

Epiphanius | *Panarion*
Against Ebionites.
[Vero Essene Yahad](#)

1 Number ten, but thirty of the series

1,1 Following these and holding views like theirs, Ebion,² the founder of the Ebionites, arose in the world in his turn as a monstrosity with many forms, and practically represented in himself the snake-like form of the mythical many-headed hydra. He was of the Nazoraeans' school, but preached and taught other things than they. 1,2 For it was as though someone were to collect a set of jewelry from various precious stones and an outfit of varicolored clothing and tog himself up conspicuously. Ebion, in reverse, took any and every doctrine which was dreadful, lethal, disgusting, ugly and unconvincing, thoroughly contentious, from every sect, and patterned himself after them all. (3) For he has the Samaritans' unpleasantness but the Jews' name, the opinion of the Ossaeans, Nazoraeans and Nasaraeans, the form of the Cerinthians, and the perversity of the Carpocratians. And he wants to have just the Christians' title—most certainly not their behavior, opinion and knowledge, and the consensus as to faith of the Gospels and Apostles! 1,4 But since he is midway between all the sects, as one might say, he amounts to nothing. The words of scripture, "I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the church and synagogue,"³ are applicable to him. (5) For although he is Samaritan, he rejects the name because of its objectionability. And while professing himself a Jew, he is the opposite of the Jews—though he does agree with them in part as I shall prove later with God's help, through the proofs of it in my rebuttal of them. 2,1 For this Ebion was contemporary with the Jews, and < since he was > with them, he was derived from them. (2) In the first place, he said

1 Epiphanius draws on Hipp. Synt. which is his source for the name, "Ebion," probably on Irenaeus, and certainly on some version of the Clementina, which he calls the Travels of Peter and which Strecker (*Judenchristentum*) suggests was the Grundschrift of the Clementina. Epiphanius mentions, as a separate document, the Ascents of James, (now Clem. Rec. 1.33-70). He appears to know the Letter of Clement to James, and some other "Epistles of Clement," which might be the ones called the Epistles Concerning Virginité. At 13,2 Epiphanius quotes an extract from an "Ebionite" Gospel according to Matthew; some of his other information is from oral sources. PsT 3.3 depends upon Hipp. Synt. Tertullian, who speaks of an "Ebion," may also have known this work. Origen, on the other hand, may have had some personal contact with Jewish Christianity. So may Eusebius (H. E. 3.27.4), although he seems to follow Origen. 2 For the name, Ebion, see Hipp. Refut. 7.34.1; PsT 3.3; Jer. Adv. Lucif. 23; Doctr. Pat. 41; Tert. Carn. Chr. 14; 18; 24; Virg. Vel. 6; Praescr. 10; 33 3 Prov 5:14

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that Christ was conceived by sexual intercourse and the seed of a man, Joseph⁴—I have already said that he agreed with the others in everything, with this one difference, his adherence to Judaism's Law of the Sabbath, circumcision, and all the other Jewish and Samaritan observances. (3) But like the Samaritans he goes still further than the Jews. He added the rule about taking care not to touch a gentile;⁵ (4) and that every day, if a man has been with a woman⁶ and has left her, he must immerse himself in water— any water he can find, the sea or any other. (5) Moreover, if he should meet anyone while returning from his immersion and bath in the water, he runs back again for another immersion, often even with his clothes on!⁷ 2,6 This sect now forbids celibacy and continence altogether,⁸ as do the other sects which are like it. For at one time they prided themselves on virginity, presumably because of James the Lord's brother, < and so > address their treatises to "elders and virgins."⁹ 2,7 Their origin came after the fall of Jerusalem. For since practically all who had come to faith in Christ had settled in Peraea then, in Pella, a town in the "Decapolis"¹⁰ the Gospel mentions, which is near Batanaea and Bashanitis—as they had moved there then and were living there, this provided an opportunity for Ebion. (8) And as far as I know, he first lived in a village called Cocabe in the district of Qarnaim—also called Ashtaroth—in Bashanitis. There he began his evil teaching—the place, if you please, where the Nazoraeans I have spoken of came from. (9) For since Ebion was connected with them and they with him, each party shared its own wickedness with the other. Each also differed from the other to some extent, but they emulated each other in malice. But I have already spoken at length, both in other works and in the other Sects, about the locations of Cocabe and Arabia.

4 Iren. 3.21.1; Eus. H. E. 3.27.2; Origen Cels. 5.61; in Matt 16:12; Tert. Carn. Chr. 14 5 At Jos. Bell. 2.119 Essenes are said to wash after touching foreigners. Cf. the various regulations forbidding contact with gentiles which are found in the Covenant of Damascus, CD 11,14 (Wise et al. p. 69); 12,6-11 (p. 70). At Clem Hom. 13.4.3 it is said that Christians do not eat at a gentile table. 6 Cf. Lev 15:18; Clem. Hom. 7.8.2. 7 At Hipp. Refut. 9.15.4-6 the Book of Elxai is said to prescribe this procedure for a person bitten by a mad dog. 8 Cf. Ep. Clem. Ad Jac. 7.1-2, and see p. 49, 19,7. 9 See the First Epistle of the Blessed Clement, the Disciple of Peter the Apostle, 1: "to the blessed brother virgins . . . to the holy sister virgins . . ." (Roberts and Donaldson, p. 55). 10 Cf. Matt 4:25.

3,1 And at first, as I said, Ebion declared that Christ is the offspring of a man, that is, of Joseph. For a while now, however, various of his followers have been giving conflicting accounts of Christ, as though they have decided on something untenable and impossible themselves. (2) But I think it may be since they were joined by Elxai—the false prophet < I mentioned earlier > in the tracts called “Sampsaeans,” “Ossenes” and “Elkasaites”—that they tell an imaginary story about Christ and the Holy Spirit as he did. 3,311 For some of them even say that Adam is Christ—the man who was formed first and infused with God’s breath.¹² (4) But others among them say that he is from above; created before all things, a spirit, both higher than the angels and Lord of all; and that he is called Christ, the heir of the world there.¹³ But he comes here when he chooses,¹⁴ as he came in Adam and appeared to the patriarchs clothed with Adam’s body. And in the last days the same Christ who had come to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, came and donned Adam’s body, and appeared to men, was crucified, rose and ascended. (6) But again, when they choose to, they say, “No! The Spirit—that is, the Christ—came to him and put on the man called Jesus.”¹⁵ And they get all giddy from making different suppositions about him at different times. 3,7 They too accept the Gospel according to Matthew. Like the Cerinthians and Merinthians, they too use it alone. They call it, “According to the Hebrews,” and it is true to say that only Matthew expounded and preached the Gospel in the Hebrew language and alphabet¹⁶ in the New Testament. 3,8 But some may already have replied that the Gospel of John too, translated from Greek to Hebrew, is in the Jewish treasuries, I mean the treasuries at Tiberias, and is stored there secretly, as certain Jewish converts have described to me in detail. (9) And not only that, but it is said that the book of the Acts of the Apostles, also translated from Greek to Hebrew, is there in the treasuries, so that the Jews who have read it, the ones who told me about it, have been converted to Christ from this. 4,1 One of them was Josephus—not the ancient Josephus, the author and chronicler, but Josephus of Tiberias, < born > during the old age of

11 With 3,3-5 cf. Hipp. Refut. 9.14.1. 12 Adam has the Spirit of Christ and is therefore the first appearance in the world of the true prophet: Clem. Hom. 3.20-21; Rec. 1.45.4. 13 Clem. Hom. 3.20.2. 14 Loc. cit. 15 See p. 119 n. 14. 16 Cf. Iren. 1.26.2; 3.11.7; Eus. H. E. 3.27.4; Jer. C. Pelag 3.2; Vir. Ill. 3 (Richardson p. 8).

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the Emperor Constantine of blessed memory. This Josephus was awarded the rank of count by the Emperor himself, and was authorized to build a church for Christ in Tiberias itself, and in Diocaesarea, Capernaum and the other towns. He also suffered a great deal from the Jews themselves before he came to the Emperor’s notice. 4,2 For this Josephus was counted as one of their men of rank. There are such persons, < who > rank next after the patriarch and are called “apostles.”¹⁷ They attend on the patriarch, and often stay with him day and night without intermission, to give him counsel and refer points of law to him. (3) Now the patriarch at that time was called Ellel. (I think that was how Josephus pronounced his name, unless I am mistaken because of the time). He was descended from the Gamaliel who had been one of their patriarchs. (4) One may suspect, and others have suggested this as well, that these patriarchs were descended from the first Gamaliel, the Savior’s contemporary, who gave the godly counsel of refraining from abuse of the apostles. 4,5 When Ellel was dying he asked for the bishop who then lived near Tiberias, and received holy baptism from him in extremis for a pretendedly medical reason. (6) For he had sent for him by Josephus, as though he were a doctor, and he had the room cleared and begged the bishop, “Give me the seal in Christ!” (7) The bishop summoned the servants and ordered water prepared, as though intending to give the patriarch, who was very sick, some treatment for his illness with water. They did what they were told, for they did not know. And sending everyone out from pretended modesty the patriarch was vouchsafed the laver and the holy mysteries. 5,1 Josephus told me < this > in conversation. For I heard all this from his own lips and not from anyone else, in his old age when he was about 70 or even more. (2) For I was entertained at his home in Scythopolis; he had moved from Tiberias, and owned a notable estate there in Scythopolis. Eusebius of blessed memory, the bishop of Vercelli in Italy, was Josephus’ guest, since he had been banished by Constantius for his orthodox faith. I and the other brethren had come there to visit him, and we were entertained too, along with Eusebius. 5,3 Now when I met Josephus at his home, asked him about himself, and found that he had been a prominent Jew, I also inquired his reason, and why it was that he had come over to Christianity. And I heard all this plainly (from him), not at secondhand from anyone else. (4) And since I

