

IV.

Against the Valentinians.

In Which the Author Gives a Concise Account of, Together with Sundry Caustic Animadversions on, the Very Fantastic Theology of the Sect. This Treatise is Professedly Taken from the Writings of Justin, Miltiades, Irenæus, and Proculus.

[Translated by Dr. Roberts.]

Chapter I.—Introductory. Tertullian Compares the Heresy to the Old Eleusinian Mysteries. Both Systems Alike in Preferring Concealment of Error and Sin to Proclamation of Truth and Virtue.

The Valentinians, who are no doubt a very large body of heretics—comprising as they do so many apostates from the truth, who have a propensity for fables, and no discipline to deter them (therefrom) care for nothing so much as to obscure⁶⁶¹¹ what they preach, if indeed they (can be said to) preach who obscure *their doctrine*. The officiousness with which they guard their doctrine is an officiousness which betrays their guilt.⁶⁶¹² Their disgrace is proclaimed in the very earnestness with which they maintain their religious system. Now, in the case of those Eleusinian mysteries, which are the very heresy of Athenian superstition, it is their secrecy that is their disgrace. Accordingly, they previously beset all access to their body with tormenting conditions;⁶⁶¹³ *and* they require a long initiation before they enrol (their members),⁶⁶¹⁴ even instruction during five years for their perfect disciples,⁶⁶¹⁵ in order that they may mould⁶⁶¹⁶ their opinions by this suspension of full knowledge, and

6611 Occultant. [This tract may be assigned to any date not earlier than a.d. 207. Of this Valentinus, see cap. iv. *infra*, and *de Præscript.* capp. 29, 30, *supra*.]

6612 We are far from certain whether we have caught the sense of the original, which we add, that the reader may judge for himself, and at the same time observe the terseness of our author: “Custodiæ officium conscientiæ officium est, confusio prædicatur, dum religio asseveratur.”

6613 Et aditum prius cruciant.

6614 Antequam consignant.

6615 Eoptas: see Suidas, s.v. Ἐπόπται.

6616 Ædificent.

apparently raise the dignity of their mysteries in proportion to the craving for them which they have previously created. Then follows the duty of silence. Carefully is that guarded, which is so long in finding. All the divinity, however, lies in their secret recesses:⁶⁶¹⁷ there are revealed *at last* all the aspirations of the fully initiated,⁶⁶¹⁸ the entire mystery of the sealed tongue, the symbol of virility. But this allegorical representation,⁶⁶¹⁹ under the pretext of nature's reverend name, obscures a real sacrifice by help of an arbitrary symbol,⁶⁶²⁰ and by *empty* images obviates⁶⁶²¹ the reproach of falsehood!⁶⁶²² In like manner, the heretics who are now the object of our remarks,⁶⁶²³ the Valentinians, have formed Eleusinian dissipations⁶⁶²⁴ of their own, consecrated by a profound silence, having nothing of the heavenly in them but their mystery.⁶⁶²⁵ By the help of the sacred names and titles and arguments of true religion, they have fabricated the vainest and foulest figment for men's pliant liking,⁶⁶²⁶ out of the affluent suggestions of Holy Scripture, since from its many springs many *errors* may well emanate. If you propose to them inquiries sincere and honest, they answer you with stern⁶⁶²⁷ look and contracted brow, and say, "The subject is profound." If you try them with subtle questions, with the ambiguities of their double tongue, they affirm a community of faith (with yourself). If you intimate to them that you understand *their opinions*, they insist on knowing nothing themselves. If you come to a close engagement with them they destroy your own fond hope of a victory over them by a self-immolation.⁶⁶²⁸ Not even to their own disciples do they commit a secret before they have made sure of them. They have the knack of persuading men before instructing them; although truth persuades by teaching, but does not teach by first persuading.



6617 Adytis.

6618 Eoptarum.

6619 Dispositio.

6620 Patrocinio coactæ figuræ.

6621 Excusat.

6622 "Quid enim aliud est simulachrum nisi falsum?" (Rigalt.)

6623 Quos nunc destinamus.

6624 Lenocinia.

6625 Taciturnitate.

6626 Facili caritati. Oehler, after Fr. Junius, gives, however, this phrase a subjective turn thus: "by affecting a charity which is easy to them, costing nothing."

6627 Concreto.

6628 Sua cæde.

Chapter II.—These Heretics Brand the Christians as Simple Persons. The Charge Accepted, and Simplicity Eulogized Out of the Scriptures.

For this reason we are branded⁶⁶²⁹ by them as simple, and as being merely so, without being wise also; as if indeed wisdom were compelled to be wanting in simplicity, whereas the Lord unites them both: “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves.”⁶⁶³⁰ Now if we, on our parts, be accounted foolish because we are simple, does it then follow that they are not simple because they are wise? Most perverse, however, are they who are not simple, even as they are most foolish who are not wise. And yet, (if I must choose) I should prefer taking⁶⁶³¹ the *latter* condition for the lesser fault; since it is perhaps better to have a wisdom which falls short in quantity, than that which is bad in quality⁶⁶³²—better to be in error than to mislead. Besides, the face of the Lord⁶⁶³³ is patiently waited for by those who “seek Him in simplicity of heart,” as says the very Wisdom—not of Valentinus, but—of Solomon.⁶⁶³⁴ Then, again, infants have borne⁶⁶³⁵ by their blood a testimony to Christ. (Would you say) that it was children who shouted “Crucify Him”?⁶⁶³⁶ They were neither children nor infants; in other words, they were not simple. The apostle, too, bids us to “become children again” towards God,⁶⁶³⁷ “to be as children in malice” by our simplicity, yet as being also “wise in our practical faculties.”⁶⁶³⁸ At the same time, with respect to the order of development in Wisdom, I have admitted⁶⁶³⁹ that it flows from simplicity. In brief, “the dove” has usually served to figure Christ; “the serpent,” to tempt Him. The one even from the first has been the harbinger of divine peace; the other from the beginning has been the despoiler of the divine image. Accordingly, simplicity alone⁶⁶⁴⁰ will be more easily able to know and to declare God, *whereas* wisdom alone will rather do Him violence,⁶⁶⁴¹ and betray Him.

6629 Notamur.

6630 [Matt. x. 16.](#)

6631 In the original the phrase is put *passively*: “malim eam partem meliori sumi vitio.”

6632 How terse is the original! minus sapere quam pejus.

6633 Facies Dei.

6634 [Wisd. of Sol. i. 1.](#)

6635 Litaverunt: “consecrated.”

6636 Tertullian’s words are rather suggestive of sense than of syntax: “Pueros vocem qui crucem clamant?”

6637 Secundum Deum: “according to God’s will.”

6638 [1 Cor. xiv. 20](#), where Tertullian renders the ταῖς φρεσὶ (A.V. “understanding”) by “sensibus.”

6639 Dedi.

6640 i.e., without wisdom.

6641 Concutere.

Chapter III.—The Folly of This Heresy. It Dissects and Mutilates the Deity. Contrasted with the Simple Wisdom of True Religion. To Expose the Absurdities of the Valentinian System is to Destroy It.

Let, then, the serpent hide himself as much as he is able, and let him wrest⁶⁶⁴² all his wisdom in the labyrinths of his obscurities; let him dwell deep down in the ground; let him worm himself into secret holes; let him unroll his length through his sinuous joints;⁶⁶⁴³ let him tortuously crawl, though not all at once,⁶⁶⁴⁴ beast as he is that skulks the light. Of our dove, however, how simple is the very home!—always in high and open places, and facing the light! As the symbol of the Holy Spirit, it loves the (radiant) East, that figure of Christ.⁶⁶⁴⁵ Nothing causes truth a blush, except only being hidden, because no man will be ashamed to give ear thereto. *No man will be ashamed* to recognise Him as God whom nature has already commended to him, whom he already perceives in all His works,⁶⁶⁴⁶—Him indeed who is simply, for this reason, imperfectly known; because man has not thought of Him as only one, because he has named Him in a plurality (of gods), and adored Him in other *forms*. Yet,⁶⁶⁴⁷ to induce oneself to turn from this multitude of deities to another crowd,⁶⁶⁴⁸ to remove from a familiar authority to an unknown one, to wrench oneself from what is manifest to what is hidden, is to offend faith on the very threshold. Now, even suppose that you are initiated into the entire fable, will it not occur to you that you have heard something very like it from your fond nurse⁶⁶⁴⁹ when you were a baby, amongst the lullabies she sang to you⁶⁶⁵⁰ about the towers of Lamia, and the horns of the sun?⁶⁶⁵¹ Let, however, any man approach the subject from a knowledge of the faith which he has otherwise learned, as soon



6642 Torqueat.

6643 Per anfractus.

6644 Nec semel totus.

6645 By this remark it would seem that Tertullian read sundry passages in his Latin Bible similarly to the subsequent Vulgate version. For instance, in *Zech. vi. 12*, the prophet's words **הִנֵּה-אִישׁ צֶמַח שָׁמַן** ("Behold the Man, whose name is the Branch"), are rendered in the Vulgate, "Ecce Vir *Oriens* nomen ejus." Similarly in *Zech. iii. 8*, "Servum meum adducam Orientem." (Compare *Luke i. 78*, where the **ἄνατολή ἐξ ὕψους** ("the day-spring from on high") is in the same version "*Oriens* ex alto.")

6646 Or, perhaps, "whom it (nature) feels in all its works."

6647 Alioquin.

6648 Alloquin a turba eorum et aliam frequentiam suadere: which perhaps is best rendered, "But from one rabble of gods to frame and teach men to believe in another set," etc.

6649 A nutricula.

6650 Inter somni difficultates.

6651 These were child's stories at Carthage in Tertullian's days.

as he finds so many names of Æons, so many marriages, so many offsprings, so many exits, so many issues, felicities *and* infelicities of a dispersed and mutilated Deity, will that man hesitate at once to pronounce that these are “the fables and endless genealogies” which the inspired apostle⁶⁶⁵² by anticipation condemned, whilst these seeds of heresy were even then shooting forth? Deservedly, therefore, must they be regarded as wanting in simplicity, and as merely prudent, who produce such fables not without difficulty, and defend them only indirectly, who at the same time do not thoroughly instruct those whom they teach. This, of course, shows their astuteness, if their lessons are disgraceful; their unkindness, if they are honourable. As for us, however, who are the simple folk, we know all about it. In short, this is the very first weapon with which we are armed for our encounter; it unmasks⁶⁶⁵³ and brings to view⁶⁶⁵⁴ the whole of their depraved system.⁶⁶⁵⁵ And in this we have the first augury of our victory; because even merely to point out that which is concealed with so great an outlay of artifice,⁶⁶⁵⁶ is to destroy it.

6652 Apostoli spiritus: see [1 Tim. i. 4.](#)

6653 Detectorem.

6654 Designatorem.

6655 Totius conscientiaë illorum.

6656 Tanto impendio.

Chapter IV.—The Heresy Traceable to Valentinus, an Able But Restless Man. Many Schismatical Leaders of the School Mentioned. Only One of Them Shows Respect to the Man Whose Name Designates the Entire School.

