Discourse to Hypatius 4

Ephrem the Syrian (c. AD 306–373)

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S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan. Transcribed from the Palimpsest B.M. Add. 14623 by C. W. MITCHELL, M.A., volume 1 (1912). Fourth Discourse to Hypatius against False Teachings.

THE FOURTH DISCOURSE AGAINST FALSE TEACHINGS.

How was the Darkness imprisoned? YE know that it is right that Mani be asked: From which of the Elements was the Grave built for the Darkness? But if it spontaneously turned and imprisoned itself, know that, because it cannot mix or mingle with itself anything else- - [P. 91, l.20.] for there is nothing--and because, moreover, it cannot change itself--for it is an (eternal) Entity which exists as it existed before, and does not come to change--it cannot become opposed to itself. But if he built (the Grave) from the Element of the Good (Being), how did he make it from these Souls in whom he takes delight to-day? But if there is essentially belonging to his nature something which is harder than these Souls, then why did the Darkness not build from that hard and deaf (i.e., inexorable) and victorious element a wall for the outer Domain in order to keep his possessions within? And thus [P. 92.] he would have been spared all these evils. But, perhaps, this wisdom had not come near him at that time, but in the end (?) of his years it happened that he was harassed and learned„ practical (?) workmanship and stone-cutting, and architecture. . . . And if these (qualities?) are there, not only are they there. For many things are required there. For a natural building shows how many things it requires to be employed (in constructing it).

Things required to build the Grave. For if they are stones in reality, (?) and if they are cut as they say, there is required one who cuts, and the iron [L. 30.] which cuts, and the stones which are cut, when . . . are [L. 40.] left, and a rope . . . which in the middle, and all these . . . natures . . . which is in it and a destroyer of their essence ; and, moreover, fire injures iron, for it (i.e., the fire), transforms the nature thereof. And if any one leaves an iron in the furnace there its destruction (?) follows. And [P. 93.] if any one goes . . . though they are bound (natures), and they go into one another. All this creation is required there so that it may be found in the Domain of the Good (Being). So when this Teaching professes to explain about the Domain of the Good (Being), its explanation is found to refer to this creation. And just as even when it explains about it (i.e., this creation), . . . lacks intelligence, and just as ...

The Earth from which the Stones were cut cannot be Eternal. And this Earth from which the Stones are cut is not [L. 26.] essentially such that is uncomposite, and also incapable of being cut up. For a thing which is not composite cannot be cut. For a composite nature can be dissolved. But if it can be cut . . . And if it has these (qualities) in its nature, it has no (immutable) Essence in its nature, and it shows that the natures which (spring) from it are composite creations. For that Grave is built, it is certainly composed and . . . But if [L. 40.] the Architect of the work is skilled in building it is right that it should be put together cunningly. These Stones, [P. 94, l. 8.] therefore, which were compounded there show concerning the Earth from which they were cut, that it also is a composite nature.

The Earth would be damaged by the quarrying. And just as if any one asks about natural stones ... as to whence they were cut, it is possible to declare and say that they are cut and hewn from some place or other--a thing whereof also a building in our country is a witness to us--it is right, moreover, to ask whence had this Earth (such resources) that these Stones were cut from it. For it is clear [Cf. p. xxx. l. 29.] that they were made either from something or from nothing. For they cannot say that it exists of itself; for . . . refutes them. And, therefore, let the great deep and abyss which is in that quarry, from which these Stones were cut, refute them. And when BÂN, the Builder, built to make the Grave [Cf. pp. xxx., xlvii.] for the Darkness, he made that great pit in his Domain for the Sons of his Domain. And whence was the deficiency [P. 95.] of that Earth filled up (again) ; for if it was fair before it became lacking, it was exceedingly and endlessly disfigured after it had been cut.