17 Cf. Eus. In Isa 18:1-2; Jer. In Gal 1:1 (Raspanti p. 11).

think that, because of the Hebrew translations in the treasuries, the things the man went through are worth recording for the edification of the faithful, I deliberately give Josephus’ entire reason. 5,5 Josephus was not only privileged to become a faithful Christian, but a great despiser of Arians as well. In that city, I mean Scythopolis, he was the only orthodox Christian—they were all Arians. (6) Had it not been that he was a count, and the rank of count protected him from Arian persecution, he could not even have undertaken to live in the town, especially while Patrophilus was the Arian bishop. Patrophilus was very influential because of his wealth and severity, and

his familiar acquaintance with the Emperor Constantius. (7) But there was another, younger man in town too, an orthodox believer of Jewish parentage. He did not even dare < to associate > with me in public, though he used to visit me secretly. 5,8 But Josephus told me something plausible and amusing, though I would think that even < here > he was telling the truth. He claimed that after his wife died, fearing that the Arians might take him by force and make him a cleric—to flatter him into conversion to the sect they would often promise him higher preferments if need be, and to make him a bishop. Well, he claimed that this was why he had married a second wife, to escape their ordinations! 6,1 But I shall go back to telling the story of the patriarch and make Josephus' own story known in all its particulars to those who care to read it, in the words he used to me. (2) "Just as the patriarch was being granted baptism," he told me, "I was peeping in through the cracks in the doors and realized what the bishop was doing to the patriarch—found it out, and kept it to myself. (3) For besides," Josephus said, "the patriarch had a very ample sum of money ready, and he reached out, gave it to the bishop, and said, 'Offer it for me. It is written that things are bound and loosed on earth through the priests of God, and < that > these things will be loosed and bound in heaven.'"¹⁸ (4) When this was over," he said, "and the doors were opened, the patriarch's visitors asked him how he was after his treatment, and he replied that he was very well For he knew what he was talking about!" 6,5 Then < after > two or three days, with the bishop visiting him often in the guise of a physician, the patriarch fell asleep with a good hope in store. He had entrusted his own son, who was quite young, to Josephus and another very capable < elder >. (6) All business, then, was transacted

18 Cf. Matt 18:18.

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through these two, since the patriarch, being a boy, was still childish, and was being brought up under their supervision. 6,7 During this time Josephus' mind was often troubled over the rites that had been performed in the affair of the baptism, and he was considering what he should do. Now there was a "gazophylacium" there which was sealed—"gaza" means "treasure" in Hebrew. (8) As many had different notions about this treasury because of its seal, Josephus plucked up the courage to open it unobserved—and found no money, but books money could not buy. (9) Browsing through them he found the Gospel of John translated from Greek to Hebrew, as I said, and the Acts of the Apostles—and Matthew's Gospel moreover, which is actually Hebrew. After reading from them he was once more distressed in mind, for he was somehow troubled over the faith of Christ. But now he was prodded for two reasons, his reading of the books and the patriarch's initiation. Still, as often happens, his heart was hardened. 7,1 While all his time was occupied with these things, the boy Ellel had left to be reared as patriarch was growing up. (No one usurps the positions of authority among the Jews, but son succeeds father.) (2) Just as the lad was reaching full vigor some idle youths of his own age with vicious habits unfortunately met him. (I guess he was called Judas, but because of the time I am not quite sure.) (3) His young contemporaries got him into many evil practices, seductions of women and unholy sexual unions. They undertook to help him in his licentious < activities > with certain magic devices—making certain love-philtres and compelling free women with incantations to be brought under duress for his seduction. 7,4 Josephus and his fellow elder, who were obliged to attend the boy, bore this with difficulty and often both charged him and admonished him verbally. But he preferred to listen to the young men, and he hid his indecencies and denied them. And Josephus did not dare to voice his accusations of him openly; instead he admonished him, as though for his education. 7,5 Well, they went to Gadara for the hot baths. There is a gathering there every year. Persons who wish to bathe for a certain number of days arrive from every quarter supposedly to get rid of their ailments, though this is a trick of the devil. For where wonders have been given by God the adversary has already spread his deadly nets—the bathing there is mixed! 7,6 There happened to be a free woman of unusual beauty in the bath. Lured by the habit of his licentiousness the young man rubbed his side against the woman's as he strolled about in the hot-air room. (7) But being Christian, she naturally made the sign of the cross. (There was no need for her to behave improperly and bathe in mixed company. These things happen to simple lay persons, from the laxity of the teachers who do not forewarn them through their instruction.) (8) Still, that God might make his wonders manifest, the youngster, I mean the patriarch, failed in his enterprise. For he sent emissaries to the woman and promised her gifts; but she insulted his messengers and did not yield to the pampered youth's futile efforts. 8,1 Then, when his helpers learned of the boy's pain which he betrayed for the girl, they undertook to prepare more powerful magic for him, as Josephus himself described it to me in full. (2) After sunset they took the unfortunate lad to the neighboring cemetery. (In my country there are places of assembly of this kind, called "caverns," made by hewing them out of cliff sides.) (3) Taking him there the cheats who accompanied him recited certain incantations and spells, and did very impious things to him and in the name of the woman. 8,4 By God's will this came to the attention of the other elder, Josephus' partner, and on realizing what was happening, he told Josephus. And he began by bemoaning his lot, and said, "Brother, we are wretched men and vessels of destruction! What sort of person are we attending?" (5) And when Josephus asked the reason, no sooner were the words out of his mouth than the

elder seized his hand and took Josephus to the place where the persons doomed to die, with the youth, were holding their assembly in the cemetery for magic. (6) Standing outside the door they listened to what the others were doing, but withdrew when they came out. (It was not dark yet; it was just about sundown, and one could still see dimly.) (7) After the monsters of impiety had left the tomb Josephus went in and saw certain < vessels > and other implements of jugglery thrown on the ground. They made water on them and covered them with a heap of dust, he said, and left. 8,8 But they knew the sort of woman on whose account they had plotted these wicked things, and he watched to see whether they would win. (9) When the sorcerers had not prevailed—the woman had the aid of the sign and faith of Christ—he learned that the youngster had waited for the girl’s arrival on three nights, and later quarreled with the persons who had performed the jugglery because he had not succeeded. (10) This made Josephus’ third lesson—where Christ’s name was, and the sign of his cross, the power of sorcery did not prevail. But at this point he was by no means convinced that he should become a Christian. 9,1 Then the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, “I am Jesus, whom your forefathers crucifi ed; but believe in me.” When he was not convinced even by his he fell into grave illness and was given up for

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lost. But the Lord appeared to him again, and told him to believe and he would be healed. And he promised and recovered, and again persevered in his obstinacy. 9,2 He fell ill a second time in turn, and was given up in the same way. When he was assumed to be dying by his Jewish kin he heard the words from them that they always repeat in secrecy among themselves. (3) An elder, a scholar of the law, came and whispered to him, “Believe < in > Jesus, crucifi ed under Pontius Pilate the governor, Son of God fi rst yet later born of Mary; the Christ of God and risen from the dead. And believe that he will come to judge and quick and the dead.” That same Josephus told me this plainly during his story, as I can truthfully say. 9,4 Besides, I have heard this sort of thing from someone else. He was still a Jew from fear of the Jews, but he often spent time in Christian company, and he honored Christians and loved them. He traveled with me in the wilderness of Bethel and Ephraim, when I was going up to the mountains from Jericho and saying something to him about the advent of Christ, and he did not dispute it. (5) I was amazed—he was learned in the Law as well and able to argue—and I asked the reason why he did not dispute, but agreed with me, about Jesus Christ our Lord. I had got no further than this when he too revealed to me that when he himself had been near death they had told him secretly, in a whisper, “Jesus Christ, the crucifi ed Son of God, will judge you.” (6) But let this be recorded here, from a genuine report about these persons and about this formula. 10,1 Josephus was still sick. And though, as I said, the presbyter, along with the others, had told him, “Jesus Christ will judge you,” he was still hardened. But the Lord in his lovingkindness again said to him in a dream, “Lo, I heal you; but rise and believe!” But though he recovered again, he did not believe. (2) When he was well the Lord appeared to him in a dream once more and scolded him for not believing. And he promised him, “If, for an assurance of your faith, you choose to work any miracle in my name, call upon me and I will do it.” 10,3 There was a madman in the city who used to roam the town, I mean Tiberias, naked. If he was dressed he would often tear his clothing apart, as such people will. (4) Now Josephus was overcome with awe and wished to put the vision to the test, although he was still doubtful. So he brought the man inside, shut the door, took water, made the sign of the cross over it, and sprinkled it on the madman with the words, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth the crucifi ed begone from him, demon, and let him be made whole!” 10,5 Falling down with a loud cry, the man lay motionless for a long time foaming profusely and retching, and Josephus supposed that he had died. (6) But after a while he rubbed his forehead and got up and, once on his feet and seeing his own nakedness, he hid himself and covered his privy parts with his hands, for he could no longer bear to see his own nakedness. (7) Dressed by Josephus himself in one of his own himatia, in proof of his comprehension and sanity, he came and thanked him and God profusely, for he realized that he had been cured through Josephus. He spread word of him in town, and this miracle became known to the Jews there. (8) Much talk ensued in the city from people saying that Josephus had opened the treasuries, found the Name of God in writing and read it, and was working geat miracles. And what they were saying was true, though not in the way they thought. 10,9 Josephus, however, still remained hardened in heart. But the merciful God who is continually arranging good opportunities for those who love him, grants them to those whom he deems worthy of life. (11,1) As things turned out for Josephus himself, after Judas the patriarch, of whom we have spoken, grew up—I guess he was called that—to repay Josephus he granted him the revenue of the apostolate. (2) He was sent to Cilicia with a commission, and on arriving there collected the tithes and fi rstfruits from the Jews of the province, from every city in Cilicia. (3) At this time he lodged next to the church, I don’t know in which city. But he made friends with the bishop there, < went to him > unobserved, borrowed the Gospels and read them. 11,4 Since < he was > very severe as an apostle should be—as I said, this is their name for the rank—and indeed was a reformer, he was always intent on what would make for the establishment of good order and purged and demoted many of the appointed synagogue-heads, priests, elders and “azanites” (meaning their kind of deacons or assistants), many

