

From the First Letter to Timothy

67. Against the thought that, in the absence of pain in the stomach and severe illnesses, advises us to drink wine by suggesting to us the blessed Apostle's direction when in his letter he commanded Timothy on this point:

Keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments (1 Tim 5:22-23).

From the Letter of James

68. Against the thoughts that turn us back toward the world and its commandments:

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (Jas 4:4).

From the Letter of John

69. Against the thought that supposes that the commandment to fast is burdensome:

And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith (1 John 5:3-4).

Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who has given us the victory over the thoughts of the demon of gluttony!

SECOND BOOK**Against the Thoughts of Fornication***From Exodus*

1. Against the thought of fornication that depicts in my intellect a married woman:

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife (Exod 20:17).¹

2. Against the thought of sadness that arises in us due to the many temptations of fornication that come upon us and cut off our hope by saying to us, "What beautiful thing do you expect after all this labor?":

If you indeed listen to my voice and do all the things that I will say to you, I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For my angel will go as your leader and will bring you to the Amorite, and Hittite, and Perizzite, and Canaanite, and Gergesite, and Hivite, and Jebusite, and I will destroy them (Exod 23:22-23).

3. Against the thought that supposes that in a single hour the evil thoughts of fornication will flee from it:

I will not cast them out in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the land multiply against you. Gradually I will cast them out from before you, until you have increased and will inherit the land (Exod 23:29-30).

¹The entries in this book are numbered 70 through 134 in 12,175.

4. Against the thought that comes from fornication and says, "Youth can never cease from the desires of fornication and offer to God thoughts purified of it":

Everyone who is registered from age twenty and older shall offer the sacrifice to the Lord (Exod 30:14).

5. Against the thought of fornication that says, "Youth is neither guilty nor culpable if it fornicates or if it gladly receives unclean thoughts":

And the Lord said to Moses, "If anyone has sinned against me, I will wipe them out of my book" (Exod 32:33).

From Deuteronomy

6. Against the intellect that does not make a vigilant effort to preserve itself from the fornication that is established within it, but rather speaks and performs wickedness with a woman that is depicted before its eyes:

And hear, Israel, and observe so as to do them, so that it may be well with you and so that you may be greatly multiplied, just as the Lord God of your fathers said that he would give you a land flowing with milk and honey (Deut 6:3).

- <7.> Against the thought that seeks, through filthy desire, to approach the demon of fornication:

You shall fear the Lord your God, and serve only him, and cleave to him, and swear by his name (Deut 6:13).

8. Against the soul that day and night is harassed by thoughts of fornication, losing hope that it will gain victory over them:

But if you should say in your thinking, "This nation is greater than I: how will I be able to destroy them?" you shall not fear them. Remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and all the Egyptians (Deut 7:17-18).

9. Against the thought of the soul that is oppressed by thoughts of fornication, which divide the evil passion of fornication into diverse images, collect impure thoughts, put them in rotation, [then] cleave to one of these enslaving thoughts and make it persist upon the weak soul:

And you will know today that the Lord your God will advance before you. He is a consuming fire. He will destroy them and turn them back from before you, and he will destroy them quickly, just as the Lord said to you (Deut 9:3).

10. Against the thoughts that turn quickly to foods whenever the spirit of fornication, playing with them, gives them a little respite and so they suppose that they have reached the frontier of chastity:

You shall not do all that we do here today, each person [doing] what is pleasing to him. For up to now you have not reached the rest and inheritance that the Lord your God gives you (Deut 12:8-9).

11. Against the soul that is frightened and shaken by the demon that touches its members; those who have been tempted by this demon consider what has been said:

Your helper will hold his shield over you, and his sword is your boast; and your enemies will lie to you, and you will tread upon their neck (Deut 33:29).

From Judges

12. Against the soul that due to sadness falls into listlessness and so is no longer able to endure the filthy thoughts that defile its prayer:

Rise up, for this is the day on which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand; for the Lord will advance before you (Judg 4:14).