Thus, the idle tales have become and are a laughingstock. For if the stone-cutters operate on that Earth, they are at the same time carrying it forth into the Domain of the Darkness. And if it has not a nature to remain in a Domain which is not its own, then how does it imprison in a Grave built from itself the Darkness which is foreign to its nature? Have Light and Darkness A Common Earth or separate Earths? And, again, if this Earth stretches unto the Earth of the Darkness, is it not the fact that, since it is beaten out and everywhere bordering upon it (i.e., the Darkness), it has all become one earth in the Domain of the Light, and in the Domain of the Darkness? And it is found that one earth supports them both. These are fine Gods and (eternal) Entities which are supported by one another! And if it is one, as also it is one, for it must be one, then either it is all dark [Cf. xcv. 7.] towards the Good and towards the Evil, or, again, it is luminous towards both. For it is impossible that the half of it towards [P. 96.] the Darkness is dark, and the half of it towards the Light is luminous, because its fixed nature will not allow it. For it is one in its Essence. Or a great gulf exists in the middle between these two Earths, and does not allow them to go forth to one another.

If a great gulf divided the two Domains, how could it be crossed? And if a mighty gulf which separates above and below does exist there, how did the Darkness cross to the Domain of the Good (Being) without a bridge? Or did he forsooth make a bridge over it and cross? For those to whom it is easy to speak falsely in everything, it is not difficult to lie. And if they say that he crossed without a bridge, even if they speak falsehood, they are refuted. For

if the two sides can cross over one to another without a bridge, a wide gulf being in the middle, they are found to be spiritual, and they are not heavy bodies, and it is evident that for Natures which are thus subtle and light, a supporting Earth is not required as for bodies. Therefore, either let them appeal to the Earth, and it shows that they are corporeal, and are unable to cross the gulf without a bridge. Or let them appeal to the Abyss, and if they flew and crossed it [P. 97.] they are spiritual, and are not dependent upon the Earth.

How could a bridge be constructed between the Domains? And if they flee from these two (alternatives) to (the theory of) a bridge . . . [they are refuted] for when the sons of the Darkness bridged (?) the Great Abyss, to cross it. with what (did they make it) and how? And how did they bridge it ; for those who build a bridge fix (?) its foundations (lit., legs) on both sides as rivers show, or a deep which is bridged. Why. therefore, did they bridge it? And how were the Sons of the Darkness able without a bridge to ... their companions . . . or did they, perhaps, . . . cross the bridge . . . since they were on one side, and the Sons of the Light on the other side! And if that bridge was . . . the waste in the middle would make it useless. But if it was . . . it would not allow them to cross ; and thus the twisting of Mani has come to an end.

If the Light Earth touched the Earth of Darkness, it suffered pollution. But if the Earth was all one, since it stretches towards Good and Evil, are they not ashamed when they say concerning the one, that is to say, concerning the one Essence that the half of it which is towards Good is good, and the half of it which is towards Evil is evil? But if it is in its Essence praiseworthy (?) O what ridiculous Teaching--how can the Essence of the Earth be praiseworthy (?) [when it touches the vile Earth which was opposite?]. How could the Darkness limit the Light? And if those illustrations of the Sun and Shadow which [P. 98, l. 8.] they bring forward do belong to things ; if (they are) Earths, because they are dense bodies, they touched one another and were limited by one another . . . how is it (the Light) [L. 20.] limited by the Darkness, seeing that the Light scatters the Darkness and rends it asunder and (enters) into its Domain, and . . . also its nature . . .? [L. 28.]

Mani's illustration of "Sun and Shadow." For (as regards) the Sun and the Shadow which touch one another, the nature of the Sun has no [gross and dense] body . . . to destroy the Shadow, and the Light which is here . . . seeing that no other body is interposed. [L. 38.] Moreover, a Shadow is not a nature (in) itself. For it is the child of that substance, either of stone or wood, standing in the [P. 99.] face of the Light; and apart from the Light a Shadow cannot be produced. If the nature of Light and Darkness is considered, Light ought to have made the Assault. But if they say that, although there was no dense body which hinders the Light, the Light was not able to enter the Domain of that Darkness ; they confess, though unwillingly, that they are 'bound Natures' in Essence, and that they are unable to depart from their (respective) territories. But if they are 'bound Natures,' fixed in their places like mountains, how did they make an Assault on one another and enter into one another? And it is very probable that if they do make an Assault on one another, the Light has extension and radiance and effulgence and rays, so that its effulgence may stretch afar. And if the rays

of such a thing (as this Light) the nature of which is to scatter its rays afar, were limited by external compulsion, and it did not cross the border of the Darkness, how do they know how to [announce] that the Darkness made an Assault on the Light--when it (i.e., the Darkness) has no (such) nature? And the Light which ought to have been victorious did not even make a stand for itself.

