

OMNIA MUNDA MUNDIS

JOSEPH C. PLUMPE

Catholic University of America

WHEN, on his last missionary journey, St. Paul briefly visited the island of Crete, probably in spring of the year 65,¹ he left Titus there to continue to build and organize the church on the foundations that had been laid (Tit. 1:5). It was a task that might well test to the limit the already tried abilities of the disciple. As we learn from the letter written him by his master later in that year or in the year following, he was confronted by two extremely formidable difficulties: the one—already anciently notorious—arising from the national characteristics of the Cretans; the other, quick to spring from, and to capitalize upon, the first—heresy (Tit. 1:10-14). With severe candor the Apostle quotes as true what a native of “the island of a hundred cities” had said of the people long before, that they were “semper mendaces, malae bestiae, ventres pigri”; and the false teachers among them were mostly errant Jewish Christians, who for a penny’s gain subverted home after home, men who, St. Paul says, “must have their mouths stopped” (Tit. 1:11).

Titus is not to mince words or arguments in bringing these islanders to a sound and vigorous faith, in making of them Christians who will “not listen to Jewish fables and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth” (Tit. 1:14). St. Paul immediately gives us to understand that these Judaizers were especially voluble in their insistence upon the ancient Mosaic law concerning clean and unclean meats and ceremonial washings (= “Jewish fables”); and this law they appear to have amplified also by some ascetical innovations of their own (= “commandments of men”).² The main contentions of the troublemakers are indicated and refuted by St. Paul with

¹ Cf. M. Meinertz, *Die Pastoralbriefe des heiligen Paulus* (4th ed.; Die heilige Schrift des Neuen Testaments, VIII; Bonn, 1931), p. 8. F. X. Pözl, *Die Mitarbeiter des Weltapostels Paulus* (Regensburg, 1911), p. 116 f., dates the visit a few months earlier. A later date, the year 66, is assumed by F. Prat, *La théologie de saint Paul* (18th ed.; Paris, 1930), I, 398.

² Cf. T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* (translated under the direction of M. W. Jacobus; Edinburgh, 1909), II, 44-47, 105 f.; Prat, *op. cit.*, I, 402 f.

magnificent brevity, in four words (15a): πάντα καθαρά τοῖς καθαροῖς —*Omnia munda mundis*: "For the clean all things are clean." The negative side follows in somewhat detailed exposition: "Coinquinatis autem et infidelibus nihil est mundum, sed inquinatae sunt eorum et mens et conscientia. Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant: cum sint abominati, et incredibiles, et ad omne opus bonum reprobī" (15a-16).

The sententious note³ of St. Paul's pithy affirmation of the Christian stand on foods and the like cannot be mistaken, it "has the ring of a proverb."⁴ It has even been surmised⁵ that our Lord Himself may have used the formula or its equivalent. In our own day "for the clean all things are clean," or its equivalent in the King James version—"unto the pure all things are pure"—certainly is quoted often as a proverb or axiom,⁶ and, frequently enough, it is also misquoted to justify or exculpate the reprehensible, that which is unclean or impure under all circumstances.

In ancient Christianity both the Greek and the Latin Fathers were quick to recognize the broad axiomatic value of this Pauline dictum. It is interesting and instructive to note the many situations, the great variety of problems and disputes in which it was invoked by them.⁷

³ Cf. Meinertz, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁴ W. Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles* (I. C. C.; New York, 1924), p. 135. See also E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles* (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary; London, 1936), p. 161; R. A. Falconer, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford, 1937), p. 106; C. R. Erdman, *The Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul* (Philadelphia, 1923), p. 145.

⁵ H. von Soden, *Die Briefe an die Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon; die Pastoralbriefe* (2d ed.; Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament, III, 1; Freiburg i. Br. u. Leipzig, 1893), p. 211; cf. also M. Dibelius, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (2d ed.; Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, XIII; Tübingen, 1931), p. 87, and Lock, *op. cit.*, p. 135 f., for scriptural anticipations and for parallels from pagan philosophers, especially on the negative side.

⁶ To the German, "Dem Reinen ist alles rein," sometimes is added the drastic negative version, "Den Schweinen ist alles Schwein"!

