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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 ἀφθορία (ἄφθορος) 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. BROUDÉHOUC, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d’Alexandrie*, coll. *Théologie Historique* 11, Paris, 1970, p. 105-106.

36. ἀφθορία (ἄφθορος) : 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 nature, being distinguished by means of water—that is a different birth than the one we know in this world. In 17: 2 Humboldt quotes Julius Caesar who says that those who are dominated by the earthly things engender and are engendered, but that "our constitution is in heaven, from whence also we expect the Saviour" (17: 2, 20). Humboldt agrees with the second part of this statement, "for we have to believe, like many and rightly" (17: 2, 21). It is those who marry as if they did not marry... and those who bring forth children as begetting mortal men" (17: 2). To sum up, Humboldt positions the fundamental position of his work against the Kantians whom he seems to consider as Kantians. He rejects their radicalized eschatology, from which their repudiation of marriage and procreation (wedlock, party and other superficially, by spiritualizing such words from 17: 2 as woman, man, heaven and corruption in death, party, etc.) by reading that the process of heaven and earth is something inherent to the world by divine disposition. Humboldt agrees with the Kantians that birth in this world is necessarily 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—however. For Humboldt the link between marriage and death is natural, and there is no reason why the end of the 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 (overstated). But in spite of his criticism of the Kantian conception of the relation between marriage and death, and the restoration of the Platonic view, Humboldt leaves one problem unsolved: that of the relation between marriage and death. This problem, raised by Humboldt, is in fact, solved in the eschatological treatment of Christian eschatology. It has to wait (17: 2) to receive a more thorough treatment.

On the relation between virginity and immortality (or immortality) Humboldt has not very much to say. On the one hand, he criticizes Kant's opinion of 17: 2, 24-26, in the sense of a radical eschatology, on the other, he seems to suggest that those who practice virginity already practice in immortality²⁶.

2. Metaphysics of Eschatology

Metaphysics of Eschatology is the literary parallel of Plato's dialogue of the same name. But we cannot be sure that it is also the doctrinal counterpart in the matter that concerns us here. For the Greek text and English in Metaphysics, which seems to be the Christian answer to the eschatology of Plato's dialogue. It is true that both virginity and immortality are at issue; but it should be observed, that Plato, in the chapter concerned, was not interested in Eschatology as a means of overcoming death, whereas for Metaphysics, 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 Eschatology does not contain a straight answer on Plato's idea of immortality-for-ever; this is the more surprising as he had an excellent opportunity to do so. The answer to explaining 17: 2, 8-12, he says the four uses in this passage were the four legislations (of man in Paradise, of Noah, Jesus and Christ), that were intended to bring man back to the immortality from which he was called. The devil made himself of these legislations in imitation of each of them, except of the last, i.e. the reign of earthly inaugurated by Christ, the Anagnorisis (17: 2).

26. Humboldt's opinion, which is based on 17: 2, 24-26, is that those who practice virginity already practice in immortality. This is the more surprising as he had an excellent opportunity to do so. The answer to explaining 17: 2, 8-12, he says the four uses in this passage were the four legislations (of man in Paradise, of Noah, Jesus and Christ), that were intended to bring man back to the immortality from which he was called. The devil made himself of these legislations in imitation of each of them, except of the last, i.e. the reign of earthly inaugurated by Christ, the Anagnorisis (17: 2).