Primitive Light and Light which is visible now must be different in kind. For these things which they say do not occur in the case of this Darkness and Light which are here. Let them either appeal to the Light and Darkness which are here, or let them admit that this is not the same Light as exists there, but another. And if it is not the same, why do they worship this Sun if it is not the same as that which is in the Domain of the Good (Being)? And if the Light and the Darkness are not the same, then this world was not mixed and brought [P. 100, l.14.] into existence from these Natures. And whence then are these Luminaries which are in our sphere? Mani's inconsistent Teaching. O what (is to be said) of a Teaching whose failures are more than its artifices (can remedy)! For as often as they need an argument they bring forward such proofs as these, and as often as an allegory suits them they concoct such tales as these. For Mani did not know that his deceit would enter the furnace of Truth. For where it suits him, he says that the Darkness made an Assault; but he does not remember that this visible Light shows him clearly that this cannot be so. Again, where it suits him, he asserts that the Light is the Light of Souls, that is to say, that the Luminous Nature of the Soul is created (in the form of) Light of the Soul. But the worship with which he worships the visible Luminaries refutes him. Or can it be that the visible Sun is perversely (represented as) the God of the invisible Souls? [P. 101.]

The Bright Ones whom the Primal Man cast to Darkness. "But," he says, "the Primal Man cast his five Bright Ones (ZIWANE) into the mouth of the Sons of the Darkness, in order that, as a hunter, he might catch them with his [net]." And here it is found that the Sons of the Light are their food, and that the Essence of the Sons of the Darkness [is akin] to the Sons of the Bright Ones. To which of them is it like-- to the Light, which is visible, or to the Wind which is invisible ; to the Water which is cold, or to the Fire which is hot? ... Know that this world was not made from these refined [L. 26.] Natures, and it is necessary that . . . the creation of the world which was from such Natures. But if it was mixed out of these Bright Ones (ZIWANE), let them know that the refined Light was also made turbid by its opposite ; but, concerning its nature, he declared that it is visible, [and it consists of] hot Fire and cold Water. And still our question stands, (namely), to which of them (i.e., of the Bright Ones) was their (i.e., of the Sons of the Darkness) Root (Essence) itself like? But know (?), O Mani, that the fish of the deep and birds of [P. 102.] the height are caught with a bait which is akin to them, as nature shows from which they bring illustrations. For from the quarter from which they bring illustrations, from there (they) can be refuted. . . . And if ... them, how does it [L. 15.] oppose them, if it is true that from their own (Elements), and from the (Elements) of Darkness, the whole of it (i.e., Creation) does exist as they say?

The Creator has given Freewill. But as regards those who say that everything is created from nothing, and that devils and men have Freewill, and this Freewill produces good and evil actions--and if it be not so they have no Freewill at all--it is impossible that we should stand up (and) contend (?) against them either in words or in writings. For a nature is changed into everything according to the will of the Creator ; in order that he may show that (Creation comes) not from 'bound Entities' . . . [L. 44] like the Freewill of mankind [so the devils (?) have Freewill] [P. 103.] . . . when those who persist in the arrogance of their Will do entreat and make supplication. And these (words) "thou has set thy heart on my servant Job, O (?) Satan ..." prove that he (i.e., Satan) has Freewill just as several passages from the Old Testament. But there are many (such passages) belonging to the New (Testament), and these are sufficient to stand on behalf of us and to contend against our enemies.

