

On the Birth of Abel

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Chapter I

“And he also added, that she should bring forth his Brother.” The addition of one thing is a taking away of some other; as for instance, of particles in arithmetic, and of reasons in the soul. If then we must say that Abel is added, we must also think that Cain is taken away. But that the unusual character of expression may not cause perplexity to many we will endeavour to explain accurately the philosophy which is apparent beneath them, as clearly as may be in our power.

It happens then, that there are two opinions contrary to and at variance with one another; the one of which commits everything to the mind as the leader of all reasoning, or feeling, or moving, or being stationary; and the other, attributing to God all the consequent work of creation as his own. Now the symbol of the former of these is Cain, which name, being interpreted means, “possession,” from his appearing to possess all things; and the symbol of the other is Abel; for this name, being interpreted, means “referring to God.”

Now both these opinions were brought forth by one soul. But it follows of necessity that as soon as they were born they must have been separated; for it was impossible for enemies to dwell together for ever. Until then the soul brought forth the God-loving doctrine Abel, the self-loving Cain dwelt with her. But when she brought forth Abel, or unanimity with God, she abandoned unanimity with that mind which was wise in its own conceit.

Chapter II

And this will be more evidently shown by the oracle which was given to Perseverance, that is to Rebecca; for she also, having conceived the two inconsistent natures of good and evil, and having considered each of them very deeply according to the injunctions of prudence, beholding them both exulting, and making a sort of skirmish as a prelude to the war which was to exist between them; she, I say, besought God to explain to her what this calamity meant, and what was the remedy for it. And he answered her inquiry, and told her, “Two nations are in thy womb.” This calamity is the birth of good and evil. “But two peoples shall be divided in thy bowels.” And the remedy is, for these two to be parted and separated from one another, and no longer to abide in the same place.

God therefore having added the good doctrine, that is Abel, to the soul, took away from it evil doctrine, that is Cain: for Abraham also, leaving mortal things, “is added to the people of God,” having received immortality, and having become equal to the angels; for the angels are the host of God, being incorporeal and happy souls. And in the same manner Jacob, the practiser of virtue, is added to the better one, because he had quitted the worse.

And Isaac, who was thought worthy of self-taught knowledge, of his own accord also leaves all the corporeal essence which was attached to his soul, and is added to and made an inheritor with (not the people, as the others whom I have mentioned were), but with the “Race,” as Moses says; for “race” is one, and the highest of all: but “people,” is the name of many.

As many, therefore, as through instruction and learning have improved and at last arrived at perfection, are classed among the larger number. Nor is number insignificant of those who have learnt from oral instruction and demonstration, and whom Moses calls the people. But those men who have forsaken human instruction, and having become well-disposed disciples of God, and having arrived at a comprehension of knowledge acquired without labour, have passed over to the immortal and most perfect race of beings, and have so received an inheritance better than the former generations of created men; and of these men Isaac is reckoned as a companion.

Chapter III

There is also another proof that the mind is immortal, which is of this nature: — There are some persons whom God, advancing to higher degrees of improvement, has enabled to soar above all species and genera, having placed them near himself; as he says to Moses, “But stand thou here with Me.” When, therefore, Moses is about to die, he is not added to one class, nor does he forsake another, as the men before him had done; nor is he connected with “addition” or “subtraction,” but “by means of the word of the Cause of all things, by whom the whole world was Made.” He departs to another abode, that you may understand from this that God accounts a wise man as entitled to equal honour with the world itself, having both created the universe, and raised the perfect man from the things of earth up to himself by the same word.

Not but what, when he gave him the use of all earthly things and suffered him to dwell among them, he assigned to him not such a power as he might exercise in common with an earthly governor or monarch, by which he should forcibly rule over the passions of the soul, but he appointed him to be a sort of god, making the whole of the body, and the mind, which is the ruler of the body, subjects and slaves to him; “For I give thee,” says he, “as a god to Pharaoh.”(exodus 7:1.) But God is not susceptible of any subtraction or addition, inasmuch as he is complete and entirely equal to himself.

In reference to which it is said of Moses, “That no one is said to know of his Tomb;” for who could be competent to perceive the migration of a perfect soul to the living God? Nor do I even believe that the soul itself while awaiting this event was conscious of its own improvement, inasmuch as it was at that time becoming gradually divine; for God, in the case of those persons whom he is about to benefit, does not take him who is to receive the advantage into his counsels, but is accustomed rather to pour his benefits ungrudgingly upon him without his having any previous anticipation of them. This is something like the meaning of God’s adding the creation of what is good to the perfect mind. But the good is holiness, the name of which is Abel.

Chapter IV

“And Abel became a shepherd of sheep; but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” Why now has Moses, who represents Cain as older than Abel, now transposed them in the order in which he here mentions them, so as to name the younger first when relating their choice of a way of life? For it was natural that the elder should lead the way and adopt the cultivation of the land, and that the younger should subsequently come to the care of sheep.

But Moses is not influenced by what is likely and probable, but pursues the plain unadulterated truth. And when he alone comes to God by himself, he tells him with all freedom that “he is not eloquent,” which statement is equivalent to saying that he does not aim at specious and plausible reasonings, and that this has happened to him “now yesterday, or the day before yesterday, but ever since God began to converse with him as his Servant.”

For they who have come into the billows and heavy waves of life must be borne on by swimming, not being able to take hold of any firm point of the

matters which lie within the province of knowledge, but depending on what is only likely and probable. But it becomes a servant of God to lay hold of the truth, disregarding and rejecting all the uncertain and fabulous statements which rest on the conjectures of plausible men.

What, then, is the truth in these matters which we are considering? Why, that wickedness is older than virtue in point of time, but younger in power and rank. Therefore, when the birth of the two is narrated, let Cain have the precedence; but when a comparison of their pursuits is instituted, then let Abel be the first;

for it happens to the being that is born, from his very swaddling clothes till the time when the innovating vigour of his ripe age extinguishes the fiery heat of his passions, to have for his foster brethren, folly, intemperance, injustice, fear, cowardice, and the other evil things which are born with him, every one of which his nurses and tutors foster and cause to grow up within him; by their habits and practices banishing piety, and by their uniform instructions introducing superstition, which is a thing nearly akin to impiety.

But when the child has now passed the age of youth, and when the impetuous disease of the passions has become mollified, as if a calm had come over them, then the man begins to enjoy tranquillity, having been at length and not without difficulty strengthened in the foundation of virtue, which has allayed that continued and incessant agitation which is the greatest evil of the soul. Thus wickedness has the superiority in point of time; but virtue in point of rank, and honour and real glory. And this same law-giver is a trustworthy evidence of this fact;

for having introduced Esau, who bears the name of folly, as the elder in point of time, he gives the birthright and chief honour to the younger, who, from his practice of virtue, was called Jacob. And he is not seen to obtain this pre-eminence before (as is the case in athletic contests) his adversary renounces the combat, putting down his hands from weakness, and yielding up the decision and the crown to him who has carried on a truceless and irreconcilable war against the passions; for, says Moses, “He sold his birthright to Jacob,”

avowing, in plain terms that the pre-eminence in power and the honours of virtue belong to no wicked man, but only to him who is a lover of wisdom,

just as the flute and the lyre and the other instruments of music belong to the musician alone.

Chapter V

And concerning this doctrine Moses also records a law, which he makes with great beauty and suitableness. And it runs thus, “If a man have two wives, the one of them beloved and the other hated; and if both the one who is beloved and the one who is hated have borne him children, and if the child of her who is hated is the firstborn, then it shall be in the day in which he divides the inheritance of his possessions among his sons that he shall not be able to give the inheritance of the first-born to the son of the wife that is beloved, overlooking his first-born son, the son of her who is hated; but he shall recognise the son of her who is hated as his first-born, to give him a double share of all the property that he has acquired; because he is the beginning of his children, and the right of the first-born is His.”

Consider, O my soul, and know who it is who is hated, and who is the son of her who is hated, and immediately you shall perceive that the chief rights and chief honours belong to no one else but to him alone; for there are two wives cohabiting with each individual of us, hostile and inimical to one another, filling the abode of the soul with the contentions which arise from jealousy. Of these we love one, which is gentle and tractable, and which we think very affectionate and akin to ourselves, and its name is pleasure; but the other we hate, looking upon it as untameable, ungentle, fierce, and very hostile to us, and the name of this one is virtue. Now what mortal is ignorant of the great mysteries of that exceedingly beautiful and greatly contended for pleasure? And who could worthily describe the multitude or the greatness of the good things which are treasured up by Virtue?(sections 21û33a were misplaced in Yonge’s translation because the edition on which Yonge based his translation, Thomas Mangey, *Philonis Iudaei opera omnia graece et latine ad editionem Thomae Mangey collatis aliquot mss. edenda curavit Augustus Fridericus Pfeiffer* (Erlangae: In Libraria Heyderiana, 1820), lacked this material. The lines in Yonge’s edition were originally located in *On the Special Laws* 2.284ff.)

