot be called many causes, but one cause consisting of many — for each individual by himself is not the cause of the ship being drawn, but along with the rest —

so also philosophy, being the search for truth, contributes to the comprehension of truth; not as being the cause of comprehension, but a cause along with other things, and co-operator; perhaps also a joint cause. And as the several virtues are causes of the happiness of one individual; and as both the sun, and the fire, and the bath, and clothing are of one getting warm: so while truth is one, many things contribute to its investigation. But its discovery is by the Son. If then we consider, virtue is, in power, one. But it is the case, that when exhibited in some things, it is called prudence, in others temperance, and in others manliness or righteousness. By the same analogy, while truth is one, in geometry there is the truth of geometry; in music, that of music; and in the right philosophy, there will be Hellenic truth. But that is the only authentic truth, unassailable, in which we are instructed by the Son of God. In the same way we say, that the drachma being one and the same, when given to the shipmaster, is called the fare; to the tax-gatherer, tax; to the landlord, rent; to the teacher, fees; to the seller, an earnest. And each, whether it be virtue or truth, called by the same name, is the cause of its own peculiar effect alone; and from the blending of them arises a happy life.

But if philosophy contributes remotely to the discovery of truth, by reaching, by diverse essays, after the knowledge which touches close on the truth, the knowledge possessed by us, it aids him who aims at grasping it, in accordance with the Word, to apprehend knowledge. But the Hellenic truth is distinct from that held by us (although it has got the same name), both in respect of extent of knowledge, certainty of demonstration, divine power, and the like. For we are taught of God, being instructed in the truly "sacred letters" (*2 Timothy 3:15*) by the Son of God. Whence those, to whom we refer, influence souls not in the way we do, but by different teaching.

Since almost all of us, without training in arts and sciences, and the Hellenic philosophy, and some even without learning at all, through the influence of a philosophy divine and barbarous, and by power, have through faith received the word concerning God, trained by self-operating wisdom. But that which acts in conjunction with something else, being of itself incapable of operating by itself, we describe as co-operating and concausing, and say that it becomes a cause only in virtue of its being a joint-cause, and receives the name of cause only in respect of its concurring with something else, but that it cannot by itself produce the right effect.

Although at one time philosophy justified the Greeks, not conducting then to that entire righteousness to which it is ascertained to co-operate, as the first and second flight of steps help you in your ascent to the upper room, and the grammarian helps the philosopher. Not as if by its abstraction, the perfect Word would be rendered incomplete, or truth perish; since also sight, and hearing, and the voice contribute to truth, but it is the mind which is the appropriate faculty for knowing it. Perspicuity accordingly aids in the communication of truth, and logic in preventing us from falling under the heresies by which we are assailed. But the teaching, which is according to the Saviour, is complete in itself and without defect, being "the power and wisdom of God;" (*1 Corinthians 1:24*) and the Hellenic philosophy does not, by its approach, make the truth more powerful; but rendering powerless the assault of sophistry against it, and frustrating the treacherous plots laid against the truth, is said to be the proper "fence and wall of the vineyard." And the truth which is according to faith is as necessary for life as bread; while the preparatory discipline is like sauce and sweetmeats.

Chapter 21. The Jewish Institutions and Laws of Far Higher Antiquity than the Philosophy of the Greeks

[Note: This chapter contains Clement's extended chronological argument for the antiquity of Hebrew wisdom over Greek philosophy. He traces the succession of Hebrew prophets and judges from Moses through the Babylonian captivity, and cross-references these dates against Greek chronology to establish that Moses predates all the Greek sages. The argument is dense with names and dates and is presented here in full for completeness.]

On the plagiarising of the dogmas of the philosophers from the Hebrews, we shall treat a little afterwards. But first, as due order demands, we must now speak of the epoch of Moses, by which the philosophy of the Hebrews will be demonstrated beyond all contradiction to be the most ancient of all wisdom.

Apion, then, the grammarian, surnamed Pleistonices, in the fourth book of *The Egyptian Histories*, when referring to Amosis king of the Egyptians, and his exploits, adduces, as a witness, Ptolemy of Mendes. And his remarks are to the following effect: Amosis, who lived in the time of the Argive Inachus, overthrew Athyria, as Ptolemy of Mendes relates in his Chronology. Now this Ptolemy was a priest; and setting forth the deeds of the Egyptian kings in three entire books, he says, that the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, under the conduct of Moses, took place while Amosis was king of Egypt. Whence it is seen that Moses flourished in the time of Inachus.