were angry with him. As though in an attempt to pay him back these people took no little trouble to pry into his affairs and find out what he was doing. (5) For this reason a crowd of meddlers burst in upon him at home in his residence, and caught him pouring over the Gospels. They seized the book and grabbed the man, dragged him to the floor with shouts, bore him off to the synagogue with no light mistreatment, and beat him as the Law prescribes. (6) This made his first trial; however, the bishop of the town arrived and got him out. Another time they caught him on a journey, he told me, and threw him into the river Cydnus. < When they saw > him taken by the current they thought he had gone under and drowned, and were glad of it. 11,7 But a little later he was vouchsafed holy baptism—for he was rescued (from the river). He went to court, made friends with the Emperor Constantine, and told him his whole story—how he was of the highest

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Jewish rank, and how the divine visions kept appearing to him, since the Lord was summoning him to his holy calling, and the salvation of his faith and knowledge. (8) And the good emperor—a true servant of Christ, and, after David, Hezekiah and Josiah, the king with the most godly zeal—rewarded him with a rank in his realm, as I have said already. (9) He made him a count and told him to ask what he wanted in his turn. Josephus asked nothing of the emperor but this very great favor—permission by imperial rescript to build Christ's churches in the Jewish towns and villages where no one had ever been able to found churches, since there are no Greeks, Samaritans or Christians among the population. (10) This < rule > of having no gentiles among them is observed especially at Tiberias, Diocaesarea, Sepphoris, Nazareth and Capernaum. 12,1 After receiving the letter and the authorization along with his title, Josephus came to Tiberias. Besides, he had a draft on the imperial treasury, and he himself had been honored with a salary from the emperor. 12,2 And so he began to build in Tiberias. There was a very large temple in the town already, I think they may have called it the Adrianeum. The citizens may have been trying to restore this Adrianeum, which was standing unfinished, for a public bath. (3) When Josephus found this he took the opportunity from it; and as he found that there were already four walls raised to some height, made of stones four feet long, he began the erection of the church from that point. 12,4 But lime was needed, and the other building material. He therefore had a number of ovens, perhaps seven altogether, set up outside the city. (In the language of the country they call these "furnaces.") But the horrid Jews who are always up to trying anything did not spare their usual sorcery. Those grand Jews wasted their time on magic and jugglery to bind the fire, but they did not entirely succeed. 12,5 Well, the fire was smouldering and not doing anything but had practically ceased to be fire. 19 When those whose task it was to feed the fire with fuel—I mean brushwood or scrub—told Josephus what had been done he rushed from the city, stung to the quick and moved with zeal for the Lord. (6) He ordered water fetched in a vessel, (I mean a flask, but the local inhabitants call this a "cacubium,") < and > took this vessel of water in the sight of all—a crowd of Jews had gathered to watch, eager to see how it would turn out and what Josephus would try to do. Tracing the sign of the cross on the vessel with his own finger, and invoking the name of

19 ἀλλὰ τῆς ἰδίας ὡς εἶπεῖν φύσεως ἐκτὸς ἐγένετο

Jesus, he cried out, (7) "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom my fathers and those of all here present crucified, may there be power in this water to set at naught all sorcery and enchantment these men have wrought, and to work a miracle on the fire that the Lord's house may be finished." (8) With that he wet his hand and sprinkled the water on each furnace. And the spells were broken, and in the presence of all, the fire blazed up. And the crowds of spectators cried, "There is one God, who comes to the aid of the Christians," and went away. 12,9 Though they harmed the man on many occasions, he eventually restored part of the temple at Tiberias and finished a small church. He left then and came to Scythopolis and made his home. However, he completed buildings in Diocaesarea and certain other towns. (10) So much for my account and description of these events, which I recalled here because of the translation of the books, the rendering from Greek to Hebrew of the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles. 13,1 But I shall resume the thread of my argument against Ebion—because of the Gospel according to Matthew the course of the discussion obliged me to insert the whole of the knowledge which I had gained. (2) Now in what they call a Gospel according to Matthew, though it is not the entire Gospel but is corrupt and mutilated—and they call this thing "Hebrew"—the following passage is found: "There was a certain man named Jesus, and he was about thirty years of age, 20 who chose us. And coming to Capernaum he entered into the house of Simon surnamed Peter, and opened his mouth and said, (3) Passing beside the Sea of Tiberias I chose John and James, the sons of Zebedee, 21 and Simon and Andrew and < Philip and Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus and Thomas >, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. 22 Thee too, Matthew, seated at the receipt of custom, did I call, and thou didst follow me. 23 I will, then, that ye be twelve apostles 24 for a testimony to Israel." (4) And, "John came baptizing, and there went out unto him Pharisees and were baptized, and all Jerusalem. And John had a garment of camel's hair, and a girdle of skin about his loins.

And his meat," it says, "was wild honey, whose taste was the taste of manna, as a cake in oil."²⁵ (5) This, if you

20 Cf. Lk 3:23 21 Cf. Matt 4:18. What precedes is a combination of the Gospel passages Mark 1:21; 29; Matt 5:2; Matt 4:18. 22 Cf. Matt 10:2-4; Luke 6:14-16. The list given here, however, is not identical with either. 23 Cf. Matt 9:9. 24 Cf. Clem. Rec. 1.40.4; Clem. Alex. Strom. 6.418.2. 25 Cf. Matt 3:4-5; Num 11:8.

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please, to turn the account of the truth into falsehood, and substitute "a cake in honey" for "locusts"! 13,6 But the beginning of their Gospel is, "It came to pass in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, < in the high-priesthood of Caiaphas >, that < a certain > man, John < by name >, came baptizing with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan, and he was said to be of the lineage of Aaron the priest, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and all went out unto him."²⁶ (7) And after saying a good deal it adds, "When the people had been baptized Jesus came also and was baptized of John. And as he came up out of the water the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove which descended and entered into him. And (there came) a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased,²⁷ and again, This day have I begotten thee.²⁸ And straightway a great light shone round about the place.²⁹ Seeing this," it says, "John said unto him, Who art thou, Lord?³⁰ And again (there came) a voice to him from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.³¹ (8) And then," it says, "John fell down before him and said, I pray thee, Lord, do thou baptize me. But he forbade him saying, Let it alone, for thus it is meet that all be fulfilled."³² 14,1 See how their utterly false teaching is all lame, crooked, and not right anywhere! (2) For by supposedly using their same < so-called Gospel according to Matthew > Cerinthus and Carpocrates want to prove from the beginning of Matthew, by the genealogy, that Christ is the product of Joseph's seed and Mary. (3) But these people have something else in mind. They falsify the genealogical tables in Matthew's Gospel and make its opening, as I said, "It came to pass in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, in the high-priesthood of Caiaphas, that a certain man, John by name, came baptizing with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan" and so on. (4) This is because they maintain that Jesus is really a man, as I said, but that Christ, who descended in the form of a dove, has entered him—as we have found already in other sects—< and > been united with him. Christ himself < is from God on high, but Jesus > is the offspring of a man's seed and a woman.

26 Cf. Luke 1:5; Mark 1:4-5. 27 This is closest to Luke 3:21-22. 28 Heb. 1:5; Ps 2:7; Gospel according to the Hebrews H-S I p. 169 which, however, is a quoted from Epiph. There is no other source for the quotation. 29 Cf. Justin Dial. 7. 30 Acts 9:5 31 Cf. Matt 3:17 32 Matt 12:47-50

14,5 But again they deny that he is a man, supposedly on the basis of the words the Savior spoke when he was told, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without," "Who are my mother and my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, These are my brethren and mother and sisters, these that do the will of my Father." (6) And so Ebion, as I said, who is crammed with all sorts of trickery, shows himself in many forms—making him a monstrosity, as I indicated above. 15,1 But they use certain other books as well—supposedly the so-called Travels of Peter written by Clement, though they corrupt their contents while leaving a few genuine passages. (2) Clement himself convicts them of this in every way in his general epistles which are read in the holy churches, because his faith and speech are of a different character than their spurious productions in his name in the Travels. He himself teaches celibacy, and they will not accept it. He extols Elijah, David, Samson and all the prophets, whom they abhor.³³ 15,3 In the Travels they have changed everything to suit themselves and slandered Peter in many ways, saying that he was baptized daily³⁴ for purification as they are. And they say he abstained from flesh and dressed meat as they do, and any other dish made from meat—since both Ebion himself, and Ebionites, entirely abstain from these.³⁵ (4) When you ask one of them why they do not eat meat, having no explanation they answer foolishly and say, "Since it is a product of the congress and intercourse of bodies, we do not eat it." Thus, according to their own foolish regurgitations, they are wholly abominable themselves, since they are the results of the intercourse of a man and a woman. 16,1 They too receive baptism, apart from their daily baptisms. And they celebrate supposed mysteries from year to year in imitation of the sacred mysteries of the church, using unleavened bread—and the other part of the mystery with water only. 16,2 But as I said, they set side by side two who have been appointed by God, one being Christ, but one the devil. And they say that Christ has been allotted the world to come, but that this world has been entrusted

33 The Clementines are at least suspicious of the prophets. Ep. Pet. Ad Jac. 1.4 warns of being confused by their contradictory utterances. Cf. Clem. Hom. 3.53.2. For a Nag Hammadi attack on the prophets see GT 52. 34 This seems implied at Clem Hom. 11.1.1-2; Rec. 4.3.1; 8.1.1. See, however, Strecker, *Judenchristentum* p. 208. 35 Cf. Clem. Hom. 8.15.3-4.