13. Against the intellect that is contending with thoughts of fornication, but does not want to shake them off of it completely and does not recognize the fetter of sin and the anxiety of evils:

And Delilah said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he woke up from his sleep and said, "I will go out just like every other time, and I will shake them off." And he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. And the Philistines seized him, cut out his eyes, brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he ground at the mill in the prison house (Judg 16:20-21).

From Samuel

14. To the angel of the Lord that suddenly appeared in my intellect, cooled the thought of fornication, and drove out from it [my intellect] all the thoughts that besieged it:

My heart is established in the Lord; my horn is exalted in my God; my mouth is enlarged over my enemies; I have rejoiced in your salvation (1 Kgdms 2:1).

15. Against the filthy demon of fornication that appeared to me at night in an obscene vision in the form of a woman, but which could not compel my soul with its filthy desires:

The bow of the mighty ones has become weak, and the weak ones have girded themselves with strength. Those who were full of bread have been brought low, and the hungry have forsaken the land (1 Kgdms 2:4-5).

16. Against the soul that does not want to escape unclean desire but persists in the thought of Nahash the Ammonite, which [Nahash] is translated "snake":

And all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." And Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On these terms I will make a covenant with you, that I should put out all your right eyes and I will lay a reproach upon Israel" (1 Kgdms 11:1-2).

From the Book of Kings

17. Against the demon of fornication that wants to spoil and defile my chastity through thoughts:

My God forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers (3 Kgdms 20:3).

From the Book of Chronicles

18. Against the soul that supposes that it is tempted by the demon of fornication beyond its power:

Then the land began to be subject to tribute to give silver at the command of Pharaoh, and each person according to his ability paid the silver and gold required by the people of the land to give to Pharaoh Neco (2 Chr 36:4a).

*From Ezra*²

19. To the Lord concerning the thoughts of fornication that show us abominable visions at night:

And I said, "Lord, I am too ashamed and confounded, my God, to lift my face to you, for our transgressions have multiplied upon our head, and our trespasses have increased even to heaven. From the days of our fathers we have been in a trespass until this day" (2 Esd 9:6-7).

20. Against the soul that after valiant combats with thoughts of fornication has acquired chastity and purity:

The land into that you enter to inherit is disturbed by the removal of the peoples of the nations for their abominations, with which they filled it from mouth to mouth with their acts of uncleanness (2 Esd 9:11).

²This heading actually appears before no. 20. It appears in this incorrect place in 12,175 as well.

From David the Prophet

21. To the Lord concerning the multitude of unclean thoughts that trouble and afflict us and attract our intellect to diverse faces:

Lord, why are they who afflict me so numerous? Many rise up against me. Many say to my soul, "There is no salvation for him in his God." But you, Lord, are my helper, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head (Ps 3:2-4).

22. Against the soul that does not know that the intensity of irascibility opposes the thought of fornication, because irascibility comes from fire by nature, but unclean thoughts are born of water:

Be angry, and do not sin. Speak in your hearts, and feel compunction upon your beds (Ps 4:5; cf. Eph 4:26).³

23. Against the unclean thoughts that persist in us and frequently depict in us obscene images and that bind our intellect with passions of desire in our dishonorable members:

Depart from me, all your workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping; the Lord has heard my petition; the Lord has accepted my prayer (Ps 6:9-10).

24. To the Lord concerning the demon of fornication that, when it cannot humiliate us through the desire of our body, then shows us in our intellect a monk performing the obscene sin of fornication:

The swords of the enemy have failed utterly, and you have destroyed cities. Their memory has been destroyed with a noise, but the Lord endures forever (Ps 9:7-8).

25. To the Lord concerning the filthy demon of fornication that openly approaches the thighs of those who endeavor to depart from it, suddenly seizing the intellect with a madness

³ On the use of irascibility to oppose thoughts of fornication, see *Thoughts* 16, also citing Ps 4:5.

that alters the soul through a multitude of powerful thoughts of fornication—it is very useful when we are tempted by this demon to jump up at once and to use our cell for frequent and brisk walks—let the one who is able to understand, understand:

Light up my eyes, lest I sleep unto death, lest at any time my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him" (Ps 12:4-5).⁴

26. Against the soul that supposes that the thoughts of fornication are more powerful than God's commandments, which were given to us for the extirpation of this passion:

I will beat them like the dust before the wind, and I will grind them like the mud of the streets (Ps 17:48).