We know, I say, most fully their actual origin, and we are quite aware why we call them Valentinians, although they affect to disavow their name. They have departed, it is true,⁶⁶⁵⁷ from their founder, yet is their origin by no means destroyed; and even if it chance to be changed, the very change bears testimony to the fact. Valentinus had expected to become a bishop, because he was an able man both in genius and eloquence. Being indignant, however, that another obtained the dignity by reason of a claim which confessorship⁶⁶⁵⁸ had given him, he broke with the church of the true faith. Just like those (restless) spirits which, when roused by ambition, are usually inflamed with the desire of revenge, he applied himself with all his might⁶⁶⁵⁹ to exterminate the truth; and finding the clue⁶⁶⁶⁰ of a certain old opinion, he marked out a path for himself with the subtlety of a serpent. Ptolemæus afterwards entered on the same path, by distinguishing the names and the numbers of the Ænons into personal substances, which, however, he kept apart from God. Valentinus had included these in the very essence of the Deity, as senses and affections of motion. Sundry bypaths were then struck off therefrom, by Heracleon and Secundus and the magician Marcus. Theotimus worked hard about “the images of the law.” Valentinus, however, was as yet nowhere, and still the Valentinians derive their name from Valentinus. Axionicus at Antioch is the only man who at the present time does honour⁶⁶⁶¹ to the memory of Valentinus, by keeping his rules⁶⁶⁶² to the full. But this heresy is permitted to fashion itself into as many various shapes as a courtesan, who usually changes and adjusts her dress every day. And why not? When they review that spiritual seed of theirs in every man after this fashion, whenever they have hit upon any novelty, they forthwith call their presumption a revelation, their own perverse ingenuity a spiritual gift; but (they deny all) unity, *admitting only diversity*.⁶⁶⁶³ And thus we clearly see that, setting aside their customary dissimulation, most of them are in a divided state, being ready to say (and that sincerely) of certain points of their belief, “This is not so;” and, “I take this in a different sense;” and, “I do not admit

6657 Enim.

6658 Martyrii.

6659 Conversus.

6660 Semitam.

6661 Consolatur.

6662 Regularum: the particulars of his system. [Here comes in the word, borrowed from heresy, which shaped Monasticism in after times and created the *regular* orders.]

6663 Nec unitatem, sed diversitatem: scil. appellant.

that.” By this variety, indeed, innovation is stamped on the very face of their rules; besides which, it wears all the colourable features of ignorant conceits.⁶⁶⁶⁴

6664 Colores ignorantiarum.

Chapter V.—Many Eminent Christian Writers Have Carefully and Fully Refuted the Heresy. These the Author Makes His Own Guides.

My own path, however, lies along the original tenets⁶⁶⁶⁵ of their chief teachers, not with the self-appointed leaders of their promiscuous⁶⁶⁶⁶ followers. Nor shall we hear it said of us from any quarter, that we have of our own mind fashioned our own materials, since these have been already produced, both in respect of the opinions and their refutations, in carefully written volumes, by so many eminently holy and excellent men, not only those who have lived before us, but those also who were contemporary with the heresiarchs themselves: for instance Justin, philosopher and martyr;⁶⁶⁶⁷ Miltiades, the sophist⁶⁶⁶⁸ of the churches; Irenæus, that very exact inquirer into all doctrines;⁶⁶⁶⁹ our own Proculus, the model⁶⁶⁷⁰ of chaste old age and Christian eloquence. All these it would be my desire closely to follow in every work of faith, even as in this particular one. Now if there are no heresies at all but what those who refute them are supposed to have fabricated, then the apostle who predicted them⁶⁶⁷¹ must have been guilty of falsehood. If, however, there are heresies, they can be no other than those which are the subject of discussion. No writer can be supposed to have so much time on his hands⁶⁶⁷² as to fabricate materials which are already in his possession.



6665 Archetypis.

6666 Passivorum.

6667 [See Vol. I. pp. 171, 182, this series].

6668 In a good sense, from the elegance of his style.

6669 [See Vol. I. p. 326, of this series. Tertullian appropriates the work of Irenæus, (B. i.) against the Gnostics without further ceremony: translation excepted.]

6670 Dignitas. [Of this Proculus see Kaye, p. 55.]

6671 [1 Cor. xi. 19.](#)

6672 Otiosus.

Chapter VI.—Although Writing in Latin He Proposes to Retain the Greek Names of the Valentinian Emanations of Deity. Not to Discuss the Heresy But Only to Expose It. This with the Raillery Which Its Absurdity Merits.

In order then, that no one may be blinded by so many outlandish⁶⁶⁷³ names, collected together, and adjusted at pleasure,⁶⁶⁷⁴ and of doubtful import, I mean in this little work, wherein we merely undertake to propound this (heretical) mystery, to explain in what manner we are to use them. Now the rendering of some of these *names* from the Greek so as to produce an equally obvious sense of the word, is by no means an easy process: in the case of some others, the genders are not suitable; while others, again, are more familiarly known in their Greek form. For the most part, therefore, we shall use the Greek names; their meanings will be seen on the margins of the pages. Nor will the Greek be unaccompanied with the Latin *equivalents*; only these will be marked in lines above, for the purpose of explaining⁶⁶⁷⁵ the personal names, rendered necessary by the ambiguities of such of them as admit some different meaning. But although I must postpone all discussion, and be content at present with the mere exposition (of the heresy), still, wherever any scandalous feature shall seem to require a castigation, it must be attacked⁶⁶⁷⁶ by all means, if only with a passing thrust.⁶⁶⁷⁷ Let the reader regard it as the skirmish before the battle. It will be my drift to show how to wound⁶⁶⁷⁸ rather than to inflict deep gashes. If in any instance mirth be excited, this will be quite as much as the subject deserves. There are many things which deserve refutation in such a way as to have no gravity expended on them. Vain and silly topics are met with especial fitness by laughter. Even the truth may indulge in ridicule, because it is jubilant; it may play with its enemies, because it is fearless.⁶⁶⁷⁹ Only we must take care that its laughter be not unseemly, and so itself be laughed at; but wherever its mirth is decent, there it is a duty *to indulge it*. And so at last I enter on my task.

6673 Tam peregrinis.

6674 Compactis.

6675 Ut signum hoc sit.

6676 Or *stormed* perhaps; *expugnatio* is the word.

6677 Delibatione transfunctoria.

6678 Ostendam vulnera.

6679 Secura.

Chapter VII.—The First Eight Emanations, or Æons, Called the Ogdoad, are the Fountain of All the Others. Their Names and Descent Recorded.

Beginning with Ennius,⁶⁶⁸⁰ the Roman poet, he simply spoke of “the spacious saloons⁶⁶⁸¹ of heaven,”—either on account of their elevated site, or because in Homer he had read about Jupiter banqueting therein. As for *our* heretics, however, it is marvellous what storeys upon storeys⁶⁶⁸² and what heights upon heights, they have hung up, raised *and* spread out as a dwelling for each several god of theirs. Even our Creator has had arranged for Him the saloons of Ennius in the fashion of private rooms,⁶⁶⁸³ with chamber piled upon chamber, and assigned to each god by just as many staircases as there were heresies. The universe, *in fact*, has been turned into “rooms to let.”⁶⁶⁸⁴ Such storeys of the heavens you would imagine to be detached tenements in some happy isle of the blessed,⁶⁶⁸⁵ I know not where. There the god even of the Valentinians has his dwelling in the attics. They call him indeed, as to his essence, Αἰὼν τέλειος (*Perfect Æon*), but in respect of his personality, Προαρχή (*Before the Beginning*), Ἡ Ἀρχή (*The Beginning*), and sometimes Bythos (*Depth*),⁶⁶⁸⁶ a name which is most unfit for one who dwells in the heights above! They describe him as unbegotten, immense, infinite, invisible, and eternal; as if, when they described him to be such as we know that he ought to be, they straightway prove him to be a being who may be said to have had such an existence even before all things else. I indeed insist upon⁶⁶⁸⁷ it that he is such a being; and there is nothing which I detect in beings of this sort more obvious, than that they who are said to have been before all things—things, too, not their own—are found to be behind all things. Let it, however, be granted that this Bythos of theirs existed in the infinite ages of the past in the greatest and profoundest repose, in the extreme rest of a placid and, if I may use the expression, stupid divinity, such as Epicurus has enjoined upon us. And yet, although they would have him be alone, they assign to him a second person in himself and with himself, Ennoea (*Thought*), which they also call both Charis (*Grace*) and Sige (*Silence*).

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6680 Primus omnium.

6681 Cœnacula: dining halls.

6682 Supernitates supernitatum.

6683 Ædicularum.

6684 Meritorium.

6685 This is perhaps a fair rendering of “Insulam Feliculam credas tanta tabulata coelorum, nescio ubi.” “Insula” is sometimes “a detached house.” It is difficult to say what “Felicula” is; it seems to be a diminutive of Felix. It occurs in Arrian’s *Epictetica* as the name of a slave.

6686 We follow Tertullian’s mode of designation all through. He, for the most part, gives the Greek names in Roman letters, but not quite always.

6687 Expostulo: “I postulate as a first principle.”

Other things, as it happened, conduced in this most agreeable repose to remind him of the need of by and by producing out of himself the beginning of all things. This he deposits in lieu of seed in the genital region, as it were, of the womb of his Sige. Instantaneous conception is the result: Sige becomes pregnant, and is delivered, of course in silence; and her offspring is Nus (Mind), very like his father and his equal in every respect. In short, he alone is capable of comprehending the measureless and incomprehensible greatness of his father. Accordingly he is even called the Father himself, and the Beginning of all things, and, with great propriety, Monogenes (*The Only-begotten*). And yet not with absolute propriety, since he is not born alone. For along with him a female also proceeded, whose name was Veritas⁶⁶⁸⁸ (*Truth*). But how much more suitably might Monogenes be called Protogenes (*First begotten*), since he was begotten first! Thus Bythos and Sige, Nus and Veritas, are alleged to be the first fourfold team⁶⁶⁸⁹ of the Valentinian set (of gods)⁶⁶⁹⁰ the parent stock and origin of them all. For immediately when⁶⁶⁹¹ Nus received the function of a procreation of his own, he too produces out of himself Sermo (*the Word*) and Vita (*the Life*). If this latter existed not previously, of course she existed not in Bythos. And a pretty absurdity would it be, if *Life* existed not in God! However, this offspring also produces fruit, having for its mission the initiation of the universe and the formation of the entire Pleroma: it procreates Homo (*Man*) and Ecclesia (*the Church*). Thus you have an Ogdoad, a double Tetra, out of the conjunctions of males and females—the cells⁶⁶⁹² (so to speak) of the primordial Æons, the fraternal nuptials of the Valentinian gods, the simple originals⁶⁶⁹³ of heretical sanctity and majesty, a rabble⁶⁶⁹⁴—shall I say of criminals⁶⁶⁹⁵ or of deities?⁶⁶⁹⁶—at any rate, the fountain of all ulterior fecundity.