From which of the Natures does the "Consuming Fire" come? But, perhaps, this great confusion is a small thing to Mani ; and it is right that we should turn again and ask him of this Consuming Fire, from which of these Natures does its consuming nature come? If it is from the Darkness, how does it injure the body which is akin to its nature? And if it injures its nature, it would be right that it should injure itself also, if that nature which springs from it is injured. But if its harmfumess is from the Light, how could the Sons of the Darkness imprison it in their midst without being injured, seeing that bodies, their kinsmen, are not able to stand before its breath? And if they are two, as if from the two Natures of Good and Evil, then how did they receive [P. 104.] one another into union when they were opposed to one another? And all this (that he says, namely), 'they loved one another' is due to the fact that the difference between them is not known. And how did they become one mind, when they are both suspicious of the two Natures from which they have sprung? For when good and evil (persons) touch them (i.e., the Elements contained in Fire), they are both injured equally by both of them. And the good Fire which springs from the good Nature does not recognize the good, its kinsmen, just as also the evil Fire does not discern the evil, its relatives. And in virtue of the test applied to this one Compound (i.e., Fire), we have a right to say that all that Mixture of the two Natures consists of one mingling of love. But if there are some of the Minglings which struggle with one another because they are opposed to one another, why does Fire not struggle with Fire?

The Creation in all its diversity has come not from the Entities but from the Creator. The Diversity is due to the needs of mankind, not to Eternal opposition of Natures. Is it not thus plain to an intelligent person that all the creatures exist in natures which are different from one another according to the Will of the Creator, He who prepared them for the numerous uses of mankind? And there are some that are akin to one another, and there are some which are opposed to one another, according as it pleased the Will which arranges everything. But when they agree and differ deliberately, and exist in agreement and disagreement [it is obvious] that they are not made from Entities which differ. For if, on [P. 105, l.12.] account of the enmity which they have towards one another, it is supposed that they are differentiated from one thing, then (it follows that) on account of the love which they have, they are known

not to be made from Entities which are opposed to one another. For if those were created for our benefit (?) it is clear that we must recognize that likewise all of them were regulated for our sakes. For this is the true cause of their creation(?). For if Light and Darkness exist for their own sakes, and not for our sakes, perhaps he is right (?) in thinking that they have enmity towards each other. But if they exist for our sake and are both useful to us--the Light for toil and the Night for rest. . . .

[and they are useful to us] even if they have a war with one [P. 106.] another, but for us they both bring much peace and health. For when hot fire is necessary for us on account of its heat which is necessary to [warm us] it is supposed that because it is a consumer it is an enemy opposed to the things which are injured by it, and [why] do I (?) weary myself (?) with many details? For these many things can be explained even in. . . . Since they are all useful to mankind they are all at peace with one another, (namely, those) which are supposed to be created from different Entities. For on account of the uses of man, which are unlike one another, creatures were created for his service, and are unlike one another. For if his use were (only) one, then it would be a single thing which was necessary for his service. And if his service were one, there would be one thing for his use. But because everything is useful to him, everything was created for his use.

And even those things which are considered unnecessary [P. 107.] are necessary (to promote) either his awe or his chastisement (?) or his fear, or in the course of his swimming through this world that this dwelling may not cause his nature to sink, (this dwelling) which also hated the true lodger (?); and the temporary lodging-place was acceptable to that Good [L. 15.] (Being) in His grace and not . . . but (he set) upon him the constraint of many troubles, that on account of the troubles that are in the world he should hate the dwelling and desire to return to his true profit. These are the true causes on account of which the different creatures which are unlike one another were created. See how man is served by creatures possessing opposite qualities. But seek out completely the creatures as related to one another, and seek them out again as related to man, and see that creatures which are not all useful to one another are all useful to man, and those which are thought to be strange (to one another) are all related to the service of man. For how is the bull like the horse in running? And (yet) the swiftness of the horse and the slowness of the ox are both useful to man. [P.108] And how is the winter like the summer in comparison? And (yet) the coldness of the one and the heat of the other are a source of help to man. And how are fierce things like gentle things? And (yet) they both do one common service. And, therefore, their histories are too long and their numbers are too great, and their kinds are too abundant that we should labour (?) to complete the comparison of them, but some tastes (i.e., specimens) of them are sufficient to convince concerning them all.

Manichaeans attribute the usefulness of creatures to the Mixture of Light. But those Heretics who do not examine creatures according to the reason of their use in relation to us, but compare creatures with one another (saying) "how is the Darkness like the Light, and sweet like bitter, and that which harms like that which is harmed," when they bring com-

parisons of one thing with another, they cause the simple to err by means of their names, and because childhood has not (sufficient) knowledge to oppose them, it is perplexed. But also they are refuted by their own words. For because they perceived that everything was created as for our service--for there is no single thing among all these which is benefitted but they must needs make an assumption and say "that it is due to the Light which is mingled with all," and to that cause the benefit [P. 109.] of everything is to be ascribed, [and] they have confessed, though unwillingly, that if a man is helped by them all, (then) they all were created on his account.

