

On Mating

Philo of Alexandria



Chapter I

“But Sarah the wife of Abraham had not borne him any child. And she had an Egyptian handmaiden, whose name was Hagar. And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold, the Lord has closed me up, so that I should not bear children; go in unto my handmaiden that thou mayest have children by Her.”

The name Sarah, being interpreted, means “my principedom.” And the wisdom which is in me, and the temperance which is in me, and the particular justice, and each of the other virtues which belong to me alone, are the principedom of me alone. For such virtue, being a queen from its birth, rules over and governs me who have determined on obeying it.

Now this virtue, Moses (making a most paradoxical assertion) reports, as being both barren and also most prolific, since he affirms that the most populous of all nations is sprung from it. For, in real truth, virtue is barren with respect to all things which are evil, but is so exceedingly prolific of good things, that it stands in no need of the art of the midwife, for it anticipates it by bringing forth before its arrival.

Therefore animals and plants, after considerable intervals and interruptions, bring forth their appropriate fruits, once, or at most twice a year; according to the number of times which nature has appointed each of them, and which is properly adapted to the seasons of the year. But virtue without any interruption, without any interval or any cessation, is continually bringing forth at all times and on all occasions, not indeed children, but virtuous reasonings, and irreproachable counsels, and praiseworthy actions.

Chapter II

But neither is wealth, which it is not possible to employ, of any advantage to its possessors, nor is the fertility of wisdom of any service to us, unless it also brings forth such things as are serviceable to us. For some persons it judges to be in every respect worthy of living in its company; but others appear to have not yet arrived at such an age, as to be able to support so highly praised and well regulated a charge; whom, however, it permits to enter upon the preliminaries of marriage, holding out to them a hope that they may hereafter consummate the wedlock.

Sarah therefore, the virtue which rules over my soul, has brought forth, but, she has not brought forth for me (for I should never as yet have been able, since I am quite young, to receive her offspring); she has brought forth, I say, wisdom, and the doing of just actions, and piety, by reason of the multitude of illegitimate children whom the vain opinions have brought forth to me. For the education of the offspring, and the constant superintendence and incessant care which they require, have compelled me to neglect the legitimate children, who are really citizens.

It is well, therefore, to pray that virtue may not only bring forth, since she is prolific even without a prayer, but that she may bring for us; in order that we, receiving a share of her seed and of her offspring, may be happy. For she is accustomed to bring forth children to God alone, restoring with burning gratitude the first fruits of all the blessings which she has received, to him, who, as Moses says, “opened her Womb,” which was at all times virgin.

For he also says that the lamp, that archetypal model after which the copy is made, shines in one part, that is to say, in the part which is turned towards God. For since that completes the number of seven, and stands in the middle of the six branches, which are divided into two lots of three each, acting as body-guards to it on either side, it sends its rays upwards toward that one being, namely God, thinking its light too brilliant for mortal sight to be able to stand its proximity.

Chapter III

On this account he does not say that Sarah did not bring forth at all, but only that she did not bring forth for him, for Abraham. For we are not as yet capable of becoming the fathers of offspring of virtue, unless we first of all have a connection with her handmaiden; and the handmaiden of wisdom is the encyclical knowledge of music and logic, arrived at by previous instruction.

For as in houses there are vestibules placed in front of staircases, and as in cities there are suburbs, through which one must pass in order to enter into the cities; so also the encyclical branches of instruction are placed in front of virtue, for they are the road which conducts to her.

And as you must know that it is common for there to be great preludes to great propositions, and the greatest of all propositions is virtue, for it is conversant about the most important of all materials, namely, about the universal life of man; very naturally, therefore, that will not employ any short preface, but rather it will use as such, grammar, geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, music, and all the other sorts of contemplation which proceed in accordance with reason; of which Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah, is an emblem, as we will proceed to show.

“For Sarah,” says Moses, “said unto Abraham, Behold, the Lord has closed me up, so that I may not bear children. Go in unto my handmaiden, that thou mayest have children by her.” Now, we must take out of the present discussion those conjunctions and connections of body with body which have pleasure for their end. For this is the connection of the mind with virtue, which is desirous to have children by her, and which, if it cannot do so at once, is at all events taught to espouse her handmaid, namely, intermediate instruction.

Chapter IV

And here it is worth while to admire wisdom, by reason of its modesty, which has not thought fit to reproach us with the slowness of our generation, or our absolute barrenness. And this, too, though the oracle says truly that she brought forth no child, not out of envy, but because of the unsuitableness of our own selves. For, says she, “The Lord has closed me up so, that I may not bear children.” And she no longer adds the words, “to you,” that she may not appear to mention the misfortunes of others, or to reproach them with theirs.

“Therefore,” says she, “go thou in to my handmaiden,” that is to say, to the intermediate instruction of the intermediate and encyclical branches of knowledge, “that you may first have children by her;” for hereafter you shall be able to enjoy a connection with her mistress, tending to the procreation of legitimate children.

For grammar, by teaching you the histories which are to be found in the works of poets and historians, will give you intelligence and abundant learning; and, moreover, will teach you to look with contempt on all the vain fables which erroneous opinions invent, on account of the ill success which

history tells us that the heroes and demigods who are celebrated among those writers, meet with.

And music will teach what is harmonious in the way of rhythm, and what is ill arranged in harmony, and, rejecting all that is out of tune and all that is inconsistent with melody, will guide what was previously discordant to concord. And geometry, sowing the seeds of equality and just proportion in the soul, which is fond of learning, will, by means of the beauty of continued contemplation, implant in you an admiration of justice.

And rhetoric, having sharpened the mind for contemplation in general, and having exercised and trained the faculties of speech in interpretations and explanations, will make man really rational, taking care of that peculiar and especial duty which nature has bestowed upon it, but upon no other animal whatever.

And dialectic science, which is the sister, the twin sister of rhetoric, as some persons have called it, separating true from false arguments, and refuting the plausibilities of sophistical arguments, will cure the great disease of the soul, deceit. It is profitable, therefore, to aide among these and other sciences resembling them, and to devote one's especial attention to them. For perhaps, I say, as has happened to many, we shall become known to the queenly virtues by means of their subjects and handmaidens.

Do you not see that our bodies do not use solid and costly food before they have first, in their age of infancy, used such as had no variety, and consisted merely of milk? And, in the same way, think also that infantine food is prepared for the soul, namely the encyclical sciences, and the contemplations which are directed to each of them; but that the more perfect and becoming food, namely the virtues, is prepared for those who are really full-grown men.

Chapter V

Now the first characteristics of the intermediate instruction are represented by two symbols, the race and the name. As to race, the handmaiden is an Egyptian, and her name is Hagar; and this name, being interpreted, means "emigration." For it follows of necessity that the man who delights in the encyclical contemplations, and who joins himself as a companion to varied learning, is as such enrolled under the banners of the earthly and Egyptian

body; and that he stands in need of eyes in order to see and to read, and of ears in order to attend and to hear, and of his other external senses, in such a manner as to be able to unfold each of the objects of the external sense.

For it is not natural to suppose that the subject of judgment can possibly be comprehended without some power which is to judge; and the power which judges of the objects of the external sense is the external sense, so that without the external sense it would not be possible for any thing in that world which is perceptible by the external sense to be accurately known, though those are the matters which are the principal field for philosophical speculation. But the external sense, being that portion of the soul which most resembles the body, is deeply rooted in the entire vessel of the soul; and the vessel of the soul is, by a figurative way of speaking, called Egypt.

And there is one characteristic derived from her race, which the handmaiden of virtue possesses. But what or what kind of characteristic that is which is derived from the name, we must now proceed to consider. The intermediate instruction has the same rank and classification as a sojourner. For all knowledge, and wisdom, and virtue, are the only real native and original inhabitants and citizens of the universe. And all the others kinds of instruction, which obtain the second, and third, and lowest honours, are on the confines, between foreigners and citizens. For they are not connect with either race without some alloy, and yet again they are not connected with both according to a certain community and participation.