⁷ For the formal exegesis of Tit. 1:15 cf. the following patristic writers who have written commentaries or homilies on the Epistle to Titus: John Chrysostom, *PG*, LXII, 663-700; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *PG*, LXVI, 948 f.; Theodoret, *PG*, LXXXII, 857-69; Ambrosiaster, *PL*, XVII, 497-504; Jerome, *PL*, XXVI, 555-600. Here I mention also an article by B. Haensler, "Zu Tit I, 15," *Bibl. Zeitschrift*, XIII (1915), 121-29, which proposes "dieser Bibelstelle nachzugehen und sie patrologisch-exegetisch zu bearbeiten." However, this is done rather perfunctorily: some of the exegetical material referred to at the beginning of the present note is cited (with Ambrosiaster taken as St. Ambrose!), and only one of the passages studied in this paper (cf. below, note 24) is quoted. Haensler then (p. 124) goes over to Thomas Aquinas.

We learn, moreover, that in the early Christian centuries, too, Christians lost to shame sometimes endeavored to vindicate their shameless conduct by appealing to the proverb formulated by Paul for Titus.

What appears to be the earliest evidence in the matter takes us not far from Crete to that great melting-pot in which Jew and Christian met Greek—Alexandria in Egypt. Clement in the final chapter of Book II and throughout Book III of the *Stromateis* treats of marital chastity and virginity as means to Christian perfection. Though actually still very young, Christianity in the Orient was already a veteran in its conflicts with heresy: in setting forth the Christian teaching on marriage and continence, the writer refutes heterodox extremists, rigorists and laxists, the contentions of gnosticism, Marcionism, and docetism. Finally, setting forth St. Paul's directions to the married, especially as contained in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (7:10-14), Clement asks: "Reading this, what can those say who contend that marriage was permitted in the old dispensation, but not in the new? What can they say who stand in abhorrence of marriage because of the acts of generation and birth which it involves?" These heretics Clement puts to shame with further testimony by the same Apostle: "For the clean all things are clean."⁸

Origen, too, recalls this sentence by Paul. In his *Commentary on Matthew* he charges certain Jews and the Ebionites with deliberately choosing to continue to live in ancient servitude when, in the presence of Christ's teaching in the Gospels,⁹ they persist in prescribing the observance of the injunctions in Leviticus and Deuteronomy concerning clean and unclean foods. Such foods or meats, he states, are in their own nature indifferent. However unclean or impure such things may seem, they are made pure through the pure intention and pure conscience of the user; for, "all things become (*γίνονται*) clean to the clean."¹⁰

These words are appealed to again by another illustrious Alexandrian, Athanasius, to settle the scrupulous consciences of some monks who had written to him through their superior, Amun. The devil, St. Athanasius shows, is a dexterous employer of a great variety of weapons, and so resorts to vile thoughts and phantasms to confuse

⁸ *Strom.*, III, 18, 109, 1 (ed. Stählin, GCS, Clem. Al., II, 246, 20 f.).

⁹ Matt. 15:10 f. and Mark 7:19 are quoted.

¹⁰ *Comm. in Matti*, XI, 12 (edd. Klostermann-Benz, GCS, Orig., X, 53, 18 f.).

the simpler souls. "All of God's works are good and pure, and the Word of God certainly has made nothing that is useless or impure"; as St. Paul states: "For the clean all things are clean." But the ingenious devil, source of corruption and ruin that he is, under the guise of purity works to deflect such simple souls from their wonted healthy and helpful meditation. He aims to make them impure by making their minds and consciences impure as a result of morbidly seeing impurity in everything: for example, in certain natural and normal functions common to every human body, in its excretions and secretions, and in the members through which these take place. These in themselves have nothing to do with sin; medical men, too, Athanasius adds, support us by demonstrating that they are necessary for us; and to fret over them is only to occupy oneself with nugatory problems.¹¹

A delectable incident, retold by the church historian, Sozomen, again involves the question of food that had been forbidden in the former dispensation. Once, we are told, the Cypriote bishop Spyridon found himself in the Lenten season, which he and his household were keeping very strictly. A traveler stopped in. Seeing how weary he was, the bishop told his daughter: "Come, wash his feet, and bring him something to eat." When she reminded her father that it was a fast day and that therefore there was neither bread nor meal in the house, he prayed and asked God for forgiveness, and then told her to get some pork out of the brine and to boil it. When the table had been set, the bishop himself sat down with the stranger. The latter, however, would not follow his host's example in eating of the pork, protesting that he was a Christian; to which Spyridon replied: "All the more reason for not declining; for the Divine Word has defined that 'for the clean all things are clean.'"¹²

Turning our attention to the Western Fathers, we find a particularly noteworthy instance of the citing of Tit. 1:15a in the correspondence of Cyprian of Carthage. One of his suffragans, a certain Fidus, had written him concerning the proper time for administering the sacrament of baptism. We learn that by the middle of the third century infant baptism had become so much the accepted thing in the African church, that there was uncertainty only as to whether or not

¹¹ *Epist. ad Amunem* (PG, XXVI, 1169-75).