For two women live with each individual among us, both unfriendly and hostile to one another, filling the whole abode of the soul with envy, and jealousy, and contention; of these we love the one looking upon her as being mild and tractable, and very dear to and very closely connected with ourselves, and she is called pleasure; but the other we detest, deeming her unmanageable, savage, fierce, and most completely hostile, and her name is virtue. Accordingly, the one comes to us luxuriously dressed in the guise of a harlot and prostitute, with mincing steps, rolling her eyes about with excessive licentiousness and desire, by which baits she entraps the souls of the young, looking about with a mixture of boldness and impudence, holding up her head, and raising herself above her natural height, fawning and giggling, having the hair of her head dressed with most superfluous elaborateness, having her eyes pencilled, her eyebrows covered over, using incessant warm baths, painted with a fictitious colour, exquisitely dressed with costly garments, richly embroidered, adorned with armlets, and bracelets, and necklaces, and all other ornaments which can be made of gold, and precious stones, and all kinds of female decorations; loosely girdled, breathing of most fragrant perfumes, thinking the whole market her home; a marvel to be seen in the public roads, out of the scarcity of any genuine beauty, pursuing a bastard elegance.

And with her there walk as her most intimate friends, bold cunning, and rashness, and flattery, and trick, and deceit, and false speaking, and false opinion, and impiety, and injustice, and intemperance, in the middle of which she advances like the leader of the company, and marshalling her band, speaks thus to her mind, "My good friend, the treasures of all human blessings and stores of happiness are in my power (for as for divine blessings they are all in heaven), and besides them you will find nothing.

"If you will dwell with me I will open to you all these treasures, and will bestow on you for ever the most unsparing use and enjoyment of them. And I desire to inform you beforehand of the multitude of good things which I have stored up there, that if you are so inclined you may of your own accord live happily, and that if you refuse you may not decline them out of ignorance.

If therefore you are inclined to take up your abode with me, I will give you what is suitable for you of all the things which I have prepared, considering carefully by eating or drinking what you may be most thoroughly cheered, or

by what sights addressed to your eyes, or by what sounds visiting your ears, or by the smell of what fragrant odours you may be most delighted. "And nothing which you can desire shall be wanting to you; for you shall find what is produced anew more abundant than what is expended and consumed;

for in the treasures which I have mentioned there are ever-flourishing plants, blossoming and producing an incessant series of fruits, so that the beauty of those in their prime and fresh appearing overtakes and overshadows those which are already fully ripe; and no war, either domestic or foreign, has ever cut down these plants, but from the very day that the earth first received them it has cherished them like a faithful nurse, sending down into its lowest depths the roots to act like the strongest branches, and above ground extending its trunk as high as heaven, and putting forth branches which are by analogy imitations of the hand and feet which we see in animals, and leaves which correspond to the hair. I have prepared and caused that to blossom which shall be at the same time a covering and an ornament to you; and besides all this, I have provided fruit for the sake of which the branches and leaves are originally produced."

When the other woman heard these words (for she was standing in a place where she was out of sight but still within hearing), fearing lest the mind, without being aware of it, might be led captive and be enslaved, and so be carried away by so many gifts and promises, yielding also to the tempter in that she was arrayed so as to win over the sight, and was equipped with great variety of ingenuity for the purposes of deceit; for by all her necklaces and other appendages, and by her different allurements, she spurred on and charmed her beholders, and excited a wonderful desire within them; she in her turn came forward, and appeared on a sudden, displaying all the qualities of a native, free-born, and lady-like woman, such as a firm step, a very gentle look, the native colour of modesty and nature without any alloy or disguise, an honest disposition, a genuine and sincere way of life, a plain, honest opinion, an language removed from all insincerity, the truest possible image of a sound and honest heart, a disposition averse to pretence, a quiet unobtrusive gait, a moderate style of dress, and the ornaments of prudence and virtue, more precious than any gold.

And she was attended by piety, and holiness, and truth, and right, and purity, and an honest regard for an oath, and justice, and equality, and

adherence to one's engagements and communion, and prudent silence, and temperance, and orderliness, and meekness, and abstemiousness, and contentment, and good-temper, and modesty, and an absence of curiosity about the concerns of others, and manly courage, and a noble disposition and wisdom in counsel, and prudence, and forethought, and attention, and correctness, and cheerfulness, and humanity, and gentleness, and courtesy, and love of one's kind, and magnanimity, and happiness, and goodness. One day would fail me if I were to enumerate all the names of the particular virtues.

And these all standing on each side of her, were her bodyguards, while she was in the middle of them.

"Know, then, that the very dress in which she appear to you wholly belongs to some one else; for of ten things which contribute to genuine beauty, not one is ever brought forward as being derived from or as belonging to her. But she is hung round with nets and snares with which to catch you with a bastard and adulterated beauty, which you, beholding beforehand, will, if you are wise, take care that her pursuit shall be unprofitable to her; for when she appears she conciliates your eyes, and when she speaks she wins over your ears; and by these, and by all other parts of her conduct, she is well calculated by nature to injure your soul, which is the most valuable of all your possessions; and all the different circumstances belonging to her, which were likely to be attractive to you if you heard of them, she enumerated; but all those which would not have been alluring she suppressed and made no mention of, but, meaning mischief to you, concealed utterly, as she very naturally expected that no one would readily agree with them."

But I, stripping off all her disguises, will reveal her to you; and I will not myself imitate the ways of pleasure, so as to show you nothing in me but what is alluring, and to conceal and to keep out of sight everything that has any unpleasantness or harshness in it; but, on the contrary, I will say nothing about those matters which do of themselves give delight and pleasure, well knowing that such things will of themselves find a voice by their effects; but I will fully detail to you all that is painful and difficult to be borne about me, putting them plainly forward with their naked appellation, so that their nature may be visible and plain even to those whose sight is somewhat dim. For the things which, when offered by me, appear to be the greatest of my evils, will in effect be found to be more honourable and more beneficial to the users than

the greatest blessings bestowed by pleasure. But, before I begin to speak of what I myself have to give, I will mention all that may be mentioned of those things which are kept in the back ground by her.

For she, when she spoke of what she had stored up in her magazines, such as colours, sounds, flavours, smells, distinctive qualities, powers relating to touch and to every one of the outward senses, and having softened them all by the allurements which she offered to the hearing, made no mention at all of those other qualities which are her misfortunes and diseases; which, however, you will of necessity experience if you choose those pleasures which she offers; that so, being borne aloft by the breeze of some advantage, you may be taken in her toils.

Know, then, my good friend, that if you become a votary of pleasure you will be all these things: a bold, cunning, audacious, unsociable, uncourteous, inhuman, lawless, savage, illtempered, unrestrainable, worthless man; deaf to advice, foolish, full of evil acts, unteachable, unjust, unfair, one who has no participation with others, one who cannot be trusted in his agreements, one with whom there is no peace, covetous, most lawless, unfriendly, homeless, cityless, seditious, faithless, disorderly, impious, unholy, unsettled, unstable, uninitiated, profane, polluted, indecent, destructive, murderous, illiberal, abrupt, brutal, slavish, cowardly, intemperate, irregular, disgraceful, shameful, doing and suffering all infamy, colourless, immoderate, unsatiable, insolent, conceited, self-willed, mean, envious, calumnious, quarrelsome, slanderous, greedy, deceitful, cheating, rash, ignorant, stupid, inharmonious, dishonest, disobedient, obstinate, tricky, swindling, insincere, suspicious, hated, absurd, difficult to detect, difficult to avoid, destructive, evil-minded, disproportionate, an unreasonable chatterer, a proser, a gossip, a vain babbler, a flatterer, a fool, full of heavy sorrow, weak in bearing grief, trembling at every sound, inclined to delay, inconsiderate, improvident, impudent, neglectful of good, unprepared, ignorant of virtue, always in the wrong, erring, stumbling, ill-managed, ill-governed, a glutton, a captive, a spendthrift, easily yielding, most crafty, double-minded, double-tongued, perfidious, treacherous, unscrupulous, always unsuccessful, always in want, infirm of purpose, fickle, a wanderer, a follower of others, yielding to impulses, open to the attacks of enemies, mad, easily satisfied, fond of life, fond of vain glory, passionate, ill-tempered, lazy, a procrastinator, suspected, incurable, full of evil jealousies,

despairing, full of tears, rejoicing in evil, frantic, beside yourself, without any steady character, contriving evil, eager for disgraceful gain, selfish, a willing slave, an eager enemy, a demagogue, a bad steward, stiffnecked, effeminate, outcast, confused, discarded, mocking, injurious, vain, full of unmitigated unalloyed misery.

