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of the true Father, being born again by means of water—that is a different birth than the one we know in this creation. In 95, 2 Clement quotes Julius Cassianus, who says that those who are dominated by the earthly things engender and are engendered, but that “our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we expect the Saviour” (*Phil.* 3, 20). Clement agrees with the second part of this statement, “for we have to behave ‘like strangers and pilgrims’” (*Heb.* 11, 13), i.e. those who marry as if they did not marry... and those who bring forth children as begetting mortal men” (95, 3). To sum up, Clement proclaims the fundamental goodness of this world against the Encratites whom he seems to consider as Gnostics³⁴. He rejects their radicalized eschatology, from which their repudiation of marriage and procreation proceeded, partly, and rather superficially, by spiritualizing such words from EvEg as woman, man, γένεσις and corruption or death, partly also by stating that the process of γένεσις καὶ φθορά is something inherent to this world by divine disposition. Clement admits, with the Encratites, that birth in this world is necessarily followed by death; but the process of γένεσις should not, for that reason, be stopped, for it is something divine; he shares with Plato and Aristotle an optimistic view of γένεσις; on the other hand, there is an ‘escape’ from this natural process which is guaranteed by the ἀναγέννησις. For Clement the link between marriage and death is natural, and there is no reason why the end of this world should be hastened to break it. On the contrary, this world has to be built up, and man has to contribute to its completion (συντελειώσις). But in spite of his criticism of the encratite conception of the relation between marriage and death, and the reassertion of the platonic view, Clement leaves one problem unsolved: that of the relation between marriage and time. This problem, raised by Encratism, is, in fact, rooted in the eschatological character of christian ascetism. It has to await Gregory of Nyssa to receive a more thorough treatment.

On the relation between virginity and immortality (or incorruptibility) Clement has not very much to say. On the one hand, he criticizes Tatian’s exegesis of *Lk.* 20. 34-36, in the sense of a realized eschatology, on the other, he seems to suggest that those who practise virginity already partake in incorruptibility³⁵.

2. Methodius of Olympus.

Methodius’ Symposium is the literary parallel of Plato’s dialogue of the same name. But we cannot be sure that it is also its doctrinal counterpart in the matter that concerns us here. Are the ἀγνεία and παρθενία in Methodius’ work meant to be the christian answer to the extolling of Eros in Plato’s dialogue? It is true that both virginity and Eros aim at immortality; but it should be observed, that Plato, in the chapters concerned, uses the words ἀθάνατος or ἀθανασία, whereas Methodius mostly speaks of ἀφθαρσία (ἄφθαρτος) or of φθορά as its opposite³⁶. This difference in terminology seems to indicate that Plato is more interested in Eros as a means of overcoming death, whereas for Methodius chastity, and virginity in particular, are the appropriate way to keep one’s soul and body undefiled, i.e. free from passion and corruption. Methodius’ Symposium does not contain a straight attack on Plato’s idea of immortality-by-γένεσις; this is the more surprising as he had an excellent opportunity to do so. For in Logos 10, explaining *Judg.* 9, 8-15, he says that the four trees in this passage mean the four legislations (of man in Paradise, of Noah, Moses and Christ), that were intended to bring man back to the immortality from which he was exiled. The devil made fictions of these legislations in imitation of each of them, except of the last, i.e. the reign of chastity inaugurated by Christ, the Archvirgin (10, 4).

34. See F. BOLGIANI’s, articles, referred to in n. 29.

35. See J.-P. BROUDEHOUX, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d’Alexandrie*, coll. Théologie Historique 11, Paris, 1970, p. 105-106.

36. ἀφθαρσία (ἄφθαρτος) : 1, 2; 4, 2, 4; 6, 5; 8, 1, 2, 4; 10, 3; Thecla’s Hymn 22. ἀθανασία (ἀθάνατος) : 6, 1 (the soul) ; 8, 3; 10, 5, 6.



of the same fashion, being born again by means of water—that is a different birth than the one we know in this creation. In 11:2 Clement quotes John Chrysostom who says that those who are baptized by the earthly things engendered and are engendered, but that "our regeneration is in heaven, from whom also we expect the Savior" (11:2, 20). Clement agrees with the second part of this statement, "for we have to believe 'the heavenly' and 'the earthly' (11:2, 17), i.e. those who marry as if they did not marry... and those who being born children as begotten mortal men" (10:2, 7). To sum up, Clement positions the fundamental position of this work against the Eucharist which he seems to consider as a sacrament. He is against their medicalized eschatology, from which their reproduction of marriage and procreation is derived, partly and rather superficially, by spiritualizing such words from 11:2 as women, man, heaven and corruption in death, partly also by stating that the process of heaven and earth is something inherent to this world by divine generation. Clement agrees with the Eucharist, that birth in this world is necessary followed by death; but the process of heaven should not, for that reason, be stopped. It is something distinct he shares with Plato and Aristotle an optimistic view of heaven on the other hand there is an escape from this natural process which is guaranteed by the Eucharist. For Clement the link between marriage and death is broken, and that is no reason why the end of this world should be hastened to break it. On the contrary, this world has to be built up, and man has to contribute to its completion (interiority). But in spite of his criticism of the marriage connection of the relation between marriage and death, and the transgression of the physical view, Clement leaves one problem unsolved: that of the relation between marriage and death. This problem, raised by Eucharist, is in fact, rooted in the metaphysical character of Christian thought. It has to wait (Clement) of 11:2 to receive a more thorough treatment.

On the relation between virginity and immortality (or immortality) Clement has not very much to say. On the one hand, he writes: "The virgin's virginity is 11:2, 24-26, in the form of a rhetorical exhortation, on the other, he seems to suggest that those who practice virginity already practice immortality."

2. Metaphysics of Virginity

Metaphysics of virginity is the literary parallel of Plato's dialogue of the same name. But we cannot be sure that it is the literary parallel in the sense that concerns us here. For the Greek text of the dialogue in the middle of the 11th century was known to the scholars of the 11th century. It is true that both virginity and Eucharist are immortality; but it should be observed, that Plato, in the chapter concerned, was not interested in Eucharist as a means of overcoming death, whereas for Metaphysics clearly, and virginity in particular, are the appropriate way to keep one's soul and body undisturbed, i.e. free from passion and corruption. Metaphysics of virginity does not contain a straight answer to Plato's idea of immortality-for-virginity; this is the more surprising as he had an excellent opportunity to do so. The 11:2, 24-26, he says the four men in this passage were the four legislators (of man in Eucharist, of death, of heaven and Christ), they were needed to bring man back to the immortality from which he was called. The devil made Eucharist of those legislators in imitation of each of them, except of the last, i.e. the virginity introduced by Christ, the Eucharist (11:2, 26).

11:2, 24-26, Clement's text, which is the same as the one in the middle of the 11th century. 11:2, 24-26, Clement's text, which is the same as the one in the middle of the 11th century. 11:2, 24-26, Clement's text, which is the same as the one in the middle of the 11th century.