¹² *Hist. eccl.*, I, 11 (PG, LXVII, 889BC).

it was necessary or proper to wait for the ceremony until the eighth day, in accordance with the Old Testament precept for circumcision. Fidus was inclined to require such an interim between birth and baptism, but the synod to which the metropolitan submitted the *causa infantium* (in 251 or 253) and whose decision he reports, rejected it: "Longe aliud in concilio nostro visum est." After advancing a number of reasons for immediate baptism of infants, Cyprian answers an objection by Fidus:

For, concerning, too, what you have said, that the appearance of an infant during the first days after its birth is not clean, that each one of us still shies of kissing it, we do not think either that this should be an impediment to conferring the heavenly grace. For it is written: 'For the clean all things are clean.' Nor should any of us loathe that which God has deigned to make. . . . In kissing an infant each one of us ought by the promptings of his own piety think of God's own hands still imprinted upon it—hands which, as it were, we kiss when embracing that which God has fashioned in the man newly made and newly born.¹³

Quite naturally in the brief treatise *On Jewish Foods* by Cyprian's schismatic contemporary, the Roman Novatian, there was also ready occasion to refer to this sentence by St. Paul. Having set forth in the initial chapters that, in forbidding the Jews to eat of the flesh of certain animals, God meant to teach them to shun the various sins and vices symbolized by the natures of these animals, and to teach them self-restraint, Novatian shows that these prohibitions came to an end with the coming of Christ. Under Him, who is *magister insignis, doctor caelestis*, and *institutor consummatae veritatis*, such animal foods were restored to the pristine natural goodness which was present in them by reason of their very creation; and under Him it is now rightly said: "Omnia munda mundis . . ." ¹⁴

¹³ *Epist.* LXIV, 4 (ed. Hartel, *CSEL*, III, 2, 719, 13–23): "Nam et quod vestigium infantis in primis partus sui diebus constituti mundum non esse dixisti, quod unusquisque nostrum adhuc horreat exosculari, nec hoc putamus ad caelestem gratiam dandam impedimento esse oportere. Scriptum est enim: 'Omnia munda sunt mundis.' Nec aliquis nostrum id debet horrere quod Deus dignatus est facere. . . . In osculo infantis unusquisque nostrum pro sua religione ipsas adhuc recentes Dei manus debet cogitare, quas in homine modo formato et recens nato quodam modo exosculamur, quando id quod Deus fecit amplectimur." F. J. Dölger, "Der Kuss im Tauf- und Firmungsritual nach Cyprian von Karthago und Hippolyt von Rom," *Antike und Christentum*, I (1929), 186–88, has discussed this passage, especially for its reflection of ancient Roman attitude and custom.

¹⁴ *De cibis iudaicis*, 5 (edd. Landgraf-Weymann, *Archiv f. lat. Lex. u. Gram.*, II [1898], 234, 19–235, 7).

In Africa again this word of St. Paul is employed very frequently by St. Augustine over a wide range of arguments. We shall look briefly at the most noteworthy instances.

In the second of his two long letters to Januarius, written in the year 400, there is reference to the old trouble of considering and declaring certain foods unclean. Januarius had written that it was for this reason that certain brethren abstained from eating meats. This, St. Augustine writes, most evidently "contra fidem sanamque doctrinam est." He declines to discuss the matter further, lest it appear that the Apostle did not speak clearly on the subject. But he quotes St. Paul's remarks to Timothy (I Tim. 4:1-5) concerning future apostates, mendacious hypocrites and pseudo-ascetics, "prohibentes nubere, abstinere a cibis . . ."; and to the assurance in this passage that "omnis creatura Dei bona est et nihil abiciendum, quod cum gratiarum actione percipitur," he adds Paul's further statement to Titus: "Omnia, inquit, munda mundis."¹⁵