And of the Hellenic states, the most ancient is the Argolic, I mean that which took its rise from Inachus, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus teaches in his *Times*. And younger by forty generations than it was Attica, founded by Cecrops, who was an aboriginal of double race; and Arcadia, founded by Pelasgus, younger too by nine generations; and more recent than this last by fifty-two generations, was Pthiotis, founded by Deucalion. And from the time of Inachus to the Trojan war twenty generations or more are reckoned; let us say, four hundred years and more.

[Clement continues with a lengthy recounting of the periods of the Hebrew judges, kings, and prophets from Joshua to the Babylonian captivity, cross-referenced with Greek chronological data. This occupies the remainder of the chapter and provides the evidential foundation for his argument that Moses — and therefore revealed wisdom — precedes all Greek philosophy by many centuries.]

And in the Gospel according to Matthew, the genealogy which begins with Abraham is continued down to Mary the mother of the Lord. "For," it is said, "from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon till Christ are likewise other fourteen generations" (*Matthew 1:17*) — three mystic intervals completed in six weeks.

Chapter 22. On the Greek Translation of the Old Testament

So much for the details respecting dates, as stated variously by many, and as set down by us.

It is said that the Scriptures both of the law and of the prophets were translated from the dialect of the Hebrews into the Greek language in the reign of Ptolemy the son of Lagos, or, according to others, of Ptolemy surnamed Philadelphus; Demetrius Phalereus bringing to this task the greatest earnestness, and employing painstaking accuracy on the materials for the translation. For the Macedonians being still in possession of Asia, and the king being ambitious of adorning the library he had at Alexandria with all writings, desired the people of Jerusalem to translate the prophecies they possessed into the Greek dialect. And they being the subjects of the Macedonians, selected from those of highest character among them seventy elders, versed in the Scriptures, and skilled in the Greek dialect, and sent them to him with the divine books. And each having severally translated each prophetic book, and all the translations being compared together, they agreed both in meaning and expression. For it was the counsel of God carried out for the benefit of Grecian ears. It was not alien to the inspiration of God, who gave the prophecy, also to produce the translation, and make it as it were Greek prophecy. Since the Scriptures having perished in the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar, Esdras the Levite, the priest, in the time of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, having become inspired, in the exercise of prophecy restored again the whole of the ancient Scriptures.

And Aristobulus, in his first book addressed to Philometor, writes in these words: "And Plato followed the laws given to us, and had manifestly studied all that is said in them." And Numenius, the Pythagorean philosopher, expressly writes: "For what is Plato, but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?"

Chapter 23. The Age, Birth, and Life of Moses

Moses, originally of a Chaldean family, was born in Egypt, his ancestors having migrated from Babylon into Egypt on account of a protracted famine. Born in the seventh generation, and having received a royal education, the following are the circumstances of his history. The Hebrews having increased in Egypt to a great multitude, and the king of the country being afraid of insurrection in consequence of their numbers, he ordered all the female children born to the Hebrews to be reared (woman being unfit for war), but the male to be destroyed, being suspicious of stalwart youth. But the child being goodly, his parents nursed him secretly three months, natural affection being too strong for the monarch's cruelty. But at last, dreading lest they should be destroyed along with the child, they made a basket of the papyrus that grew there, put the child in it, and laid it on the banks of the marshy river. The child's sister stood at a distance, and watched what would happen. In this emergency, the king's daughter, who for a long time had not been pregnant, and who longed for a child, came that day to the river to bathe and wash herself; and hearing the child cry, she ordered it to be brought to her; and touched with pity, sought a nurse. At that moment the child's sister ran up, and said that, if she wished, she could procure for her as nurse one of the Hebrew women who had recently had a child. And on her consenting and desiring her to do so, she brought the child's mother to be nurse for a stipulated fee, as if she had been some other person. Thereupon the queen gave the babe the name of Moses, with etymological propriety, from his being drawn out of "the water" — for the Egyptians call water "mou" — in which he had been exposed to die.