27. To the Lord concerning the demon that suddenly fell upon the body, but could not conquer the intellect through the unclean thoughts that attacked it:

You have turned my sorrow into dance for me; you have ripped off my sackcloth and have girded me with gladness, so that my glory may sing praise to you and I may not be pierced (Ps 29:12-13).

28. Against the thought that says to me, "The demon of fornication will put you to shame if you stand up to it in battle":

Let those who seek my soul be put to shame and confounded; let those who devise evils against me be turned back and put to shame (Ps 34:4).

29. Against the thought that threatens me, "Another demon of fornication—weightier, bolder, and stronger than the first—is being sent to you, one that will easily compel your soul and bring it to the sin that is accomplished in deeds":

Let them be as dust before the wind, with an angel of the Lord afflicting them. Let their way be dark and slippery, with an angel of the Lord persecuting them (Ps 34:5-6).

⁴ Evagrius attributes this boast to the demon of listlessness in *Thoughts* 35.

30. Against the soul that, when it is being harassed by thoughts of fornication, rejects sackcloth and does not remember that David did this very thing for our instruction when he said:

But as for me, when they troubled me, I put on sackcloth and humbled my soul with fasting (Ps 34:13).

31. Against the soul that is saddened because the filthy thoughts of fornication have persisted in it and that does not expect victory over them because it sees that one of the filthy images is fixed in its intellect and continually harasses it:

Yet a little while, and the sinner will not exist, and you will seek his place, and you will not find it (Ps 36:10).

32. Against the demon of fornication that imitates the form of a beautiful naked woman, luxurious in her gait, her entire body obscenely dissipated, [a woman] who seizes the intellect of many persons and makes them forget the better things:

Therefore, may God destroy you forever; may he pluck you up and remove you from your dwelling and your root from the land of the living (Ps 51:7).

33. Against the thought that prophesies to me that I will fall away from chastity and be put to shame before human beings:

Let all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned back. Let them be like the grass of the housetops, which withers before it is plucked up (Ps 128:5-6).

From the Proverbs of Solomon

34. Against the demon of fornication that in a dream at night drew me into filthy behavior and then during the day through thoughts taunted us and laughed at us:

Therefore, I too will laugh at your destruction, and I will rejoice over you when ruin comes upon you, and when fear suddenly comes upon you and your overthrow comes like a tempest (Prov 1:26-27).

35. Against the thoughts that compel us to linger in conversation with a married woman on the pretext that she has visited us frequently or that she will benefit spiritually from us:

Do not be long with someone else's woman (Prov 5:20).

36. Against the intellect in which is depicted the form of a beautiful woman and that wants to speak with her earnestly or to do something evil that would not be proper, as the holy John, the prophet of Thebes,⁵ recounted to us:

Let not the desire for beauty conquer you; do not be ensnared by your eyes nor captured by her eyelids. For the price of a harlot is as much as one loaf of bread (Prov 6:25-26).

37. Against the thought that persuades me that we will not be harmed by the sight of a harlot:

Can anyone bind fire in his bosom and not burn his clothes? Or can anyone walk on coals of fire and not burn his feet? So too the one who goes into a married woman will not be held guiltless (Prov 6:27-29).

38. Against the soul that does not know the reason for temptations and also does not understand that the demon of fornication, whenever it is conquered and departs from us, leaves within us perfect chastity:

Just as silver and gold are tested in the furnace, so too elect hearts by God (Prov 17:3).⁶

39. Against the unclean thought that entices us and turns us back to that sin for which we have many times repented before the Lord:

Just as a dog, when it returns to its own vomit, becomes abominable, so is a fool who returns in his wickedness to his own sin (Prov 26:11).