Elsewhere, in a work written soon after his baptism, Augustine shows, against the Manichaeans who were boasting of their ascetical practices, how true Christian ascetics conducted themselves in the use of certain foods. He illustrates this with a remarkable account of communal life practiced by men and women lodged in houses within the hubbub of crowded Milan and Rome. They joined fasting with manual labor, practicing the former with extreme severity. Abstinence from all meats seems to be implied. However, tolerance reigned withal. No one was forced to take such austerities upon himself; if a man or woman appeared too weak to follow the others, such a one was not therefore condemned. Theirs was the correct Christian outlook, Augustine indicates, "for they bear in mind how in the Scriptures charity is enjoined upon all; they bear in mind, 'Omnia munda mundis.'" Therefore, all their spiritual industry centers not on the problem of rejecting this or that food as polluted, but on subjugating their concupiscence and on preserving an abiding love for their brethren.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Epist.* LV (= *Ad inquisitiones Ianuarii, lib. II*), 20, 36 (ed. Goldbacher, *CSEL*, XXXIV, 210, 18-211, 14). Here, and throughout this article, scripture texts are quoted and translated as worded in the respective patristic sources.

¹⁶ *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* I, 33, 71 (*PL*, XXXII, 1340).

In his famous reply to his former Manichaean teacher, Faustus of Mileve, Augustine refers in numerous passages, especially in Book VI, to St. Paul's dictum on cleanness. In his rejection of the Old Testament, Faustus also denied that any of the practices enjoined in the old law could have served any purpose of prefiguration "of things to come" in the new. Thus, in their abhorrence of circumcision in the flesh, the Manichaeans ridiculed any thought of the new "circumcision of the heart" as having been foreshadowed by it. Evidently, suggests Augustine, they were not concerned when it was said, "Omnia munda mundis"; but for such as they the Apostle continued: "Immundis autem et infidelibus nihil est mundum, sed polluta sunt eorum et mens et conscientia."¹⁷

But not only do they, because of their polluted minds and consciences, regard the generative organ as impure, and despise the circumcision of it—an act called by the Apostle a "signaculum iustitiae fidei" (Rom. 4:11); but they monstrously suppose that the carnal members of their own god are bound up with their own members and defiled through their defilement of them; he is vitiated by their vicious actions; hence, to spare their unfortunate god, they shun all conjugal intercourse. What a god! the quondam admirer of Faustus says in effect. If among men, who have unstable wills, it is true that "for the clean all things are clean," then "how much more are all things clean for God, who forever remains immutable and incontaminable?"¹⁸

Further on in the same book, Augustine taunts Faustus and Adimantus¹⁹ for contradicting themselves in their attitude on meats. Because the Catholics, following the axiom of the Apostle, "Omnia

¹⁷ *Contra Faustum*, VI, 3 (ed. Zycha, *CSEL*, XXV, 286, 15–27) (= Eugippius, *Excerpta ex operibus S. Augustini*, 40, 55 [ed. Knoell, *CSEL*, IX, 238, 14–25]). In a later passage of this work, XXV, 2 (*CSEL*, XXV, 727 f.), Augustine again shows that the ancient practice of circumcision was not, as the Manichaeans claimed, indecent and revolting, but divinely appointed to represent the stripping-off of the flesh: "signum in parte corporis congrua divinitus datum, quo carnis expoliatio figurata est." If they were to view circumcision with a Christian, and not a heretical, mind, then they, too, could understand it in the light of "omnia munda mundis."

¹⁸ *Contra Faust.*, VI, 3 (*CSEL*, XXV, 286, 27–288, 8).

¹⁹ Quite certainly identical with Addas, Mani's first missionary and perhaps the earliest Manichaean writer; cf. P. Alfarcic, *Les écritures manichéennes, II: étude analytique* (Paris, 1919), 96–98. Among St. Augustine's works there is also one *Contra Adimantum*; and in this, too, he quotes (14 [*CSEL*, XXV, 151, 18 and 152, 1]) the Apostle's "Omnia munda mundis" against the heretical claim that some *carnes* are *immundae*.

munda mundis," declare no meats whatever to be unclean, Faustus and his followers hold these Catholics to be prejudicial to the Old Testament. At the same time, to discredit the Old Testament, Adimantus, whom Faustus extols so, quotes a statement by Christ showing that He wished no animals to be considered unclean.²⁰ Yet, the Manichaeans persist in holding that the eating of any flesh defiles them. Adimantus, to extricate himself from his own predicament, claimed that the Lord's declaration regarding all food as being clean was made only to the *turbæ*, the common crowd; but that he spoke quite differently to His disciples. Augustine sarcastically suggests that possibly the Manichaeans wish it understood that Paul meant to say: "Not for the heretics are all things clean, but 'for the clean are all things clean.'"²¹