For they are sojourners from the fact of their passing their time among citizens; but from the fact of their not being settled inhabitants, they also resemble foreigners. In the same manner, according to my idea, as adopted children, inasmuch as they inherit the property of those who have adopted them, resemble real legitimate children; but inasmuch as they were not begotten by them, they resemble strangers. The same relation, then, that a mistress has to her handmaidens, or a wife, who is a citizen, to a concubine, that same relation has virtue, that is Sarah, to education, that is Hagar. So that very naturally, since the husband, by name Abraham, is one who has an admiration for contemplation and knowledge; virtue, that is Sarah, would be his wife, and Hagar, that is all kinds of encyclical accomplishments, would be his concubine.

Whoever, therefore, has acquired wisdom from his teachers, would never reject Hagar. For the acquisition of all the preliminary branches of education is wholly necessary.

And each of these has a different appearance and a different nature. For instance, of the two citizen wives, one is a most healthy and well established and peaceful motion, whom from the circumstances the historians called Leah: and the other resembles a whetstone and is called Rachel, in the pursuit of whom the mind, which is fond of labour and fond of exercises, is much sharpened and excited; and the name, being interpreted, means the “sight of profanation;” not because she sees profanely, but, on the contrary, because she thinks the things which are seen and which are the objects of the external senses, not brilliant but common and profane in comparison of the pure and untainted nature of those things which are invisible and which are only discernible by the intellect.

For since our soul is composed of two parts, and since the one contains the rational faculties, and the other the irrational ones, it follows that each part must have its own peculiar virtue, Leah being the virtue of the rational part, and Rachel of the irrational.

For the one trains us, by means of the external senses and the parts of speech, to look contemptuously upon all things which it is proper to disregard, such as glory, and wealth, and pleasure, which the principal and general multitude of common men look upon as things to be admired and striven for, their sense of hearing being corrupted, and the tribunal of all the other external senses being corrupted likewise.

But the other teaches us to turn away from that uneven and rough road which is never approached by souls that love virtue, and to go smoothly along the smooth road without any stumbling and without meeting any hindrances in the path.

Therefore the handmaiden of the former of the two citizen wives will necessarily be the power of interpretation as exercised by means of the organs of speech, and also the rational invention of sophisms, deceiving man by a well-imagined plausibility; and its necessary nourishment is meat and drink.

The historian has recorded for us the names of the two handmaidens, calling them Zilpah and Billah. The name Zilpah, being interpreted, means “a

mouth going forth,” a symbol of that nature which interprets and speaks. But Billah means “a swallowing,” which is the first and most necessary support of all mortal animals. For it is by swallowing that our bodies are established firmly, and the cables of life are attached to this action as to a sure foundation.

Accordingly the practiser of virtue lives with all the aforesaid powers, with some as with free women and citizens, and with others as slaves and concubines. For he is enamoured of the motion of Leah; and a smooth (leia) motion existing in a body would be calculated to produce health, and, when existing in a soul, it would produce virtue and justice. But he loves Rachel, wrestling with his passions, and preparing himself for a struggle of temperance, arraying himself in opposition to all the objects of the external senses.

For there are two kinds of advantage, either that according to which we enjoy blessings, as in peace, or else that which comes from arraying one’s self in opposition to and from removing evils as in war. Now Leah is the wife according to whom it happens to the husband to enjoy the elder, and more important, and dominant blessings; and Rachel the wife, according to whom he obtains what resemble the sports of war. Such then is his way, if left with his citizen wives.

But the practiser of virtue also wants Billah, that is, swallowing, but as a slave and a concubine; for without food and vitality, living well could not possibly be the lot of man, since things indifferent are always the foundation of what is better; and he also wants Zilpah, that is to say, interpretation by means of utterance, in order that the rational part itself may, in a twofold manner, contribute to perfection, both from the fountain existing in the intellect, and also from the stream flowing therefrom in the organ of the voice.

Chapter VII

But these men were husbands of many wives and concubines, not only of such as were citizens, as the sacred scriptures tell us. But Isaac had neither many wives nor any concubine at all, but only his first and wedded wife, who lived with him all his life.

Why was this? Because the virtue acquired by teaching, which Abraham pursues, requires many things, both such as are legitimate according to

prudence, and such also as are illegitimate according to the exegetical contemplations of preliminary instruction. And there is also a virtue which is made perfect by practice, to which Jacob appears to have been devoted; for exercises consist of many and various dogmas and doctrines, some leading and others following, some leading the way, and others arriving later, and bringing at one time more serious, and at other times lighter labours.

But the self-instructed race, of which Isaac was a partaker, the excellent country of the mastery over the passions, has received as its share a nature simple, and unmixed, and unalloyed, standing in no need of either practice or instruction in which there is need of the concubine sciences, and not only of the citizen wives; for when God has showered down from above that most requisite benefit of knowledge, self-taught, and having no need of a preceptor, it would be impossible any longer for a man to live with the slavish and concubine arts, having a desire for bastard doctrines as his children. For the man who has arrived at this honour, is inscribed as the husband of the mistress and princess virtue; and she is called in the Greek language, perseverance, but among the Hebrews her name is Rebekkah.

For he who, by reason of the happy constitution of his own nature and by the prolific fertility of his soul, has attained to wisdom without encountering labour or enduring hardship, stands in need of no further improvement;

for he has at hand the perfect gifts of God, inspired by means of those most ancient graces, and he wishes and prays that they may remain lasting. In reference to which, it appears to me to be that the Author of all goodness gave him perseverance as his wife, in order that his mercies might endure for ever to the man who had her for his wife.

Chapter VIII

Now recollection only comes in the second rank after memory, as inferior to it; and he who recollects is inferior to him who remembers; for the latter resembles a man in an uninterrupted state of good health, but the other is like a man recovering from a disease, for forgetfulness is a disease of the memory;

and it follows inevitably that the man who exerts his recollection has previously forgotten what he now recollects. Therefore the sacred scriptures call memory Ephraim, which name, being interpreted, means “fruit-bearing.”

But the Hebrews call recollection, after forgetfulness, Manasseh;

for, in good truth, the soul of the man who remembers does bear as fruit the things which he has learned, losing nothing of them; but the soul of the man who exerts recollection, is only escaping from forgetfulness, by which it was detained before it recollected; therefore a citizen wife, memory, lives with the man who is endowed with remembrance. But the concubine recollection, a Syrian by birth, insolent and overbearing, lives with the man who forgets; for the meaning of the name Syria, is “sublimity;”

and the son of the concubine recollection is Machir, as the Hebrews call him; but the Greeks interpret the name to mean “of the father.” For those who recollect a thing think that the mind is the father and cause of their recollecting, and do not consider that this same endowment of the mind did also before contain “forgetfulness,” though it never would have received it if it had had memory in its power.

For it is said in the scripture, “And the sons of Manasseh were Ashriel whom she bare, but his concubine, the Aramitess, bare Machir; and Machir was the father Gilead.” And Nachor, also, the brother of Abraham, had two wives, one a citizen and the other a concubine. And the name of the citizen was Milcah; and the name of the concubine was Rumah.

But let no one who is in his senses suspect that the wise legislator recorded this as a historical genealogy, but it is rather an explanation of things which are able to benefit the soul by means of symbols. And when we have translated the names into our own language, we shall understand the real meanings intended to be conveyed by them. Come, then, let us now investigate each of them.

Chapter IX

The name Nachor, being interpreted, means “a rest from light;” and Milcah means “princess;” and Rumah means “she who sees something.” Therefore, to have light in the mind is good; but cessation from light, and tranquillity, and immobility is not perfect good, for it is advantageous to have evils tranquil, but it is desirable to have blessings in motion; for what advantage is there in a man’s having a tuneful voice, if he keeps silent?

or in his having the skill of a flute player, if he does not play the flute? or of his knowing the harp, if he does not strike it? or, in short, what good is there in any artist whatever, if he does not exercise his art? for theoretical knowledge, without putting it in practice, is of no advantage whatever to those who possess it. For a man, though skilful in the contest of the pancratiun, or in boxing, or in wrestling, would derive no advantage from his athletic prowess if his hands were tied behind him; and he who was thoroughly practised in running would derive no advantage from his fleetness of foot if he were afflicted with the gout, or if he were to meet with any other injury to his feet.