These are the great mysteries of that very beautiful and much to be sought for pleasure, which she designedly concealed and kept out of sight, from a fear that if you knew of them you would turn away from any meeting with her. But who is there who could worthily describe either the multitude or the magnitude of the good things which are stored up in my treasure houses? They who have partaken of them already know it, and those whose nature is mild will hereafter know, when they have been invited to a participation in the banquet, not the banquet at which the pleasures of the satiated belly make the body fat, but that at which the mind is nourished and at which it revels among the virtues, and exults and revels in their company.

Chapter VI

Now, on account of these things, and because of what was said before, namely, that the things which are really pious, holy, and good do naturally utter a voice from themselves, even while they keep silence, I will desist from saying any more about them; for neither does the sun nor the moon require an interpreter, because they, being on high, fill the whole world with light, the one shining by day and the other by night. But their own brilliancy is an evidence in their case which stands in no need of witnesses, but which is confirmed by the eyes, which are more undeniable judges than the ears.

But I will speak with all freedom of that point in virtue which appears to have the greatest amount of difficulty and perplexity, for this, too, does appear to the imagination, at their first meeting, to be troublesome; but, on consideration, it is found to be very pleasant and, as arising from reason, to be suitable. But labour is the enemy of laziness, as it is in reality the first and greatest of good things, and wages an irreconcilable war against pleasure; for, if we must declare the truth, God has made labour the foundation of all good and of all virtue to man, and without labour you will not find a single good thing in existence among the race of men.

For, as it is impossible to see without light, since neither colours nor eyes are sufficient for the comprehension of things which we arrive at by means of sight (for nature has made light beforehand to serve as a link to connect the two, by which the eye is brought near and adapted to colour, for the powers of both eye and of colour are equally useless in darkness), so in the same manner is the eye of the soul unable to comprehend anything whatever of the actions in accordance with virtue, unless it takes to itself labour as a coadjutor, as the eye borrows the assistance of light; for this, being placed in the middle, between the intellect and the good object which the intellect desires, and understanding the whole nature of both the one and the other, does itself bring about friendship and harmony, two perfect goods between the two things on either hand of it.

Chapter VII

For, choose whatever good thing you please, and you will find that it owes its existence and all its strength and solidity to labour. Now, piety and holiness are good things, but still we are not able to attain to them without the worship of the gods, and the worship of them is combined with perseverance in labours. Again, prudence and courage and justice are all beautiful things and perfect goods, but still they are not to be acquired by laziness, and we must be content if they can be attained to by continued diligence. Now, since the organs of every soul are not able to support a familiarity with God and with virtue, as being a very intense and mighty harmony, they very often get lax and become remiss so as to descend from the highest unto those of more moderate character;

but, nevertheless, even in these moderate ones there is great labour requisite. Look at all those who practise the encyclical branches of what is called elementary instruction; look at those who cultivate the land, and at all who provide the means of subsistence by any regular business. These men are never free from care night or day, but always and continually, as it is said, they labour with hand and foot and with all their power, and never cease from suffering hardship, so as often to encounter even death from it.

Chapter VIII

But as those who are thus anxious to render their souls propitious must of necessity cultivate the virtues of the soul, so also they who purpose to render their bodies favourable to their objects, must cultivate health and those powers which are akin to health, and these too they cultivate with unremitting and ceaseless labours, being overwhelmed with care, arising from the faculties in them of which they are compounded.

You see, therefore, that all good things spring up and shoot out from labour as from one general root, and this you must never allow yourself to neglect; for if you do, you will without being aware of it, be also letting slip the collected heap of goods which it brings with it; for the Ruler of the universe, of heaven, and of the world, both himself possesses and bestows on whomsoever he pleases, his good things, with all ease and abundance. Since formerly he created this world, vast as you see it is, without any labour, and how too he never ceases holding it together, so that it may last for ever. And absence from all labour and fatigue is the most appropriate attribute of God; but nature has not given the acquisition of good things to any mortal without labour, (this is not only the same idea, but almost the very language of Horace in Sat. I. 9.60.) in order that in consequence of this arrangement, God alone of existing beings may be called happy and enjoy felicity.

Chapter IX

For labour appears to me to have nearly the same properties as food. As therefore this latter makes life to depend upon itself, having combined all the actions and all the passions in living, so also has labour caused all good things to depend upon itself. For as those persons who are desirous to live must not neglect food, so too they who are anxious to attain to good things must pay due attention to labour, for what food is to life that labour is to virtue. Do not you then ever slight that, though it is but a single thing, that by its means you may enjoy the collective blessings of all good things.

For thus, though you may be younger by birth you shall be called the elder, and you shall be thought worthy of the pre-eminence in honour. But if, having gone through a constant course of improvement you shall at last arrive at the end, then not only shall the Father give thee the preeminence, but he shall also bestow on thee all the inheritance of the Father, as he did to Jacob,

who overthrew all the foundations and seats of passion, and who confessed what he suffered, saying that “God has pitied me, and all things belong to Me,” uttering a doctrine full of instruction, for he makes everything to anchor in the mercy of God.

Chapter X

And he learnt all these things from Abraham his grandfather, who was the author of his own education, who gave to the all-wise Isaac all that he had, leaving none of his substance to bastards, or to the spurious reasonings of concubines, but he gives them small gifts, as being inconsiderable persons. For the possessions of which he is possessed, namely, the perfect virtues, belong only to the perfect and legitimate son; but those which are of an intermediate character, are suitable to and fall to the share of those who are not perfect, but who have advanced as far as the encyclical branches of elementary education, of which Agar and Cheturah partake, Agar meaning “a dwelling near,” and Cheturah meaning “sacrificing.”

For he who attends only to the encyclical instruction abides near wisdom but does not dwell with it, as sending a certain sweet fragrance from the elegance of contemplation to his own soul. But such a man requires food, and not sweet scents to bless him with good health. But nature is said to have made, with great skill and propriety, smell to serve as a handmaid to taste, as a sort of subject and taster to the other, or her queen; and we must always attend to the sovereign powers before those who are ruled over by them, and to the indigenous and native sciences before those which are strangers.

The mind bearing this rejects pleasure, and attaches itself to virtue, perceiving its genuine, and unalloyed, and very divine beauty. Then it becomes the shepherd of sheep, being the charioteer and pilot of the irrational faculties which exist in the soul, “not permitting them to be borne about at random and in an inconsistent manner, without any superintendant or guide; that they may not fall into a sort of orphan state, destitute of guardians and protectors, owing to their want of any allies, in which case they would perish without any saving hand to restrain them.

Chapter XI

Accordingly, Jacob, the practiser of contemplation, conceiving this to be an employment most closely akin to virtue, endured “to be the shepherd of the flocks of Laban,” a man wholly devoted to colours and to forms, and, in sort, to lifeless substances; and he tended not all of them, but the residue only. Now, what is the interpretation of this? The irrational animal is of a twofold character; one consisting in a misuse of that reason which should direct the choice, and such we call people out of their mind: the other consisting in an absolute privation of reason, which we see to exist in these animals which we call brutes.

Now, the irrational impulses of the mind, I mean those faculties which are developed in a misuse of that reason which should direct the choice, the sons of Laban, “when they had departed three days’ Journey,”(ibid.) paid great regard to; being thus under a symbol cut off from virtue for the whole period of their life; for time is capable of being divided into three parts, consisting of the past, and the present, and the future. But these animals which are irrational in the second sense, and which are destitute not only of right reason but of all reason whatever, under which class the brute beasts are reckoned, the practiser of contemplation will think worthy of all his care, considering that their errors have proceeded, not so much from deliberate wickedness as from ignorance, which was devoid of a guide.

Ignorance, therefore, being but a slight and also an involuntary calamity, admits of a cure which is neither difficult nor troublesome, namely instruction. But, wickedness being a voluntary disease of the soul, admits of no remedy but such as if difficult, and almost impossible. Therefore his sons, as men who have been instructed by a father of exceeding wisdom, even if they do go down to Egypt, that is to say, to the body which is inclined to be a slave to the passions, and even if they meet with Pharaoh, that squanderer of all good things, who appears to be the sovereign of the composite animals, being not at all bewildered with the abundance of the preparations which they behold, confess that they are shepherds of sheep, and not only they but their fathers Also.