6688 Tertullian is responsible for this *Latin* word amongst the Greek names. The strange mixture occurs often.

6689 Quadriga.

6690 Factionis.

6691 Ibidem simul.

6692 Cellas.

6693 Census.

6694 Turbam.

6695 Criminum.

6696 Numinum.

Chapter VIII.—The Names and Descent of Other Æons; First Half a Score, Then Two More, and Ultimately a Dozen Besides. These Thirty Constitute the Pleroma. But Why Be So Capricious as to Stop at Thirty?

For, behold, when the second Tetrad—Sermo and Vita, Homo and Ecclesia⁶⁶⁹⁷—had borne fruit to the Father’s glory, having an intense desire of themselves to present to the Father something similar of their own, they bring other issue into being⁶⁶⁹⁸—conjugal of course, as the others were⁶⁶⁹⁹—by the union of the twofold nature. On the one hand, Sermo and Vita pour out at a birth a half-score of Æons; on the other hand, Homo and Ecclesia produce a couple more, so furnishing an equipoise to their parents, since this pair with the other ten make up just as many as they did themselves procreate. I now give the names of the half-score whom I have mentioned: Bythios (*Profound*) and Mixis (*Mixture*), Ageratos (*Never old*) and Henosis (*Union*), Autophyes (*Essential nature*) and Hedone (*Pleasure*), Acinetos (*Immoveable*) and Synchysis (*Commixture*), Monogenes (*Only-begotten*) and Macaria (*Happiness*). On the other hand, these will make up the number twelve (to which I have also referred): Paracletus (*Comforter*) and Pistis (*Faith*), Patricas (*Paternal*) and Elpis (*Hope*), Metricos (*Maternal*) and Agape (*Love*), Ainos (*Praise*)⁶⁷⁰⁰ and Synesis (*Intelligence*), Ecclesiasticus (*Son of Ecclesia*) and Macariotes (*Blessedness*), Theletus⁶⁷⁰¹ (*Perfect*) and Sophia (*Wisdom*). I cannot help⁶⁷⁰² here quoting from a like example what may serve to show the import of these names. In the schools of Carthage there was once a certain Latin rhetorician, an excessively cool fellow,⁶⁷⁰³ whose name was Phosphorus. He was personating a man of valour, and wound up⁶⁷⁰⁴ with saying, “I come to you, excellent citizens, from battle, with victory for myself, with happiness for you, full of honour, covered with glory, the favourite of fortune, the greatest of men, decked with triumph.” And forthwith his scholars begin to shout for the school of Phosphorus, φεῦ⁶⁷⁰⁵ (*ah!*). Are you a believer



6697 We everywhere give Tertullian’s own names, whether of Greek form or Latin. On their first occurrence we also give their English sense.

6698 Ebulliunt.

6699 Proinde conjugales.

6700 Of this name there are two forms—Αἶνος (*Praise*) and Ἄεινοῦς (*Eternal Mind*).

6701 Or Τελετός (*Teletus*). Another form of this Æon’s name is Φιλητός (*Philetus = Beloved*). Oehler always reads Theletus.

6702 Cogor.

6703 Frigidissimus.

6704 Cum virum fortem peroraret...inquit.

6705 Tertullian’s joke lies in the equivocal sense of this cry, which may mean either admiration and joy, or grief and rage.

in⁶⁷⁰⁶ Fortunata, and Hedone, and Acinetus, and Theletus? Then shout out your φεῦ for the school of Ptolemy.⁶⁷⁰⁷ This must be that mystery of the Pleroma, the fulness of the thirty-fold divinity. Let us see what special attributes⁶⁷⁰⁸ belong to these numbers—four, and eight, and twelve. Meanwhile with the number thirty all fecundity ceases. The generating force and power and desire of the Æons is spent.⁶⁷⁰⁹ As if there were not still left some strong rennet for curdling numbers.⁶⁷¹⁰ As if no other names were to be got out of the page's hall!⁶⁷¹¹ For why are there not sets of fifty and of a hundred procreated? Why, too, are there no comrades and boon companions⁶⁷¹² *named for them?*

6706 Audisti: interrogatively.

6707 See above, chap. iv. p. 505.

6708 Privilegia.

6709 Castrata.

6710 Tanta numerorum coagula.

6711 The *pædagogium* was either the place where boys were trained as pages (often for lewd purposes), or else the boy himself of such a character.

6712 Oehler reads, "hetæri (ἑταῖροι) et syntrophi." Another reading, supported by Rigaltius, is "sterceiæ," instead of the former word, which gives a very contemptuous sense, suitable to Tertullian's irony.

Chapter IX.—Other Capricious Features in the System. The Æons Unequal in Attributes. The Superiority of Nus; The Vagaries of Sophia Restrained by Horos. Grand Titles Borne by This Last Power.

But, further, there is an “acceptance⁶⁷¹³ of persons,” inasmuch as Nus alone among them all enjoys the knowledge of the immeasurable Father, joyous and exulting, while they of course pine in sorrow. To be sure, Nus, so far as in him lay, both wished and tried to impart to the others also all that he had learnt about the greatness and incomprehensibility of the Father; but his mother, Sige, interposed—she who (you must know) imposes silence even on her own beloved heretics;⁶⁷¹⁴ although they affirm that this is done at the will of the Father, who will have all to be inflamed with a longing after himself. Thus, while they are tormenting themselves with these internal desires, while they are burning with the secret longing to know the Father, the crime is almost accomplished. For of the twelve Æons which Homo and Ecclesia had produced, the youngest by birth (never mind the solecism, since Sophia (Wisdom) is her name), unable to restrain herself, breaks away without the society of her husband Theletus, in quest of the Father and contracts that kind of sin which had indeed arisen amongst the others who were conversant with Nus but had flowed on to this Æon,⁶⁷¹⁵ that is, to Sophia; as is usual with maladies which, after arising in one part of the body, spread abroad their infection to some other limb. The fact is,⁶⁷¹⁶ under a pretence of love to the Father, she was overcome with a desire to rival Nus, who alone rejoiced in the knowledge of the Father.⁶⁷¹⁷ But when Sophia, straining after impossible aims, was disappointed of her hope, she is both overcome with difficulty, and racked with affection. Thus she was all but swallowed up by reason of the charm and toil (of her research),⁶⁷¹⁸ and dissolved into the remnant of *his* substance;⁶⁷¹⁹ nor would there have been any other alternative for her than perdition, if she had not by good luck fallen in with Horus (*Limit*). He too had considerable power. He is the foundation of the great⁶⁷²⁰ universe, and, externally, the

6713 Exceptio.

6714 Tertullian has, above, remarked on the silent and secret practices of the Valentinians: see chap. i. p. 503.

6715 In hunc derivaret.

6716 Sed enim.

6717 De Patre.

6718 Præ vi dulcedinis et laboris.

6719 It is not easy to say what is the meaning of the words, “Et in reliquam substantiam dissolvi.” Rigaltius renders them: “So that whatever substance was left to her was being dissolved.” This seems to be forcing the sentence unnaturally. Irenæus (according to the Latin translator) says: “Resolutum in universam substantiam,” “Resolved into his (the Father’s) general substance,” i. 2, 2. [Vol. I. p. 317.]

6720 Illius.

guardian thereof. To him they give the additional names of Crux (*Cross*), and Lytrotes (*Re-deemer*), and Carpistes (*Emancipator*).⁶⁷²¹ When Sophia was thus rescued from danger, and tardily persuaded, she relinquished further research after the Father, found repose, and laid aside all her excitement,⁶⁷²² or Enthymesis (*Desire*), along with the passion which had come over her.

6721 So Grabe; but *Reaper*, according to Neander.

6722 Animationem.

Chapter X.—Another Account of the Strange Aberrations of Sophia, and the Restraining Services of Horus. Sophia Was Not Herself, After All, Ejected from the Pleroma, But Only Her Enthymesis.

But some dreamers have given another account of the aberration⁶⁷²³ and recovery of Sophia. After her vain endeavours, and the disappointment of her hope, she was, I suppose, disfigured with paleness and emaciation, and that neglect of her beauty which was natural to one who⁶⁷²⁴ was deploring the denial of the Father,—an affliction which was no less painful than his loss. Then, in the midst of all this sorrow, she by herself alone, without any conjugal help, conceived and bare a female offspring. Does this excite your surprise? Well, even the hen has the power of being able to bring forth by her own energy.⁶⁷²⁵ They say, too, that among vultures there are only females, which become parents alone. At any rate, she was another without aid from a male, and she began at last to be afraid that her end was even at hand. She was all in doubt about the treatment⁶⁷²⁶ of her case, and took pains at self-concealment. Remedies *could* nowhere *be found*. For where, then, should we have tragedies and comedies, from which to borrow the process of exposing what has been born without connubial modesty? While the thing is in this evil plight, she raises her eyes, and turns them to the Father. Having, however, striven in vain, as her strength was failing her, she falls to praying. Her entire kindred also supplicates in her behalf, and especially Nus. Why not? What was the cause of so vast an evil? Yet not a single casualty⁶⁷²⁷ befell Sophia without its effect. All her sorrows operate. Inasmuch as all that conflict of hers contributes to the origin of Matter. *Her* ignorance, *her* fear, *her* distress, become substances. Hereupon the Father by and by, being moved, produces in his own image, with a view to these *circumstances*⁶⁷²⁸ the Horos whom we have mentioned above; (and this he does) by means of Monogenes Nus, a male-female (Æon), because there is this variation of statement about the Father's⁶⁷²⁹ sex. They also go on to tell us that Horos is likewise called Metagogius, that is, "a conductor about," as well as Horothetes (*Setter of Limits*). By his assistance they declare that Sophia was checked in her illicit courses, and purified from all evils, and henceforth strengthened (in virtue), and restored to the conjugal state: (they add) that she indeed re-



6723 Exitum.

6724 Uti quæ.

6725 Comp. Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* vi. 2; Pliny, *H. N.* x. 58, 60.

6726 Ratione.

6727 Exitus.

6728 In hæc: in relation to the case of Sophia.

6729 Above, in chap. viii. we were told that Nus, who was so much like the Father, was himself called "Father."

mained within the bounds⁶⁷³⁰ of the Pleroma, but that her Enthymesis, with the accruing⁶⁷³¹ Passion, was banished by Horos, and crucified and cast out from the Pleroma,—even as they say, *Malum foras!* (Evil, avaunt!) Still, that was a spiritual essence, as being the natural impulse of an Æon, although without form or shape, inasmuch as it had apprehended nothing, and therefore was pronounced to be an infirm and feminine fruit.⁶⁷³²

6730 In censu.

6731 Appendicem.

6732 Literally, “infirm fruit and a female,” *i.e.* “had not shared in any male influence, but was a purely female production.” See our *Irenæus*, i. 4. [Vol. I. p. 321.]

Chapter XI.—The Profane Account Given of the Origin of Christ and the Holy Ghost Sternly Rebuked. An Absurdity Respecting the Attainment of the Knowledge of God Ably Exposed.