And the light of the soul, which is the most brilliant and the most like the sun, is knowledge; for as the eyes are lightened up by beams, so is the mind made brilliant by wisdom, and becomes gradually accustomed to see more acutely from being continually anointed with new speculations. Therefore, Naoor is interpreted "a cessation from light," very naturally;

for, inasmuch as he is a relation of the wise Abraham, he partakes of that light which is according to wisdom; but inasmuch as he did not join him in his emigration from the crated to the uncreated being, from the world to the Creator of the world, he has acquired only a lame and imperfect knowledge, intermittent and delaying, or rather put together like a lifeless statue;

for he does not depart and quit his abode in the Chaldaean country, that is to say, he does not separate himself from the speculations concerning astronomy; honouring that which is created rather than him who created it, and the world in preference to God; or rather, I should say, looking on the world itself as an absolute independent God, and not as the work of an absolute God.

Chapter X

And he takes Milcah for his wife, not being some queen who by the dispensations of fortune governs some nation of men, or some city, but only one who bears a common name, the same as here. For, just as a person would not be widely wrong who called the world, as being the most excellent of all created things, the king of the objects of the external sense; so, also, one may call the knowledge which is conversant about the heaven, which knowledge those who study astronomy and the Chaldaeans possess in an eminent degree,

the queen of all the sciences.

This, therefore, is the wife who is a citizen; but the concubine is she who sees one only of all existing things at a time, even though it may be the most worthless of all. It is given, therefore, to the most excellent race to see the most excellent of things, namely, the really living God; for the name Israel, being interpreted, means “seeing God.” But to him who aims at the second prize, it is allowed to see that which is second best, namely, the heaven which is perceptible by the external senses, and the harmonious arrangement of the stars therein, and their truly musical and wellregulated motion.

The third class are the sceptics, who do not apply themselves to the most excellent objects, either of the intellect or of the external senses, which exist in nature, because they are always occupying themselves with petty sophistries, and small cavils, and criticisms. These have for their companions the concubine Rumah, who sees something which is very minute, because they are unable to approach the investigation of better things, by means of which they might benefit their own life.

For, as among physicians that which is called theoretical medical skill, is a long way from doing any good to those that are sick — for diseases are cured by medicines, and by operations, and by regimen, and not by discussions or theories; so also in philosophy, there is a set of word-traffickers and word-eaters, who have neither the will nor the skill to heal a life which is full of infirmities, but who, from their very earliest infancy to the extremity of old age, are not ashamed to cavil, and quibble, and wrangle about figurative expressions, as if happiness consisted in an interminable and profitless minuteness of accuracy in the matter of nouns and verbs, and not in the improving and ameliorating the moral character, the true fountain of the persons’ disposition; and in expelling the vices, and driving them out of its boundaries, and establishing the virtues as settlers within them.

Chapter XI

Now the wicked also have a desire for concubines, that is, for vain opinions and doctrines; accordingly Moses tells us that Thimna, the concubine of Eliphah the son of Esau, bore Amalek to Eliphah. Alas, for the eminent ignobleness of the descendant! And you will see this ignobleness the more

clearly, if you abandon the idea that this expression is used about a man, and rather consider the soul, with a kind of anatomical dissection.

The historian then calls the irrational and immoderate desires and impetuosity of the passions, Amalek; now the name Amalek, being interpreted, means “the people looking up.” For as the power of fire consumes the materials which are offered to it, so in the same manner does passion, when boiling over lick up and destroy everything with which it meets.

And the father of this passion is very properly described as Eliphah; for this name, being interpreted, means “God has scattered me.” But does it not follow that when God scatters, and disperses, and discards the soul, banishing it from himself, irrational passion is at once engendered? For He plants the mind which can really behold him, and which is really attached to God, the vine of a good kind, stretching out its roots so as to make them everlasting, and giving it abundance of fruit for the acquisition and enjoyment of the virtues.

On which account Moses prays, saying, “Bring them in and plant them In,” in order that those divine shoots may not be ephemeral, but long-lived and lasting for ever and ever. And banishing the unjust and ungodly soul, he disperses it and drives it to a distance from himself to the region of the pleasures and appetites and acts of injustice; and this region is, with exceeding appropriateness, called the region of the impious, more fitly than that one which is fabled as existing in the shades below. For indeed, the real hell is the life of the wicked, which is audacious, and flagitious, and liable to all kinds of curses.

Chapter XII

There is also in another place the following sentence deeply engraven: “When the Most High came down to scatter the nations, as he dispersed the sons of Adam,” he drove out all earthly dispositions, which had no desire to see any good thing from heaven; depriving them of house and city, and rendering them truly wanderers on the face of the earth. For no house, nor city, nor anything else which relates to society and participation, is preserved for any one of the wicked; but they are deprived of all settled habitation, and dispersed abroad, being moved in every direction, and living a life of continued emigration, and not being able to become settled any where.

Therefore the wicked man has for his children, wickedness, by his wife who is a citizen, and passion by his concubine; for the whole soul, like a free citizen, is a companion of reason, but that which is open to reproach brings forth wickedness. But the nature of the body is a concubine, by means of whom the birth of the passion is beheld; and the body is the region of the pleasures and passions, and it is called Thamnah,

which name, being interpreted, signifies a “fluctuating abandonment.” For the soul becomes faint and powerless by reason of the passions having received much tossing about and agitation from the body, on account of the violent storm which bursts forth from immoderate impetuosity.

But as the head is the chief of all the aforementioned parts of an animal, so is Esau the chief of this race, whose name is at one time interpreted “an oak,” and at another, “a thing made.” It is interpreted an oak, in reference to his being unbending, and implacable, and obstinate, and stiffnecked by nature, and having folly for his chief fellow counsellor, and being as such of a truly oaken character. And it is interpreted “a thing made,” inasmuch as a life according to folly is an invention and a fable, full of tragic pomp and vain boasting; and, on the other hand, of mockery and comic ridicule, having in it nothing sound, being full of falsehood, having utterly cast off truth, and disregarding as a thing of no value, that nature which is void of distinctive qualities, or of particular species, but plain and sincere, which the practiser of virtue loves.

And Moses bears witness to this, when he says that “Jacob was a man without artifice, dwelling in a House;” so that he who is contrary to him, must necessarily be destitute of a house, the companion of invention, and of things made, and of fabulous nonsense, or rather be himself a theatre and a fable.

Chapter XIII

The connection therefore between the reason which is devoted to contemplation and those powers which are citizen wives, or concubines, has here been explained to the best of my power. We must now proceed to investigate what follows, and endeavour to frame a proper connection for an argument. “Abraham,” says the sacred historian, “listened to the voice of Sarah.” For it is necessary for him who is a learner to be obedient to the injunctions of virtue:

but yet all men are not so obedient, but only those who are inspired with an exceedingly vehement love for knowledge. Since almost every day the places where there is anything to hear and the theatres are crowded, and those who study philosophy go on without ever stopping to take breath in one long continued discussion about virtue.

But still what advantage is derived from all that is said? For men, instead of attending, turn their mind in other directions, some to marine and mercantile affairs, others to rents and agriculture; some to public honours and affairs of state, some to the gains to be derived from each different profession and art, others to revenging themselves upon their enemies, others again to the enjoyments to be derived from the indulgence of the amorous appetites, and in short every body is under the influence of some distracting idea or other; so that, as far as the subjects of the discussion are concerned, they are completely deaf, and are present with their bodies only, but are at a distance as to their minds, being in no particular different from images or statues.

And if any persons do attend, they sit all that time only listening, and when they have departed they do not recollect a word of what has been said, but they have come in fact rather to be pleased through the medium of their hearing than with the view of deriving any solid advantage; so that their soul has not been able to comprehend anything or to become pregnant with any new idea, and even the cause which at first excited their pleasure soon ceases and their attention is extinguished.

There is a third kind of persons to whom what is said is for a time attended to and remembered, as if still sounding in their ears; but still they are found to be sophists rather than philosophers: of these men the language indeed is praiseworthy but the life is blameable; for they are powerful at speaking, but have no ability to do what is best.

It is therefore hardly possible to find a man who is inclined to attend and endowed with a good memory, honouring deeds rather than words; as is testified to in the praise of the man fond of hearing in the words, "He listened to the voice of Sarah." For he is not represented merely as hearing but also as listening to: and this last is a particularly felicitous expression to indicate one who approves of and is influenced by what he hears.