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to the devil³⁶—supposedly by the decree of the Almighty, at the request of each of them. (3) And they say that this is why Jesus was begotten of the seed of a man and chosen, and thus has been named Son of God by election, after the Christ who came to him from on high in the form of a dove. (4) But they say that he is not begotten of God the Father but created as one of the archangels, and that he is ruler both of angels and of all creatures of < the > Almighty; and that he came and instructed us < to abolish the sacrifices >. (5) As their so-called Gospel says, “I came to abolish the sacrifices, and if ye cease not from sacrifices, wrath will not cease from you.”³⁷ Both these and certain things of the kind are guileful inventions which are current among them. 16,6 They speak of other Acts of Apostles in which there is much thoroughly impious material, and from them arm themselves against the truth in deadly earnest. (7) They lay down certain ascents and instructions in the supposed “Ascents of James,” as though he were giving orders against the temple and sacrifices, and the fire on the altar—and much else that is full of nonsense. 16,8 Nor are they ashamed to accuse Paul³⁸ here with certain fabrications of their false apostles’ villainy and imposture. They say that he was Tarsean—which he admits himself and does not deny. And they suppose that he was of Greek parentage, taking the occasion for this from the (same) passage because of his frank statement, “I am a man of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city.”³⁹ (9) They then claim that he was Greek and the son of a Greek mother and Greek father, but that he had gone up to Jerusalem, stayed there for a while, desired to marry a daughter of the high priest, and had therefore become a proselyte and been circumcised. But since he still could not marry that sort of girl he became angry and wrote against circumcision, and against the Sabbath and the legislation. 17,1 But he is making a completely false accusation, this horrid serpent with his poverty of understanding. For “Ebion,” translated from Hebrew to Greek, means “poor.” For truly he is poor, in understanding, hope and actuality, since he regards Christ as a mere man, and thus has come to

³⁶ See Clem. Hom. 3.19.2; 20.2.1-2; Rec. 7.3-4. At Clem. Hom. 8.21.1-2 the “king of the present” (Satan) tempts the “king of the future” (Christ). In Manichean literature see Man. Hom. 41,18-20. ³⁷ Cf. Clem. Hom. 2.44.2; 3.26.3; 3.45.1-2; 56.4, and Rec. 1.37 1.39.12. Mandaean literature deprecates the sacrifices, e.g. at Ginza 9,83; 33,2; 43,8-10. ³⁸ Cf. Ep. Pet. Ad Jac. 2.5; Clem. Rec. 1.70-71. Ebionite opposition to Paul is mentioned at Iren. 1.26.2; Orig. Cels. 5.65; Hom. 19 in Jer. 18:12 (Klostermann p. 167). ³⁹ Cf. Acts 21:39.

hope in him with poverty of faith.⁴⁰ (2) They themselves, if you please, boastfully claim that they are poor because they sold their possessions in the apostles’ time and laid them at the apostles’ feet, and went over to a life of poverty and renunciation;⁴¹ and thus, they say, they are called “poor” by everyone. (3) But there is no truth to this claim of theirs either; he was really named Ebion.⁴² I suppose the poor wretch was named prophetically by his father and mother. 17,4 And how many other dreadful, false, observances they have, chock full of wickedness! When one of them falls ill or is bitten by a snake, he gets into water and invokes the names in Elxai—of heaven, earth, salt, water, winds, “angels of righteousness” < as > they say, bread and oil⁴³—and begins to say, “Come to my aid and rid me of my pain!” 17,5 But I have already indicated, even before this, that Ebion did not know of these things. After a time his followers became associated with Elxai, and they have the circumcision, the Sabbath and the customs of Ebion, but Elxai’s delusion. (6) Thus they believe that Christ is a manlike figure invisible to human eyes, ninety-six miles—or twenty-four schoena, if you please!—tall; six schoena, or twenty-four miles wide; and some other measurement through. Opposite him the Holy Spirit stands invisibly as well, in the form of a female, with the same dimensions. (7) “And how did I find the dimensions?” he says. “I saw from the mountains that the heads were level with them, and from observing the height of the mountain, I learned the dimensions of Christ and the Holy Spirit.” (8) I have already spoken of this in the Sect, “Against Ossaeans.” I have put it down here though, in passing, lest it be thought that I fail from forgetfulness to mention characteristics of any nation and sect which are also found in others. 18,1 Ebion too preached in Asia and Rome, but the roots of these thorny side-growths come mostly from Nabataea and Baniyas, Moabitis, and Cocabe in Bashanitis beyond Adrai—in Cyprus as well. (2) They compel them to give their children in marriage even when they are too young—with the permission of their teachers, if you please! (Ebionites have elders and heads of synagogues, and they call their church a synagogue, not a church; and they take pride in Christ’s name only.) (3) And they do not allow people to contract only one marriage; even if someone should want

⁴⁰ Eusebius gives a comparable explanation at H. E. 3.27.1. He knows nothing of an “Ebion.” ⁴¹ Cf. Acts 4:34-35. ⁴² See p. 133 n. 2. ⁴³ A shorter version of these “witnesses” is found at Ep. Pet. Ad Jac. 4.1.

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to be released from his first marriage and contract another, they permit it—they allow everything without hesitation—down to a second, and a third, and a seventh marriage. 18,4 They acknowledge Abraham, Isaac and

Jacob, Moses and Aaron—and Joshua the son of Nun⁴⁴ simply as Moses' successor, though he is of no importance. But after these they acknowledge no more of the prophets, but even anathematize David and Solomon and make fun of them. Similarly they disregard Isaiah and Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel, Elijah and Elisha; for they pay them no heed and blaspheme their prophecies,⁴⁵ but accept only the Gospel. (5) They say, however, that Christ is the prophet of truth⁴⁶ and the Christ; < but > is Son of God by promotion,⁴⁷ and by union with the elevation on high which has come to him. They say that the prophets are prophets of < their own > understanding, not of truth. (6) Christ alone, they would have it, is prophet, man, Son of God, and Christ—and as I said before he is a mere man⁴⁸ who has come to be called Son of God owing to the virtue of his life. 18,7 Nor do they accept Moses' Pentateuch in its entirety; they reject certain sayings.⁴⁹ When you say to them, of eating meat, "Why did Abraham serve the angels the calf and the milk? Why did Noah eat meat, and why was he told to by God, who said, 'Slay and eat?' Why did Isaac and Jacob sacrifice to God—Moses too, in the wilderness?" he will disbelieve those things and will say, "What need for me to read what is in the Law, when the Gospel has come?" 18,8 "Well, how do you know about Moses and Abraham? I know you admit that they exist, and that you put them down as righteous, and your own ancestors." 18,9 Then he will answer, "Christ has revealed this to me," and will blaspheme most of the legislation, and Samson, David, Elijah, Samuel, Elisha and the rest.

⁴⁴ The Book of Joshua is appended to the Samaritan Pentateuch, perhaps for similar reasons. ⁴⁵ Ebionites are said to repudiate the canonical prophets at Method. Conviv. 8.10. ⁴⁶ This idea recurs many times in the Clementina. A good specimen is found at Rec. 8.59-62. ⁴⁷ Hipp. Refut. 7.34.2: καὶ < γὰρ > τὸν Ἰησοῦν λέγουσι δικαιοῦσθαι ποιήσαντα τὸν νόμον, - διὸ καὶ Χριστὸν αὐτὸν < καὶ υἱὸν > θεοῦ ὀνομάσθαι. ⁴⁸ Clem. Hom. 16.15.2: "Our Lord neither asserted that there were gods except the Creator of all, nor did he proclaim himself to be God." This, however, is a late passage by an Anomoean author. ⁴⁹ Clem. Hom. 2.38.1; 45-52; 18.19-20. The Clementina regard any anthropopathic material in the Pentateuch as a corruption of the Law God originally gave to Moses.