Accordingly, after the banishment of the Enthymesis, and the return of her mother Sophia to her husband, the (illustrious) Monogenes, the Nus,⁶⁷³³ released indeed from all care and concern of the Father, in order that he might consolidate all things, and defend and at last fix the Pleroma, and so prevent any concussion of the kind again, once more⁶⁷³⁴ emits a new couple⁶⁷³⁵ (blasphemously named). I should suppose the coupling of two males to be a very shameful thing, or else the one⁶⁷³⁶ must be a female, and so the male is discredited⁶⁷³⁷ by the female. One divinity is assigned in the case of all these, to procure a complete adjustment among the Æons. Even from this fellowship in a common duty two schools actually arise, two chairs,⁶⁷³⁸ and, to some extent,⁶⁷³⁹ the inauguration of a division in the doctrine of Valentinus. It was the function of Christ to instruct the Æons in the nature of their conjugal relations⁶⁷⁴⁰ (you see what the whole thing was, of course!), and how to form some guess about the unbegotten,⁶⁷⁴¹ and to give them the capacity of generating within themselves the knowledge of the Father; it being impossible to catch the idea of him, or comprehend him, or, in short, even to enjoy any perception of him, either by the eye or the ear, except through Monogenes (the Only-begotten). Well, I will even grant them what they allege about knowing the Father, so that they do not refuse us (the attainment of) the same. I would rather point out what is perverse in their doctrine, how they were taught that the incomprehensible part of the Father was the cause of their own perpetuity,⁶⁷⁴² whilst that which might be comprehended of him was the reason⁶⁷⁴³ of their generation and formation. Now by these several positions⁶⁷⁴⁴ the tenet, I suppose, is insinuated, that it is expedient for God not to be apprehended, on the very ground that the incomprehensibility of His



6733 Ille nus.

6734 Iterum: above.

6735 Copulationem: The profane reference is to Christ and the Spirit.

6736 [A shocking reference to the Spirit which I modify to *one* of the Divine Persons.]

6737 Vulneratur.

6738 Cathedræ.

6739 Quædam.

6740 Conjugiorum.

6741 Innati conjectationem.

6742 Perpetuitatis: *i.e.* “what was unchangeable in their condition and nature.”

6743 Rationem: perhaps “the means.”

6744 Hac dispositione.

character is the cause of perpetuity; whereas what in Him is comprehensible is productive, not of perpetuity, but rather of conditions which lack perpetuity—namely, nativity and formation. The Son, indeed, they made capable of comprehending the Father. The manner in which He is comprehended, the recently produced Christ fully taught them. To the Holy Spirit, however, belonged the special gifts, whereby they, having been all set on a complete par in respect of their earnestness to learn, should be enabled to offer up their thanksgiving, and be introduced to a true tranquillity.

Chapter XII.—The Strange Jumble of the Pleroma. The Frantic Delight of the Members Thereof. Their Joint Contribution of Parts Set Forth with Humorous Irony.

Thus they are all on the self-same footing in respect of form and knowledge, all of them having become what each of them severally is; none being a different being, because they are all what the others are.⁶⁷⁴⁵ They are all turned into⁶⁷⁴⁶ Nuses, into Homos, into Theletuses;⁶⁷⁴⁷ and so in the case of the females, into Siges, into Zoes, into Ecclesias, into Fortunatas, so that Ovid would have blotted out his own *Metamorphoses* if he had only known our larger one in the present day. Straightway they were reformed and thoroughly established, and being composed to rest from the truth, they celebrate the Father in a chorus⁶⁷⁴⁸ of praise in the exuberance of their joy. *The Father* himself also revelled⁶⁷⁴⁹ in the glad feeling; of course, because his children and grandchildren sang so well. And why should he not revel in absolute delight? Was not the Pleroma freed (from all danger)? What ship's captain⁶⁷⁵⁰ fails to rejoice even with indecent frolic? Every day we observe the uproarious ebullitions of sailors' joys.⁶⁷⁵¹ Therefore, as sailors always exult over the reckoning they pay in common, so do these Æons enjoy a similar pleasure, one as they now all are in form, and, as I may add,⁶⁷⁵² in feeling too. With the concurrence of even their new brethren and masters,⁶⁷⁵³ they contribute into one common stock the best and most beautiful thing with which they are severally adorned. Vainly, as I suppose. For if they were all one by reason by the above-mentioned thorough equalization, there was no room for the process of a common reckoning,⁶⁷⁵⁴ which for the most part consists of a pleasing variety. They all contributed the one good thing, which they all were. There would be, in all probability, a formal procedure⁶⁷⁵⁵ in the mode or in the form of the very equalization in question. Ac-

6745 Nemo aliud quia alteri omnes.

6746 Refunduntur.

6747 The reader will, of course, see that we give a familiar English plural to these names, as better expressing Tertullian's irony.

6748 Concinunt.

6749 Diffundebatur.

6750 Nauclerus: "pilot."

6751 Tertullian lived in a seaport at Carthage.

6752 Nedum.

6753 Christ and the Holy Spirit, [i.e. blasphemously.]

6754 Symbolæ ratio.

6755 Ratio.

cordingly, out of the donation which they contributed⁶⁷⁵⁶ to the honour and glory of the Father, they jointly fashion⁶⁷⁵⁷ the most beautiful constellation of the Pleroma, and its perfect fruit, Jesus. Him they also surname⁶⁷⁵⁸ Soter (*Saviour*) and Christ, and Sermo (*Word*) after his ancestors;⁶⁷⁵⁹ and lastly Omnia (*All Things*), as formed from a universally culled nosegay,⁶⁷⁶⁰ like the jay of Æsop, the Pandora of Hesiod, the bowl⁶⁷⁶¹ of Accius, the honey-cake of Nestor, the miscellany of Ptolemy. How much nearer the mark, if these idle title-mongers had called him Pancarpian, after certain Athenian customs.⁶⁷⁶² By way of adding external honour also to their wonderful puppet, they produce for him a bodyguard of angels of like nature. If this be their mutual condition, it may be all right; if, however, they are consubstantial with Soter (for I have discovered how doubtfully the case is stated), where will be his eminence when surrounded by attendants who are co-equal with himself?

6756 Ex ære collaticio. In reference to the common *symbola*, Tertullian adds the proverbial formula, “quod aiunt” (as they say).

6757 Compingunt.

6758 Cognominant.

6759 De patritus. Irenæus’ word here is πατρωνυμικῶς (“*patronymice*”).

6760 Ex omnium defloratione.

6761 Patina.

6762 Alluding to the olive-branch, ornamented with all sorts of fruits (compare our “Christmas tree”), which was carried about by boys in Athens on a certain festival (White and Riddle).

Chapter XIII.—First Part of the Subject, Touching the Constitution of the Pleroma, Briefly Recapitulated. Transition to the Other Part, Which is Like a Play Outside the Curtain.

In this series, then, is contained the first emanation of Æons, who are alike born, and are married, and produce offspring: there are the most dangerous fortunes of Sophia in her ardent longing for the Father, the most seasonable help of Horos, the expiation of her Enthymesis and accruing Passion, the instruction of Christ and the Holy Spirit, their tutelary reform of the Æons, the piebald ornamentation of Soter, the consubstantial retinue⁶⁷⁶³ of the angels. All that remains, according to you, is the fall of the curtain and the clapping of hands.⁶⁷⁶⁴ What remains in my opinion, however, is, that you should hear and take heed. At all events, these things are said to have been played out within the company of the Pleroma, the first scene of the tragedy. The rest of the play, however, is beyond the curtain—I mean outside of the Pleroma. And yet if it be such within the bosom of the Father, within the embrace of the guardian Horos, what must it be outside, in free space,⁶⁷⁶⁵ where God did not exist?



6763 Comparaticium antistatum. The latter word Oehler explains, “ante ipsum stantes;” the former, “quia genus eorum comparari poterat substantiæ Soteris” (so Rigaltus).

6764 The reader will see how obviously this is meant in Tertullian’s “Quod superest, inquis, vos valet et plaudite.” This is the well-known allusion to the end of the play in the old Roman theatre. See Quintilian, vi. 1, 52; comp. Horace, *A. P.* 155. Tertullian’s own parody to this formula, immediately after, is: “Immo quod superest, inquam, vos audite et proficite.

6765 In libero: which may be, however, “beyond the control of Horos.”

Chapter XIV.—The Adventures of Achamoth Outside the Pleroma. The Mission of Christ in Pursuit of Her. Her Longing for Christ. Horos' Hostility to Her. Her Continued Suffering.

For Enthymesis, or rather Achamoth—because by this inexplicable⁶⁷⁶⁶ name alone must she be henceforth designated—when in company with the vicious Passion, her inseparable companion, she was expelled to places devoid of that light which is the substance of the Pleroma, even to the void and empty region of Epicurus, she becomes wretched also because of the place of her banishment. She is indeed without either form or feature, even an untimely and abortive production. Whilst she is in this plight,⁶⁷⁶⁷ Christ descends from⁶⁷⁶⁸ the heights, conducted by Horos, in order to impart form to the abortion, out of his own energies, the form of substance only, but not of knowledge also. Still she is left with some property. She has restored to her the odour of immortality, in order that she might, under its influence, be overcome with the desire of better things than belonged to her present plight.⁶⁷⁶⁹ Having accomplished His merciful mission, not without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Christ returns to the Pleroma. It is usual out of an abundance of things⁶⁷⁷⁰ for names to be also forthcoming. Enthymesis came from action;⁶⁷⁷¹ whence Achamoth came is still a question; Sophia emanates from the Father, the Holy Spirit from an angel. She entertains a regret for Christ immediately after she had discovered her desertion by him. Therefore she hurried forth herself, in quest of the light of Him Whom she did not at all discover, as He operated in an invisible manner; for how else would she make search for His light, which was as unknown to her as He was Himself? Try, however, she did, and perhaps would have found Him, had not the self-same Horos, who had met her mother so opportunely, fallen in with the daughter quite as unseasonably, so as to exclaim at her Iao! just as we hear the cry “Porro Quirites” (“Out of the way, Romans!”), or else Fidem Cæsaris!” (“By the faith of Cæsar!”), whence (as they will have it) the name Iao comes to be found in the Scriptures.⁶⁷⁷² Being thus hindered from proceeding further, and being unable to sur-

6766 Ininterpretabili.

6767 Tertullian's “Dum ita rerum habet” is a copy of the Greek οὕτω τῶν πραγμάτων ἔχουσο.

6768 Deflectitur a.

6769 Casus sui.

6770 Rerum ex liberalitatibus.

6771 De actia fuit. [See Vol. I. pp. 320, 321.]

6772 It is not necessary, with Rigaltius, to make a difficulty about this, when we remember that Tertullian only refers to a silly conceit of the Valentinians touching the origin of the sacred name.

mount⁶⁷⁷³ the Cross, that is to say, Horos, because she had not yet practised herself in the part of Catullus' *Laureolus*,⁶⁷⁷⁴ and given over, as it were, to that passion of hers in a manifold and complicated mesh, she began to be afflicted with every impulse thereof, with sorrow,—because she had not accomplished her enterprise, with fear,—lest she should lose her life, even as she had lost the light, with consternation, *and* then with ignorance. But not as her mother (did she suffer this), for *she* was an Æon. Hers, however, was a worse suffering, considering her condition; for another tide of emotion still overwhelmed her, even of conversion to the Christ, by Whom she had been restored to life, and had been directed⁶⁷⁷⁵ to this very conversion.