They fail to account for the fixed nature of animals. We turn, again, to examine that thing which they also investigate, (namely), of what use are harmful creeping things which have been created. But being eager to win, they have been quickly defeated. For how does a creeping thing do harm, seeing that even in it, as they have said, there is mixed in it some of the Good Nature which is scattered through everything? And where is the Evil that is not mixed in an innocent lamb, if it is scattered in everything? And so it is possible to distinguish between Good and Evil by means of wolves and lambs, and by means of serpents and doves, and the Mixing of Good and Evil has appeared in man alone! And how are wolves always evil and rapacious, [Cf. p. xix. (in med.)] and lambs always illtreated and innocent, whereas men sometimes ravage like wolves and sometimes are illtreated like lambs? Who is he who arranged these things . . . and who [P.110, l.2.] is he who [gave] to creatures a 'bound Nature' so that creatures [have a fixed disposition], and to man gave an independent Will?

If Light and Darkness had originally Freewill, why do not all things possess it? Does man alone come from a Mixing? If the Darkness has Freewill--for behold as they say, by its Will it made an Assault, and, again, if the Light has an independent nature--if from two natures which have Freewill and Independence and Thought all creatures have come, how (?) is it that they all have not Life, and all have not Thought, as also they all have not independent Freewill? And here it is found that man alone is from these two Natures which have these (qualities), because he also has such (qualities) as these. Whence therefore came the rest of creatures and of beasts and plants which do not possess these (qualities), and are not from the two Natures from which man comes? Or let them be convinced that there is one Will which created everything from nothing, as was useful for Freewill and for [P. 111.] our boldness (?) according to the reasoning which we wrote above.

Refutatory Summary. But consider also that according as it suits their cause they learn to construct discourses, but because they are (artificially) constructed they are reduced to nothing, and because they are decked out they are refuted, and because they are powerless they are not able to stand in a contest. If the Sun comes from the Good Nature, why does it hurt the eye? For they say that everything which injures is from the Evil (Nature), just as everything which helps is from the Good (Nature). And they say concerning the Sun that it purifies from Evil, because it goes and comes every day to the Domain of the Good one, which is a purification. And yet [Cf. p. xli.] the eye which fixes its gaze much upon it is

injured by its strength, but if it fixes its gaze to look on the shadow or thick darkness it is not injured, and so it is found that the Sun of the Good (Being) is harmful.

They cannot say that it only hurts the Body. And if they say that it harms the body which is akin to the Darkness, why did it not always harm it, but instead (of that) it actually gave Pleasure to it? And how is the Soul which is in the midst of it (and) akin to the nature of the Light harmed by the Body? For it causes it to sin, since the [P. 112.] Bitterness (?) of the Darkness is not all like itself, as also the Pleasantness of Light is not the same in everything. For this visible Darkness by its colour confuses the eye, and does not imprison it; it is rather Satan who by Thought enslaves the Soul, and it is not the Colour (which does it), and this (Darkness) which has Colour has no Thought. And the Primal Darkness from which they both come, on account of its (greedy) hunger, harmed the Light which it 'passionately [Cf. pp.xxxvi. l. 17; xliv. l. 16; lxxxix. l. 26.] desired and ate, and sucked in, and swallowed, and imprisoned in its midst, and mixed in its limbs.'

Primal Darkness and our Darkness must be different. And what is the nature of all of this harmful (Darkness), seeing that this Darkness, which is from it, confuses us by its Colour, and Satan, who is from it, by his Thought slew the Light, but the Primal Darkness crushed it with its teeth? So the Light of the Sun and the Light of the Soul are different : the Sun is silent; the Soul can speak. And just as this Darkness is not like itself, so neither is the Light (like itself). For this Sun by its Colour delights us, and not by its Voice, and the Soul which in his (Mani's) Teaching is akin to it (i.e., the Sun), delights by means of its Voice, and not by its Colour. And how is this Sun wanting in Thought (?), and how does the Darkness not possess Speech like its original Father? . . . the creation and learned . . . to give to them his Refining that he may bring them to the House of Life. And why does the Moon go on quietly, and why are the stars in silence? If they all come from an [P. 113, l.9] eloquent Nature, why are they not all eloquent like the Nature from which they come?