Chapter XII

And yet no one would ever utter so great a boast in consequence of any power and sovereignty as these men do in respect of their being shepherds; to those indeed who are able to reason correctly, it is a more noble employment than that of a king, to be able to govern the body and the outward senses, and the belly, as one might govern a city or a country, and to restrain the pleasures which have their seat around the belly, and the other passions, and one's tongue, and, in short, all the different parts of one's composite nature, with vigour and exceeding power, and again to guide them in the right way with due gentleness; for it is necessary at one time to act like a charioteer who slackens the reins with which he holds the horses which are yoked to his chariot, and at other times one must draw them tight, and resist the haste of the steeds, that no precipitation and impetuous pursuit of outward objects may take place, and lead them into rebellion.

And I admire that guardian of the laws, Moses, who, thinking it a great and noble task to be a shepherd, has attributed that employment to himself; for he manages and conducts the doctrines of Jethro, leading them from the tumultuous vexations of political affairs into the desert, for the purpose of avoiding all temptation to injustice. "For he led the sheep into the Wilderness." (exodus 3:1.)

The consequence of which conduct of his was that "Every shepherd of sheep is an abomination to the Egyptians." For every man who loves his passions hates right reason as the governor and guide to good things; just as foolish children hate their tutors and teachers, and every one who reproves them or corrects them, or would lead them to virtue. But Moses says that he "will sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to God." namely the virtues which are faultless and most becoming victims, which every foolish man abominates. So that very appropriately, Abel, who brought the best offerings to God, is called a shepherd; but he, who offered every thing to himself and to his own mind, is called a tiller of the earth, namely Cain. And what is meant by tilling the Earth we have shown in our previous treatises.

Chapter XIII

And it came to pass after some days that Cain brought of the fruits of the earth as an offering to the Lord. Here are two accusations against the

self-loving man; one that he showed his gratitude to God after some days, and not at once, the other that he made his offering from the fruits, and not from the first fruits, which have a name in one word, the first fruits. Let us now examine into each of these subjects of reproach, and first into that which is first in order,

we must do good works, hastening with all speed, and labouring to outstrip others, casting away all slowness and delay. And the best of all good works is the pleasing the first good without any postponement of energy, on which account it is also enjoined, "If thou vowest a vow, thou shalt not delay to perform It." A vow now is a request for good things addressed to God, and the injunction is, that when one has attained the object of one's hopes, one must offer offerings of gratitude to God, and not to one's self, and to offer them if possible without any loss of time, and without any delay;

and of those who do not act rightly in this particular, some through forgetfulness of the benefits which they have received, have failed in that great and beautiful virtue of thankfulness, and others form an excessive conceit, have looked upon themselves as the authors of the good things which have befallen them, and have not attributed them to him, who is really the cause of them. A third class are they who commit an offence slighter indeed than the fault of these latter, but more serious than that of the first mentioned, for though they confess that the supreme Ruler is the cause of the good that has befallen them, they still say that they deserved to receive it, for that they are prudent, and courageous, and temperate, and just, so that they may well on these accounts be esteemed by God to be worthy of his favours.

Chapter XIV

Now the holy scriptures are opposed to all these classes, and reply to each of them, saying to the first class which has discarded recollection, and humbled forgetfulness, "Take care, my good man, lest when you have eaten and are filled, and when you have built fine houses and inhabited them, and when your flocks and your herds have increased, and when your silver and gold, and all that you possess is multiplied, you be lifted up in your heart, and forget the Lord your God." When is it then that you do not forget God? when you do not forget yourself; for if you remember your own nothingness in every

particular, you will also be sure to remember the exceeding greatness of God in everything.

And Moses reproves the man who looks upon himself as the cause of the good things that have befallen him in this manner, "Say not," says he, "my own might, or the strength of my right hand has acquired me all this power, but remember always the Lord thy God, who giveth thee the might to acquire Power."(deuteronomy 8:17.)

And he who conceives that he was deserving to receive the possession and enjoyment of good things, may be taught to change his opinion by the oracle which says, "You do not enter into this land to possess it because of thy righteousness, or because of the holiness of thy heart; but, in the first place, because of the iniquity of these nations, since God has brought on them the destruction of wickedness; and in the second place that he may establish the covenant which he swore to our Fathers." Now by the covenant of God his graces are figuratively meant (nor is it right to offer to him anything that is imperfect), as all the gifts of the uncreated God are complete and entirely perfect, and virtue is a thing complete among existing things, and so is the course of action in accordance with it.

If therefore we discard forgetfulness and ingratitude, and self-love, and the present wickedness of all these things, namely, self-opinion, we shall not longer through our delay miss attaining the genuine worship of God, but outrunning and bounding on beyond all created beings, before we embrace any mortal thing we shall meet our master himself, having prepared ourselves to do the things which he commands us.

Chapter XV

For Abraham also, having come with all haste and speech and eagerness, exhorts virtue, that is to say, Sarah, "to hasten and knead three measures of fine meal, and to make cakes upon the Hearth." When God, being attended by two of the heavenly powers as guards, to wit, by authority and goodness, he himself, the one God being between them, presented an appearance of the figures to the visual soul; each of which figures was not measured in any respect; for God cannot be circumscribed, nor are his powers capable of being defined by lines, but he himself measures everything. His goodness therefore is

the measure of all good things, and his authority is the measures of things in subjection, and the Governor of the universe himself, is the measure of all things to the corporeal and incorporeal. On which account, his powers also having been looked upon in the light of rules and models, have weighed and measured other things with reference to them.

Now it is very good that these three measures should, as it were, be kneaded together in the soul, and mixed up together, in order that so the soul, being persuaded that the supreme being is God, who has raised his head above all his powers, and who is beheld independently of them, and who makes himself visible in them, may receive the characters of his power and beneficence, and becoming initiated into the perfect mysteries, may not be too ready to divulge the divine secrets to any one, but may treasure them up in herself, and keeping a check over her speech, may conceal them in silence; for the words of the scripture are, "To make secret cakes;" because the sacred and mystic statements about the one uncreated Being, and about his powers, ought to be kept secret; since it does not belong to every one to keep the deposit of divine mysteries properly.

Chapter XVI

For the stream of the intemperate soul, flowing outwards through the mouth and tongue, is pumped up and poured into all ears. Some of which having wide channels, keeps that which is poured into them with all cheerfulness; but others, through the narrowness of the passages, are unable to be bedewed by it. But that which overflows being poured forth in an unrestrained manner, is scattered in every direction: so that what has been concealed escapes and floats on the top of it, and, like a random torrent of mud, bears along with it in its flood, things worthy of being tended with all care.

In reference to which, those persons appear to me to have come to a right decision who have been initiated in the lesser mysteries before learning anything of these greater ones. "For they baked their flour which they brought out of Egypt, baking secret cakes of unleavened Bread." That is to say, they dealt with the untameable and savage passions, softening them with reason as they would knead bread; fore they did not divulge the manner of their

kneading and improving it, as it was derived from some divine system of preparation; but they treasured it up in their secret stores, not being elated at the knowledge of the mystery, but yielding and being lowly as to their boasting.

Chapter XVII

Let us then, with reference to our gratitude to and honouring of the omnipotent God, be active and ready, deprecating all sluggishness and delay; for those who are passing over from obedience to the passions to the contemplation of virtue, are enjoined to keep the passover with their loins girded up, being ready to do service, and binding up the burden of the flesh, or, as it is expressed, their shoes, “standing upright, and firmly on their feet, and having in their hands a Staff,” that is to say education, with the object of succeeding without any failure in all the affairs of life; and lastly, “to eat the passover in haste.” For, by the passover, is signified the crossing over of the created and perishable being to God: — and very appropriately; for there is no single good thing which does not belong to God, and which is not divine.

Seek it therefore, quickly, O my soul! as did that practiser of contemplation, Jacob, who, when his father asked him, “How found you this so quickly, I my Son?” answered, with a doctrine concealed underneath his words, “The Lord God brought it before me.” For he, being well skilled in many matters, knew that whatever creation bestows on the soul is confirmed by long time, as those men know who give to their pupils arts, and lessons in arts: for their case is not like that of men who pour water into a vessel, they are not in a moment able to fill their minds with the lessons which have been brought before them. But when the fountain of wisdom, that is to say, God, gives knowledge of the sciences to the race of mankind, he gives it to them without any limitation of time. But they, as being disciples of the only wise Being, and being competent by nature, quickly accomplish the discovery of the things which they seek to understand.

Chapter XVIII

But the principal virtue of pupils is to endeavour to imitate their perfect master, as far as those who are imperfect can imitate a perfect man. But the

master is more rapid than any time, which did not even co-operate with him when he was creating the universe, since it is plain that time itself was created at the same moment that the world was made. For God, while he spake the word, did at the same moment create; nor did he allow anything to come between the word and the deed; and if one may advance a doctrine which is pretty nearly true, His word is his deed. But among the race of mankind nothing is more easily moved than the word; for by its rapidity and by the volubility of its nouns and verbs, it outstrips even the comprehension which hastens to overtake them.