And the expression, “to the voice,” is not inconsiderately or incorrectly used in preference to saying — he listened to Sarah speaking. For it is the especial character of a learner to listen to the voice and words of his teacher; for by these alone is he taught. But he who acquires what is good by practice, and solitary meditation, and not by instruction, does not attend to what is said but rather to those who say it, imitating the lives of those men in their actions which are in each particular irreproachable.

For it is said, in the case of Jacob when he was sent away to form a marriage among his kinsmen, “Jacob listened to his mother and his father, and went into Mesopotamia.” He listened not to their voice, nor to their words, for it was fitting that he who was an imitator of their actions should be a practiser of virtue not a listener to speeches. For this is the peculiar character of one who is being taught, but the other is the mark of one who is enduring labours, in order that from this instance we may comprehend the difference between a practiser and a learner, the one being regulated with regard to him who is speaking, and the other with regard to his speech.

Chapter XIV

Therefore, continues the sacred historian, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, having taken Hagar, the Egyptian woman, her own handmaiden, ten years after Abraham had begun to dwell in the land of Canaan, gave her to Abraham her “husband, to be his Wife.” Wickedness is by nature an envious, and bitter, and evil-disposed thing, but virtue is gentle, and inclined to communion, and friendly; wishing in every possible manner to benefit those who are well disposed, either by its own power or by the means of others.

So now accordingly, as we are not able to become the fathers of children by prudence, she espouses us to her own handmaiden, encyclical instruction, as I have said before, and all but endures to be the bridesmaid and manager of the marriage; for it is said that Sarah herself took this woman and gave her to her own husband.

And here it is worth while to raise the question why it is that now again Moses calls the wife of Abraham Sarah, when he had already repeatedly told us what her name was before; for he was not a writer who ever indulged in that worst description of prolixity, tautology. What, then, are we to say? Since she

is about to betroth to him the handmaiden of wisdom, encyclical instruction, he says that she did not forget the duty which she owed to her mistress, but knew that she was, both in law and in her master's feelings, his wife, and that she herself was only such because of necessity and the force of opportunity. And this happens to every man who is fond of learning. And he who has experienced it may be looked upon as the most trustworthy witness to this fact.

At all events I, when I was first excited by the stimulus of philosophy to feel a desire for it, when I was very young connected myself with one of her handmaidens, namely, grammar; and all the offspring of which I became the father by her, such as writing, reading, and the acquaintance with the works of the poets and historians, I attributed to the mistress.

And at a subsequent time, forming connection with another of her handmaidens, geometry, and admiring her beauty (for she had beautiful symmetry and proportions in all her parts), I still appropriated none of the offspring, but carried them to the citizen wife, and bestowed them on her.

I was desirous also to form a similar connection with a third, and she was full of good rhythm, well arranged, and well limbed, and was called music. And by her I became the parent of diatonic, and chromatic, and harmonic, and combined and separate melodies, and all the different concords belonging to fourths and to fifths, and to the diapason. And, again, I concealed none of all these things, in order that my legitimate citizen wife might become wealthy, being ministered unto by a multitude of ten thousand servants;

for some men, being attracted by the charms of handmaidens, have neglected their true mistress, philosophy, and have grown old, some in poetry, and others in the study of painting, and others in the mixture of colours, and others in ten thousand other pursuits, without ever being able to return to the proper mistress;

for each act has its own peculiar brilliancies, certain attractive powers, by which some persons are allured and overcome, forgetting all the covenants which they have made with philosophy; but he who abides by the agreements which he has made, provides every thing from all quarters with a view to pleasing her. Very appropriately, therefore, does the sacred scripture, admiring his good faith in respect of his legitimate wife, say that even now Sarah was his

true wife, inasmuch as he only took his handmaid into his bed out of complaisance towards her;

and, indeed, in the same manner as the encyclical branches of education contribute to the proper comprehension of philosophy, so also does philosophy aid in the acquisition of wisdom; for philosophy is an attentive study of wisdom, and wisdom is the knowledge of all divine and human things, and of the respective causes of them. Therefore, just as encyclical accomplishments are the handmaidens of philosophy, so also is philosophy the handmaiden of wisdom;

but philosophy teaches temperance with regard to the belly, and temperance with regard to the parts below the belly, and also temperance and restraint of the tongue. Now these qualities are said to be worthy of praise for their own sakes, but they would appear more respectable still if they were cultivated for the sake of doing honour to and giving pleasure to God. We must, therefore, always remember the legitimate mistress when we are about to espouse her handmaidens; and let us be said indeed to be the husbands of the latter, but still let our legitimate mistress be our real wife, and not merely called such.

Chapter XV

Again, she gives Hagar to him, not the first moment that he arrives in the country of the Canaanites, but after he has abode there ten years. And what the meaning of this statement is we must investigate in no careless manner. Now, at the beginning of our existence, our soul dwelt among the passions alone as its fosterbrethren, griefs, pains, fears, desires, and pleasures, which reach it through the medium of the external senses, before reason was as yet able to see good and evil, and to distinguish accurately the points wherein these things differ from one another, but while it was still wavering and hesitating, and as it were closing its eyes in profound sleep;

but as time advances, when advancing out of the age of infancy we are on the point of becoming young men, then, without any delay, the double trunk of virtue and wickedness springs forth out of one root, and we attain to a comprehension of them both, but still we by all means choose one of the two; those who are well disposed choosing virtue, and those of the contrary

character choosing wickedness.

These things, now, being previously sketched out in this manner, we must become aware that Egypt is the symbol of the passions and the land of the Canaanites, the emblem of the wickednesses; so that it is in strict accordance with natural probability that God, after having roused his people and made them depart from Egypt, leads them into the country of the Canaanites;

for the man, as I have said before, at his very earliest birth had the Egyptian passions assigned to him to dwell among, being deeply rooted in pleasures and in pains; and at a subsequent time he departs as if to found a colony, and migrates towards wickedness. His reason now being inclined to a more acute sight, and comprehending accurately both the opposite extremes of good and evil, but nevertheless choosing the worse part, because it has a great share in mortal nature, to which what is evil is in some degree akin, as also the contrary, namely, good, is akin to the divine nature.

Chapter XVI

But these are the different countries of each respective nature; passions, that is to say, Egypt, being the country of the age of childhood; and wickedness, that is the land of Canaan, being the country of the age of youth. But the sacred scripture, although it is well acquainted with the different countries of the mortal race, suggests to us what ought to be done and what will be advantageous to us, enjoining us to hate the heathen, and their laws, and their customs, in that passage where he says,

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God; ye shall not behave according to the customs of Egypt in which ye dwelt among them, and ye shall not walk in their laws. Ye shall do my judgments, and ye shall not do according to the customs of the land of Canaan, into which I am leading you to dwell there. And he shall keep my commandments, and ye shall walk in them. I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep all my commandments and my judgments, and ye shall do them. He that doeth them the same shall live in them. I am the Lord your God: and ye shall keep all my commandments and my judgments.”

Therefore, real true life, above everything else, consists in the judgments and commandments of God, so that the customs and practices of the impious

must be death: but there are some races which take no note of passions and wickednesses, from whom the multitudes of impious persons and wickedness are sprung.

Therefore, ten years after our departure to settle in the land of the Canaanites let us marry Hagar, since from the first moment that we become rational beings, we seek for ignorance and a deficiency of knowledge which is pernicious in its own nature; but at a subsequent period, and at a perfect number, namely, the legal number of the decade, we come to feel a desire for that instruction which is able to benefit us.

Chapter XVII

But the sons of the musicians have accurately and carefully investigated the question respecting the decade; and the most sacred Moses has composed a hymn, with no slight degree of skill, attributing the most excellent things to this number of the decade, such as prayers, first-fruits, the continual and unceasing offerings of the priests, the observance of the passover, the atonement, the remission of debts, and the return to the ancient allotments of property at the end of every fifty years; the preparation and furnishing of the indissoluble tabernacle, and ten thousand other things which it would take a long time to enumerate. However, we must not pass over the most important points.

In the first place he represents Noah to us (and this man is the first who is specially entitled just, in the holy scriptures), as the tenth in succession from him who was formed out of the earth, not intending by this statement to indicate the number of years that had elapsed, but rather to show clearly that as the decade is the most perfect boundary and end of the numbers which proceed onwards from the unit, so also just in the soul is the perfection and true end of the actions of human life.