Having reached the proper age, he was taught arithmetic, geometry, poetry, harmony, and besides, medicine and music, by those that excelled in these arts among the Egyptians; and besides, the philosophy which is conveyed by symbols, which they point out in the hieroglyphical inscriptions. The rest of the usual course of instruction, Greeks taught him in Egypt as a royal child, as Philo says in his life of Moses. He learned, besides, the literature of the Egyptians, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies from the Chaldeans and the Egyptians; whence in the Acts he is said "to have been instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (*Acts 7:22*) And Eupolemus, in his book *On the Kings in Judea*, says that "Moses was the first wise man, and the first that imparted grammar to the Jews, that the Phoenicians received it from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phoenicians."

Chapter 24. How Moses Discharged the Part of a Military Leader

Moses then is a prophet, a legislator, skilled in military tactics and strategy, a politician, a philosopher. And in what sense he was a prophet, shall be by and by told, when we come to treat of prophecy. Tactics belong to military command, and the ability to command an army is among the attributes of kingly rule. Legislation, again, is also one of the functions of the kingly office, as also judicial authority.

Of the kingly office one kind is divine — that which is according to God and His holy Son, by whom both the good things which are of the earth, and external and perfect felicity too, are supplied. And there is a second kind of royalty, inferior to that administration which is purely rational and divine, which brings to the task of government merely the high mettle of the soul; after which fashion Hercules ruled the Argives, and Alexander the Macedonians. The third kind is what aims after one thing — merely to conquer and overturn; but to turn conquest either to a good or a bad purpose, belongs not to such rule. The fourth, the worst of all, is the sovereignty which acts according to the promptings of the passions, as that of Sardanapalus, and those who propose to themselves as their end the gratification of the passions to the utmost.

He is a king, then, who governs according to the laws, and possesses the skill to sway willing subjects. Such is the Lord, who receives all who believe on Him and by Him. For the Father has delivered and subjected all to Christ our King, "that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (*Philippians 2:10–11*)

Now, generalship involves three ideas: caution, enterprise, and the union of the two. And each of these consists of three things, acting as they do either by word, or by deeds, or by both together. And all this can be accomplished either by persuasion, or by compulsion, or by inflicting harm in the way of taking vengeance on those who ought to be punished.

Now, the Greeks had the advantage of receiving from Moses all these, and the knowledge of how to make use of each of them. For the sake of example: Moses, on leading the people forth, suspecting that the Egyptians would pursue, left the short and direct route, and turned to the desert, and marched mostly by night. For it was another kind of arrangement by which the Hebrews were trained in the great wilderness, and for a protracted time, to belief in the existence of one God alone, being inured by the wise discipline of endurance to which they were subjected. The strategy of Moses, therefore, shows the necessity of discerning what will be of service before the approach of dangers, and so to encounter them. It turned out precisely as he suspected, for the Egyptians pursued with horses and chariots, but were quickly destroyed by the sea breaking on them and overwhelming them with their horses and chariots, so that not a remnant of them was left.

Perceiving this, Miltiades, the Athenian general, who conquered the Persians in battle at Marathon, imitated it in the following fashion. Marching over a trackless desert, he led on the Athenians by night, and eluded the barbarians that were set to watch him.

Chapter 25. Plato an Imitator of Moses in Framing Laws

Plato the philosopher, aided in legislation by the books of Moses, censured the polity of Minos, and that of Lycurgus, as having bravery alone as their aim; while he praised as more seemly the polity which expresses some one thing, and directs according to one precept. For he says that it becomes us to philosophize with strength, and dignity, and wisdom — holding unalterably the same opinions about

the same things, with reference to the dignity of heaven. Accordingly, therefore, he interprets what is in the law, enjoining us to look to one God and to do justly. Of politics, he says there are two kinds — the department of law, and that of politics, strictly so called.

And he refers to the Creator, as the Statesman by way of eminence, in his book of this name; and those who lead an active and just life, combined with contemplation, he calls statesmen. That department of politics which is called "Law," he divides into administrative magnanimity and private good order, which he calls orderliness, and harmony, and sobriety, which are seen when rulers suit their subjects, and subjects are obedient to their rulers; a result which the system of Moses sedulously aims at effecting.