6773 Or does “*nec habens supervolare crucem*” mean “being unable to *elude* the cross?” As if Tertullian meant, in his raillery, to say, that Achamoth had not the skill of the player who played the part of *Laureolus*. Although so often suspended on the gibbet, he had of course as often escaped the real penalty.

6774 A notorious robber, the hero of a play by Lutatius Catullus, who is said to have been crucified.

6775 *Temperata*.

Chapter XV.—Strange Account of the Origin of Matter, from the Various Affections of Achamoth. The Waters from Her Tears; Light from Her Smile.

Well, now, the Pythagoreans may learn, the Stoics may know, Plato himself (may discover), whence Matter, which they will have to be unborn, derived both its origin and substance for all this pile of the world—(a mystery) which not even the renowned⁶⁷⁷⁶ Mercurius Trismegistus, master (as he was) of all physical philosophy, thought out.⁶⁷⁷⁷ You have just heard of “Conversion,” one element in the “Passion” (we have so often mentioned). Out of this the whole life of the world,⁶⁷⁷⁸ and even that of the Demiurge himself, our God, is said to have had its being. Again, you have heard of “sorrow” and “fear.” From these all other created things⁶⁷⁷⁹ took their beginning. For from her⁶⁷⁸⁰ tears flowed the entire mass of waters. From this circumstance one may form an idea of the calamity⁶⁷⁸¹ which she encountered, so vast were the kinds of the tears wherewith she overflowed. She had salt teardrops, she had bitter, and sweet, and warm, and cold, and bituminous, and ferruginous, and sulphurous, and even⁶⁷⁸² poisonous, so that the Nonacris exuded therefrom which killed Alexander; and the river of the Lyncestæ⁶⁷⁸³ flowed from the same source, which produces drunkenness; and the Salmacis⁶⁷⁸⁴ was derived from the same source, which renders men effeminate. The rains of heaven Achamoth whimpered forth,⁶⁷⁸⁵ and we on our part are anxiously employed in saving up in our cisterns the very wails and tears of another. In like manner, from the “consternation” and “alarm” (of which we have also heard), bodily elements were derived. And yet amidst so many circumstances of solitude, in this vast prospect of destitution, she occasionally smiled at the recollection of the sight of Christ, and from this smile of joy light flashed forth. How great was this beneficence of Providence, which induced her to smile, and all that we might not linger for ever in the dark! Nor need you feel aston-



6776 Ille.

6777 Recogitavit.

6778 “Omnis anima hujus mundi” may, however, mean “every living soul.” So Bp. Kaye, *On Tertullian*, p. 487.

6779 Cetera.

6780 Achamoth’s.

6781 Exitum.

6782 Utique.

6783 These two rivers, with their peculiar qualities, are mentioned by Pliny, *H. N.* ii. 103; [and the latter by Milton against Salmasius.]

6784 Ovid. *Metam.* iv. 286.

6785 Pipiavit.

ished how⁶⁷⁸⁶ from her joy so splendid an element⁶⁷⁸⁷ could have beamed upon the world, when from her sadness even so necessary a provision⁶⁷⁸⁸ flowed forth for man. O illuminating smile! O irrigating tear! And yet it might now have acted as some alleviation amidst the horror of her situation; for she might have shaken off all the obscurity thereof as often as she had a mind to smile, even not to be obliged to turn suppliant to those who had deserted her.⁶⁷⁸⁹

6786 Qui.

6787 As light.

6788 Instrumentum: water is meant.

6789 Christ and the Holy Spirit. Oehler.

Chapter XVI.—Achamoth Purified from All Impurities of Her Passion by the Paraclete, Acting Through Soter, Who Out of the Above-Mentioned Impurities Arranges Matter, Separating Its Evil from the Better Qualities.

She, too, resorts to prayers, after the manner of her mother. But Christ, Who now felt a dislike to quit the Pleroma, appoints the Paraclete as his deputy. To her, therefore, he despatches Soter,⁶⁷⁹⁰ (who must be the same as Jesus, to whom the Father imparted the supreme power over the whole body of the Æons, by subjecting them all to him, so that “by him,” as the apostle says, “all things were created”⁶⁷⁹¹), with a retinue and cortege of contemporary angels, and (as one may suppose) with the dozen fasces. Hereupon Achamoth, being quite struck with the pomp of his approach, immediately covered herself with a veil, moved at first with a dutiful feeling of veneration and modesty; but afterwards she surveys him calmly, and his prolific equipage.⁶⁷⁹² With such energies as she had derived from the contemplation, she meets him with the salutation, Κύριε, χαῖρε (“Hail, Lord”)! Upon this, I suppose, he receives her, confirms and conforms her in knowledge, as well as cleanses⁶⁷⁹³ her from all the outrages of Passion, without, however, utterly severing them, with an indiscriminateness like that which had happened in the casualties which befell her mother. For such vices as had become inveterate and confirmed by practice he throws together; and when he had consolidated them in one mass, he fixes them in a separate body, so as to compose the corporeal condition of Matter, extracting out of her inherent, incorporeal passion such an aptitude of nature⁶⁷⁹⁴ as might qualify it to attain to a reciprocity of bodily substances,⁶⁷⁹⁵ which should emulate one another, so that a twofold condition of the substances might be arranged; *one* full of evil through its faults, *the other* susceptible of passion from conversion. This will prove to be Matter, which has set us in battle array against Hermogenes, and all others who presume to teach that God made all things out of Matter, not out of nothing.

6790 Saviour: another title of their Paraclete.

6791 Col. i. 16.

6792 Fructiferumque suggestum.

6793 Expumicat.

6794 Habilitatem atque naturam. We have treated this as a “hendiadys.”

6795 Æquiparantias corpulentiarum.

Chapter XVII.—Achamoth in Love with the Angels. A Protest Against the Lascivious Features of Valentinianism. Achamoth Becomes the Mother of Three Natures.

Then Achamoth, delivered at length from all her evils, wonderful to tell⁶⁷⁹⁶ goes on and bears fruit with greater results. For warmed with the joy of so great an escape from her unhappy condition, and at the same time heated with the actual contemplation of the angelic luminaries (one is ashamed) *to use such language*, (but there is no other way of expressing one's meaning), she during the emotion somehow became personally inflamed with desire⁶⁷⁹⁷ towards them, and at once grew pregnant with a spiritual conception, at the very image of which the violence of her joyous transport, and the delight of her prurient excitement had imbibed and impressed upon her. She at length gave birth to an offspring, and then there arose a leash of natures,⁶⁷⁹⁸ from a triad of causes,—one material, arising from her passion; another animal, arising from her conversion; the third spiritual, which had its origin in her imagination.



6796 Ecce.

6797 Subavit et ipsa.

6798 Trinitas generum.

Chapter XVIII.—Blasphemous Opinion Concerning the Origin of the Demiurge, Supposed to Be the Creator of the Universe.

Having become a better proficient⁶⁷⁹⁹ in practical conduct by the authority which, we may well suppose,⁶⁸⁰⁰ accrued to her from her three children, she determined to impart form to each of the natures. The spiritual one however, she was unable to touch, inasmuch as she was herself spiritual. For a participation in the same nature has, to a very great extent,⁶⁸⁰¹ disqualified like and consubstantial beings from having superior power over one another. Therefore⁶⁸⁰² she applies herself solely to the animal nature, adducing the instructions of Soter⁶⁸⁰³ (for her guidance). And first of all (she does) what cannot be described and read, and heard of, without an intense horror at the blasphemy thereof: she produces this God of ours, the God of all except of the heretics, the Father and Creator⁶⁸⁰⁴ and King of all things, which are inferior to him. For from him do they proceed. If, however, they proceed from him, and not rather from Achamoth, or if only secretly from her, without his perceiving her, he was impelled to all that he did, even like a puppet⁶⁸⁰⁵ which is moved from the outside. In fact, it was owing to this very ambiguity about the personal agency in the works which were done, that they coined for him the mixed name of (*Motherly Father*),⁶⁸⁰⁶ whilst his other appellations were distinctly assigned according to the conditions and positions of his works: so that they call him *Father* in relation to the animal substances to which they give the place of honour⁶⁸⁰⁷ on his right hand; whereas, in respect of the material substances which they banish⁶⁸⁰⁸ to his left hand, they name him *Demiurgus*; whilst *his title King* designates his authority over both classes, *nay* over the universe.⁶⁸⁰⁹

6799 Exercitior.

6800 Scilicet.

6801 Fere.

6802 Eo animo.

6803 See above, chap. xvi. p. 512.

6804 Demiurgum.

6805 Et velut sigillario. "*Sigillarium* est νευρόσπαστον," Oehler.

6806 The Father acting through and proceeding from his Mother.

6807 Commendant.

6808 Delegant.

6809 Communiter in universitatem.

Chapter XIX.—Palpable Absurdities and Contradictions in the System Respecting Achamoth and the Demiurge.

And yet there is not any agreement between the propriety of the names and that of the works, from which all the names are suggested; since all of them ought to have borne the name of her by whom the things were done, unless after all⁶⁸¹⁰ it turn out that they were not made by her. For, although they say that Achamoth devised these forms in honour of the Æons, they yet⁶⁸¹¹ transfer this *work* to Soter as its author, when they say that he⁶⁸¹² operated through her, so far as to give her the very image of the invisible and unknown Father—that is, the image which was unknown and invisible to the Demiurge; whilst he⁶⁸¹³ formed this same Demiurge in imitation⁶⁸¹⁴ of Nus the son of Propator;⁶⁸¹⁵ and whilst the archangels, who were the work of the Demiurge, resembled the other Æons. Now, when I hear of such images of the three, I ask, do you not wish me to laugh at these pictures of their most extravagant painter? At the female Achamoth, a picture of the Father? At the Demiurge, ignorant of his mother, much more so of his father? At the picture of Nus, ignorant of his father too, and the ministering angels, facsimiles of their lords? This is painting a mule from an ass, and sketching Ptolemy from Valentinus.

6810 Jam.

6811 Rursus.

6812 This is the force of the “qui” with the subjunctive verb.

6813 Soter.

6814 Effingeret.

6815 There seems to be a relative gradation meant among these *extra-Pleroma* beings, as there was among the Æons of the Pleroma; and, further, a relation between the two sets of beings—Achamoth bearing a relation to Propator, the Demiurge to Nus, etc.

Chapter XX—The Demiurge Works Away at Creation, as the Drudge of His Mother Achamoth, in Ignorance All the While of the Nature of His Occupation.