As, therefore, everlasting springs, which are poured down in rivers, have a course which never ceases, the stream as it comes on continually taking up the cessation of the waves which have preceded, so too the abundant flow of words, when they begin to be poured forth, keep pace with the most swiftly-moving of all the qualities which are in us, namely, the mind, which can itself outstrip even flying natures. As therefore the uncreated God outstrips all creation, so also does the word of the uncreated God outrun the word of creation, and is borne on with exceeding swiftness in the clouds. On which account God speaks freely, saying, "Now you shall see, because my word shall overtake You." As the divine word can outstrip and overtake everything,

but if his word can thus outstrip everything, much more can he who utters it, as he testifies in another place, where he says, "Here am I, I stood here before You." For he declares here that he stood before any created being; and he who is here is also there, and in other places, and every where, having filled every place in every direction, and having left nothing whatever destitute of himself:

for he does not say, "Here I stand and there, but now also when I am present do I stand there also at the same moment;" not being moved or changing his place so as to occupy one place and to quit another, but using one intense motion. Very properly therefore do his subject children, imitating the nature of their father, do all that is right without any delay, and with all diligence, their most excellent employment being the paying prompt and unremitting honour to God.

Chapter XIX

But Pharaoh, the squanderer of all things, not being able himself to receive the conception of virtues unconnected with time, inasmuch as he was mutilated as to the eyes of his soul, by which alone incorporeal natures are comprehended, would not endure to be benefited by virtues unconnected with time; but being weighed down by soulless opinions, I mean here by the frogs, animals which utter a sound and noise wholly void and destitute of reality, when Moses says, “appoint a time to me when I may pray for you and for your servants that God will make the frogs to Disappear,” though he ought, as he was in very imminent necessity, to have said, Pray this moment, nevertheless postponed it, saying, “Pray to-morrow,” in order that he might in every case preserve the folly of his impiety.

And this happens to nearly all those men who hesitate and vacillate between two opinions, even if they do not confess it in express words. For when any thing unexpected befalls them, inasmuch as they did not previously believe firmly in God the Saviour, they take refuge in the assistance of created things, of physicians, of herbs, of the composition of drugs, in a carefully considered plan of life, and in any other aid which may be derived from mortal man. And if any one were to say to them, “Flee, O ye wretched men, to Him who is the only physician for the diseases of the soul, and discard all this falsely called assistance which ye are seeking to find in the creature who is subject to the same sufferings as yourselves,” they would laugh at and ridicule him; saying, “Tell us this to-morrow.” Since, even if any thing were to happen to them they would not supplicate the Deity to avert the present evils from them.

But when it is found that there is no relief from man, and when even all the remedies are proved to be injurious, then in great perplexity they renounce all ideas of assistance from other quarters, and, like wretched men as they are and sorely against their will, they reluctantly and tardily flee to the only Saviour, God. But he, as well knowing that there is no dependence to be placed on reformation extorted by necessity, does not apply his law to every one of them, but only to those in whose case it appears good and suitable. Let every reasoning therefore that thinks that all possessions belong to itself, and that honours itself before God, for the expression, “sacrificing after a few days,” involves such a notion as this, know that it is liable to the accusation of impiety.

Chapter XX

We have now adequately gone through the first article of our accusation against Cain. And the second is of this nature, Why does he bring the first fruits of the fruits of the earth, but not of the first produce? May it not be for the same reason, that he may give the pre-eminence in honour to creation, and may requite God himself with what is the second best? For as there are some persons who place the body before the soul, the slave before the mistress, so also there are persons who honour the creation more than God, though the lawgiver delivered this injunction, that “we should bring the first fruits of the first produce of the earth into the house of God,”(exodus 23:19.) and not assign them to ourselves. For it is just to refer all the first motions of the soul, whether in point of order or of power, to God.

Now the first things in point of order are such as these, in which we participated from the first moment of our original birth: nourishment, growth, sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, speech, the mind, the parts of the soul, the parts of the body, the energies of these parts, and in short all the motions and conditions which are in accordance with nature. But those things which are first in consideration and in power are good actions, the virtues, and conduct in accordance with the virtues.

It is right therefore to offer the first fruits of these things: and the first fruits are the language of gratitude sent up from sincere truth of mind. And this language divides itself according to appropriate divisions in the same manner as the lyre and the other musical instruments are divided. For in each of those instruments each sound is by itself harmonious, and also exceedingly adapted to making a symphony with the rest. As in grammar also those of the elements which are called vowels are both capable of being uttered by themselves, and they also make a complete sound in conjunction with other letters.

But nature which has created many powers in ourselves, some consisting of the outward senses, some reasoning and intellectual and which has directed each to some appropriate work, and which again has adapted all in due proportion by a union and harmony with one another, may be most properly pronounced happy both in each particular and in all of them.

Chapter XXI

On which account if you bring a sacrifice of the first fruits, you must divide it as the sacred scripture teaches, first of all offering those fruits which are green, then those which are toasted, then those which are cut up, and after all the others those which are ground. Those which are green, on this account, because he teaches those who are lovers of the old, and obsolete, and fabulous times, and who do not comprehend the rapid power of God, illimitable by time, warning them to adopt new, and flourishing, and vigorous thoughts, in order that they may not embrace false opinions from being nourished among the old fabulous systems which a long lapse of ages has handed down to the deceiving of mortals; but that, receiving new and fresh good things in all abundance from God, who never grows old, but who is always young and vigorous, they may be taught to think nothing old that is with him, and nothing passed away or obsolete, but to look upon everything as created and existing without any limitation as to time.

Chapter XXII

On which account he says in another place, “Thou shalt rise up from before a hoary head, and thou shalt honour the face of an Elder.” As if the difference were very great. For what is hoary is that time which energizes not at all, from which one ought to rise up, and depart, and flee, avoiding that idea which deceives tens of thousands, that time has a natural capacity of doing something. But by an elder is meant one who is worthy of honour, and respect, and of preeminence, and examination of whom is committed to Moses, the friend of God. “For those whom thou knowest,” says God to Moses, “they are the Elders.” As he was a man who admitted no innovations of any kind, but was by custom attached to his elders, and to those who were worthy of the highest honours.

It is advantageous, therefore, if not with reference to the acquisition of perfect virtue, still at all events with reference to political considerations, both to be nourished in ancient and primeval opinions, and also to be acquainted with the ancient records of glorious actions, which historians and the whole race of poets have delivered to their contemporaries and to subsequent ages, to be preserved in their recollection. But when the sudden light of self-taught wisdom has shone upon those who had no foreknowledge or expectation of it, and opening the previously closed eyes of the soul, makes men spectators of

knowledge instead of being merely hearers of it, implanting in the mind the swiftest of the outward senses, sight, instead of hearing, which is slower; it is then in vain to exercise the ears with speeches.

Chapter XXIII

On which account it is said also: “And ye shall eat old store, and old food from the old store, and you shall also bring forward the old out of the sight of the New.” As it is fitting to repudiate no ancient piece of learning from considerations of time, while we endeavour to meet with the writings of wise men, and to be present as it were with the opinions and expositions of those who relate ancient matters, and to be always fond of inquiring about the former ages of men, and ancient events, since it is the pleasantest of all things to be ignorant of nothing. But when God causes new shoots of self-taught wisdom to spring up in the soul, then it behoves us immediately to circumscribe and to contract the things which we have acquired from instruction, which of their own accord do return and flow back to their source. For it is impossible that one who is a follower, or a friend, or a disciple of God, or any other name which one may think fit to call him, should tolerate mortal lessons.

Chapter XXIV

And let the ripeness of the new soul be toasted. That is to say, as gold is tried in the fire, let this also be tested by powerful reason. And the being consolidated is a sign of having been tried, and tested, and approved. For as the fruit of flourishing stalks of corn is toasted, that it may no longer be damp, and as this cannot in the nature of things take place without fire, so also is it necessary that the young and fresh ripeness, advancing by means of powerful and unalterable reason to the perfection of virtue, must be made solid and stable. But it is the natural characteristic of reason not only to ripen speculations in the soul, preventing them from dissolving, but also vigorously to put an end to the impetuosity of irrational passion.

Behold the practiser of contemplations, Joseph, cooking it, when, “Esau is in a moment discovered to be Fainting.” For wickedness and passion are the foundations of those who love themselves, supported on which the man,

when he sees them defeated and extinguished by reason which has refuted them, does not unnaturally relax his exertions and his strength.