In my opinion, the end both of the statesman, and of him who lives according to the law, is contemplation. It is necessary, therefore, that public affairs should be rightly managed. But to philosophize is best. For he who is wise will live concentrating all his energies on knowledge, directing his life by good deeds, despising the opposite, and following the pursuits which contribute to truth. And the law is not what is decided by law, but law is the opinion which is good, and what is good is that which is true, and what is true is that which finds "true being," and attains to it. "He who is," (*Exodus 3:14*) says Moses. In accordance with which, namely, good opinion, some have called law, right reason, which enjoins what is to be done and forbids what is not to be done.

Chapter 26. Moses Rightly Called a Divine Legislator, and, Though Inferior to Christ, Far Superior to the Great Legislators of the Greeks, Minos and Lycurgus

Whence the law was rightly said to have been given by Moses, being a rule of right and wrong; and we may call it with accuracy the divine ordinance, inasmuch as it was given by God through Moses. It accordingly conducts to the divine. Paul says: "The law was instituted because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." Then, as if in explanation of his meaning, he adds: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up," manifestly through fear, in consequence of sins, "unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; so that the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we should be justified by faith." (*Galatians 3:19–24*)

The true legislator is he who assigns to each department of the soul what is suitable to it and to its operations. Now Moses, to speak comprehensively, was a living law, governed by the benign Word. Accordingly, he furnished a good polity, which is the right discipline of men in social life.

It is the wise man, therefore, alone whom the philosophers proclaim king, legislator, general, just, holy, God-beloved. And if we discover these qualities in Moses, as shown from the Scriptures themselves, we may, with the most assured persuasion, pronounce Moses to be truly wise.

What, then, is the unbelief of the Greeks? Is it not their unwillingness to believe the truth which declares that the law was divinely given by Moses, whilst they honour Moses in their own writers? They relate that Minos received the laws from Zeus in nine years, by frequenting the cave of Zeus; and Plato, and Aristotle, and Ephorus write that Lycurgus was trained in legislation by going constantly to Apollo at Delphi. Chamæleo of Heraclea, in his book *On Drunkenness*, and Aristotle in *The Polity of Locrians*, mention that Zaleucus the Locrian received the laws from Athene.

But those who exalt the credit of Greek legislation, as far as in them lies, by referring it to a divine source, after the model of Mosaic prophecy, are senseless in not owning the truth, and the archetype of what is related among them.

Chapter 27. The Law, Even in Correcting and Punishing, Aims at the Good of Men

Let no one, then, run down law, as if, on account of the penalty, it were not beautiful and good. For shall he who drives away bodily disease appear a benefactor; and shall not he who attempts to deliver the soul from iniquity, as much more appear a friend, as the soul is a more precious thing than the body? Besides, for the sake of bodily health we submit to incisions, and cauterizations, and medicinal draughts; and he who administers them is called saviour and healer, even though amputating parts, not from grudge or ill-will towards the patient, but as the principles of the art prescribe, so that the sound parts may not perish along with them, and no one accuses the physician's art of wickedness; and shall we not similarly submit, for the soul's sake, to either banishment, or punishment, or bonds, provided only from unrighteousness we shall attain to righteousness?

For the law, in its solicitude for those who obey, trains up to piety, and prescribes what is to be done, and restrains each one from sins, imposing penalties even on lesser sins. But when it sees any one in

such a condition as to appear incurable, posting to the last stage of wickedness, then in its solicitude for the rest, that they may not be destroyed by it (just as if amputating a part from the whole body), it condemns such an one to death, as the course most conducive to health. "Being judged by the Lord," says the apostle, "we are chastened, that we may not be condemned with the world." (*1 Corinthians 11:32*)

But it is the highest and most perfect good, when one is able to lead back any one from the practice of evil to virtue and well-doing, which is the very function of the law. So that, when one falls into any incurable evil — when taken possession of, for example, by wrong or covetousness — it will be for his good if he is put to death. For the law is beneficent, being able to make some righteous from unrighteous, if they will only give ear to it, and by releasing others from present evils; for those who have chosen to live temperately and justly, it conducts to immortality. To know the law is characteristic of a good disposition. And again: "Wicked men do not understand the law; but they who seek the Lord shall have understanding in all that is good." (*Proverbs 28:5*)