19,1 But the tramp is completely exposed by the Savior, who refutes the whole of his deceitful teaching, expressly and as though in summary form with one utterance, when he says, "John came in the way of righteousness, neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, < and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber." >⁵⁰ (2) And he certainly does not mean that John never by any chance ate, or that the Savior ate anything and everything—with the suspicion of forbidden foods as well. (3) The passage makes the meaning of the truth plain, since "He is a glutton and a wine-bibber" can mean only the eating of meat and the drinking of wine; and "neither eating nor drinking" means that John did not partake of meat and wine, but only of locusts and honey—water too, obviously. 19,4 But who does not know that the Savior arose from the dead and ate (flesh)? As the holy Gospels of the truth say, "There was given unto him bread, and a piece of broiled fish. And he took it, and did eat, and gave to his disciples."⁵¹ As he also did at the Sea of Tiberias, both eating and giving. (5) And a great deal can be said on this subject. But I must now come to the detailed refutation of their worthless, unsound teachings, and compose the rebuttal of them. 20,1 And first, it must be said of Christ that he is not a mere man. It cannot be that a person conceived < like > a man in every respect will be given to the world for a "sign," as the Holy Spirit foretold of him by saying to Ahaz, "Ask thee a sign"; and since Ahaz would not ask, the prophet then said, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold the Virgin shall conceive."⁵² 20,2 A woman who has been united to a husband and married cannot be called a virgin. But she who has truly had the conception of the Word of God without a husband may properly be called a virgin—(3) as Isaiah himself says in another passage, "A voice of a cry from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord of recompense, that rendereth recompense to his enemies. Before she that travailed hath brought forth, before the pain of her travail came, she escaped (it) and was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard of such a thing? Or who hath seen such things? Or hath the earth travailed in one day and brought forth a nation at once? For Zion hath travailed and brought forth her children. And it was I who granted this expectation, and they did not remember, saith the

⁵⁰ Matt. 11:18-19 ⁵¹ Luke 24:42-43; John 21:12 ⁵² Isa. 7:11;14

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Lord."⁵³ (4) But which "expectation" and which "children," other than that of a virgin's giving birth (to a child) without labor pains, something that had never happened, and that the child born of Elizabeth by promise for his sake < leaped in the womb before his birth >, even though John was born with labor pains. 20,5 How, then, can these people declare the Savior a mere man, conceived of a man's seed? How will he "not be known," as Jeremiah says of him, "He is a man, and yet who will know him?"⁵⁴ (6) For in giving his description the prophet said of him, "Who will know him?" But if he were speaking of a mere man, surely his father would know him and his mother, his relatives and neighbors, the members of his household and his fellow townsmen. (7) But since the human offspring is born of Mary but the divine Word came from above, truly begotten not in time and without beginning, not of a man's seed but of the Father on high, and in the last days consenting to enter a virgin's womb

and fashioning flesh from her, patterned after himself—this is why Jeremiah says, “And he is a man, but who will know him?”⁵⁵ For as God he came from above, the only-begotten divine Word. ^{20,8} But the deluded souls are most unfortunate to have abandoned the testimonies of prophets and angels and to be content with those of the deluded Ebion, who wants to do what he likes, and practice the Jewish customs even though he is estranged from the Jews. (9) < For > when Gabriel was bringing the tidings to Mary, he pledged his word at once as soon as she said, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” and said, “The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that which is born of thee shall be called holy, Son of God.”⁵⁶ (10) By saying, “that which is born,” he showed that the flesh < is > from her and the rest of the humanity, but that the power of the highest and the Holy Spirit overshadowed the holy Virgin from above, from the heavens, and the only-begotten Son, the divine Word, has descended from on high—< indicating > both that Christ became man, and that he was born of her in truth. (11) And how much more there is of this sort! But as I promised it is not my custom to range widely, so as not to make my treatise very lengthy.

[53 Isa. 66:6-9](#) [54 Jerem 17:9](#) [55 Jerem 17:9](#) [56 Luke 1:34-35](#)

21,1 But next I shall discuss the other false accusations which they make, against Peter and the other apostles—that every day, before so much as eating bread, Peter had had immersions. (2) Observe the whole of their slander, and the badness hidden under their cheap teaching! Since they are defiled themselves and often indulge themselves sexually on earth, they make lavish use of water for their own reassurance, to deceive themselves if you please, under the impression that they have purification through baptisms. (3) And they are not ashamed to say these offensive things about the apostles, even though the Lord exposes their perversity since, when he came to wash Peter’s feet, Peter said, “Thou shalt never wash my feet,” and the Savior’s answer was, “If I wash not thy feet thou hast no part with me.” (4) And when Peter replied, “Not the feet only, but also the head,” the Lord returned, “He that is washed once needeth not < to wash > his head, but his feet only; for he is clean every whit.”⁵⁷ **21,5** He showed, then, that there is no need to make use of immersions, useless customs, and commandments and teachings of men, as he says in the Gospel in agreement with the prophet, “This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”⁵⁸ (6) Why did he fault the Pharisees and Scribes, with their thorough immersions < both > of themselves, and of their platters, cups and the rest? And why does he declare definitively, “To eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man?”⁵⁹ Thus not only did he put a stop to the immersion of these things. He even showed that washing one’s hands is unnecessary, and that if one would rather < not > wash his hands, it does him no harm. **22,1** And how can their stupidity about the eating of meat not be exposed out of hand? First of all, because the Lord ate the Jewish Passover. Now the Jewish Passover was a sheep and unleavened bread—sheep’s flesh roasted with fire and eaten, (2) as his disciples say to him, “Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee that thou mayest eat the Passover?” And the Lord himself says, “Go ye into the city, and ye shall find a man bearing a pitcher of water and ye shall follow whithersoever he goeth, and say ye to the goodman of the house, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall keep the Passover with my disciples? And he shall show you an upper room furnished; there make ready.”⁶⁰

[57 John 13:8-10](#) [58 Matt. 15:8-9](#) [59 Matt. 15:20](#) [60 Mark 14:12-15](#)

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22,3 And again, the Lord himself says, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.”⁶¹ And he did not simply say “Passover” but “this Passover,” so that no one could play with it in his own sense. A Passover, as I said, was meat roasted with fire and the rest. (4) But to destroy deliberately the true passage these people have altered its text—which is evident to everyone from the expressions that accompany it⁶²—and represented the disciples as saying, “Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?” and he supposedly saying, “Did I really desire to eat meat as this Passover with you?” **22,5** But how can their tampering go undetected, when the passage cries out that the “mu” and “eta” are additions? Instead of saying ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα they have put in the additional μή. Christ truly said, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.”⁶³ But they misled themselves by writing in meat and making a false entry, and saying, “Did I really want to eat meat with you as this Passover?” But it is plainly demonstrated that he both kept the Passover, and, as I said, ate meat. **22,6** But they will also be convicted by the vision which was shown St. Peter, through the sheet which contained all sorts of wild beasts, domestic animals, reptiles and birds, and the Lord’s voice saying, “Arise, slay and eat!” And when Peter said, “Not so, Lord; nothing common or unclean hath entered into my mouth,” the Lord replied, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”⁶⁴ (7) For the proof of the truth can be arrived at by two methods. If they say that St. Peter’s remark refers inclusively to all foods when he says, “Nothing common or unclean < hath > at any time < entered into my mouth >,” so that he would have called cattle, goats, sheep

and birds unclean, they will be exposed at once by his previous mode of life. (8) It was after marrying, fathering children⁶⁵ and having a mother-in-law that he met the Savior, and he was Jewish. But Jews eat flesh, and among them the eating of meat is not considered abominable or forbidden. (9) Since he had always eaten meat, then—even if we say (he did it only) until he met the Savior—this will prove that he considered nothing unclean which was not declared to be unclean. For in fact he did not attribute commonness or uncleanness to all sorts of meat, but (only) to the ones the Law called common or unclean.

⁶¹ Luke 22:15 ⁶² I.e., the expression τοῦτο. ⁶³ Luke 22:15 ⁶⁴ Acts 11:7-9 ⁶⁵ The Act of Peter, BG 8502,4, is the legend of Peter's daughter.

22,¹⁰ But again—since it is established that he did not hold of all kinds of meat that they were all common, but that he held this of the kinds which are called common and unclean in the Law—to teach him the character of Christ's holy church God told him to consider nothing common. "For all things are pure, when they are received with thanks and praise to God."⁶⁶ (11) But even though the riddle referred to the call of the gentiles so that Peter would not regard the uncircumcised as profane or unclean, the expression Peter used did not refer to people but meant the foods the Law prohibits, as anyone can see. And their silly argument has failed from every point of view. 23,¹ They pretendedly accept the names of the apostles in order to convince their dupes, and have composed forged books in their names, supposedly by James, Matthew, and other disciples. (2) They list the name of the apostle John among these to make their stupidity detectible in every way. For not only does he refute them in every way by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."⁶⁷ (3) < It is clear from his Gospel >, moreover, that he < accepts > the testimonies of the holy prophets. In this Gospel he published their testimonies by giving a good and full account, with the Holy Spirit's help, of the things the Savior said about each oracle (of the prophets) which, as I said, has been fulfilled in Christ. From these prophets the Ebionites have estranged themselves. (4) At the very outset he showed how John himself answered the messengers sent by the Pharisees to John the Baptist with, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah."⁶⁸ (5) And again, when the Lord overturned the tables of the money-changers and said, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," John himself, taking the testimony from the prophets, I mean from David, said, "They remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."⁶⁹ And again, John himself said, "Isaiah saw, being in the Holy Spirit."⁷⁰ 24,¹ And again, when St. John himself was preaching in Asia, it is reported that he did an extraordinary thing as an example of the truth. Although his way of life was most admirable and appropriate to his apostolic rank and he never bathed, he was compelled to approach the bath by the

⁶⁶ Cf. Rom. 14:20 and 1 Tim. 4:3. ⁶⁷ John 1:1 ⁶⁸ John 1:23 ⁶⁹ John 2:16-17 ⁷⁰ John 12:41