The Demiurge therefore, placed as he was without the limits of the Pleroma in the ignominious solitude of his eternal exile, founded a new empire—this world (of ours)—by clearing away the confusion and distinguishing the difference between the two substances which severally constituted it,⁶⁸¹⁶ the animal and the material. Out of incorporeal (elements) he constructs bodies, heavy, light, erect⁶⁸¹⁷ and stooping, celestial and terrene. He then completes the sevenfold stages of heaven itself, with his own throne above all. Whence he had the additional name of Sabbatum from the hebdomadal nature of his abode; his mother Achamoth, too, had the title Ogdoada, after the precedent of the primeval Ogdoad.⁶⁸¹⁸ These heavens, however, they consider to be intelligent,⁶⁸¹⁹ and sometimes they make angels of them, as indeed they do of the Demiurge himself; as also (they call) Paradise the fourth archangel, because they fix it above the third heaven, of the power of which Adam partook, when he sojourned there amidst its fleecy clouds⁶⁸²⁰ and shrubs.⁶⁸²¹ Ptolemy remembered perfectly well the prattle of his boyhood,⁶⁸²² that apples grew in the sea, and fishes on the tree; after the same fashion, he assumed that nut-trees flourished in the skies. The Demiurge does his work in ignorance, and therefore perhaps he is unaware that trees ought to be planted only on the ground. His mother, of course, knew all about it: how is it, then, that she did not suggest the fact, since she was actually executing her own operation? But whilst building up so vast an edifice for her son by means of those works, which proclaim him at once to be father, god and, king before the conceits of the Valentinians, why she refused to let them be known to even him,⁶⁸²³ is a question which I shall ask afterwards.



6816 Duplicis substantiæ illius disclusæ.

6817 Sublimantia.

6818 Ogdoadis primogenitalis: what Irenæus calls “the first-begotten and primary Ogdoad of the Pleroma” (See our *Irenæus*, Vol. I.; also above, chap. vii. p. 506.)

6819 Noëros.

6820 Nubeculas.

6821 Arbusculas.

6822 Puerilium dicibulorum.

6823 *Sibi* here must refer to the secondary agent of the sentence.

Chapter XXI.—The Vanity as Well as Ignorance of the Demiurge. Absurd Results from So Imperfect a Condition.

Meanwhile you must believe⁶⁸²⁴ that Sophia has the surnames of earth and of Mother—“Mother-Earth,” of course—and (what may excite your laughter still more heartily) even Holy Spirit. In this way they have conferred all honour on that female, I suppose even a beard, not to say other things. Besides,⁶⁸²⁵ the Demiurge had so little mastery over things,⁶⁸²⁶ on the score,⁶⁸²⁷ you must know,⁶⁸²⁸ of his inability to approach spiritual essences, (constituted as he was) of animal elements, that, imagining himself to be the only being, he uttered this soliloquy: “I am God, and beside me there is none else.”⁶⁸²⁹ But for all that, he at least was aware that he had not himself existed before. He understood, therefore, that he had been created, and that there must be a creator of a creature of some sort or other. How happens it, then, that he seemed to himself to be the only being, notwithstanding his uncertainty, and although he had, at any rate, some suspicion of the existence of some creator?

6824 Tenendum.

6825 Alioquin.

6826 Adeo rerum non erat compos.

6827 Censu.

6828 Scilicet.

6829 [Isa. xlv. 5; xlv. 9.](#)

Chapter XXII.—Origin of the Devil, in the Criminal Excess of the Sorrow of Achamoth. The Devil, Called Also Munditenens, Actually Wiser Than the Demiurge, Although His Work.

The odium felt amongst them⁶⁸³⁰ against the devil is the more excusable,⁶⁸³¹ even because the peculiarly sordid character of his origin justifies it.⁶⁸³² For he is supposed by them to have had his origin in that criminal excess⁶⁸³³ of her⁶⁸³⁴ sorrow, from which they also derive the birth of the angels, and demons, and all the wicked spirits. Yet they affirm that the devil is the work of the Demiurge, and they call him Munditenens⁶⁸³⁵ (*Ruler of the World*), and maintain that, as he is of a spiritual nature, he has a better knowledge of the things above than the Demiurge, an animal being. He deserves from them the pre-eminence which all heresies provide him with.

6830 Infamia apud illos.

6831 Tolerabilior.

6832 Capit: "capax est," nimirum "infamiae" (Fr. Junius).

6833 Ex nequitia.

6834 Achamoth's.

6835 Irenæus' word is Κοσμοκράτωρ; see also [Eph. vi. 12](#).

Chapter XXIII.—The Relative Positions of the Pleroma. The Region of Achamoth, and the Creation of the Demiurge. The Addition of Fire to the Various Elements and Bodies of Nature.

Their most eminent powers, moreover, they confine within the following limits, as in a citadel. In the most elevated of all summits presides the tricenary Pleroma,⁶⁸³⁶ Horos marking off its boundary line. Beneath it, Achamoth occupies the intermediate space for her abode,⁶⁸³⁷ treading down her son. For under her comes the Demiurge in his own Hebdomad, or rather the Devil, *sojourning* in this world in common with ourselves, formed, as has been said above, of the same elements and the same body, out of the most profitable calamities of Sophia; inasmuch as, (if it had not been for these,) our spirit would have had no space for inhaling and ejecting⁶⁸³⁸ air—that delicate vest of all corporeal creatures, that revealer of all colours, that instrument of the seasons—if the sadness of Sophia had not filtered it, just as her fear did the animal existence, and her conversion the Demiurge himself. Into all these elements and bodies fire was fanned. Now, since they have not as yet explained to us the original sensation of this⁶⁸³⁹ in Sophia, I will on my own responsibility⁶⁸⁴⁰ conjecture that its spark was struck out of the delicate emotions⁶⁸⁴¹ of her (feverish grief). For you may be quite sure that, amidst all her vexations, she must have had a good deal of fever.⁶⁸⁴²



6836 Above, in chap. viii., he has mentioned the Pleroma as “the fulness of the thirtyfold divinity.”

6837 Metatur.

6838 Reciprocandi.

6839 Fire.

6840 Ego.

6841 Motiunculis.

6842 Febricitasse.

Chapter XXIV.—The Formation of Man by the Demiurge. Human Flesh Not Made of the Ground, But of a Nondescript Philosophic Substance.

Such being their conceits respecting God, or, if you like,⁶⁸⁴³ the gods, of what sort are their figments concerning man? For, after he had made the world, the Demiurge turns his hands to man, and chooses for him as his substance not any portion of “the dry land,” as they say, of which alone we have any knowledge (although it was, at that time, not yet dried by the waters becoming separated from the earthy residuum, and only afterwards became dry), but of the invisible substance of that matter, which philosophy indeed dreams of, from its fluid and fusible composition, the origin of which I am unable to imagine, because it exists nowhere. Now, since fluidity and fusibility are qualities of liquid matter, and since everything liquid flowed from Sophia’s tears, we must, as a necessary conclusion, believe that muddy earth is constituted of Sophia’s eye-rheums and viscid discharges,⁶⁸⁴⁴ which are just as much the dregs of tears as mud is the sediment of waters. Thus does the Demiurge mould man as a potter does his clay, and animates him with his own breath. Made after his image and likeness, he will therefore be both material and animal. A fourfold being! For in respect of his “image,” he must be deemed clayey,⁶⁸⁴⁵ that is to say, material, although the Demiurge is not composed of matter; but as to his “likeness,” he is animal, for such, too, is the Demiurge. You have two (of his constituent elements). Moreover, a coating of flesh was, as they allege, afterwards placed over the clayey substratum, and it is this tunic of skin which is susceptible of sensation.

6843 Vel.

6844 Ex pituitis et gramis.

6845 Choicus.

Chapter XXV.—An Extravagant Way of Accounting for the Communication of the Spiritual Nature to Man. It Was Furtively Managed by Achamoth, Through the Unconscious Agency of Her Son.

In Achamoth, moreover, there was inherent a certain property of a spiritual germ, of her mother Sophia's substance; and Achamoth herself had carefully severed off (the same quality), and implanted it in her son the Demiurge, although he was actually unconscious of it. It is for you to imagine⁶⁸⁴⁶ the industry of this clandestine arrangement. For to this end had she deposited and concealed (this germ), that, whenever the Demiurge came to impart life to Adam by his inbreathing, he might at the same time draw off from the vital principle⁶⁸⁴⁷ the spiritual seed, and, as by a pipe, inject it into the clayey nature; in order that, being then fecundated in the material body as in a womb, and having fully grown there, it might be found fit for one day receiving the perfect Word.⁶⁸⁴⁸ When, therefore, the Demiurge commits to Adam the transmission of his own vital principle,⁶⁸⁴⁹ the spiritual man lay hid, *although* inserted by his breath, and at the same time introduced into the body, because the Demiurge knew no more about his mother's seed than about herself. To this seed they give the name of Ecclesia (*the Church*), the mirror of the church above, and the perfection⁶⁸⁵⁰ of man; tracing this *perfection* from Achamoth, just as they do the animal nature from the Demiurge, the clayey material of the body (they derive) from the primordial substance,⁶⁸⁵¹ the flesh from Matter. So that you have a new Geryon here, only a fourfold (rather than a threefold) monster.

6846 Accipe.

6847 Anima derivaret.

6848 Sermoni perfectio.

6849 Traducem animæ suæ.

6850 Censum.

6851 Or, the substance of Ἀρχή.

Chapter XXVI.—The Three Several Natures—The Material, the Animal, and the Spiritual, and Their Several Destinations. The Strange Valentinian Opinion About the Structure of Soter’s Nature.

In like manner they assign to each of them a separate end.⁶⁸⁵² To the material, that is to say the carnal (nature), which they also call “the left-handed,” they assign undoubted destruction; to the animal (nature), which they also call “the right-handed,” a doubtful issue, inasmuch as it oscillates between the material and the spiritual, and is sure to fall at last on the side to which it has mainly gravitated. As regards the spiritual, however, (they say) that it enters into the formation of the animal, in order that it may be educated in company with it and be disciplined by repeated intercourse with it. For the animal (nature) was in want of training even by the senses: for this purpose, accordingly, was the whole structure of the world provided; for this purpose also did Soter (*the Saviour*) present Himself in the world—even for the salvation of the animal (nature). By yet another arrangement they will have it that He, in some prodigious way,⁶⁸⁵³ clothed Himself with the primary portions⁶⁸⁵⁴ of those substances, the whole of which He was going to restore to salvation; in such wise that He assumed the spiritual nature from Achamoth, whilst He derived the animal (being), Christ, afterwards from the Demiurge; His corporal substance, however, which was constructed of an animal nature (only with wonderful and indescribable skill), He wore for a dispensational purpose, in order that He might, in spite of His own unwillingness,⁶⁸⁵⁵ be capable of meeting persons, and of being seen and touched by them, and even of dying. But there was nothing material assumed by Him, inasmuch as *that* was incapable of salvation. As if He could possibly have been more required by any others than by those who were in want of salvation! And all this, in order that by severing the condition of our flesh from Christ they may also deprive it of the hope of salvation!