The Mosaic account of the Creation is the true one. Speech is God's gift to man. Harmful creatures show man's superiority, and only harmful after the Fall.

And though Bodies are from the Darkness, as they say, they have Speech and Mind (and) Beauty, and there is no . . . and as regards the lightly-moving Luminaries which are from an Element endowed with Speech which shuts up their mouths like a scorpion ... let them be refuted concerning the Luminaries (and shown) that because they are lamps created for our service, the Sun and Moon are rightly deprived (?) of Speech. For by Speech [our superiority in the rank of creatures is clearly demonstrated and the Luminaries are] for our service, God . . . [so the Luminaries] are found against them, so that though they do not wish it they establish the word which Moses wrote. For when God created everything for the service of man, and that he might show that creatures were created to serve him, He did not give them Speech and Mind as (He did) to him that their inferiority might prove about them that they were certainly for service, as, also, the superiority of man proves concerning him that he [P. 114, l.4.] is certainly to be served. And not only harmful creatures did He create for the service of Adam ; for it might be thought that if they were harmful they might be

able to cause him harm, on this account God created those creatures which are fierce, and those which are terrible, and those which are cruel, and those which are harmful, in order that the sovereignty of Adam might be seen, set over all like that of God. But he possessed this power over them before he sinned, but they received this power against him after he had sinned. Therefore God said, let us make man in our Image, that is in the Image of His authority, so that just as the authority of God rules over all so also the yoke of Adam's lordship had been set over everything.

Man is higher than the Parts of the Light. Let them tell us, therefore--those who speak against the God of Moses--how they speak against that Scripture to the Truth of which they themselves are witnesses. For the Scripture declares that God gave to man dominion and [P. 115, l. 8.] authority over the earth, and behold now . . . [we see] that it is so, but, according to the scripture of the Heretics, it is not only to man that they give honour and dominion, but to all the Parts of the Light, because they say "they are from one Great and Glorious Essence." And because they desired to give worship to those that serve, those Manichaeans are sun-worshippers, who have compelled mankind who ought to be served to offer worship to the things of creation. Consider, then, how they are refuted by the things of creation. For it is a fact (lit., found) that they have magnified the Sun and the Moon more than mankind. Let them tell us which is greater--a thing that is excellent by its Light and its Effulgence, or a thing which is excellent by its Reason and Knowledge. For if a thing that is excellent by Light is superior, let them blot out their scriptures and annul their doctrines, and put their words to silence, and deny their faith and sit down and weep for themselves.

Why has the Soul not Effulgence like the Luminaries? But man's Soul is greater than 'an Effulgence.' And why have they not Radiance like fire, if that Radiance is excellent? So that they may also be asked (this question) --if they are from that Effulgent Nature, why have they not the Radiance of their kinsman? If, therefore, some one produces a fire in a desert by the rubbing of a flint, or of something else, that he may make there a great flame from a great heap--of the two, (namely), that great fire which has a great Radiance, and the small mortal who has an excellent Mind, which is the greater? For if the rays [P. 116, l. 21.] of the fire have suffered(?) themselves to be confined for a long time, the hidden beams of the Mind (are such that) this creation has no power against them that they should be confined by it. For a lamp which can be confined in the midst of a vessel can prove concerning every Light that exists, that it can be confined in some hollow or other. But there is no hollow to confine the Mind ; for it is confined in the body, and more excellent than it; and in the midst of creation, and is more than it; and in the hollow of creation, and it has no power against it; for it is limitless because even unto God who is not limited its extent reaches.

If the Parts of the Light are mixed in all living creatures why are their powers and characters so different?

