

**Excerpt from *The Preaching of Simeon Kefa from the Journal of T. Flavius Clemens***

**Book IV**

**Chapter XIV: Yahweh Both Good and Righteous**

“Hence, since so many false and erratic religions have been introduced into the world, we have been sent, as good merchants, bringing unto you the worship of the true Yahweh, handed down from the fathers, and preserved; as the seeds of which we scatter these words amongst you, and place it in your choice to choose what seems to you to be right. For if you receive those things which we bring you, you shall not only be able yourselves to escape the incursions of the demon, but also to drive them away from others; and at the same time you shall obtain the rewards of eternal good things. But those who shall refuse to receive those things which are spoken by us shall be subject in the present life to diverse demons and disorders of sicknesses, and their spirits after their departure from the body shall be tormented for ever. For Yahweh is not only good, but also just; for if He were always good, and never just to render to every one according to his deeds, goodness would be found to be injustice. For it were injustice if the disobedient and the obedient were treated by Him alike.

**Chapter XV: How Demons Get Power over Men**

“Therefore demons, as we have just said, when once they have been able, by means of opportunities afforded them, to convey themselves through base and evil actions into the bodies of men, if they remain in them a long time through their own negligence, because they do not seek after what is profitable to their souls, they necessarily compel them for the future to fulfill the desires of the demons who dwell in them. But what is worst of all, at the end of the age, when that demon shall be consigned to eternal fire, of necessity the spirit also which obeyed him, shall with him be tortured in eternal fires, together with its body which it hath polluted.

## Chapter XVI: Why They Wish to Possess Men

“Now that the demons are desirous of occupying the bodies of men, this is the reason. They are spirits baring their purpose turned to wickedness. Therefore by immoderate eating and drinking, and lust, they urge men on to sin, but only those who entertain the purpose of sinning, who, while they seem simply desirous of satisfying the necessary cravings of nature, give opportunity to the demons to enter into them, because through excess they do not maintain moderation. For as long as the measure of nature is kept, and legitimate moderation is preserved, the mercy of Yahweh does not give them liberty to enter into men. But when either the mind falls into impiety, or the body is filled with immoderate meat or drink, then, as if invited by the will and purpose of those who thus neglect themselves, they receive power as against those who have broken Torah imposed by Yahweh.

## Chapter XVII: The Besorah Gives Power over Demons

“You see, then, how important is the acknowledgment of Yahweh, and the observance of the divine obedience, which not only protects those who believe from the assaults of the demon, but also gives them command over those who rule over others. And therefore it is necessary for you, who are of the Gentiles, to betake yourselves to Yahweh, and to keep yourselves from all uncleanness, that the demons may be expelled, and Yahweh may dwell in you. And at the same time, by prayers, commit yourselves to Yahweh, and call for His aid against the impudence of the demons; for ‘whatever things you ask, believing, you shall receive.’ But even the demons themselves, in proportion as they see faith grow in a man, in that proportion they depart from him, residing only in that part in which something of infidelity still remains; but from those who believe with full faith, they depart without any delay. For when a spirit has come to the faith of Yahweh, it obtains the virtue of heavenly water, by which it extinguishes the demon like a spark of fire.

## Chapter XVII: This Power in Proportion to Faith

“There is therefore a measure of faith, which, if it be perfect, drives the demon perfectly from the soul; but if it has any defect, something on the part of the demon still remains in the portion of infidelity; and it is the greatest difficulty for the soul to understand when or how, whether fully or less fully, the demon has been expelled from it. For if he remains in any quarter, when he gets an opportunity, he suggests thoughts to men’s hearts; and they, not knowing whence they come, believe the suggestions of the demons, as if they were the perceptions of their own spirits. Thus they suggest to some to follow pleasure by occasion of bodily necessity; they excuse the passions of others by excess of gall; they color over the madness of others by the vehemence of melancholy; and even extenuate the folly of some as the result of abundance of phlegm. But even if this were so, still none of these could be hurtful to the body, except from the excess of meats and drinks; because, when these are taken in excessive quantities, their abundance, which the natural warmth is not sufficient to digest, curdles into a sort of poison, and it, flowing through the bowels and all the veins like a common sewer, renders the motions of the body unhealthy and base. Wherefore moderation is to be attained in all things, that neither may place be given to demons, nor the spirit, being possessed by them, be delivered along with them to be tormented in eternal fires.

## Chapter XIX: Demons Incite to Idolatry

“There is also another error of the demons, which they suggest to the senses of men, that they should think that those things which they suffer, they suffer from such as are called elohim, in order that thereby, offering sacrifices and gifts, as if to propitiate them, they may strengthen the worship of false religion, and avoid us who are interested in their salvation, that they may be freed from error; but this they do, as I have said, not knowing that these things are suggested to them by demons, for fear they should be saved. It is therefore in the power of every one, since man has been

made possessed of free-will, whether he shall hear us to life, or the demons to destruction. Also to some, the demons, appearing visibly under various figures, sometimes throw out threats, sometimes promise relief from sufferings, that they may instill into those whom they deceive the opinion of their being elohim, and that it may not be known that they are demons. But they are not concealed from us, who know the mysteries of the creation, and for what reason it is permitted to the demons to do those things in the present world; how it is allowed them to transform themselves into what figures they please, and to suggest evil thoughts, and to convey themselves, by means of meats and of drink consecrated to them, into the minds or bodies of those who partake of it, and to concoct vain dreams to further the worship of some idol.