But suppose the language is not confused, but divided into appropriate divisions, the meaning of the expression, “those that are cut up,” is something of this kind. For in everything order is better than disorder, and most especially is it so in the most swiftly flowing nature — speech.

And thus the most excellent of all branches of learning, speech, is harmoniously connected together. For the lawgiver cuts leaves of gold into thin hairs, so as to plait appropriate works of that material in a durable manner. And in like manner, speech, which is more precious than gold, is completed in a praiseworthy manner of innumerable varieties of ideas, then, being divided into the thinnest possible heads, after the fashion of a woven web, it receives an harmonious demonstration, like a work of the distaff.

It is enjoined therefore that sacrificers, when they have flayed the burnt offering, shall cut it up joint by joint, in order in the first place that the soul may appear naked without any coverings, such as are made by empty and false opinions; and in the second place that it may be able to receive suitable divisions, for virtue is a whole and one, which is divided into corresponding species, such as prudence and temperance, justice and courage, that we, knowing the differences of each of these qualities, may submit to a voluntary service of them both in their entirety and in particulars.

And let us consider how we may train the soul so that it may not, from being thrown into a state of confusion, be deceived by general and unintelligible appearances, but that by making proper divisions of things it may be able to inspect and examine each separate thing with all accuracy, adopting language which will not, through being borne forward by disorderly impetuosity, cause any indistinctness, but being divided into its appropriate headings and into the demonstrations suitable to each, will be compounded like some living animal of perfect parts, properly put together. And we ought to apply ourselves to a continual meditation on and practice of these things, if we wish the use of them to be confirmed in us, as after having touched knowledge, not to abide in it is like tasting meat and drink, but being prevented from feeding on them in sufficient quantities.

Chapter XXVI

After those that are cut up, it was very natural to make an offering of such as are ground; that is to say, it is natural after the division to dwell among and pass one's leisure among what had been thus discovered, for continued practice produces firm and stable knowledge, just as continued indifference produces ignorance. Therefore numbers of men from fear of the labour of practice, have lost the strength with which they were endowed by nature, whom those men have not imitated who nourished their souls on prophecy, which is signified under the name of manna, "for they ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of It." (numbers 11:8.) every one of them knowing well how to knead and soften the heavenly language of virtue for the sake of making the intellect firmer.

When therefore you confess that the young and fresh corn, that is to say vigour, and the toasted corn, that is to say speech tried in the fire and invincible, and the corn cut up, which signifies the cutting up and division of things, and the corn ground, that is to say anxious care about the examination into what has been found out, do all proceed from God, you will then be offering a sacrifice of the first fruits of the first produce, of the first and best things which the soul has brought forth; and even if we are slow, nevertheless he does not delay to take to himself those who are fit to worship him. For "I will take," says he, "you to be a people for myself, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people: I am the Lord."

Chapter XXVII

These now, and such as these, are the accusations brought against Cain, who after some days offered sacrifice; but Abel did not bring the same offerings, nor did he bring his offerings in the same manner; but instead of inanimate things he brought living sacrifices, and instead of younger things, worthy only of the second place, he offered what was older and of the first consideration, and instead of what was weak he offered what was strong and fat, for he says that "he made his sacrifice of the first-born of his flocks, and of their Fat," according to the most holy commandment.

Now the commandment is as follows: "And it shall be," say the scriptures, "when God shall bring thee forth into the land of the Canaanites, in the

manner which he swore to thy fathers, and shall give it to thee, that thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the womb of all thy flocks, and of all the beasts which thou hast, and shalt set apart all the males for the Lord. Every offspring of an ass that openeth the womb shalt thou exchange for a sheep; and if thou dost not exchange it thou shalt redeem it with Money.” For that which openeth the wound is Abel, that is to say, a gift, the first-born, and you must examine how and when it is to be offered up;

now the most suitable time is when God shall lead thee into fluctuating reason, that is to say, into the land of the Canaanites, not in any chance manner, but in the manner in which he himself swore that he would; not in order that being tossed about hither and thither in the surf and tempest and heavy waves, you may be deprived of all rest or stability, but that having escaped from such agitation you may enjoy fine weather and a calm, and reaching virtue as a place of refuge, or port, or harbour of safety for ships, may lie in safety and steadiness.

Chapter XXVIII

But when Moses says that God swears, we must consider whether he really asserts this as a thing appropriate for him to do; since to very many people it appears inconsistent with the character of God; for the meaning implied in an oath is, that it is the testimony of God in a matter which is doubtful. But to God there is nothing uncertain and nothing in doubt;

as it is he who demonstrates clearly to others all the clear indications of truth. And accordingly he is in need of no witness; for neither is there any other god of equal honour with him. I omit to mention that he who bears witness, inasmuch as he bears witness, is better than he to whom he bears witness; for the one stands in need of something, and the other serves him: and he who serves is more worthy of credit than he who requires to be served. But it impious to conceive that any thing can be better than the Cause of all things, since there is nothing equal to him, nothing that is even a little inferior to him; (the similarity to Horace is here again very remarkable. Horace, speaks of the Parent and Governor of the universe in *Od.* I. 12.17.) but every thing which exists in the world is found to be in its whole genus inferior to God.

Now it is for the sake of obtaining credence that those men who are disbelieved have recourse to an oath. But God is to be believed when simply he says any thing; so that, as far as certainty goes, his words do in no respect differ from oaths. And it happens, indeed, that our opinions are confirmed by an oath; but that an oath itself is confirmed by the addition of the name of God. God, therefore, does not become credible because of an oath, but even an oath is confirmed by God.

Chapter XXIX

Why, then, has this hierophant thought fit to introduce him as swearing? That he might demonstrate the weakness of the created being, and after he had demonstrated it, might comfort him: for we are not able at all times to have ready in our soul that principal fact which ought to be remembered concerning God, namely, that “God is not as a Man,” So that we may rise above those assertions which are advanced concerning man;

but we, since we have the greatest share in what is mortal, and since we are not able to conceive any thing apart from ourselves, and have no power to go beyond or to escape our own calamities, but since we have got into mortality as snails have into their shells, and since we are revolved round and round ourselves in a ball, like so many hedgehogs, and have only the same opinions about the blessed and immortal God which we have about ourselves, avoiding all absurdity of assertion, such for instance as that God has the same form as man, but in reality being guilty of the impiety of attributing to him that he has the same passions as man;

we do on this account fashion for him in our minds hands and feet, a coming in and a going out, hatred, aversion, alienation, and anger; parts and passions very inconsistent with the character of the Cause of all things, an oath by which is often an assistant of our weakness.

“If God shall give thee the things which thou desirest,” says Moses, speaking very eloquently and accurately; for if he does not give them thou wilt not have them, since every thing belongs to him, both things external, and the body, and the outward sense, and the power of speech, and the mind, and the energies and essences of all the faculties. And not you, but all this world also, and whatever you cut off and divide from it, you will find does not belong to

you; for you do not possess the earth, or the water, or the air, or the heaven, or the stars, or any of the kinds of animals or plants, whether perishable or immortal, as you own; so that, whatever from them you bring to offer to him as a sacrifice, you are bringing as the possession of God, and not as your own.

Chapter XXX

And take notice how very clearly it is enjoined, that he who is sacrificing may take a part of what is offered, and that he is not bound to offer the whole of what has been given him. For nature has given us a countless number of things, suitable to the human race, of all of which it receives no share itself: for instance, she has given us creation, though she is herself uncreate; and food, though she has no need of food; and growth, though she always remains in the same condition; and age, with reference to time, though she herself admits neither of addition nor of subtraction; an organic body, which she is incompetent to receive: also the powers of coming forward, of seeing, of applying food, and of disposing of it again when digested; of judging between the differences of scents, of using speech, of giving vent of laughter.

There are also many other things in us which have reference to our necessary and beneficial uses: but one may pronounce these things indifferent, but those which are confessedly good ought to be attributed to and comprehended in nature. Come, therefore, let us investigate those things which are especially admired among us, of the things which are really goods, every one of which we pray to attain to at suitable seasons, and if we do attain to them, we are called the happiest of men.

Now who is there who is ignorant, that a happy old age and a happy death are the greats of human goods? neither of which can nature partake of, inasmuch as nature can neither grow old nor die. And what is there extraordinary in the fact, if that which is uncreated does not condescend to use the good things of created beings, when even that which has been created desires different virtues, according to the differences of ideas into which it is divided. At all events men would not be rivals to women, nor would women be rivals to men, in these matters with which the opposite sex alone ought to have any concern. But if the women were to emulate the pursuits of men they would be looked upon as half men, and if the men were to apply themselves to

the pursuits of women they would acquire an evil reputation as men-women.