For the number three when multiplied by itself so as to make nine, the oracles have pronounced to be the most warlike of numbers; but when one is added to it so as to complete the number ten, then they receive it as a friendly one.

And as a proof of this, they allege the kingdoms of the nine kings, (when the civil war was fanned into a flame, the four passions rising up against the five

outward senses, and when the entire soul, like a city, was in danger of being subjected to an utter overthrow and destruction,) which the wise Abraham, appearing as the tenth king, put an end to, by joining in the warfare.

He then caused a calm instead of a storm, and health instead of disease, and life, if one may speak the plain truth, instead of death, showing himself as the trophy-bearer of God who giveth the victory, to whom also he consecrated the tenths as a grateful offering on account of his victory.

Moreover, he also separates off the tenth of all the cattle which come “under the Rod,” I mean by this under instruction, and of all those which are of a tame and tractable sort, pronouncing them to be holy by an express provision of the law. In order that so, by many concurrent testimonies, we may learn the particular and especial appropriateness of the number ten to God, and of the number nine to our mortal race.

Chapter XVIII

But also it is expressly ordered, that men should offer as first fruits the tenths, not only of animals, but also of all the things which grow up out of the earth; “For,” says the scripture, “every tenth of the earth from the seed and from the fruit of every tree, is holy to the Lord: and every tenth of oxen and sheep, and everything of any cattle which passes under the rod, of all these the tenth shall be holy to the Lord.”

You see that he thinks that it is proper to make an offering, by way of first fruits from the corporeal mass that is around us, which is really earthly and wooden; for life, and durability, and increase, and good health, fall to his share through the divine grace. You see also, that again an express command is given to offer first-fruits from all the irrational animals that are around ourselves; and by these are meant the outward senses. For to see, and to hear, and to smell, and to taste, and also to touch are divine gifts, for which it is our duty to give thanks.

But not only are we taught to thank the giver of all goodness for these earthly, and wooden, and corporeal things, and for the irrational animals, the outward senses, but also for the mind, which, to speak with strict propriety, is man in man, the better in the worse, the immortal in the mortal.

On this account I think it is, that God ordered to be consecrated the whole of the firstborn, the tenth, I mean the tribe of Levi, taking them in exchange for the first-born, for the preservation and protection of holiness, and piety, and sacred ministrations, which all have reference to the honour of God. For the first and best thing in ourselves is our reason, and it is very proper to offer up the first-fruits of our cleverness, and acuteness, and comprehension, and prudence, and of all our other faculties which we have in connection with our reason as first-fruits to God, who has bestowed upon us this great abundance of power of exerting our intelligence.

From this consideration it was, that Jacob, the practiser of virtue, at the beginning of his prayers, says: "Of all that thou givest me, I will set apart and consecrate a tenth to Thee." And the sacred scripture, which was written after the prayers on occasion of victory, which Melchisedek, who had received a self-instructed and self-taught priesthood, makes, says: "For he gave him a tenth of all Things," assigning to him the outward senses the faculty of feeling properly, and by the same sense of speech the faculty of speaking well, and by the senses connected with the mind the faculty of thinking well.

Very beautifully, therefore, and at the same time most unavoidably, does the sacred historian tell us in the fashion of an incidental narrative, when the memorial of that heavenly and divine food was consecrated in the golden urn, that "gomer was the tenth part of three Measures." For in us men there appear to be three measures, the outward senses, and speech, and mind. The outward sense being the measure of the objects of outward sense, speech being the measure of nouns and verbs, and of whatever is said; and the mind being the measure of those things which can only be perceived by the intellect.

We must therefore offer first-fruits of each of these three measures as a sacred tenth, in order that our powers of speaking, and of feeling, and of comprehending, may be seen to be irreproachable and sound, in reference to and in connection with God. For this is the true and just measure, and the things that relate to ourselves are false and unjust measures.

Chapter XIX

Very appropriately, therefore, in the case of sacrifices also, the tenth part of the measure of fine wheat flour will be brought upon the altar, together with

the victims. But the number of nine, which is what is left of the number ten, will remain among us.

And the daily sacrifice of the priests corresponds also to these facts. For it is expressly commanded to them to offer every day the tenth part of an Ephah of fine wheat flour. For, passing over the ninth number, the god who was only discernible by the outward senses and by opinion, they learnt to worship the tenth, who is the only living and true God.

For the world had nine portions assigned to it, eight in heaven, namely the portion of the fixed stars and the seven planets which are all borne forward in the same arrangement, and the ninth being the earth in conjunction with the air and water. For of these things there is only one bond and connection, though they admit all kinds of various changes and alterations.

Therefore men in general have paid honours to these nine portions, and to the world which is compounded of them. But the perfect man honours only that being who is above the nine, and who is their creator, being the tenth portion, namely God. For having examined into the whole of his works, he has felt a love for the creator of them, and he has become anxious to be his suppliant and servant. On this account the priest offers up a tenth every day to the tenth, the only and everlasting God.

This is, to speak properly, the spiritual passover of the soul, the passing over of all the passions and of every object of the outward senses to the tenth, which is the proper object of the intellect, and which is divine. For it is said in the scripture: "On the tenth day of this month let each of them take a sheep according to his house; in order that from the tenth, there may be consecrated to the tenth, that is to God, the sacrifices which have been preserved in the soul, which is illuminated in two portions out of the three, until it is entirely changed in every part, and becomes a heavenly brilliancy like a full moon, at the height of its increase at the end of the second week, and so is able not only to guard, but even to sacrifice uninjured and faultless improvements, that is to say, propitiations.

For this propitiation also is established in the tenth day of the month, when the soul addresses its supplications to the tenth portion, namely to God, and has learnt, by its own sagacity and acuteness, the insignificance and nothingness of the creature, and also the excessive perfection and pre-eminent

excellence in all good things of the uncreated God. Therefore God becomes at once propitious, and propitious too, even without any supplications being addressed to him, to those who abase and humble themselves, and who are not puffed up with vain arrogance and self-opinion.

This is remission and deliverance, this is complete freedom of the soul, shaking off the wanderings in which it wandered, and fleeing for a secure anchorage to the one nature which cannot wander, and which rises up to return to the lot which it formerly received when it had brilliant aspirations, and when it vigorously toiled in labours which had virtuous ends for their object. For then admiring it for its exertions, the holy scripture honoured it, giving it a most especial honour, and immortal inheritance, a place namely in the imperishable race.

This is what the wise Abraham supplicates for, when that which in word indeed is the land of Sodom, but in real fact is the soul made barren of all good things and blinded as to its reason, is about to be burnt up, in order that if the memorial of justice, namely the Tenth part be found in it, it may obtain a short of amnesty. Therefore he begins his supplication with a prayer for pardon, connected with the number fifty, and terminates with the number ten, the lowest number for whose deliverance he can dare to entreat.

Chapter XX

From which consideration it appears to me to have been, that Moses, after the appointment of chiliarchs, or commanders of thousands, and of centurians, and of captains of fifties, thought proper to appoint captains of ten over all, in order than if the mind was not able to be improved by means of the elder orders, it might at least be purified by these last in order.

And the son of the man who was devoted to learning, learnt a very beautiful doctrine when he went on that admirable embassy, asking in marriage for the self-taught wise man that most appropriate sister, namely, perseverance. For he takes ten camels, a reminder of the number ten, that is to say, of right instruction, from among many and, indeed, infinite memorials of the Lord.

He also takes of his good things, evidently not silver, nor any gold, nor any other of those things which consist of perishable materials; for Moses never

gave the favourable appellation of good to any of these things, but those genuine good things which are the only good things of the soul; and those he appropriates for the use of his journey, and for his purposes of traffic, namely, instruction, improvement, study, desire, admiration, enthusiasm, prophecy, and the love of doing good actions;

to which objects, a man who devotes all his care, and who practices the actions calculated to ensure their attainment, when he is about, as it were, to anchor in a safe harbour after having been tossed in a stormy sea, will take two earrings, each of a drachm in weight, and two golden armlets of ten shekels weight of gold for the arms of her who is sought in Marriage. Oh the divine ornament! We may understand that the drachm means the faculty of hearing, and the unbroken unit, and the attractive nature; for it is not becoming for hearing to have leisure to attend to anything except to that speech alone which sets forth in a suitable manner the virtues of the one and only God. And the ten shekels weight of gold mean attempts at works; for the actions, in accordance with wisdom, are established in perfect numbers, and every one of them is more precious than gold.