Chapter 28. The Fourfold Division of the Mosaic Law

The Mosaic philosophy is accordingly divided into four parts — into the historic, and that which is specially called the legislative, which two properly belong to an ethical treatise; and the third, that which relates to sacrifice, which belongs to physical science; and the fourth, above all, the department of theology, "vision," which Plato predicates of the truly great mysteries. And this species Aristotle calls metaphysics. Dialectics, according to Plato, is, as he says in *The Statesman*, a science devoted to the discovery of the explanation of things. And it is to be acquired by the wise man, not for the sake of saying or doing aught of what we find among men (as the dialecticians, who occupy themselves in sophistry, do), but to be able to say and do, as far as possible, what is pleasing to God.

But the true dialectic, being philosophy mixed with truth, by examining things, and testing forces and powers, gradually ascends in relation to the most excellent essence of all, and essays to go beyond to the God of the universe, professing not the knowledge of mortal affairs, but the science of things divine and heavenly; in accordance with which follows a suitable course of practice with respect to words and deeds, even in human affairs. Rightly, therefore, the Scripture, in its desire to make us such dialecticians, exhorts us: "Be you skilful money-changers," rejecting some things, but retaining what is good.

"Wherefore it alone conducts to the true wisdom, which is the divine power which deals with the knowledge of entities as entities, which grasps what is perfect, and is freed from all passion: not without the Saviour, who withdraws, by the divine word, the gloom of ignorance arising from evil training, which had overspread the eye of the soul, and bestows the best of gifts, that we might well know both God and man." (*cf. Matthew 11:27*) Rightly, then, the apostle says that it was by revelation that he knew the mystery: "As I wrote before in few words, according as you are able to understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (*Ephesians 3:3–4*)

Chapter 29. The Greeks but Children Compared with the Hebrews

Hence most beautifully the Egyptian priest in Plato said, "O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children, not having in your souls a single ancient opinion received through tradition from antiquity. And not one of the Greeks is an old man;" meaning by old, I suppose, those who know what belongs to the more remote antiquity, that is, our literature; and by young, those who treat of what is more recent and made the subject of study by the Greeks — things of yesterday and of recent date as if they were old and ancient. Wherefore he added, "and no study hoary with time;" for we, in a kind of barbarous way, deal in homely and rugged metaphor. Those, therefore, whose minds are rightly constituted approach the interpretation utterly destitute of artifice. And of the Greeks, he says that their opinions "differ but little from myths."

Divinely, therefore, the power which spoke to Hermas by revelation said, "The visions and revelations are for those who are of double mind, who doubt in their hearts if these things are or are not."

Similarly, also, demonstrations from the resources of erudition, strengthen, confirm, and establish demonstrative reasonings, in so far as men's minds are in a wavering state like young people's. "The good commandment," then, according to the Scripture, "is a lamp, and the law is a light to the path; for instruction corrects the ways of life." (*Proverbs 6:23*) "Law is monarch of all, both of mortals and of immortals," says Pindar. I understand, however, by these words, Him who enacted law. And I regard, as spoken of the God of all, the following utterance of Hesiod, though spoken by the poet at random and not with comprehension:

"For the Saturnian framed for men this law: Fishes, and beasts, and winged birds may eat Each other, since no rule of right is theirs; But Right (by far the best) to men he gave."

Whether, then, it be the law which is connate and natural, or that given afterwards, which is meant, it is certainly of God; and both the law of nature and that of instruction are one. Thus also Plato, in *The Statesman*, says that the lawgiver is one; and in *The Laws*, that he who shall understand music is one; teaching by these words that the Word is one, and God is one. And Moses manifestly calls the Lord a covenant: "Behold I am my Covenant with you," (*Genesis 17:4*) having previously told him not to seek the covenant in writing. For it is a covenant which God, the Author of all, makes. And in the *Preaching of Peter* you will find the Lord called Law and Word. But at this point, let our first Miscellany of gnostic notes, according to the true philosophy, come to a close.

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Ante-Nicene Fathers edition. The opening of Book I is genuinely fragmentary; the manuscript begins mid-sentence and the lacuna is noted in the text.

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