But are there not some virtues between which nature herself has made such distinction, that by no practice can they be brought into the common use of both sexes? At all events, to sow and to beget children is the especial property of man, according to his peculiar capacity, and no woman could manage to do this. And again, the nature of man does not make him capable of bearing children, which is the good deed of women; therefore these things, which are innate in the nature of man, cannot be predicated with propriety of God, but it is done only through some catachrestical misapplication of terms, by which we make amends for our weakness. You will take away therefore, O my mind, whatever is created or mortal, or changeable or unconsecrated, from your conceptions, regarding the uncreate God, immortal, unchangeable, and holy, the only God, blessed for ever.

Chapter XXXI

But it is most entirely in accordance with nature “to sacrifice the males of every creature that openeth the womb, to God.” For as nature has given to women the womb, as the part most excellently adapted for the generation of animals, so also for the production of things she has placed a power in the soul, by means of which the mind conceives and is in travail, and brings forth many things.

But of the ideas which are brought forth by the mind, some are male and some female, as in the case of animals. Now the female offspring of the soul are wickedness and passion, by which we are made effeminate in every one of our pursuits; but a healthy state of the passions and virtue is male, by which we are excited and invigorated. Now of these, whatever belongs to the fellowship of men must be attributed to God, and everything that relates to the similarity to women must be imputed to one’s self, on which account the command was delivered, “Of everything which openeth the womb the males belong to the Lord.”

Chapter XXXII

But also he says, “The males belong to the Lord of everything which openeth the womb, of thy flocks and of thy cattle, and of all that belongs to

thee.” Having spoken of the offspring of the principal part of the soul, he begins to give us information about the produce of the irrational part, which the outward senses have obtained for their inheritance, which he likens to cattle, and to the young which are bred up in the herds, being tame and tractable, inasmuch as they are guided by the care of their overseer, that is to say, of the shepherd; for those which are let run loose and are indulged with freedom, are made wild from want of any one to make them gentle. But those which have guides, such as goatherds, cowherds, and shepherds, who are the managers of every species of cattle, they I say are of necessity made tame.

Moreover the genus of the outward senses is formed by nature, so as to be in one instance wild and in another tractable; it is wild, when having shaken off the rein of the mind as of its herdsman, it is borne on irrationally towards the external objects of the outward senses; but it is tame when having yielded in an obedient manner to reason, which is the guide of the discernment, it is regulated and directed in its course by it. Whatever therefore it sees or hears, or, in short, whatever it feels with any one of its inward senses according to the injunction of the mind, all these things are male and perfect, for goodness is added to each;

but whatever is done without any guide, in a state of anarchy, in such case the body ruins us as anarchy ruins a city. Again, we must consider that those motions of the outward senses which proceed in obedience to the mind, and which of necessity are the better, do take place according to the dispensation of God; but these which are obstinate and disobedient, we must impute to ourselves, when we are carried away irrationally by the impetuosity of the outward senses.

Chapter XXXIII

And he has commanded us to take a portion not only from the things which have just been mentioned, but also from the entire mass in combination. And the command is couched in the following words: “And it shall be, when ye eat of the fruit of the land, that he shall take a part to offer up has a heave-offering unto the Lord: ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for a heave-offering as ye do the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye offer It.”(numbers 15:19.)

Now speaking properly, if we must avow the exact truth, it is we ourselves who are this dough; since many essences are kneaded and combined together that we may be made perfect: for the great Creator having mingled and kneaded together the cold and hot, dry and moist, opposite properties, has made out of them all one distinct combination, ourselves, from which the expression dough is applied to us. Now, of this combination in which body and soul, two most important divisions, are united, the first fruits are to be consecrated.

But the first fruits are the holy motions of each in accordance with virtue; on which account they have been compared to a threshing-floor. As, therefore, on a threshing-floor there is wheat and barley, and as many more of such things as are capable of being separated by themselves, and husks and chaff, and whatever other refuse is dissipated and scattered in different directions, so too, with us, there are some things which are excellent and useful, and which afford real nourishment, by means of which a good life is brought to perfection; all which things we should attribute to God. But there are other things which are not divine, which we must leave like refuse to the race of mankind; but from these some portions must be taken away,

and there are some entire virtues, free from all wickedness, which it would be impious to mutilate by dividing them, and which resemble those indivisible sacrifices, the whole burnt-offerings, of which Isaac is a manifest pattern, whom his father was commanded to offer up like a victim, sharing in no destructive passion.

And in another passage it is said, "My gifts, and my offerings, and my sacrifices, ye will take care to offer to me at my festivals:" not taking away form them, nor dividing them, but bringing them forward full, and entire, and perfect; for the feast of the soul is cheerfulness in perfect virtues; and the perfect virtues are all those which the human race exhibits, free from all stain or spot. But the wise man alone can keep such a festival as this, and no other human being; for it is a most rare thing to find a soul which has never tasted of wickedness of passions.

Chapter XXXIV

Having therefore given an account of the dominant and subject divisions of the soul, and having shown what portion in each is male and female, Moses proceeds after this very consistently to explain the divisions of the body. For being well aware that without labour and care it is not possible to obtain a masculine offspring, he proceeds to say, "Every foal of an ass that openeth the womb, thou shalt exchange for the young of a Sheep." Which expression is equivalent to, "Exchange all labour for improvement." For an ass is the symbol of labour, being a much enduring animal, and a sheep is the emblem of improvement, as its very name shows, (probaton, derived from probainoμ, to advance forward.)

being a symbol of the care which is required to be expended in arts and professions, and all other things which are matters of instruction, and that with no negligence or indifference, but it is necessary with all anxiety to have prepared one's mind to encounter vigorously every amount of labour, and to strive not to be held in bondage by ill-considered toil, but to find advance and improvement by pushing on to the most glorious end; for labour is to be endured for the sake of improvement.

But if you indeed receive fatigue from labour, and still your nature does not advance at all on the road to improvement, but is rather opposed to your becoming better by progress, then abandon the pursuit and be quiet, for it is a difficult task to go against nature. On which account the scripture adds: "And if you do not exchange it, you shall ransom it for money;" which means, but if you are not able to exchange labour for improvement, then give up your labour; for the idea of ransoming carries with it the notion of emancipating the mind from vain and unproductive care.

Chapter XXXV

But I am speaking here, not of the virtues but of the arts of intermediate character, and of other necessary studies which are conversant about the attention due to the body, and about the abundance of external goods. But since the labour which is applied to what is perfectly good and excellent, even if it fall short of attaining its object, is nevertheless of such a character that it by itself does good to those who exert it, while the things which are unconnected with virtue unless their aim is attained, are entirely unprofitable. For as in the

case of animals, if you take away the head there is an end of the whole animal, but the head of actions is their end, as they in a manner live if the end is arrived at, but if you cut off their end and mutilate them they die.

So too let those athletes who are not able to gain the victory but who are invariably defeated, condemn their trade; and if any merchant or captain of a ship in all his voyages meets with incessant disasters, let him turn away from the business and rest. And those men who, having devoted themselves to the intermediate arts, have nevertheless through the ruggedness of their nature been unable to acquire any learning, are to be praised for abandoning them: for such studies are not practised for the sake of the practice, but for the sake of the object towards which the labourer is borne.

If therefore nature hinders one's improvement for the better, let us not strive against her in an unprofitable way, but if she co-operates with us then let us honour the Deity with the first fruits and honours, which are the ransom of our soul, emancipating it from subjection to cruel masters, and elevating it to freedom.

Chapter XXXVI

For Moses confesses that the Levites who being taken in exchange for the firstborn, were appointed ministers of him who alone is worthy to be ministered unto, were the ransom of all the rest of the Israelites. "For I," says God, "behold, I have chosen the Levites out of the midst of the children of Israel, instead of every firstborn that openeth the womb from among the children of Israel; they shall be their ransom and the Levites shall belong to me: for every first-born is mine; from that day in which I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I dedicated to myself all the first-born of Israel."

Reason which fled to God and became his suppliant, is what is here called the Levite; God having taken this from the most central and dominant part of the soul, that is to say, having taken it to himself and appropriated it as his own share, thought it worthy of the honour due to the first-born. So that from these it is plain that Reuben is the first-born of Jacob, but Levi the first born of Israel, the one having the honours of seniority according to time, but the other according to dignity and power.

For Jacob being the symbol of labour and improvement, is also the beginning of goodness of disposition, which is signified in Reuben: but the fountain of contemplation of the only wise being, according to which the name of Israel is given, is the principle of being inclined to minister to him; and of such ministry the Levite is the symbol. As therefore Jacob is found to be the inheritor of the birth-right of Esau, eagerness in wickedness having been defeated by virtuous labour, so also Levi, as one who devotes himself to perfect virtue, will carry off the honours of seniority from Reuben, the man of a good disposition. But the most undeniable proof of perfection is for a man to be a fugitive to God, having abandoned all concern for the things of creation.