6852 Exitum.

6853 Monstruosum illum.

6854 Proscicias induisse. Irenæus says, “Assumed the first-fruits,” τὰς ἀπαρχάς.

6855 Ingratis.

Chapter XXVII.—The Christ of the Demiurge, Sent into the World by the Virgin. Not of Her. He Found in Her, Not a Mother, But Only a Passage or Channel. Jesus Descended Upon Christ, at His Baptism, Like a Dove; But, Being Incapable of Suffering, He Left Christ to Die on the Cross Alone.

I now adduce⁶⁸⁵⁶ (what they say) concerning Christ, upon whom some of them engraft Jesus with so much licence, that they foist into Him a spiritual seed together with an animal *inflatus*. Indeed, I will not undertake to describe⁶⁸⁵⁷ these incongruous crammings,⁶⁸⁵⁸ which they have contrived in relation both to their men and their gods. Even the Demiurge has a Christ of His own—His natural Son. An animal, in short, produced by Himself, proclaimed by the prophets—His position being one which must be decided by prepositions; in other words, He was produced *by means of a virgin*, rather than *of a virgin*! On the ground that, having descended into the virgin rather in the manner of a passage through her than of a birth by her, He came into existence *through* her, not *of* her—not experiencing a mother in her, but nothing more than a way. Upon this same Christ, therefore (so they say), Jesus descended in the sacrament of baptism, in the likeness of a dove. Moreover, there was even in Christ accruing from Achamoth the condiment of a spiritual seed, in order of course to prevent the corruption of all the other stuffing.⁶⁸⁵⁹ For after the precedent of the principal Tetrads, they guard him with four substances—the spiritual one of Achamoth, the animal one of the Demiurge, the corporeal one, which cannot be described, and that of Soter, or, in other phrase, the columbine.⁶⁸⁶⁰ As for Soter (*Jesus*), he remained in Christ to the last, impassible, incapable of injury, incapable of apprehension. By and by, when it came to a question of capture, he departed from him during the examination before Pilate. In like manner, his mother's seed did not admit of being injured, being equally exempt from all manner of outrage,⁶⁸⁶¹ and being undiscovered even by the Demiurge himself. The animal and carnal Christ, however, does suffer after the fashion⁶⁸⁶² of the superior Christ, who, for the purpose of producing Achamoth, had been stretched upon the cross, that is, Horos, in a substantial though not a cognizable⁶⁸⁶³ form. In this manner do they reduce all things to mere images—Christians themselves being indeed nothing but imaginary beings!

6856 Reddo.

6857 Nescio quæ.

6858 Fartilia.

6859 Farsura.

6860 That which descended like a dove.

6861 Æque insubditivam.

6862 In delineationem.

6863 Agnitionali.

Chapter XXVIII.—The Demiurge Cured of His Ignorance by the Saviour's Advent, from Whom He Hears of the Great Future in Store for Himself.

Meanwhile the Demiurge, being still ignorant of everything, although he will actually have to make some announcement himself by the prophets, but is quite incapable of even this part of his duty (because they divide authority over the prophets⁶⁸⁶⁴ between Achamoth, the Seed, and the Demiurge), no sooner heard of the advent of Soter (*Saviour*) than he runs to him with haste and joy, with all his might, like the centurion in the Gospel.⁶⁸⁶⁵ And being enlightened by him on all points, he learns from him also of his own prospect how that he is to succeed to his mother's place. Being thenceforth free from all care, he carries on the administration of this world, mainly under the plea of protecting the church, for as long a time as may be necessary and proper.



6864 Prophetiale patrocinium.

6865 [Matt. viii. 5, 6.](#)

Chapter XXIX.—The Three Natures Again Adverted to. They are All Exemplified Amongst Men. For Instance, by Cain, and Abel, and Seth.

I will now collect from different sources, by way of conclusion, what they affirm concerning the dispensation⁶⁸⁶⁶ of the whole human race. Having at first stated their views as to *man's* threefold nature—which was, however, united in one⁶⁸⁶⁷ in the case of Adam—they then proceed after him to divide it (into three) with their especial characteristics, finding opportunity for such distinction in the posterity of Adam himself, in which occurs a threefold division as to moral differences. Cain and Abel, and Seth, who were in a certain sense the sources of the human race, become the fountain-heads of just as many qualities⁶⁸⁶⁸ of nature and essential character.⁶⁸⁶⁹ The material nature,⁶⁸⁷⁰ which had become reprobate for salvation, they assign to Cain; the animal nature, which was poised between divergent hopes, they find⁶⁸⁷¹ in Abel; the spiritual, preordained for certain salvation, they store up⁶⁸⁷² in Seth. In this way also they make a twofold distinction among souls, as to their property of good and evil—according to the material condition derived from Cain, or the animal from Abel. Men's spiritual state they derive over and above the other conditions,⁶⁸⁷³ from Seth adventitiously,⁶⁸⁷⁴ not in the way of nature, but of grace,⁶⁸⁷⁵ in such wise that Achamoth infuses it⁶⁸⁷⁶ among superior beings like rain⁶⁸⁷⁷ into good souls, that is, those who are enrolled in the animal class. Whereas the material class—in other words, those which are bad souls—they say, never receive the blessings of salvation,⁶⁸⁷⁸ for that nature they have pronounced to be incapable of any change or reform in its natural condition.⁶⁸⁷⁹ This grain, then, of spiritual seed is modest and very small when cast from her hand, but under her in-

6866 De dispositione.

6867 Inunitam.

6868 Argumenta.

6869 Essentiæ.

6870 Choicum: "the clayey." Having the doubtful issues, which arise from freedom of the will (Oehler).

6871 Recondunt: or, "discover."

6872 Recondunt: or, "discover."

6873 Superducunt.

6874 De obvenientia.

6875 Indulgentiam.

6876 The "quos" here relates to "spiritalem statum," but expressing the *sense* rather than the grammatical propriety, refers to the plural idea of "good souls" (Oehler).

6877 Depluat.

6878 Salutaria.

6879 We have tried to retain the emphatic repetition, "inreformabilem naturæ naturam."

struction⁶⁸⁸⁰ increases and advances into full conviction, as we have already said;⁶⁸⁸¹ and the souls, on this very account, so much excelled all others, that the Demiurge, even then in his ignorance, held them in great esteem. For it was from their list that he had been accustomed to select men for kings and for priests; and these even now, if they have once attained to a full and complete knowledge of these foolish conceits of theirs,⁶⁸⁸² since they are already naturalized in the fraternal bond of the spiritual state, will obtain a sure salvation, nay, one which is on all accounts their due.

6880 Eruditu hujus.

6881 Above, in ch. xxv. p. 515.

6882 Istarum næniarum.

Chapter XXX.—The Lax and Dangerous Views of This Sect Respecting Good Works.
That These are Unnecessary to the Spiritual Man.

For this reason it is that they neither regard works⁶⁸⁸³ as necessary for themselves, nor do they observe any of the calls of duty, eluding even the necessity of martyrdom on any pretence which may suit their pleasure. For this rule, (they say), is enjoined upon the animal seed, in order that the salvation, which we do not possess by any privilege of our state,⁶⁸⁸⁴ we may work out by right⁶⁸⁸⁵ of our conduct. Upon us, who are of an imperfect nature,⁶⁸⁸⁶ is imprinted the mark of this (animal) seed, because we are reckoned *as sprung* from the loves of Theletus,⁶⁸⁸⁷ and consequently as an abortion, just as their mother was. But *woe* to us indeed, should we in any point transgress the yoke of discipline, should we grow dull in the works of holiness and justice, should we desire to make our confession anywhere else, I know not where, and not before the powers of this world at the tribunals of the chief magistrates!⁶⁸⁸⁸ As for them, however, they may prove their nobility by the dissoluteness⁶⁸⁸⁹ of their life and their diligence⁶⁸⁹⁰ in sin, since Achamoth fawns on them as her own; for she, too, found sin no unprofitable pursuit. Now it is held amongst them, that, for the purpose of honouring the celestial marriages,⁶⁸⁹¹ it is necessary to contemplate and celebrate the mystery always by cleaving to a companion, that, is to a woman; otherwise (they account any man) degenerate, and a bastard⁶⁸⁹² to the truth, who spends his life in the world without loving a woman or uniting himself to her. Then what is to become of the eunuchs whom we see amongst them?



6883 Operations: the doing of (good) works.”

6884 As, forsooth, we should in the *spiritual* state.

6885 Suffragio.

6886 Being animal, not spiritual.

6887 See above. ch. ix. x. p. 508.

6888 See *Scorpiace*, ch. x. *infra*.

6889 Passivitate.

6890 “Diligentia” may mean “proclivity” (Rigalt.).

6891 Of the Æons.

6892 Nec legitimus: “not a lawful son.”

Chapter XXXI.—At the Last Day Great Changes Take Place Amongst the Æons as Well as Among Men. How Achamoth and the Demiurge are Affected Then. Irony on the Subject.

It remains that we say something about the end of the world,⁶⁸⁹³ and the dispensing of reward. As soon as Achamoth has completed the full harvest of her seed, and has then proceeded to gather it into her garner, or, after it has been taken to the mill and ground to flour, has hidden it in the kneading-trough with yeast until the whole be leavened, then shall the end speedily come.⁶⁸⁹⁴ Then, to begin with, Achamoth herself removes from the middle region,⁶⁸⁹⁵ from the second stage to the highest, since she is restored to the Pleroma: she is immediately received by that paragon of perfection⁶⁸⁹⁶ Soter, as her spouse of course, and they two afterwards consummate⁶⁸⁹⁷ new nuptials. This must be the spouse of the Scripture,⁶⁸⁹⁸ the Pleroma of espousals (for you might suppose that the Julian laws⁶⁸⁹⁹ were interposing, since there are these migrations from place to place). In like manner, the Demiurge, too, will then change the scene of his abode from the celestial Hebdomad⁶⁹⁰⁰ to the higher regions, to his mother's now vacant saloon⁶⁹⁰¹—by this time knowing her, without however seeing her. (A happy coincidence!) For if he had caught a glance of her, he would have preferred never to have known her.

6893 De consummatione.

6894 Urgebit.

6895 See above, ch. xxiii. p. 514.

6896 Compacticius ille.

6897 Fient.

6898 Query, the Holy Scriptures, or the writings of the Valentinians?

6899 Very severe against adultery, and even against celibacy.

6900 In ch. xx. this "scenam de Hebdomade cælesti" is called "cælorum septemPLICEM scenam" = "the sevenfold stage of heaven."

6901 Cœnaculum. See above, ch. vii. p. 506.

Chapter XXXII.—Indignant Irony Exposing the Valentinian Fable About the Judicial Treatment of Mankind at the Last Judgment. The Immorality of the Doctrine.