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Holy Spirit who said, "Look what is at the bath!" (2) To his companions' surprise he actually went to the bathing-room, approached the attendant who took the bathers' clothes, and asked who was inside in the bathingroom. (3) And the attendant stationed there to watch the clothes—some people do this for a living in the gymnasia—said to St. John, "Ebion is inside." (4) But John understood at once why the Holy Spirit's guidance had impelled him to approach the bath, as I said—as a memorial to leave us the truth's advice as to who Christ's servants and apostles are, and the sons of that same truth, but what the vessels of the evil one are, and the gates of hell; though these cannot prevail against the rock, and God's holy church which is founded on it. (5) Becoming disturbed at once and crying out John said in an aside audible to all—as a testimony in evidence of undefiled doctrine—"Let's get out of here in a hurry, brothers, or the bath may fall and bury us along with the person who is inside in the bathingroom, Ebion, because of his impiety." (6) And no one need be surprised to hear that Ebion met John. The blessed John had a very long life, and survived till the reign of Trajan.⁷¹ (7) But anyone can see that all the apostles distinguished Ebion's faith (from their own), and considered it foreign to the character of their preaching. 25,¹ And how much do I have to say about their blasphemies of St. Paul? First, they say that he was Greek and of gentile parentage, but that he had later become a proselyte. (2) Why does he say "an Hebrew of Hebrews" of himself, then, "of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, concerning the Law, a Pharisee, being more exceeding zealous of the traditions of my fathers?"⁷² (3) And he says elsewhere, "Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I,"⁷³ and, "Circumcised the eighth day, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and an Hebrew of Hebrews."⁷⁴ 25,⁴ What frightful shrieks and snake's hisses of the horrid serpents, and what deadly nonsense! Whose word shall I take? Ebion's and his kind, or St. Peter's, who says, "As my brother, Paul, hath written unto you, which things are deep and hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned and unstable pervert by their own ignorance?"⁷⁵ (5) And St. Paul himself testifies in his turn for Peter and says, "James, John and Cephas, who seemed

to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.”⁷⁶ For even if he said that he was from Tarsus, this is no excuse for the attitude of those who hunt for words < that they have invented > to their own ruin and the ruin of < their > converts. (6) For that matter, scripture also says that Barnabas, whose name was once Joseph but was changed to Barnabas, or “son of consolation,” was a Levite from Cyprus. And it is by no means true that, because he was a Cypriote, he was not descended from Levi. Just so, even though St. Paul came from Tarsus, he was not foreign to Israel. ^{25,7} For since many were dispersed when there was war during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes and at other times, both by being taken prisoner, and by < fleeing because of > a siege, those who had been taken captive remained in certain places, while everyone who had left for some such reason settled where he could. (8) And so the holy Jeremiah said of Israel because it was so often that they had to flee from their enemies, “And if thou passest over to the Citians, there also shalt thou have no rest.”⁷⁷ (9) Now anyone can see that Citium means the island of Cyprus, for Cypriotes and Rhodians are Citians. Moreover, the Cypriote and Rhodian stock had settled in Macedonia where Alexander of Macedon came from. And this is why the Book of Maccabees says, “He came out of the land of the Citians”;⁷⁸ Alexander of Macedon was of Citian descent. ^{25,10} But to find my place again after giving the information about them because of the chance remark,⁷⁹ I am saying that many of the emigrants who had settled in the other countries had Israelite ancestry. (11) For they were called natives of each country besides. Thus Jethro’s daughters told their father how Moses had helped them when he drove the shepherds away and watered their sheep. And they went and told their father about it, and when he said, “How is it that ye are come so soon today?” (12) they answered, “An Egyptian delivered us from the shepherds, and also drew water for us and watered our flock.” And Jethro answered at once, “Why brought ye him not hither, that he may eat bread?”⁸⁰ ^{25,13} But who does not know that Moses was the son of Amram and Jochabed, Amram was the son of Kohath, Kohath of Levi, Levi of Jacob, Jacob of Isaac, and Isaac of Abraham? And the line of his noble stock and his descent had surely not died out because Moses is called “Egyptian.”

⁷⁶ Gal. 2:9 ⁷⁷ Isa. 23:12 ⁷⁸ 1 Macc. 1:1 ⁷⁹ I.e., at 25,2 ⁸⁰ Exod. 2:18-20

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(14) But these people whom Ebion has led astray have left the road and set their minds on many crooked ways and an uphill path. ^{26,1} Again, they are proud of having circumcision,⁸¹ and boast, if you please, that this is the sign and mark of the patriarchs and the righteous men who have lived by the Law; and they think that it makes them their equals. And indeed they want to give the proof of this from Christ himself, as Cerinthus did. (2) Echoing his silly argument they too say, “ ‘It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.’ Christ was circumcised; you be circumcised too!”⁸² ^{26,383} . . . and that the seeds of the imposture may be discredited in every way. As the sea has a bridle, bars, and gates determined by God; as it has sand for a boundary, and for a commandment, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; in thyself shall thy waves be shattered,”⁸⁴ < as > he says—so they will be exhausted within themselves. (4) But there the words about the boundary have been said by God for the ordering of the sea by God’s command. Here, however, wickedness, and the imposture that blinds the mind and perverts pious reason, has of itself raised waves against itself beforehand, as it were. It smashes against the harshnesses of its previous pronouncements with other waves of its own opinion, and is constantly being shattered within itself < and > destroying itself. ^{26,5} Or it is like a horrid serpent which savages itself and becomes its own destruction by bending round from the tail and devouring itself. (6) They say this used to be done by asp which had been sealed up in jars, and when each had destroyed the other the strongest and fiercest survived. But when it was left alone and got hungry, certain Egyptian naturalists report that it would eat itself up, beginning with its own tail. Hence they also named this appropriately and from the Gorgon’s head called this too an “aspidogorgon.”⁸⁵ (7) So the lame-brained Ebion and his circle have cut themselves up beforehand, and from the outset destroyed the very things of which they are proud. (8) For Christ did not circumcise himself, since he was born as a child. But glory to the merciful God! To avoid admitting the truth Ebion has anticipated himself, so that this even becomes a refutation for him. (9) If he said that Christ had come down from heaven as God and been circumcised by Mary on the eighth day, then—since, as God, he

⁸¹ Cf. Iren. 1.26.2. ⁸² Cf. PsT 3.3. ⁸³ There is a lacuna here. ⁸⁴ Job 38:11 ⁸⁵ The word might originally have referred to the Gorgon’s head on Athena’s breastplate.

would be allowing this of his own consent—this would provide the tramp with the persuasive argument for circumcision. But since he brings in the idea that Christ, as a mere man, was generated by men, the child cannot be responsible, even though he was circumcised the eighth day. (10) For he did not circumcise himself, but was circumcised by men. Children do not circumcise themselves and are not responsible for their own circumcision;

their parents are. They are unknowing, innocent babes, and neither do they know what their parents are doing to them. 27,1 But we say that he both came from heaven as God and remained in the Virgin Mary's womb for the normal period of gestation, so as to take his incarnate humanity entirely from the virgin womb, and provide the dispensation in which he was also circumcised—truly, and not in appearance—on the eighth day. (2) "For he came to perfect the Law and prophets, not to destroy them"⁸⁶—not to declare the Law foreign to himself, but a thing given by himself and continuing as a type until his coming. Thus the deficiencies in the Law would in turn be perfected in him and by him so that the types, come to spiritual perfection, might be preached in truth by him and his apostles—no longer as types but as truth. 27,3 For in this the saying of the Law was fulfilled, one which had stood until his time, and was abolished and yet brought to fulfillment in him—the words of Zipporah, "The blood of the circumcision of my child hath ceased to flow."⁸⁷ (4) And she did not say, "I was circumcising my child"—the angel who was sent to her was not instituting circumcision, nor did he leave for fear of the blood of circumcision. But in token of the Child who would stanch the blood of circumcision < he was providing that she would say, "The blood of my child hath ceased to flow" >. And on hearing this and having made the provision, he went away. (5) And which child's blood, mark you, but the child's of whom the prophet said, "They shall wish that they were burned with fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is also given,"⁸⁸ (6) truly referring to the child who was born to mean his true incarnation; but (saying), "Unto us a son is given," to show that God's Word from above and his Son himself had been given and become man by entering the womb—both human and divine, himself God, himself man; himself a Son given from above, himself a child (humanly) born. 27,7 With this child the blood of circumcision finally ceased to flow, as he says in the Gospel—when Greeks arrived to see him, approached

⁸⁶ Cf. Matt. 5:17. ⁸⁷ Cf. Exod. 4:25. ⁸⁸ Cf. Isa. 9:5-6.

