

Isidore

Clement's Quotations of Isidore

Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Book II, Chapter 20

At present this only needs to be pointed out, that man, according to Basilides, preserves the appearance of a wooden horse, according to the poetic myth, embracing as he does in one body a host of such different spirits. Accordingly, Basilides' son himself, Isidorus, in his book, *About the Soul attached to us*, while agreeing in the dogma, as if condemning himself, writes in these words: "For if I persuade any one that the soul is undivided, and that the passions of the wicked are occasioned by the violence of the appendages, the worthless among men will have no slight pretence for saying, 'I was compelled, I was carried away, I did it against my will, I acted unwillingly;' though he himself led the desire of evil things, and did not fight against the assaults of the appendages. But we must, by acquiring superiority in the rational part, show ourselves masters of the inferior creation in us." For he too lays down the hypothesis of two souls in us, like the Pythagoreans, at whom we shall glance afterwards.

Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Book III, Sections 2-3.

2. And they say that by the words "it is better to marry than to burn" the apostle means this: "Do not cast your soul into the fire, so that you have to endure night and day and go in fear lest you should fall from continence. For a soul which has to concentrate upon 'endurance has lost hope." In his *Ethics*, Isidore says in these very words: "Abstain, then, from a quarrelsome woman lest you are distracted from the grace of God. But when you have rejected the fire of the seed, then pray with an undisturbed conscience. And when your prayer of thanksgiving," he says, "descends to a prayer of request, and your request is not that in future you may do right, but that you may do no wrong, then marry. But perhaps a man is too young or poor or suffers from weak health, and has not the will to marry as the apostle's saying suggests. Such a man should not separate himself from his brother Christian. He should say, I have come into the sanctuary, I can suffer nothing. And if he has a presentiment that he may fall, he may say, Brother, lay your hand on me lest I sin, and he will receive help both spiritually and physically. Let him only wish to accomplish what is right and he will achieve his object.

3. "Sometimes, however, we say with our mouth 'I wish not to sin' while our mind is really inclined towards sin. Such a man does not do what he wishes for fear lest any punishment should be in store for him. Human nature has some wants which are necessary and natural, and others which are only natural. To be clothed is necessary and natural; sexual intercourse is natural but not necessary."

I have quoted these remarks to prove in error those Basilidians who do not live purely, supposing either that they have the power even to commit sin because of their perfection, or indeed that they will be saved by nature even if they sin in this life because they possess an innate election. For the original teachers of their doctrines do not allow one to do the same

as they are now doing. They ought not, therefore, to take as a covering cloak the name of Christ and, by living lewder lives than the most uncontrolled heathen, bring blasphemy upon his name. "For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers" as far as the words "whose end shall be like their works."

Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Book VI, chapter 6.

Now also Valentinus, the Coryphaeus of those who herald community, in his book on The Intercourse of Friends, writes in these words: "Many of the things that are written, though in common books, are found written in the church of God. For those sayings which proceed from the heart are vain. For the law written in the heart is the People of the Beloved -- loved and loving Him." For whether it be the Jewish writings or those of the philosophers that he calls "the Common Books," he makes the truth common. And Isidore," at once son and disciple to Basilides, in the first book of the Expositions of the Prophet Parchor, writes also in these words: "The Attics say that certain things were intimated to Socrates, in consequence of a daemon attending on him. And Aristotle says that all men are provided with daemons, that attend on them during the time they are in the body,-having taken this piece of prophetic instruction and transferred it to his own books, without acknowledging whence he had abstracted this statement." And again, in the second book of his work, he thus writes: "And let no one think that what we say is peculiar to the elect, was said before by any philosophers. For it is not a discovery of theirs. For having appropriated it from our prophets, they attributed it to him who is wise according to them." Again, in the same: "For to me it appears that those who profess to philosophize, do so that they may learn what is the winged oak," and the variegated robe on it, all of which Pherecydes has employed as theological allegories, having taken them from the prophecy of Chum."