As for the human race, its end will be to the following effect:—To all which bear the earthy⁶⁹⁰² and material mark there accrues an entire destruction, because “all flesh is grass,”⁶⁹⁰³ and amongst these is the soul of mortal man, except when it has found salvation by faith. The souls of just men, that is to say, our souls, will be conveyed to the Demiurge in the abodes of the middle region. We are duly thankful; we shall be content to be classed with our god, in whom lies our own origin.⁶⁹⁰⁴ Into the palace of the Pleroma nothing of the animal nature is admitted—nothing but the spiritual swarm of Valentinus. There, then, the first process is the despoiling of men themselves, that is, men within the Pleroma.⁶⁹⁰⁵ Now this despoiling consists of the putting off of the souls in which they appear to be clothed, which they will give back to their Demiurge as they had obtained⁶⁹⁰⁶ them from him. They will then become wholly intellectual spirits—impalpable,⁶⁹⁰⁷ invisible⁶⁹⁰⁸—and in this state will be readmitted invisibly to the Pleroma—stealthily, if the case admits of the idea.⁶⁹⁰⁹ What then? They will be dispersed amongst the angels, the attendants on Soter. As sons, do you suppose? Not at all. As servants, then? No, not even so. Well, as phantoms? Would that it were nothing more! Then in what capacity, if you are ashamed to tell us? In the capacity of brides. Then will they end⁶⁹¹⁰ their Sabine rapes with the sanction of wedlock. This will be the guerdon of the spiritual, this the recompense of their faith! Such fables have their use. Although but a Marcus or a Gaius,⁶⁹¹¹ full-grown in this flesh of ours, with a beard and such like proofs (of virility,) it may be a stern husband, a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather (never mind what, in fact, if only a male), you may perhaps in the bridal-chamber of the Pleroma—I have already said so tacitly⁶⁹¹²—even become the parent by an

6902 Choicæ: “clayey.”

6903 *Isa. xl. 6.*

6904 See above, in ch. xxiv. p. 515.

6905 Interiores.

6906 Averterant.

6907 Neque detentui obnoxii.

6908 Neque conspectui obnoxii.

6909 Si ita est: or, “since such is the fact.”

6910 Claudent.

6911 But slaves, in fact.

6912 This parenthetic clause, “tacendo jam dixi,” perhaps means, “I say this with shame,” “I would rather not have to say it.”

angel of some Æon of high numerical rank.⁶⁹¹³ For the right celebration of these nuptials, instead of the torch and veil, I suppose that secret fire is then to burst forth, which, after devastating the whole existence of things, will itself also be reduced to nothing at last, after everything has been reduced to ashes; and so their fable too will be ended.⁶⁹¹⁴ But I, too, am no doubt a rash man, in having exposed so great a mystery in so derisive a way: I ought to be afraid that Achamoth, who did not choose to make herself known even to her own son, would turn mad, that Theletus would be enraged, that Fortune⁶⁹¹⁵ would be irritated. But I am yet a liege-man of the Demiurge. I have to return after death to the place where there is no more giving in marriage, where I have to be clothed upon rather than to be despoiled,—where, even if I am despoiled of my sex, I am classed with angels—not a male angel, nor a female one. There will be no one to do aught against me, nor will they then find any male energy in me.



6913 The common reading is, “Onesimum Æonem,” an Æon called Onesimus, in supposed allusion to Philemon’s Onesimus. But this is too far-fetched. Oehler discovers in “Onesimum” the corruption of some higher number ending in “esimum.”

6914 This is Oehler’s idea of “et nulla jam fabula.” Rigaltius, however, gives a good sense to this clause: “All will come true at last; there will be no fable.”

6915 The same as *Macariotes*, in ch. viii. above, p. 507.

Chapter XXXIII.—These Remaining Chapters an Appendix to the Main Work. In This Chapter Tertullian Notices a Difference Among Sundry Followers of Ptolemy, a Disciple of Valentinus.

I shall now at last produce, by way of *finale*,⁶⁹¹⁶ after so long a story, those points which, not to interrupt the course of it, and by the interruption distract the reader's attention, I have preferred reserving to this place. They have been variously advanced by those who have improved on⁶⁹¹⁷ the doctrines of Ptolemy. For there have been in his school "disciples above their master," who have attributed to their Bythus two wives—Cogitatio (*Thought*) and Voluntas (*Will*). For Cogitatio alone was not sufficient wherewith to produce any offspring, although from the two wives procreation was most easy to him. The former bore him Monogenes (*Only-Begotten*) and Veritas (*Truth*). Veritas was a female after the likeness of Cogitatio; Monogenes a male bearing a resemblance to Voluntas. For it is the strength of Voluntas which procures the masculine nature,⁶⁹¹⁸ inasmuch as she affords efficiency to Cogitatio.

6916 Velut epicitharisma.

6917 Emendatoribus.

6918 Censum.

Chapter XXXIV.—Other Varying Opinions Among the Valentinians Respecting the Deity, Characteristic Raillery.

Others of purer mind, mindful of the honour of the Deity, have, for the purpose of freeing him from the discredit of even single wedlock, preferred assigning no sex whatever to Bythus; and therefore very likely they talk of “this deity” in the neuter gender rather than “this god.” Others again, on the other hand, speak of him as both masculine and feminine, so that the worthy chronicler Fenestella must not suppose that an hermaphrodite was only to be found among the good people of Luna.

Chapter XXXV.—Yet More Discrepancies. Just Now the Sex of Bythus Was an Object of Dispute; Now His Rank Comes in Question. Absurd Substitutes for Bythus Criticised by Tertullian.

There are some who do not claim the first place for Bythus, but only a lower one. They put their Ogdoad in the foremost rank; itself, however, derived from a Tetrad, but under different names. For they put Pro-arche (*Before the Beginning*) first, Anennœtos (*Inconceivable*) second, Arrhetos (*Indescribable*) third, Aoratos (*Invisible*) fourth. Then after Pro-arche they say Arche (*Beginning*) came forth and occupied the first and the fifth place; from Anennœtos came Acataleptos (*Incomprehensible*) in the second and the sixth place; from Arrhetos came Anonomastos (*Nameless*) in the third and the seventh place; from Aoratos⁶⁹¹⁹ came Agennetos (*Unbegotten*) in the fourth and the eighth place. Now by what method he arranges this, that each of these Æons should be born in two places, and that, too, at such intervals, I prefer to be ignorant of than to be informed. For what can be right in a system which is propounded with such absurd particulars?

6919 Tertullian, however, here gives the Latin synonyme, *Invisibilis*.

Chapter XXXVI.—Less Reprehensible Theories in the Heresy. Bad is the Best of Valentinianism.

How much more sensible are they who, rejecting all this tiresome nonsense, have refused to believe that any one Æon has descended from another by steps like these, which are really neither more nor less *Gemonian*;⁶⁹²⁰ but that on a given signal⁶⁹²¹ the eight-fold emanation, of which we have heard,⁶⁹²² issued all at once from the Father and His Ennoea (*Thought*),⁶⁹²³—that it is, in fact, from His mere motion that they gain their designations. When, as they say, He thought of producing offspring, He on that account gained the name of Father. After producing, because the issue which He produced was true, He received the name of *Truth*. When He wanted Himself to be manifested, He on that account was announced as *Man*. Those, moreover, whom He preconceived in His thought when He produced them, were then designated *the Church*. As man, He uttered His *Word*; and so this *Word* is His first-begotten Son, and to the *Word* was added *Life*. And by this process the first Ogdoad was completed. However, the whole of this tiresome story is utterly poor and weak.



6920 The “Gemonian steps” on the Aventine led to the Tiber, to which the bodies of executed criminals were dragged by hooks, to be cast into the river.

6921 Mappa, quod aiunt, missa: a proverbial expression.

6922 Istam.

6923 See above, ch. vii. p. 506.

Chapter XXXVII.—Other Turgid and Ridiculous Theories About the Origin of the Æons and Creation, Stated and Condemned.

Now listen to some other buffooneries⁶⁹²⁴ of a master who is a great swell among them,⁶⁹²⁵ and who has pronounced his *dicta* with an even priestly authority. They run thus: There comes, says he, before all things Pro-arche, the inconceivable, and indescribable, and nameless, which I for my own part call Monotes (*Solitude*). With this was associated another power, to which also I give the name of Henotes (*Unity*). Now, inasmuch as Monotes and Henotes—that is to say, Solitude and Union—were only one being, they produced, and yet not in the way of production,⁶⁹²⁶ the intellectual, innascible, invisible beginning of all things, which human language⁶⁹²⁷ has called Monad (*Solitude*).⁶⁹²⁸ This has inherent in itself a consubstantial force, which it calls Unity⁶⁹²⁹ These powers, accordingly, Solitude or Solitariness, *and* Unity, or Union, propagated all the other emanations of Æons.⁶⁹³⁰ Wonderful distinction, to be sure! Whatever change Union and Unity may undergo, Solitariness and Solitude is profoundly supreme. Whatever designation you give the power, it is one and the same.

6924 Oehler gives good reasons for the reading “ingenia circulatoria,” instead of the various readings of other editors.

6925 Insignioris apud eos magistri.

6926 Non proferentes. Another reading is “non proserentes” (not generating).

6927 Sermo.

6928 Or, solitariness.

6929 Or, Union.

6930 Compare our Irenæus, I. 2, 3. [Vol. I. p. 316.]

Chapter XXXVIII.—Diversity in the Opinions of Secundus, as Compared with the General Doctrine of Valentinus.

Secundus is a trifle more human, as he is briefer: he divides the Ogdoad into a pair of Tetrads, a right hand one and a left hand one, *one* light and *the other* darkness. Only he is unwilling to derive the power which apostatized and fell away⁶⁹³¹ from any one of the Æons, but from the fruits which issued from their substance.

6931 Achamoth.

Chapter XXXIX.—Their Diversity of Sentiment Affects the Very Central Doctrine of Christianity, Even the Person and Character of the Lord Jesus. This Diversity Vitiates Every Gnostic School.

Now, concerning even the Lord Jesus, into how great a diversity of opinion are they divided! One party form Him of the blossoms of all the Æons.⁶⁹³² Another party will have it that He is made up only of those ten whom *the Word* and *the Life*⁶⁹³³ produced;⁶⁹³⁴ from which circumstance the titles of the Word and the Life were suitably transferred to Him. Others, again, that He rather sprang from the twelve, the offspring of *Man* and *the Church*,⁶⁹³⁵ and therefore, they say, He was designated “Son of man.” Others, moreover, maintain that He was formed by *Christ* and *the Holy Spirit*, who have to provide for the establishment of the universe,⁶⁹³⁶ and that He inherits by right His Father’s appellation. Some there are who have imagined that another origin must be found for the title “Son of man;” for they have had the presumption to call the Father Himself *Man*, by reason of the profound mystery of this title: so that what can you hope for more ample concerning faith in that God, with whom you are now yourself on a par? Such conceits are constantly cropping out⁶⁹³⁷ amongst them, from the redundance of their mother’s seed.⁶⁹³⁸ And so it happens that the doctrines which have grown up amongst the Valentinians have already extended their rank growth to the woods of the Gnostics.

6932 See above, ch. xii. p. 510.

6933 The Æons *Sermo* and *Vita*.

6934 See above, ch. vii. p. 506.

6935 See above, ch. viii. p. 507.

6936 See above, ch. xiv. p. 511.

6937 Superfruticant.

6938 Archamoth is referred to.