⁵ That is, John of Lycopolis.

⁶ See *To Monks* 60 for this image of testing by fire.

From Qoheleth

40. Against the thought that reminds us of the house in which we gave many fruits to Satan:

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of the fool is in the house of mirth (Qo 7:4).

41. Against the soul that is encountering temptations of filthy thoughts and does not want to drive them away with hunger, thirst, keeping vigil, and prayer:

If the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, do not leave your place, for soothing will put an end to great sins (Qo 10:4).

From the Song of Songs

42. To the holy angels concerning the unclean thoughts that have persisted in the soul:

Do not look at me, for I am dark, for the sun has looked unfavorably upon me (Song 1:6).

From Job

43. Against the soul that supposes that it is unnatural for it to keep the intellect keen and not to fornicate in its thinking:

For Job said, "Lest my sons have ever devised evil things against God in their thinking" (Job 1:5).

44. Against the soul that is tested by the demon of fornication with a great unspeakable temptation and marvels at the stupendous temptation to such an extent that this demon is neither put to shame nor feared:

Is not the life of a human being upon the earth a state of trial and his existence like that of a hired hand by the day? (Job 7:1).⁷

⁷ Evagrius applies the metaphor of the laborer who is paid daily from Job 7:1 to the gnostic monk in *Reflections* 32.

45. Against the thought that prophesies to me that demons of fornication are coming and will touch our members and set them on fire:

In the day darkness will come upon them, and let them grope at noon as if it were night (Job 5:14).⁸

46. Against the demon of fornication that compelled Israel to gather straw and reeds instead of grains of wheat:

Far be it from me to sin before the Lord and to disturb righteousness before the Almighty. Rather, he pays back the human being according to what each of them does (Job 34:10-11).

47. For the soul that does not know from where these burning thoughts are sent against us:

Out of his [Leviathan's] mouth proceed, as it were, burning lamps (Job 41:11).

*From Isaiah*⁹

48. Against the thought of fornication that says to me, "I am neither diminished nor destroyed by hunger, thirst, or strenuous fasting":

But he will destroy your seed with hunger, and he will destroy your remnant (Isa 14:30).

49. Against the demon that advised me in my intellect that I should marry a woman and become the father of sons and so not resist fornicating thoughts with hunger and thirst:¹⁰

For the fool will say foolish things, and his heart will think up vain things, in order to perform lawless acts and to speak

⁸ This is the order in the MS.

⁹ This heading is missing in the MS, but appears in 12,175.

¹⁰ The original reading of the MS is "thoughts of fornication," but "fornicating thoughts" is written in the margin of the MS and appears in 12,175 and other Syriac manuscripts (Sims-Williams, *Christian Sogdian Manuscript C2*, 180). The MS reads only "with hunger," but 12,175 reads "with hunger and thirst."

error against the Lord, in order to scatter hungry souls and to make thirsty souls empty (Isa 32:6).

From Jeremiah

50. To the Lord concerning the demons of fornication that take for themselves pretexts from the Scriptures and from the topics that are written in them:

Lord, who proves righteous deeds and understands guts and hearts, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have revealed my defenses (Jer 20:12).

From the Lamentations of Jeremiah

51. To the Lord concerning the thoughts of fornication that have persisted in me:

See, Lord, my humiliation, for the enemy has become magnified (Lam 1:9).

52. To the Lord concerning the demon that at night stirred up an accursed thought against my soul and distorted all the features of the face:

Look, Lord, and see that she has become dishonored (Lam 1:11).

53. Against the soul that has fallen into obscene visions of the night:

Arise, rejoice in the night at the beginning of your watch; pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord (Lam 2:19).

54. To the Lord concerning the demon of fornication that, through the passion of desire, imprints in my intellect the vision of an obscene form:

I called upon your name, Lord, from the lowest dungeon. You heard my voice: do not close your ears to my supplication. You drew near to help me; on the day when I called upon you, you said, "Do not be afraid" (Lam 3:55-57).