Chapter XXI

Something of this kind, now, is the contribution made by the princes, selected and appointed with reference to worth and merit, which they made when the soul being properly prepared and adorned by philosophy, was celebrating the festival of the dedication in a sacred and becoming manner, giving thanks to God its teacher and its guide; for it “offers up a censer full of frankincense, ten golden shekels in Weight,” in order that the wise man alone may judge of the odours which are exhaled by prudence and by every virtue.

But when they appear to be made propitious, then Moses will sing a sacred hymn over them, saying, “The Lord has smelt the smell of a sweet savour,” using the word to smell here as equivalent to approving of; for God is not formed like a man, nor has he any need of nostrils, or of any other organ parts.

But as he proceeds onwards he speaks also of the divine abode, the tabernacle, and its ten Curtains;” for, in fact, the compound edifice of entire wisdom has been assigned the perfect number, the number ten. And wisdom is the court and palace of the all governing and only absolute and independent

king.

Accordingly, this is his abode, discernible only by the intellect; but the world is perceptible by the outward senses; since Moses made the curtains of such things as are symbols of the four elements, for they were made of fine flax, and of hyacinthine colour, and of purple, and of scarlet, — four numbers, as I have said before. Now the fine flax is an example of the earth, for the flax grows out of the earth; and the hyacinthine colour is a symbol of the air, for it is black by nature; purple (porphyra), again, is a symbol of the water; for the cause of this dye is derived from the sea, being the shell-fish of the same name (heμ porphyra); and scarlet is a symbol of fire, for it most nearly resembles a flame.

Again, that omnipotent overseer and ruler of the universe reproved the state of Egypt, when rebellious against the rein, when it was extolling with grandiloquent words the mind as an adversary of God, and bestowing on it all the ensigns of kingly authority, such as the throne, the sceptre, the diadem; and chastised it with ten stripes and severe punishment.

And in the same manner, also, he promises the wise Abraham that he will work for him the overthrow and complete destruction of ten Nations exactly, neither more nor less, and that he will give the country of those who are thus destroyed to his descendants; in every instance choosing to employ the number ten, both for praise and for blame, and also for honour and for punishment. And yet why do we mention these things?

For what is more important than this is the fact, that Moses gave laws to that sacred and divine assembly in a code of ten commandments in all. And these are the commandments which are the generic heads, and roots, and principles of the infinite multitude of particular laws; being the everlasting source of all commands, and containing every imaginable injunction and prohibition to the great advantage of those who use them.

Chapter XXXII

Very naturally, therefore, is the connection of Abraham with Hagar, placed at the end of ten years after his arrival in the land of the Chaldeans. For it does not follow that the first moment that we become endowed with reason, while our intellect is still in a somewhat fluid state, we are able at once to

derive encyclical instruction. But when we have attained to intelligence and acuteness of comprehension, then we no longer have a light and superficial mind, but rather a firm and solid intellect which we can exercise on every subject.

And it is for this reason that the expression which follows is added, in connection with the former statement, "And he went in unto Hagar." For it was becoming for the scholar to go to his teacher, who was a man of learning, in order to learn such branches of instruction as are suited to the nature of man. For now, also, the pupil is represented as going to the place where he may obtain learning; but learning very often anticipates him and runs forward to meet him, having driven out envy from her habitation, and she attracts those towards her who are well inclined to her.

Accordingly, one may read that virtue, that is Leah, went forward to meet the practiser of virtue, and said unto him, "To-day you shall come in to Me," when he was returning from the fields. For where was the man who had the care of the seeds and plants of knowledge found to come, except to that virtue which he himself had cultivated?

Chapter XXIII

But there are times when virtue, as if making experiment of those who come to her as pupils, to see how much eagerness they have, does not come forward to meet them, but veiling her face like Tamar, sits down in the public road, giving room to those who are traveling along the road to look upon her as a harlot, in order that those who are over curious on the subject may take off her veil and disclose her features, and may behold the untouched, and unpolluted, and most exquisite, and truly virgin beauty of modesty and chastity.

Who then is he who is fond of investigating, and desirous of learning, and who thinks it not right to leave any of those things which are disguised or concealed unconsidered and examined? Who is he, I say, but the chief captain and king, he who abides and rejoices in the agreements which he has made with God, by name Judah? For says the scripture, "He turned aside out of his road to her, and said unto her, Suffer me to come in unto thee," (but he was not inclined to offer her any violence), and to see what is that power which is

thus veiled, and for what purpose it is thus adorned;

and after they had come together it is written, "And she conceived;" but the name of the person is not expressly mentioned. For art conceives and carries along with it him who is learning it, persuading him to feel amorously inclined towards her; and also he who is learning carries with him her who is teaching him, whenever he is fond of learning.

And it often happens that he who professes some one of the indifferent branches of knowledge, when he meets with a pupil of good natural qualifications, boasts of his success in teaching, thinking that he, by himself and alone, is the cause of his pupil's facility in learning. And then, becoming elated and puffing himself up, he holds his head high, and draws his eyebrows and becomes full of pride, and asks very high terms from those who desire to become his pupils; but those whom he perceives to be poor but still to be eager for instruction, he rejects and repels, as if he were the only person who had found a treasure of wisdom.

This is the meaning of the expression, "to conceive," namely, to be full of pride, and to be puffed up with arrogance beyond all moderation, on which account some persons have appeared to dishonour the queen of all the intermediate and indifferent branches of knowledge, virtue, who deserves to be honoured, even for her own sake.

All the souls, therefore, which, in connection with prudence, are pregnant of real things, do nevertheless bring forth, separating and distinguishing between things previously in confusion, like Rebekkah; for she having conceived in her womb ideas of two nations, the knowledge of virtue and the knowledge of wickedness, having a fortunate labour separated and distinguished between the nature of each; but those which have conceived without prudence either miscarry or else bring forth an offspring inclined to evil contention and sophistry, always either aiming darts and arrows at others, or having darts and arrows aimed at themselves.

And may we not say that this is natural? for some fancy that they are just conceiving, and others they are actually pregnant, which is a very different thing; for those who think that they are already pregnant attribute their pregnancy and the birth of their offspring to themselves, and pride themselves upon it; but those who look upon themselves as now conceiving,

admit that they have of themselves nothing which they can call peculiarly their own, but they receive the seed and the prospects of posterity which are showered upon them from without, and they admire him who bestows it, and repel the greatest of evils, namely self-love, by that perfect good, piety towards the gods.

Chapter XXIV

In this manner also the seeds of the legitimate wisdom, which exists among men, were sown, "For there was," says the same historian, "a man of the tribe of Levi, named Amram, who took to wife one of the daughters of Levi, and had her, and she conceived and brought forth a male child; and seeing that he was a goodly child they concealed him for three Months."

This is Moses, the purest mind, the child that is really goodly; the child that received at the same time all legislative and prophetic skill by the means of inspired and heaven-bestowed wisdom; who, being by birth a member of the tribe of Levi, and being flourishing both in the things relating to his mother and in those affecting his father, clings to the truth;

and the greatest profession ever made by the author and chief of this tribe is this, for he makes bold to say, that "the only God is alone to be honoured by me;" and nothing besides of all the things that are inferior to Him, neither earth, nor sea, nor rivers, nor the nature of the air, nor the nature of the winds, nor the changes of the atmosphere, nor the appearances of any animals or plants, nor the sun, nor the moon, nor the multitude of the stars moving in well-arranged revolutions, nor the whole heaven, nor the entire world.

This is a boast of a great and magnanimous soul, to rise above all creation, and to overleap its boundaries, and to cling to the great uncreated God alone, according to his sacred commands, in which we are expressly enjoined "to cleave unto Him." Therefore he, in requital, bestows himself as their inheritance upon those who do cleave unto him, and who serve him without intermission; and the sacred scripture bears its testimony in behalf of this assertion, where it says, "The Lord himself is his Inheritance."