Let them, therefore, either be persuaded honestly, or let them be vehemently plied with questions : either man is more honourable than all, and all created things are assigned for his service, or else there is one head (?), the nature of Light, as they say. Why, then, are the

Parts of this Light which are in a deaf man, deaf-mutes, and those which are in a blind man are changed into their opposite (i.e., become Darkness). and those which are in a dumb man are silent, and those which are in a scorpion inject poison. And if the Evil (principle) [P. 117, l. 19.] has prevailed and overcome them, behold in doves and in lambs the Good Parts are many, why, therefore, are those in a dove not cunning, and those in lambs not wise? And so it is discovered that Darkness possesses cunning and wisdom . . . because this Darkness is cunning . . . the Good Nature . . . So also at all times the simplicity of that [L. 43.] Good Nature has been conquered, and is conquered by this cunning of that evil Nature. For it has both power and [P. 118] wisdom. For a lion shows, and a wolf and a dragon, that they are cunning and crafty, and that they are wise and strong ; just as a lamb, together with a dove, shows that they are weak and simple. So that simpleness and weakness show an inclination towards that Nature whose Parts are numerous in them. But if they bring other illustrations (to prove) that the Darkness bears witness to its own weakness,--for it always fails before the Light,--they have (thereby) refuted and discredited the starting-point of their doctrine, though they do not perceive it. For there they relate how the Darkness conquered the Light and 'swallowed it.'

Why the Manichaeans can charm serpents and vise enchantments.

But perhaps, they are glorying over this, that they enchant the serpent and charm the scorpion, and "the cunning of the serpent is conquered by Enchantment, and the poison of the scorpion is charmed and conquered with it (i.e., the serpent). Wise are these investigators whose wisdom has conquered even the cunning of the serpent--that is to say, their wisdom is mocked at by the cunning of the Devil! For [P. 119. the Devil himself is enslaved that he may enslave, and he subjects himself to be their slave so as to become their lord. For he subjects himself in those things which do not harm him in order that they may be subject to him in those things which cause their death. For the Devil himself, on account of his subtlety, enters into the serpent as he was concealed in it from the beginning, and as those of the house of Adam thought that a serpent was speaking with them; and because they were not willing to contemplate the invisible (being), who had taken up his abode in it (i.e., the serpent), they were drawn after the external (audible) voice which called them. But when they thought that they were obeying the serpent, they became the disciples of Satan who was in it, and they did not perceive it. But let us pass on with few words, because there is no time to finish the whole account of the Serpent.

But even if we turn from the account of it, we come again to the account of his disciples--as it were from the Serpent to the sons of the Serpent. So since the Devil does everything by means of a serpent, at that time of Enchanting the Devil [P. 120. does not reveal himself that he is there. For he knows that they flee from him because he is hateful. But he causes it to be supposed concerning the serpent that it is made subject to the Enchantment in order that they may believe that that Enchantment is from God, so that while they are persuaded on account of the serpent to learn Enchantment, they may be persuaded to serve Satan by means of Enchantment.

How are they unable to conquer all kinds of Evil by their Enchantments?

Let us ask, therefore, the Sons of the Serpent (i.e., the Heretics), concerning the serpent as to how it is persuaded, or how it is enslaved by Enchantment, seeing that other natures, although they are Sons of the Evil One, as they say. are not persuaded by Enchantment. And how is that a single Nature, part of which is conquered and part of it not? If that Enchantment is powerful, why did it not enslave all the Parts of the Evil One? And if that Evil One is too powerful for Enchantment, [weak and feeble] is whoever was persuaded. And if the power of the Good (Being) is mixed in the Enchantment and the name of the True (Being) associated with it so that it (the Enchantment) becomes a weapon whereby serpents and scorpions [S. Luke x.19.] and all the power of the Enemy may be overcome, then (we may ask) was there not a single sorcerer or enchanter in the Domain of the Good (Being) who might have gone forth and enchanted that great Dragon which was assaulting them in the beginning? [P. 121.] But, perhaps, the Sons of the Light had not yet learnt this Enchantment. And from whom then does this discovery come after a time? For owing to the lack of this Enchantment perhaps, which had not yet been learnt that All-devouring (Serpent, [Cf. pp. xxxvi. l. 17; xliv.l. 16; lxxxv. l. 4.] or Dragon) was not bound which crawled forth from its Domain and swallowed the innocent ones, the Sons of the Light. And what authority did Jesus give his disciples to conquer serpents and scorpions--the authority of Enchantment or the authority of Faith? And if Faith is from God, He (thereby) asserts that Enchantment is from Satan. He, therefore, by his cunning arranged such fetters as these, allowing himself to be bound in order to bind; so that when they come to bind him by Enchantment he may turn and bind them by impiety.