He then explains the Old Testament prohibition of certain animal foods and shows that it is not contradicted by St. Paul's "Omnia munda mundis." Quite as Origen does in the passage we have referred to above, he states that the Apostle speaks of the nature of things; that the Old Testament declared some animals, not unclean by nature, but unclean symbolically: "non natura, sed significatione immunda." Revelation by Christ clarified the truths signified in such observances, while the observances themselves were no longer required by Him.²²

Finally, it is noteworthy that Faustus himself quoted our passage from the Epistle to Titus and made it the subject of a sarcastic disquisition. This and its scarcely less scornful refutation form the theme of the brief Book XXXI of Augustine's *Contra Faustum*. Faustus, of course, treating the New Testament with as much contempt as the Old, rejects the passage as un-Christian, as one that cannot have Paul as its author. He further suggests that the Catholics, too, would do well to treat the statement on cleanness of things as non-

²⁰ Matt. 16:11 (as quoted by Augustine): "Non quod intrat in os vestrum, sed quod exit."

²¹ *Contra Faust.*, VI, 6 (CSEL, XXV, 292 f.). *Ibid.*, XVI, 31 f. (CSEL, XXV, 477-81), Augustine again quotes—with special reference to the Manichaean proscription of wine—St. Paul's "Omnia munda mundis" in refuting the contention of Adimantus and Faustus that Christ in His public teaching pronounced all foods naturally good, but that in private He forbade His disciples to use what they, the Manichaeans, considered unclean.

²² *Contra Faust.*, VI, 7 (CSEL, XXV, 294 f.) (= Eugippius, *Excerpta ex operibus S. Augustini*, 41, 56 [ed. Knoell, CSEL, IX, 239, 4 ff.]).

Pauline; if they do not, they must condemn even Moses and the prophets as having been "inquinatae mentis," inasmuch as these regarded some things as defiled. Nor can they save their esteem for Daniel and the three youths, for these shunned gentile foods and sacrifices as causing defilement. Faustus furthermore proposes to show how the Catholics' own pattern of Christian living, of practicing abstinence and calling abstinence meritorious, stands in utter contradiction to Paul's proclamation that there is nothing which is not clean.²³ In answer, Augustine once again argues briefly that Paul's "Omnia munda mundis" refers only to the divinely created natures of things; that the Apostle is not, therefore, in opposition to God's legislation through Moses which set up certain foods as unclean for the Jewish people for the duration of the Law; and that among Christians some things, however good their intrinsic natures, are actually not suited to the well-being of the human body and to the ways of Christian society. "If, then," he continues, "everything is given its proper place and is permitted to keep this place in the order of nature, then 'omnia munda sunt mundis; but for the unclean and the unbelieving'—and among these you stand first—'nothing is clean.'"²⁴

The Donatists, too, gave Augustine cause to quote St. Paul's advice to Titus. He insists against Petilian that the iniquitous state of a priest offering sacrifice does not vitiate the sacrifice itself for the innocent partaker of it. It is the condition and disposition of each—of both the sacrificer and the partaker—that determine the result for each, "since there is also that scripture saying: 'Omnia munda mundis.'" He adds that according to this true and catholic pronouncement the Donatists, too, were free from pollution by the sacrifice of Optatus, provided they were displeased by his deeds.²⁵

Again, even a discussion of the mystery of the Trinity can provide a reference to Tit. 1:15. While rejecting as unsuited and absurd the

²³ *Contra Faust.*, XXXI, 1-3 (CSEL, XXV, 756, 2-759, 7).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 (CSEL, XXV, 759, 8-760, 19).

²⁵ *Contra litteras Petiliani*, II, 52, 120 (ed. Petschenig, CSEL, LII, 89, 9 ff.). Optatus, called Gildonianus because of his subservience to Gildo, the *comes Africae*, was a Donatist bishop of Tingad in Numidia. From Augustine (*ibid.*, *passim*) it appears that his record of crime in persecuting Catholics and also certain groups of Donatists was equalled perhaps only by Gildo himself. L. Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'Église*, III (3d ed.; Paris, 1910), 117, calls him "un véritable brigand."