Thus the souls which are already pregnant are naturally likely to bring forth children, rather than those which are now receiving the seed. But as the eyes of the body do oftentimes see obscurely, and often on the other hand see

clearly, so in the same manner does the eye of the soul, at times, receive the particular impressions conveyed to it by things in a most confused and indistinct manner, and at other times it beholds them with the greatest purity and clearness;

therefore an indistinct and not clearly manifested conception resembles an embryo which has not yet received any distinct character or similitude within the womb: but that which is clear and distinctly visible, is like one which is completely formed, and which is already fashioned in an artistic manner as to both its inward and its outward parts, and which has already received its suitable character.

And with respect to these matters the following law has been enacted with great beauty and propriety: "If while two men are fighting one should strike a woman who is great with child, and her child should come from her before it is completely formed, he shall be mulcted in a fine, according to what the husband of the woman shall impose on him, and he shall pay the fine deservedly. But if the child be fully formed, he shall pay life for Life." For it was not the same thing, to destroy a perfect and an imperfect work of the mind, nor is what is only likened by a figure similar to what is really comprehended, nor is what is only hoped for similar to what really exists.

On this account, in one case, an uncertain penalty is affixed to an uncertain action; in another, a definite punishment is enacted by law against an act which is perfected, but which is perfected not with respect to virtue, but with reference to what is done in an irreproachable manner, according to some act. For it is not she who has just received the seed, but she who has been for some time pregnant, who brings forth this offspring, professing boasting rather than modesty. For it is impossible that she who has been pregnant some time should miscarry, since it is fitting that the plant should be conducted to perfection by him who sowed it; but it is not strange if some mishap should befall the woman who was pregnant, since she was afflicted with a disease beyond the art of the physician.

Chapter XXV

And do not suppose that Hagar is represented as beholding herself as pregnant, by the words, "seeing that she had conceived," but as beholding her

mistress Sarah; for afterwards she speaks of herself, and says, "Seeing that she was pregnant, she was despised before Her." Why so?

Because the intermediate and indifferent arts, and the sciences in accord with them, see indeed of what they are pregnant, but they nevertheless see in every respect but dimly; but the sciences comprehend clearly and very distinctly. For science is something beyond art, having derived from reason a certain firmness and exemption from error;

for this is the definition of art, a system of comprehensions well practised with reference to some desirable end, the word desirable being very properly added by reason of the abundance of evil arts. But the definition of science is a safe and firm comprehension, which, through reason, is not liable to any error.

Therefore we call music and grammar, and other pursuits, arts; for those also who are made perfect in them, as musicians, or grammarians, are called artists. But we call philosophy and the other virtues, sciences, and those who are possessed of the knowledge of them we call scientific; for they are prudent, and temperate, and philosophical, not one of whom is ever deceived in the doctrines of a philosophy which he himself has cultivated, any more than the artists, whom I have mentioned before, err in their speculations with respect to their indifferent arts.

For as the eyes see, and still the mind sees more clearly by means of the eyes; and as the ears hear, but nevertheless the mind hears better through the medium of the ears; and as the nostrils smell, and yet the soul smells more precisely through the instrumentality of the nostrils; and in like manner, as the other external senses comprehend their respective appropriate objects, still the mind comprehends them also more purely and distinctly by their ministration. For to speak properly, it is the mind which is the eye of eyes, the hearing of hearing, and the more pure external sense of each of the external senses, using them as ministers in a court of justice, and itself deciding on the nature of the objects submitted to it, so as to approve of some and to reject others. In the same way, those that are called the intermediate arts, resembling the faculties of the body, indulge in contemplations according to certain simple observations of them, but the sciences do so with greater accuracy and with exceedingly careful investigation.

For the same relation that the mind bears to the outward sense, that same does science bear towards art; for, as has been said before, the soul is as it were the outward sense of the outward sense; therefore each of them has attracted to itself some slight things of nature, concerning which it labours and occupies itself, geometry having appropriated lines, and music sounds, and philosophy the whole nature of existing things. For this world is its subject matter, and so is the whole essence, both visible and invisible, of existing things.

What then is there wonderful if the soul, which sees both the whole and the parts, sees them too better than they do, as if it were furnished with larger and more acute eyes? Very naturally, therefore, proper philosophy will behold intermediate instruction its handmaiden, and she that she is pregnant, more than the other will see that she is.

Chapter XXVI

And yet even this is not unknown to any one, namely, that philosophy has bestowed upon all the particular sciences their first principles and seeds, from which speculations respecting them appear to arise. For it is geometry which invented equilateral and scalene triangles, and circles, and polygons, and all kinds of other figures. But it was no longer geometry that discovered the nature of a point, and line, and a superficies, and a solid, which are the roots and foundations of the aforementioned figures.

For from whence could it define and pronounce that a point is that which has no parts, that a line is length without breadth; that a superficies is that which has only length and breadth; that a solid is that which has the three properties, length, breadth, and depth? For these discoveries belong to philosophy, and the consideration of these definitions belongs wholly to the philosopher.

Again, to write and read is the undertaking of this more imperfect kind of grammar, which some people, perverting the name of, call *grammatistica*. But to the most perfect kind of grammar belongs the explanation of the great works of the poets and historians. When, therefore, men are going through the different parts of speech, and they not in so doing trying to drag over to themselves and appropriate as a kind of accessory the discoveries of philosophy?

For it is the peculiar province of philosophy to inquire what a conjunction, what a noun, what a verb, what a common noun, what a particular noun, what is deficient in a speech, what is superfluous, what is an affirmative, what an interrogative, what an indirect question, what is a comprehensive expression, what is a supplicatory form of address. For this is a science which has been compounded for the purpose of the investigation of independent propositions, and axioms, and theorems.

But, moreover, has not the whole question of semi-vowels, or vowels, or such elements as are completely mute, and the consideration of the sense in which each of these expressions is ordinarily used, and in short every notion connected with the voice, and the elements, and the parts of speech, been thoroughly worked out and brought to an accurate system by philosophy? And those thieves, after having as it were carried off a few drops from her torrent, and having sought to impregnate their own shallow souls with what they have stolen, are not ashamed to bring forth her resources as their own.

Chapter XXVII

On which account, being elated and proud, they disregard the mistress to whom in reality the authority and the complete confirmation of their contemplations belong. But she, perceiving their neglect, will convict them, and will speak freely to them, and say, "I am treated unjustly, and in utter violation of our agreement, as far as depends on you who transgress the covenants entered into between us;

for from the time that you first took to your bosom the elementary branches of education, you have honoured above measure the offspring of my handmaiden, and have respected her as your wife, and you have so completely repudiated me that you never by any chance came to the same place with me. And perhaps this may be only a suspicion of mine respecting you, arising from your open connection with my servant, which leads me to conjecture your alienation from myself, though it is not really manifest. But if your disposition is contrary to that which I suspect, still it is impossible for any one else to know this, but it is easy to God alone."

On which account she says very appropriately, "May God judge between thee and me; not making haste to condemn him beforehand as having done

her wrong, but intimating a doubt, that perhaps he may speedily do her right, which in point of fact is seen to be the case not long afterwards, when he, excusing himself and remedying her doubts, says to her, “Behold thy handmaiden is in thy hands, do unto her as it seemeth good to thee.”

For also, when he calls her her handmaiden, he confesses both facts, both that she is a slave and also that she is a child; for the name of the handmaiden (*paidiskeu*.) suits both these circumstances. At the same time also, he confesses the contrary things, opposing the child to the fullgrown woman, and the mistress to her slave, all but crying out in plain words: I embrace indeed encyclical instruction as a younger maiden and as a handmaiden, but I honour knowledge and prudence as full-grown and a mistress.

And the expression, “She is in thy hands,” means, she is in thy power and subject to thee. And this is also a symbol of something else of this nature, namely, that the qualities of the handmaiden come to the hands of the body; for the encyclical branches of knowledge have need of the bodily organs and faculties; but the qualities of the mistress reach the soul; for the things which belong to prudence and knowledge come under the province of reason;

so that in proportion as the mind is more powerful and more efficacious than, and in short superior to, the hand, in the same proportion also do I look upon knowledge and wisdom as more admirable than encyclical accomplishment, and I honour them in a higher degree. Do thou, therefore, O thou who both art the mistress, and who art so accounted by me, take all my encyclical instruction and use it as thy handmaid, doing to it as it shall seem good to thee;

for I am not unaware that whatever pleases thee is in all respects good even though it may not always be pleasant, and is useful even though it be far removed from being agreeable. But admonition and reproof are both good and profitable to those who stand in need of correction, which indeed the holy scriptures call by another name, and denominate affliction.