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Philip, and told him, "Show us Jesus," and Philip told John (sic) and John told Jesus, "Certain Greeks desire to see thee."⁸⁹ (8) And the Lord replied at once, "Now hath come the glory of God," to show that physical circumcision, which had served for a while as a type, was passing away, but that uncircumcision in the flesh possesses a greater circumcision in spirit, since it sees Christ and has comprehended him in truth. 28,1 But if these people choose to say, "Then why was Christ circumcised?"—you misguided souls, I have already told you the reason he was circumcised! He was circumcised for many reasons. (2) First, to prove that < he had > really < taken > flesh, because of Manichaeus and those who say he been manifested (only) in appearance. (3) Then, to show that the body was not consubstantial with the Godhead as Apollinarius says, and that he had not brought it down from above as Valentinus says. (4) And to confirm the circumcision which he had given of old and which had served a legitimate purpose until his arrival; and so that the Jews would have no excuse. For if he had not been circumcised they could have said, "We cannot accept an uncircumcised Christ." 28,5 And besides, after commanding Abraham to be circumcised—circumcised as a visible seal but in token of the true and invisible seal that he had been given—Christ needed to confirm this by being circumcised (himself). (6) For the visible circumcision was instituted because of Abraham's doubt, when the holy and righteous man said, as though in doubt, "Shall a son be born unto him that is an hundred years old?" and, "Shall Sarah in her old age bear a son?"⁹⁰ And the Lord said at once, "Take me a ram three years old, and a goat, and an heifer,"⁹¹ and so on, and about sundown, when Abraham saw burning torches, an oven and the rest, (7) and after God reprovably told him, for a safeguard, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall enslave them for four hundred years,"⁹² because of the doubt that had led Abraham to say, "Shall a son be born to him that is an hundred years old?"⁹³ he imposed physical circumcision on him and his, to keep them from forgetting the God of their fathers after they had been enslaved by idolatrous, unbelieving Egyptians. Thus they would see their circumcision, be reminded and feel abashed, and not deny him.

⁸⁹ Cf. John 12:20-22. ⁹⁰ Gen. 17:17 ⁹¹ Gen. 15:9 ⁹² Gen. 15:13 ⁹³ Gen. 17:17

28,8 And this remained the case until Christ, and because of it he himself consented to be circumcised, and became true man; though he had come from above from the Father as the divine Word, and did not doff the Godhead but truly wore flesh. (9) He was circumcised in the possession of full humanity, making all his provisions in truth—so that the Jews would have no excuse, as I said, and the Manichaeans and others would be refuted and so that, being circumcised himself, he could with reason abolish circumcision and show that another kind was greater. It was not as though he had no circumcision and was making one up for himself. He had one, but showed that there is no further need of this circumcision, but of the greater one. 29,1 And that he was God as soon as he was born and not a mere man, the magi will plainly show. For after a period of two years—as they told Herod the time the star had risen, "two years ago at the most"⁹⁴—they came to Jerusalem. And on learning

by inquiry that Christ must be born in Bethlehem, these same magi left again with the star guiding them, and came from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. (2) And they went in and found him with his mother Mary, and fell down and worshiped him and offered their gifts. (3) Now if he is worshiped at the outset, the child who has been born is not a mere man at birth, but is God and does not become Christ thirty years later, and not after the baptism, but was born as Christ of a virgin, God and man. (4) And thus the angels hymn him at once with, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men,"⁹⁵ and give the shepherds tidings, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, Christ the Lord."⁹⁶ 29,5 And this is not the only proof, you deluded Ebion! Moreover, when he has turned twelve he is found "sitting in the midst of the priests and elders, both questioning them and disputing with them,"⁹⁷ and "They were amazed at the gracious discourse which proceeded out of his mouth."⁹⁸ (6) And it was not after his thirtieth year that he was doing this, allowing you to say he became Christ when the Spirit had come to him, but right at the age of twelve as I said, as it is written in the Gospel according to Luke. 29,7 But even earlier too when, during his childhood, when Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast and started back,

[94 Matt. 2:16](#) [95 Luke 2:14](#) [96 Luke 2:11](#) [97 Luke 2:48](#) [98 Luke 4:22](#)

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Jesus stayed behind. And they looked for him on the road and among their relatives—Mary had relatives—and could not find him. (8) But she went back and found him, and said, "Son, what hast thou done to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (Joseph was in the position of father to him, for he was not his actual father.) (9) Then the Lord answered her, "Why is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"⁹⁹ indicating that the Temple had been built in the name of God, that is, of his own Father. (10) Now if he knew the Temple and his Father from childhood, Jesus was not a mere man when he was born and he was not called Christ and Son (only) after his thirtieth year, after the form of the dove had come to him. Instead he was teaching, even at once and with full assurance, that he had to be in his Father's house. 29,11 And for proof that Joseph was not his father but < was > in the position of father, hear how the same evangelist—the one who quotes Mary as saying, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing"¹⁰⁰—writes in turn, "And Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph."¹⁰¹ By saying, "as was supposed," he showed that Jesus was not his son, but was supposed to be. 30,1 But the time is going to run short for my discussion in proof of the truth and in refutation of Ebion's weak-mindedness and his phony school of weak-mindedness. (2) What does not make it plain that Joseph was not father to Jesus, but was held to be in the position of father? "Behold," scripture says, "the Virgin shall conceive and bear a son";¹⁰² it didn't say, "Behold, the wife!" (3) And again, it says in another place, "And the heifer shall bear, and they shall say, It hath not borne."¹⁰³ Some Manichaeans and Marcionites say that Jesus was not born—hence, "She shall bear, and they shall say, She hath not borne." For Mary has not given birth because of a man's seed, and these people¹⁰⁴ madly tell the lie that she has given birth because of a man's seed. The heifer, then, has in truth borne God, in truth borne man. 30,4 And to show that the Virgin is called "heifer" and that what was left by this heifer was a purification of the defiled, hear the Law saying,

[99 Luke 2:48-49](#) [100 Luke 2:48](#) [101 Luke 3:23](#) [102 Isa. 7:14](#) [103](#) This quotation is from the Apocryphon of Ezekiel. See Charlesworth I, p. 494, Fragment 3. [104](#) I.e., the Ebionites

"Take thee a fiery-red heifer,"¹⁰⁵ indicating the chosen vessel of Mary < by saying, "Take thee an heifer." But it says, "fi ery-red," > because of the fieriness of the Savior's Godhead that was contained in the Virgin; for "God," says scripture, "is a consuming fire."¹⁰⁶ (5) And the Law says, "a fiery-red heifer upon whose neck hath never come yoke,"¹⁰⁷ to show that the Virgin, who does not know the yoke of marriage to a husband, is a "heifer." 30,6 But why am I giving most of the arguments? As Isaiah, again, said in the person of the Lord, "Take unto thee a sheet cut from a great, new papyrus-roll"¹⁰⁸—"sheet" because the Virgin is the product of a man's seed but has been cut off from union with men and separated from natural human behavior. (7) For all human beings are generated by man's seed. But while Christ's generation had its humanity naturally from a woman, the Virgin Mary, it was cut off unnaturally from the human line of descent as Jacob says of him, "Thou didst come up, my son, from a shoot."¹⁰⁹ And he didn't say, "Thou didst come up from a seed." (8) And for this reason the holy Isaiah the prophet says, or rather, the Lord says to him, "Take thee a sheet (cut from) a papyrus-roll,"¹¹⁰ giving a symbol of sexual intercourse, the way in which men write their entire record. As it also says in the hundred and thirty-eighth psalm, "In thy book shall all be written; they shall be fashioned in a day, and no one is in them,"¹¹¹ for it likened the womb to a book. 30,9 This is why David says, "Thine eyes did see my unbaked substance."¹¹² That is, he said, "You knew me after I was conceived but before I was formed; and even earlier, before my conception." (31,1) But the Hebrew author makes the expression marvelously clear. He called the "unbaked substance" a "golem," which means a grain or granule of flour—something which has not yet come together into

a loaf and been kneaded, but is like a particle or fl eck detached from a grain of wheat, or the tiny speck that is left by fi ne fl our. (2) Thus he precisely represented a thing of the same shape, the particle that is detached from a man for insemination, and said—giving the expression in Greek translation—“the unbaked substance.” In other words, he said, “ ‘Thine eyes did see’ the

105 Numb. 19:2 106 Deut. 4:24 107 Numb. 19:2 108 Isa. 8:1 109 Cf. Gen. 49:9. 110 Isa. 8:1 111 Ps. 138:16. 112 Ps. 138:16

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unformed substance still in the womb, or before the womb”—“God knoweth all things before they be,”¹¹³ as scripture says. But what is meant by “book” and “sheet” is “womb.” 31,3 And he did not say, “Take thee a roll,” or, “Take thee papyrus,” but “a piece”—contrary to people’s characteristic custom—because of the likeness of the womb to a place for writing. He said, “new,” because of the newness and spotlessness of the Virgin. (4) And < “great” >; for great indeed is Mary, the holy Virgin, before God and man! How can we not call her “great,” when she contained the Uncontainable, whom heaven and earth cannot contain? Yet he, though uncontainable, was contained by his own choice and consent, willingly and not of necessity. Great, then, is the “sheet of papyrus,” and new! Great, because of the marvel; new, because virgin. 31,5 “And write on it,” he says, “with a man’s pen.”¹¹⁴ And he didn’t say, “Someone will write on it with a man’s pen”; and he didn’t say, “A man will write on it” either, so that Ebion would fi nd no opportunity. If he had said, “A man will write on it,” Ebion could say that a man, Joseph, sowed, and that Christ was generated from the seed of a man. (6) But he said, “Write!” to Isaiah about 753 years before the event, so that the truth would be apparent to everyone from the length of the interval—since no one could have sired the child who was to be born, 753 years ahead of time. (7) Then did he say, “Write!” to the prophet for no good reason? No, but to show that the Holy Spirit, who was in the prophet, would himself truly become the agent of the incarnate Christ’s conception. For, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and so on”¹¹⁵ said the angel Gabriel to Mary. (8) But “with a man’s pen” means, “in the image of a man.” “For Christ Jesus is man, but he is mediator between God and men,”¹¹⁶ since he came from on high as divine Word but from Mary as man, though not begotten of man’s seed. 31,9 And this is why the prophet says at once, “And he went in unto the prophetess,”¹¹⁷ to show that Mary is a prophetess—not Ahaz’s wife as some mistakenly allege that this was said because of Hezekiah. (10) For Hezekiah had already been born eleven years before. For it was in the third year of