Chapter XXXVII

These then, to speak with strict propriety are the prices to be paid for the preserving and ransoming of the soul which is desirous of freedom. And may we not say that in this way a very necessary doctrine is brought forward? Namely that every wise man is a ransom for a worthless one, who would not be able to last for even a short time, if the wise man by the exertion of mercy and prudence did not take thought for his lasting; as a physician opposing himself to the infirmities of an invalid, and either rendering them slighter, or altogether removing them unless the disease comes on with irresistible violence, and surmounts all the ingenuity of medical skill.

And in this way Sodom was destroyed, since there was, as it were, no good which could be put in the scale sufficient to outweigh the unspeakable multitude of its wickednesses. So that if the fiftieth number could have been found, according to which an emancipation for the slavery of the soul and complete freedom is proclaimed, or if any one of the numbers below fifty which the wise Abraham enumerated descending at last down to ten, the number peculiar to instruction, the mind would not have been destroyed in so inglorious a manner.

We ought at times to endeavour as far as possible to preserve those who are not on the point of being utterly destroyed by the wickedness that is in them; imitating good physicians who, even if they see that it is impossible for those who are sick to recover, nevertheless apply their remedies with cheerfulness,

lest it should appear that it was owing to their neglect that the affair did not turn out as it was desired. And if ever so slight a seed of good health is seen, this is to be cherished as a spark of fire with all imaginable care; for there is hope that if it can have its duration protracted and its strength increased the man may for the future have a better life and one more free from danger.

Therefore when I see any good man dwelling in any house or city, I pronounce that house or that city happy, and I think that its enjoyment of its present good things is sure, and that its expectation of future happiness will be accomplished, inasmuch as, for the sake of those who are worthy, God will bestow his boundless and illimitable riches even on the unworthy. And I pray that they may live to as great an age as possible, since it is not possible that they should ever grow old, as I expect that good fortune will remain to men as long as these men are able to live in the practice of virtue.

When, therefore, I see or hear that any one of these men is dead, I am exceedingly downcast and grieved, and I lament those who are left behind alive as much as I lament them; for to the one I see, that the necessary end has arrived in consistency with the ordinances of nature, and that they have exhibited a happy life and a glorious death. But I look upon the others as now deprived of the great and mighty hand by which they were saved, and as likely, now that they are bereft of it, soon to feel the evils which are due to them, unless, indeed, instead of the former men, who are gone, nature should be preparing to make other young men shoot up, as in the case of a tree which has already shed its ripe fruit for the nourishment and enjoyment of those who are able to make use of it.

As, therefore, good men are the strongest part of cities, with a view to their duration, so also in that state of each individual of us, which consists of soul and body, the reasoning powers which are attached to prudence and knowledge, are the firmest part of its foundation; which the legislator, using metaphorical language, calls the ransom and the first-born, on account of those reasons which I have already mentioned.

In this way he also says, "The cities of the Levites are ransomed for ever, because the minister of God enjoys eternal freedom, according to the continuous revolutions of the ever-moving soul," and he admits incessant healing applications; for when he calls them ransomed, not once, but for ever,

as he says, he means to convey such a meaning as this, that they are always in a state of revolution, and always in a state of freedom, the state of revolution being implanted in them because of their natural mortality, but their freedom coming to them because of their ministration to God.

Chapter XXXVIII

But it is worth while to consider, in no passing manner, why he granted the cities of the Levites to fugitives, thinking it right that even these, who appear entirely impious, should dwell with the most holy of men. Now these fugitives are they who have committed, unintentionally, homicide. First of all, therefore, we must repeat what is consistent with what has been already said, that the good man is the ransom of the worthless one, so that they who have sinned will naturally come to those who have been hallowed, for the sake of being purified; and, in the second place, we must consider that the Levites admit the fugitives because they themselves are potentially fugitives;

for as they are driven away from their country, so these others also have left their children, their parents, their brethren, their nearest and dearest things, in order that they may receive an immortal inheritance instead of a mortal one. But they differ, because the flight of the one is involuntary, being caused by an unintentional action, but the flight of the others is voluntary, from a love of what is most excellent; and because the one have the Levites for a refuge; but the Levites have the Lord of all for their refuge, in order that those who are imperfect may have the sacred scriptures for their law; but that the others may have God for theirs, by whom they are hallowed.

Moreover, those who have committed unintentional homicide, have been allotted the same cities as the Levites to dwell in, because they also were thought worthy of a privilege because of a holy slaughter. When therefore the soul being changed, came to honour the Egyptian God, the body, as fine gold, then all the sacred writings rushing forth of their own accord with defensive weapons, namely demonstrations according to knowledge, putting forward as their leader and general the chief priest, and prophet, and friend of God, Moses, proclaimed an unceasing war in the cause of piety, and would not hear of peace till they had put down all the doctrines of those who opposed them, so that they naturally came to inhabit the same dwellings, inasmuch as they

had done similar actions, though not the same.

Chapter XXXIX

There is also another opinion bruited about, as something of a secret, which it is right to lay up in the ears of the elders, not divulging it to the younger men; for of all the most excellent powers which exist in God, there is one equal to the others in honour, that is the legislative one (for he himself is a lawgiver and the fountain of all laws, and all particular lawgivers are subordinate to him), and this legislative power is divided in a twofold division, the one having reference to the rewarding of those who do well, and the other to the punishment of those who have sinned;

accordingly the Levite is the minister of the former division, for he performs all the ministrations which have a reference to perfect holiness, according to which the human race is raised up to and brought to the notice of God, either by whole burnt offerings, or else by saving sacrifices, or else by repentance for one's sins. But of the other and punishing division of the legislative power, those who have committed unintentional homicide are the ministers.

And Moses bears witness to this saying, "He was not willing, but God gave him into his Hands," so that his hands are here taken as instruments; but he who energizes by their means in an invisible manner, must be the other being, the invisible. Let therefore the two servants dwell together, being the ministers of the two species of the legislative power; the Levite being the minister of the division which has reference to the reward of them that do well, and the unintentional homicide of the division which is conversant about punishment.

"But in the day," says God, "on which I smote the first-born in the land of Egypt, I consecrated to myself all the first-born of Israel." And he says this not to lead us to suppose that at the time when Egypt was stricken with this mighty blow by the destruction of all its first-born, the first-born of Israel all became holy, but because both in former times, and now, and hereafter, and for ever, this naturally happens in the case of the soul, that when the most dominant parts of blind passion are destroyed, then the elder and most honourable offspring of God, who sees everything with a piercing sight,

becomes holy;

for the departure of wickedness brings about the entrance of virtue, as, on the other hand, when what is good is driven away, then what was bad, having been lying in ambush, comes in to supply the void. Jacob then had scarcely at all gone out, (genesis 27:1.) when Esau entered, not the mind which receives everything, being stamped with the impression of wickedness instead of the figures of virtue, if that is possible; but he would not have been able to effect this, for he will be supplanted and overthrown by the wise man before he knows it, the wise man being prompt to repel the impending injury before it can affect him.

Chapter XL

And he brings not only the first fruits from the firstborn, but also from the fat; showing by this that whatever there is in the soul that is cheerful, or fat, or preservative and pleasant, might all be surrendered to God. And I see also in the arrangements established about sacrifices, that three things are enjoined to be offered from the victims; in the first place the fat, and the kidneys, and the lobe of the liver, about which we will speak separately; but not the brain or the heart which it seemed natural should be dedicated before the other parts, since, according to the language of the lawgiver, the dominant power is recognised as existing in one of them.

But may it not be owing to an exceeding holiness and to very accurate consideration of the matter that he did not bear these things to the faithful altar of God? because that dominant part being subject to changes in either direction, either for bad or good, in an indivisible moment of time receives impressions which are continually changing, at one time impressions of what is pure and approved, and at others of an adulterated and base coinage.

Therefore the lawgiver judging a place which was capable of receiving both these opposite qualities, namely, what is honourable, and what is disgraceful, and which was adapted to each, and distributed equal honour to both, to be quite a much impure as holy, removed it from the altar of God. For what is disgraceful is profane, and what is profane is by all means unholy;

and this is why the dominant part is kept away from sacrifices, but if it is subjected to examination, then, when all its parts have been purified, it will be

consecrated as a burnt offering, free from all stain, and from all pollution. For this is the law respecting whole burnt offerings, that with the exception of the refuse of the food, and of the skin which are tokens of the weakness of the body and not of wickedness, nothing else should be left to the creature, but that all the other parts which exhibit the soul perfect in all its parts, should be presented as a whole burnt offering to God.