Chapter XXVIII

On which account the historian presently adds, “And she afflicted her;” an expression equivalent to, she admonished and corrected her. For a sharp spear is very profitable for those who are corrupted by over security and indolences,

just as it is of use with restive horses; since they can scarcely be subdued and made manageable by the whip and by gentle leading.

Do you not see how they are utterly unaffected by the prizes proposed to Them?(this is scarcely sense, but the truth probably is that the passage is corrupt. Mangey proposes one or two emendations, but they are not very satisfactory.) They are fat, they are stout, they are sleek, they breathe hard; then they take up the actions of impiety, miserable and wretched men that they are, seeking a melancholy reward, being proclaimed and crowned as conquerors by ungodliness. For by reason of the prosperity which was constantly flowing gently towards them, they looked upon themselves as silver or golden gods, after the fashion of adulterated money, forgetting the real and true coinage.

And Moses testifies to this view of the matter when he says, “He got fat, he became stout, he became swollen, and forsook God who had created Him.” So that if excessive relaxation begets the greatest of all evils, impiety, its contrary, affliction, in accordance with the law produces that perfect good, much praised correction;

and proceeding outward from this point, he also calls the unleavened bread the symbol of the first festival, “the bread of Affliction.” And yet who is there who does not know that feasts and festivals produce cheerful joy and delectation, and not affliction?

But it is plain that he is here using in a perverted sense this word for the labour of him who is the corrector. For the most numerous and greatest blessings are usually acquired by laborious practice and exercise, and by vigorously excited labour. But the festival of the soul is emulation, which is labour to attain those things which are most excellent and which are brought to perfection; on which account it is expressly commanded to “eat the unleavened bread with bitter Herbs;” not by way of an additional dish, but because men in general look upon the fact of being prevented from swelling and boiling over with their appetites, but being forced to contract and restrain them as a grievous thing, thinking it a bitter thing to unlearn the indulgence of their passions, which is the real feast and festival of a mind which loves honourable contests.

Chapter XXIX

It is for this reason that the law, as it appears to men, was given in a place which is called Bitterness; for to do wrong is pleasant, but to act justly is laborious. And this is the most unerring law; for the sacred history says, “And after they had gone out from the passions of Egypt they came to Marah: and they were not able to drink of the water at Marah, for it was bitter. On this account the name of that place was called Bitterness. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And Moses cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a stick, and he cast it into the water, and the water was made sweet. And then he gave him justification and judgment, and then he tempted Him.” For the invisible trial and proofs of the soul are in labouring and in enduring bitterness; for then it is hard to know which way it will incline; for many men are very speedily fatigued and fall away, thinking labour a terrible adversary, and they let their hands fall out of weakness, like tired wrestlers, determining to return to Egypt to the indulgence of their passions.

But others, with much endurance and great vigour, supporting the fearful and terrible events of the wilderness pass through the contest of life, keeping their life safe from overthrow and from destruction, and rising up in vigorous contest against the necessities of nature, such as hunger, thirst, cold, and heat, which are in the habit of reducing other persons to slavery, and subduing them with great exuberance of strength.

And the cause of this is not merely labour, but also the sweetness with which it is combined; for the scripture says, “And the water was made sweet.” But sweet and pleasant labour is called by another name, fondness for labour; for that which is sweet in labour is the love of, and desire for, and admiration of, and friendship for, what is honourable.

Let no one, therefore, reject such affliction as this, and let no one think that the table of festivity and cheerfulness is called the bread of affliction for injury rather than for advantage; for the soul which is rightly admonished is supported by the doctrines of instruction.

Chapter XXX

This unleavened cake is so sacred that it is enjoined in the holy scriptures, “to place in the innermost part of the temple, on the golden table, twelve loaves of unleavened bread, corresponding in number to the twelve tribes; and those loaves shall be called the shew-Bread.”

And again, it is in the law expressly “forbidden to offer any leaven or any honey upon the Altar;” for it is a difficult thing to consecrate as holy either the sweetnesses of the pleasures according to the body, or the light and unsubstantial elations of the soul, since they are by their own intrinsic nature profane and unholy.

Does not, then, the prophetic word, by name Moses, very rightly speak in dignified language when he says, “Thou shalt remember all the road by which the Lord God led thee in the wilderness, and how he afflicted thee, and tried thee, and proved thee, that he might know what was in thy heart, and whether thou wouldest keep his commandments. Did he not afflict thee and oppress thee with hunger, and feed thee with manna which thy fathers know not, that he might make thee know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God?”

Who, then, is so impious as to conceive that God is one who afflicts, and who brings that most pitiable death of hunger upon those who are not able to live without food? For God is good, and the cause of good things, bounteous, the saviour, the supporter, the giver of wealth, the giver of great gifts, driving out wickedness from the sacred boundaries; for thus did he drive out the burdens of the earth, Adam and Cain, from paradise.

Let us, then, not be led aside by words, but let us consider and examine what meaning is intended to be conveyed under figurative expressions, and pronounce that the words “he afflicted,” are equivalent to “he instructed, and he admonished, and he corrected.” And when it is said that he oppressed them with hunger, it does not mean that he caused a deficiency of meat and drink, but of pleasures, and desires, and fear, and grief, and acts of injustice, and, in short, of all things which are the works of wickedness or of the passions.

And what is said immediately afterwards is an evidence of this: “He fed thee with manna.” Is it, then, proper to call that food which, without any exertion or hardship on his part, and without any trouble of his is given to man, not out of the earth as is usual, but from heaven, a marvellous work,

afforded for the benefit of those who are to be permitted to avail themselves of it, the cause of hunger and affliction, and not rather, on the contrary, the cause of prosperity and happiness, of freedom from fear, and of a happy state of orderly living?

But men in general and the common herd think that those who are nourished on the word of God live in a miserable and wretched manner; for they are without the taste of the allnourishing food of wisdom; but they are not aware that they are living in the height of happiness.

Chapter XXXI

Thus, therefore, there is a certain description of affliction which is profitable, so that its very most humiliating form, even slavery, is accounted a great good. And there is a father who is recorded in the sacred writings as having prayed for this, for his son, namely, the most excellent Isaac for the foolish Esau;

for he says somewhere, “By thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy Brother.” Judging that destiny to be the most advantageous one for a man who had chosen war rather than peace, and who was as it were constantly armed and engaged in battle, by reason of the sedition and disorder constantly existing in his soul, the destiny namely of being a subject and a servant, and of obeying all the commands which the lover of temperance should lay upon him.

And it is from this consideration, as it appears to me that one of the disciples of Moses, by name the peaceful, who in his native language is called Solomon, says, “My son, neglect not the instruction of God, and be not grieved when thou art reprov'd by him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he Received.” Thus, then, scourging and reproof are looked upon as good, so that by means of it agreement and relationship with God arise. For what can be more nearly related than a son is to his father, and a father to his son?

But that we may not seem to be too prolix connecting one argument with another, we will, besides what we have already said, just add one most evident proof that a certain description of affliction is the work of virtue. For there is such a law as this, “Thou shalt not afflict any widow or orphan, but if thou

dost afflict them with wickedness.” ... What does this mean? Is it then possible to be afflicted by something else? For if afflictions were the work of wickedness alone, then it would be superfluous to add what would be admitted by all, and which would be understood without any such addition.

But, you will most certainly say, I know that men are reproved by virtue, and instructed by wisdom; on which account I do not blame every kind of affliction, but I very greatly admire that which is the work of justice and of the law; for that corrects by means of punishment, but that which proceeds from folly and wickedness and is pernicious, I do, as becomes me, detest, and pronounce real evil.

When, therefore, you hear that Hagar was afflicted by Sarah, you must not suppose that any of those things befell her, which arise from rivalry and quarrels among women; for the question is not here about woman, but about minds; the one being practised in the branches of elementary instruction, and the other being devoted to the labours of virtue.