113 Susannah 42 114 Isa. 8:1 115 Luke 1:35 116 Cf. 1 Tim. 2:5. 117 Isa. 8:3

his father’s reign that the prophecy, “Behold, the Virgin shall conceive,”¹¹⁸ was delivered. And after the death of Ahaz, who reigned for fourteen years and (then) died, the scripture says at once, “And Hezekiah began to reign; twenty < and fi ve > years old was he when he began to reign.”¹¹⁹ (11) So how could Hezekiah, (who reigned for twenty years after his father), be born during the reign of his father, who reigned for fourteen years, because of the prophecy that Emmanuel would be born of a virgin? Instead, will it not be evident to the wise that Hezekiah had already been born when the prophet delivered the oracle during the reign of Ahaz, Hezekiah’s father? (12) Especially since Ahaz’s wife was not a prophetess, as anyone can see. This is Mary, who said prophetically, “For from henceforth all generations will call me blessed”;¹²⁰ Mary, to whom Gabriel came with the tidings that the Spirit who had spoken in Isaiah would come upon her and she would bear a son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit—and not by the seed of a man, as these people foolishly and erroneously blaspheme. 32,1 But both the lame-brain’s Sabbath observance and circumcision, and the daily baptisms of which he makes use, stand discredited; for Jesus made a point of healing mostly on the Sabbath. And it was not just that he heals, but that he heals in two ways. (2) He directs the persons he has healed to pick their mattresses up and walk. Moreover, on the Sabbath he made clay and anointed the blind man’s eyes, but the making of clay is work. (3) Hence, since the apostles had learned from their association with him and from his teaching that the Sabbath had been abolished, they plucked ears of grain on the Sabbath, rubbed them in their hands and ate them. But it was a “second Sabbath after the fi rst” as the Gospel indicates. 32,4 For the Law designated various Sabbaths. The Sabbath proper, which recurs week by week. And the one that is a Sabbath because of the occurrences every month of the new moons and of the successive feasts such as the days of Tabernacles, and of Passover when they sacrifi ce the lamb and then eat unleavened bread. Further, when they keep the single, annual fast which is called the “Greater Fast,” and the other, which they call the “Lesser.” (5) For when these days occur, on the second day of the week or the third or the fourth, this too is designated a Sabbath for them. 32,6 Hence, after the Day of Unleavened Bread which had come and been designated a Sabbath, on the Sabbath proper following the Day of

118 Isa. 7:14 119 2 Kms. 18:1-2 120 Luke 1:48

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Unleavened Bread which was considered a Sabbath, the disciples were found going through the standing grain, plucking the ears, and rubbing and eating them. (7) They were proving that the prohibition which is fixed on the Sabbath has been relaxed at the coming of the Great Sabbath—Christ, who gave us rest from our sins, and of whom Noah was a type. On seeing him at birth his father named him Noah by prophecy, and said, “He will give us rest from our sins, or deeds of cruelty.”¹²¹ 32,8 But Noah did not give any rest from sins. Lamech made the prophecy of Christ, whose meaning is truly Noah—“Noah” means “rest”—and “Sebeth,” which means “rest and Sabbath.” (9) In other words, “Christ,” in whom the Father and his Holy Spirit have rested, and all holy men have found rest in him by desisting from sins. He is the great, eternal Sabbath, of which the lesser, temporary Sabbath was a type. This served until his coming, had been prescribed by him in the Law, and was abrogated, and fulfilled in him, in the Gospel. For this is what he meant when he said, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.”¹²² 32,10 Hence the disciples broke the Sabbath with confidence—since even the priests before them used to break it in the Temple by sacrificing and offering sacrifices to God, to keep the continual sacrifice that was offered every day from coming to an end. And not only did the priests themselves prophesy the Sabbath’s abrogation by not remaining idle; besides, circumcision itself broke the Sabbath. 32,11 For when a child was born on the Sabbath as one often was, there was an abrogation of the Sabbath and of circumcision. Thus the dissolution of both was predicted. Obviously, if the ones who were to circumcise the child which had been born on the Sabbath chose to be exact about the eighth day, and they found that it fell on Sabbath and still circumcised the child, they performed a work and broke the Sabbath. (12) But if they put it off so as not to break the Sabbath, they then performed the circumcision on the ninth day, and violated circumcision itself, and its mandatory term of eight days. 33,1 Nor was the first circumcision final. It was given for a sign, as a reminder of things to come, and because of the holy Abraham’s doubts when, as I said, he was reproved for them—and as a type of the Greater Circumcision, which fulfills all things equally in those who are held worthy. (2) If the previous circumcision had been for sanctification and the inher

¹²¹ Cf. Gen. 5:29. ¹²² Matt. 12:8

itance of the kingdom of heaven, Sarah would have been deprived of the kingdom—and Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Jochabed, Miriam the sister of Moses, and all the holy women. They could not have inherited the kingdom of heaven, since they could not have the circumcision of Abraham which, as the Ebionites tell it, God had given him. But if these have not been deprived of the kingdom of heaven though they have no circumcision, the physical circumcision of today is of no force. 33,3 But why does Ebion boast of circumcision, when both the idolaters and the Egyptian priests have it? Moreover the Saracens, also called Ishmaelites, have circumcision, and the Samaritans, Idumaeans and Homerites. Most of these do this, not because of a law, but from some senseless custom. 33,4 And I will simply use a lot of time if I spend it on Ebion’s nonsense, because of the way he pointlessly relies on the wording of the Savior’s, “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master,”¹²³ for his boast that his own circumcision derives from Christ’s—which was cut off altogether in him and abolished through him! (5) Still, since the oaf takes this saying of the imitation of Christ, I do not mind showing that it was not said for this reason. 33,6 The Lord explains immediately that he did not say it for this reason but because of persecutions and the way the Jews insulted him, and he says, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have hated me, they will hate you also.”¹²⁴ “Call ye not me teacher and Lord? And ye say well, for so I am.¹²⁵ If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more shall they call them of his household?”¹²⁶ (7) And, “The servant cannot be above his lord, nor the disciple above his teacher. But let the disciple be perfect in all things, as his teacher”¹²⁷—in other words, ready for persecution, defamation, and whatever may be inflicted on him. (8) Hence St. Paul too said, “Be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.”¹²⁸ And it was not that he imitated his Master in a wrong way; he did not say, “I am God,” or, “I am the Son of God,” or, “I am the divine Word.” For he says, “I am the least of the apostles,” and, “He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”¹²⁹

¹²³ Matt 10:25 ¹²⁴ John 15:21 ¹²⁵ John 13:13 ¹²⁶ Matt. 10:25 ¹²⁷ Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40 ¹²⁸ 1 Cor. 1:11 ¹²⁹ 1 Cor. 15:8-9

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34,1 But if you take this text of the imitation of Christ, Ebion, and want to be as your teacher—or rather, as your Lord—in the circumcision you have such silly ideas < about >, stop being like him in circumcision! This will do you no good. The Lord has made it obsolete, as I have shown plainly through many testimonies. (2) For he came and fulfilled it by giving us the perfect circumcision of his mysteries—not of one member only, but by sealing the entire body and cutting it off from sin. And not by saving one portion of the people, males alone, but by truly sealing the entire Christian people, men and women both, and < leading > them ungrudgingly < on > to the

inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. And not by providing the seal defectively in weakness, to only one class, males alone; but by revealing the kingdom of heaven to an entire people through his seal, his commandments, and his good teaching. 34,3 But if you want to be like the Lord, Ebion—that is, if you want to be like the teacher—you are very wrong. Stop mimicking him in circumcision. Call Lazarus from the grave, or raise another dead man; cleanse lepers or grant sight to the blind, or heal a paralytic from birth, if you can! But you can't because you are doing the opposite, imprisoned by unbelief, chains of flesh, and insatiable demands of law. (4) Now if you cannot do even these things—which you cannot, because of your wrong belief—I deny < that you are > like Christ. You cannot become like God, for you are a mortal man, and a deluded one. Nor can you call on Christ's name for miracles—and even if you do, you don't succeed. (5) But if you ever did manage to make a paralytic stand, since he had gotten up by the name of Jesus he could get understanding from him too, so as not to tolerate your Sabbath observance but < be able > to learn, from the name of his Healer, "Take up thy bed and go unto thine house on the Sabbath day.130 34,6 But I have already said how each of them palms off something different about Christ. Ebion himself did at one time, by saying that he originated as a mere man from sexual intercourse. But at other times the Ebionites who derive from him say that Christ has a heavenly power from God, "the Son," and that the Son puts Adam on and takes him off when convenient. By the power of God I have refuted their various opinions. 34,7 But why should I spend any further time on tidal beaches by the sea, which are flooded here and dry there, and fish are often stranded on some of them and injure people's feet when they cross their high parts because of there being poisonous ones among them—I mean sting-rays,

[130 Mark 2:11; John 3:8-16](#)

sea-snakes, sharks and sea-eels—as I have just now said. (8) I shall leave this spot in its turn, thanking God that I have also put this sect to flight, not half-heartedly but even with a painstaking refutation. (9) But let us address ourselves to others next, beloved, praying for God's help, that he himself may bring our undertakings to fulfillment through me.