#### Chapter XX: Folly of Idolatry

“And yet who can be found so senseless as to be persuaded to worship an idol, whether it be made of gold or of any other metal? To whom is it not manifest that the metal is just that which the artificer pleased? How then can the divinity be thought to be in that which would not be at all unless the artificer had pleased? Or how can they hope that future things should be declared to them by that in which there is no perception of present things? For although they should divine something, they should not straightway be held to be elohim; for divination is one thing, divinity is another. For the Pythons also seem to divine, yet they are not elohim; and, in short, they are driven out of men by Messianics. And how can that be Elohim which is put to flight by a man? But maybe you will say, What as to their effecting cures, and their showing how one can be cured? On this principle, physicians ought also to be worshipped as elohim, for they cure many; and in proportion as any one is more skilful, the more he will cure.

#### Chapter XXI: Heathen Oracles

“Whence it is evident that they since they are demoniac spirits, know some things both more quickly and more perfectly *than men*; for they are not retarded in their learning by the heaviness of a body. And therefore they, as being spirits, know without delay and without difficulty what physicians attain after a long time and by much labor. It is not wonderful, therefore, if they know somewhat more than men do; but this is to be observed, that what they know they do not employ for the salvation of souls, but for the deception of them, that by means of it they may indoctrinate them in the worship of false religion. But Yahweh, that the error of so great deception might not be concealed, and that He Himself might not seem to be a cause of error in permitting them so great license to deceive men by divinations, and cures, and dreams, has of His mercy furnished men with a remedy, and has made the distinction of falsehood and truth patent to those who desire to know. This, therefore, is that distinction: what is spoken by the true Yahweh, whether by prophets or by diverse visions, is always true; but what is foretold by demons is not always true. It is therefore an evident sign that those things are not spoken by the true Yahweh, in which at any time there is falsehood; for in truth there is never falsehood. But in the case of those who speak falsehoods, there may occasionally be a slight mixture of truth, to give as it were seasoning to the falsehoods.

#### Chapter XXII: Why They Sometimes Come True

“But if any one says, ‘What is the use of this,’ that they should be permitted even sometimes to speak truth, and thereby so much error be introduced amongst men? Let him take this for answer: If they had never been allowed to speak any truth, then they would not foretell anything at all; while if they did not foretell, they would not be known to be demons. But if demons were not known to be in this world, the cause of our struggle and contest would be concealed from us, and we should suffer openly what was done in secret, that is, if the power were granted to them of only acting against us, and not of speaking. But now, since they sometimes speak truth, and sometimes falsehood, we ought

to acknowledge, as I have said, that their responses are of demons, and not of Yahweh, with whom there is never falsehood.

#### Chapter XXIII: Evil Not in Substance

“But if any one, proceeding more curiously, inquire: ‘What then was the use of Yahweh’s making these evil things, which should have so great a tendency to subvert the minds of men?’ To one proposing such a question, we answer that we must first of all inquire whether there is any evil in substance. And although it would be sufficient to say to him that it is not suitable that the creature judge the Creator, but that to judge the work of another belongs to him who is either of equal skill or equal power; yet, to come directly to the point, we say absolutely that there is no evil in substance. But if this be so, then the Creator of substance is vainly blamed.

#### Chapter XXIV: Why Yahweh Permits Evil

“But you will meet me by saying, Even if it has come to this through freedom of will, was the Creator ignorant that those whom He created would fall away into evil? He ought therefore not to have created those who, He foresaw, would deviate from the path of righteousness. Now we tell those who ask such questions, that the purpose of assertions of the sort made by us is to show why the wickedness of those who as yet were not, did not prevail over the goodness of the Creator. For if, wishing to fill up the number and measure of His creation, He had been afraid of the wickedness of those who were to be, and like one who could find no other way of remedy and cure, except only this, that He should refrain from His purpose of creating, lest the wickedness of those who were to be should be ascribed to Him; what else would this show but unworthy suffering and unseemly feebleness on the part of the Creator, who should so fear the acting of those who as yet were not, that He refrained from His purposed creation?

#### Chapter XXV: Evil Beings Turned to Good Account

“But, setting aside these things, let us consider this earnestly, that Yahweh the Creator of the universe, foreseeing the future differences of His creation, foresaw and provided diverse ranks and different offices to each of His creatures, according to the peculiar movements which were produced from freedom of will; so that while all men are of one substance in respect of the method of creation, there should yet be diversity in ranks and offices, according to the peculiar movements of minds, to be produced from liberty of will. Therefore He foresaw that there would be faults in His creatures; and the method of His justice demanded that punishment should follow faults, for the sake of amendment. It behooved, therefore, that there should be ministers of punishment, and yet that freedom of will should draw them into that order. Moreover, those also must have enemies to conquer, who had undertaken the contests for the heavenly rewards. Thus, therefore, neither are those things destitute of utility which are thought to be evil, since the conquered unwillingly acquire eternal rewards for those by whom they are conquered. But let this suffice on these points, for in process of time even more secret things shall be disclosed.

#### Chapter XXVI: Evil Malachim Seducers

“Now therefore, since you do not yet understand how great darkness of ignorance surrounds you, meantime I wish to explain to you whence the worship of idols began in this world. And by idols, I mean those lifeless images which you worship, whether made of wood, or earthenware, or stone, or brass, or any other metals: of these the beginning was in this wise. Certain malachim, having left the course of their proper order, began to favor the vices of men, and in some measure to lend unworthy aid to their lust, in order that by these means they might indulge their own pleasures the more; and then, that they might not seem to be inclined of their own accord to unworthy services, taught men that demons could, by certain arts—that is, by magical invocations—be made to obey men; and so, as from a furnace and workshop of wickedness, they filled the whole world with the smoke of impiety, the light of piety being withdrawn.