From Daniel

55. Against the demon of fornication that, whenever its thoughts ceased, began to explore and touch the body's members—those who have been tempted by this demon will understand what I am saying—those who contend with it should at the time of the attack spend most of the night and day walking in the cell and praying and should catch [only] a little sleep while sitting, and they should wear rough sackcloth and avoid being filled with bread and water; let those who struggle in this contest understand that when by God's power they defeat this demon, they will acquire chastity and not be corrupted:

And they will drive you forth from human beings, and your dwelling will be with wild beasts, and they will feed you with grass like an ox, and you will lodge under the dew of heaven, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of human beings and will give it to whomever he wishes.¹¹

From the Gospel of Matthew

56. Against the intellect that, because of images of men and women¹² that are established in its thinking, is eager to commit a sin:

Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt 5:28).¹³

57. Against the soul that is tempted by foul thoughts of fornication and does not want to keep vigil and pray:

Stay awake and pray that you may not come into temptation (Matt 26:41).

¹¹ Dan 4:25 Theod.

¹² Possibly "images of male and female genitalia."

¹³ On the monk using mental images to fantasize about sexual acts, see *Thoughts* 25, also citing Matt 5:28.

The Apostle: From the Letter to the Corinthians

58. Against the thoughts that sometimes lead us to the markets and at other times compel us to hang around outside the markets:

Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate ones, those who lie with men, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10).

59. Against the thoughts that establish in our heart fornication, which the Lord sees as having been committed:¹⁴

We must not indulge in fornication as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day (1 Cor 10:8).

From the Letter to the Ephesians

60. Against the unclean thoughts that sometimes hand us over to visions of the night and at other times during the day begin to depict a vision of images in our intellect:

Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph 5:5).

From the Letter of James

61. Against the thought that supposes that temptations come upon human beings from God:

No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. But one is tempted by one’s own desire (Jas 1:13-14).

62. Against the soul that does not know that it is due to the desires that every kind of temptation from the demons comes upon it:

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your desires that are at war within you? (Jas 4:1).

From the Letter of Peter

- <63.> Against the soul’s thought that does not endure the touch of the demon that suddenly fell between the thighs, moved in them from below, and set [them] on fire:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed (1 Pet 4:12-13).

64. Against the soul’s thought that succumbs to distress and sadness and supposes that it is the only one that is tempted so severely:

Discipline yourselves, keep watch. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering (1 Pet 5:8-9).

65. Against the thought that threatened me and said, “You are going to suffer from the demons unspeakable evils,” which I do not want to set down in writing, lest I hinder the zeal of those who are contending, cast terror into those who have just now withdrawn from the world, and scandalize the inexperienced persons who are in the world; for truly I have

¹⁴ See Matt 5:28. The translation accepts the emendation proposed by Frankenberg.

seen the demons¹⁵ perform many unspeakable acts, things that perhaps it is not lawful to say to most people; for I have been seized by great astonishment over the patience of the holy angels, how they have not burned or consumed them with the flame of the unquenchable fire:

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment (2 Pet 2:9).

Blessed is our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who has given us the victory over the thoughts of the demon of fornication!¹⁶

THIRD BOOK

Concerning Love of Money

From Genesis

1. Against the demon that advised me in my thinking, “In a dream I will entice one of your relatives or one of the rich people to send you gold”:

I stretch out my hand to the most high God, who made heaven and earth, if from a string to a shoe-latchet I take from all that is yours (Gen 14:22-23).¹

2. Against the thought that shows me bitter poverty and the evils that arise from it and suggests to me that on the day of need I will not find a helper:

If the Lord God will be with me, and guard me on this way on which I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and return me safely to the house of my father, then shall the Lord be for me as God, and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be for me God’s house (Gen 28:20-22).

¹⁵ Frankenberg's text mistakenly lacks the plural points, which are present in the MS.

¹⁶ Frankenberg's text mistakenly lacks "the thoughts of" (*husb² d-*), which does appear in the MS.

¹ The entries in this book are numbered 135 through 191 in 12,175, which lacks 3.8 and 3.10.

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Evagrius of Pontus

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