The Manichaean interpretation of John i. 4. And how do they say 'the Primal Man'? For even with regard to the name of this one they go far astray. For they are content to understand the Scriptures in a perverse way. For the passage is written in the Gospel that "the Life is the Light [P. 122.] of man"; but the Greek Gospel explains that the Life is the Light of men. They have combined and made from the word 'man,' as it is written in the Syriac (the explanation) that this (word) refers to a (single) man, that is the Primal Man, the Father of the Five Shining Ones whom they call ZIWANE (the Bright Ones). Opinions of Mani and Bardaisan contrasted. And those things which Bardaisan makes (i.e., considers to be) five Entities, Mani makes (to be) from a single Essence. And this conflict is not ours. For it is right for us to lift ourselves from between two serpents in order that they may fight with one another for the victory which is itself altogether a defeat in other respects. Because Mani was unable to find another way out, he entered, though unwillingly, by the door which Bardaisan opened.

Their views about the making of the Body. For because they saw that this Body is well put together, and that its seven senses are arranged in order, and that there is in the heart an instrument for the impulses of the Soul, and that there is in the tongue a harp of speech, they were ashamed to speak blasphemy against it (i.e., the Body) in plain terms, and they had recourse to cunning, and divided it into two parts. But they suppose that its nature

(?) is from Evil, and its workmanship [P. 123.] from the Archons, and the cause of its arrangement is from Wisdom. And she (i.e., Wisdom) showed an image of her own beauty to the Archons, and to the Governors, and she deceived them thereby so that when they were stirred up to make (something) in imitation of what they saw, each of them should give from his treasure whatever he had; and that owing to this cause their treasures should be emptied of what they had snatched away.

And since Mani saw in this place that he was not able to cross the river at any other place, he was forced to come and cross where Bardaisan crossed. For he, too, spoke thus concerning the Primal Man : "By means of the image which he showed to the Sons of the Darkness he compelled them." Their views refuted by Scripture. And because here they both say the same thing, the same thing may be said against them both, so that by means of the Truth which is not divided against itself, the two divided ones may be overcome, (the two) who in this passage have clothed themselves with (a semblance of) agreement against the Truth. But a single passage which the true Apostle spoke dissolves their fabrications without trouble. For he said that 'your Bodies are temples of God. and whoever shall destroy [1 Cor. vi. 19.] the temple of God, him will God destroy.' If, therefore, the Body belongs to corruption, as they say, who cut off hope as [1 Cor. iii.16, 17.] regards their Bodies, why is he destroyed who destroys it, seeing [P. 124.] that even when he does not destroy it the Body pertains to corruption? But if he is destroyed who destroys it, it is clear that its Architect and Regulator is God, and not the Sons of the Darkness as Mani said, nor the foolish Governors as Bardaisan said.

THE END OF THE FOURTH DISCOURSE. Note from Vol. 1 Introduction, p. (10): [Short lacunae are indicated in the translation by dots, and longer gaps by asterisks, but in neither case is the number of the dots or asterisks intended to bear any exact relation to the number of the missing words. In respect to this an approximately correct inference may be drawn by consulting the Syriac text. Double inverted commas mark quotations where the original has [Syriac] Single inverted commas are used in numerous cases where the words seem to be quotations or to belong to a special terminology. Words in italics inside square brackets are to be regarded as conjectural translations or paraphrases. In a few passages, where the text has suffered great mutilation, italics indicate an attempt to summarise the argument from suggestions in the fragments.] [P.101] indicates page 101 of the accompanying Syriac. [l.2] means line 2 of the current page of the accompanying Syriac. [RP]

FOOTNOTES I have moved the footnotes to the end. Those consisting of "Read [syriac] for [syriac]" or similar have been omitted, as it has not been possible to transcribe the fragments of Syriac. The pages are numbered with Roman numerals. Arabic numbers and line numbers relate to the Syriac text printed at the back of the paper volume. Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPIonic font, free from here.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.