opinion that sees in the human family—that is, in the marriage of man and woman, and the offspring they beget—an image of God in three Persons, Augustine makes clear that the impropriety of such a comparison lies in the very disparate interrelation of persons in the two groups compared, and not in the terms of carnal conceptions and births which the comparison may lead us to think of. These things in themselves, St. Augustine assures us, can be the subjects of most chaste thought for those “quibus mundis omnia munda sunt.”²⁶ Similarly, in his discourse *On Faith and the Creed*, he states that the thought of the woman’s womb must not weaken our faith, must not make us reject our Lord’s generation through Mary, simply because certain sordid people think such a thought sordid: “quod eam (cogitationem) sordidi sordidam putant.”²⁷

Here the use of the word-play *sordidi sordidam*—a juxtaposed repetition of the same word in different inflexions—and the further use of rhetoric in what follows, should be noted. To the objection of the *sordidi* Augustine first opposes a paradoxical sentence from Paul: “The foolishness of God is wiser than men” (“stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus”).²⁸ He then adds that the Apostle also spoke most truly: “Omnia munda mundis.” According to the terminology of ancient rhetoric we may identify these iterated forms, *sordidi sordidam* and *munda mundis* (καθάρὰ τοῖς καθαροῖς), as examples of *traductio*, or, more precisely, *polyptoton* (employment of the same word through various cases).²⁹ The passage illustrates well that a highly rhetorical formulation also contributed to the popularization of a truth so pithily stated to Titus by Paul.³⁰

²⁶ *De Trinitate*, XII, 5, 5 (PL, XLII, 1000).

²⁷ *De fide et symbolo*, 4, 10 (ed. Zycha, CSEL, XLI, 13, 15–19).

²⁸ I Cor. 1:25. In the most recent translation of the New Testament, R. A. Knox (who renders Tit. 1:15a: “As if anything could be unclean for those who have clean hearts!”) writes: “So much wiser than men is God’s foolishness.”

²⁹ Cf. R. Volkman, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer* (2d ed.; Leipzig, 1885), p. 480 (*traductio*); pp. 470, 515 (πολυπτότων). For Augustine’s “excessive use of this figure,” at least in his sermons, see Sr. M. I. Barry, *St. Augustine, the Orator: A Study of the Rhetorical Qualities of St. Augustine’s Sermones ad Populum* (Catholic University of America Patristic Studies, VI; Washington, 1924), pp. 74–78.

³⁰ In taking leave of Augustine, the following passages, in which he also quotes Tit. 1:15, may be noted: *Confessiones* X, 31, 46 (ed. Skutella): not the uncleanness of foods, but the uncleanness of lusts is to be feared; *Enarr. in Ps. CIII*, serm. I, 3 (PL, XXXVII, 1337): to the unclean not even God’s name is clean; *Epist.* CXLIX, 23 (ed. Goldbacher,

Thus, we may also expect to find this sentence used in the concise prose, the sententious and antithetical diction, of the sermons of St. Leo the Great. An excellent example is preserved in his fourth Lenten sermon, preached probably in the year 444. We must be careful, the great Pope warns, not alone in matters that would allure our palates, but also in our resolve to practice abstinence. The ancient enemy is as crafty as ever: "qui enim scivit humano generi mortem inferre per cibum, novit et per ipsum nocere ieiunium." With the Manichaeans still his yeomen (*Manichaeis utendo famulis*), the devil now reverses the tactics he once employed in Eden and attempts to ensnare the unwary by placing an interdict on things naturally and normally allowed. Thus false doctrine is born, and even fasting becomes sin: "etiam ieiunando peccatur." But, as to immoderate eating and drinking, it is the excess in taking food and drink, not their nature, that defiles. This he states in carefully measured words:

"Nimietas edaces et bibaces dedecorat,
non cibi neque poculi natura contaminat";³¹

for the Apostle, Leo adds, states: "Omnia . . . munda sunt mundis."³²

Gregory the Great, too, in his famous *Pastoral Rule* takes up the question of extremes practiced in partaking of food and in abstaining from it, and Tit. 1:15 is included among a number of citations from Scripture to support his admonitions.³³ There is a further example in an equally famous document, a long letter by Gregory containing responses to *dubia* proposed by Augustine, the Apostle of the English. In section viii, answers are given to questions concerning certain marriage relationships which possibly might affect participation in church functions—information which the Archbishop of Canterbury

CSEL, XLIV, 369): Augustine attempts to explain to Fortunatus a passage (Col. 2:18 ff.) in which St. Paul warns against false asceticism as practiced by heretics.

³¹ Here the two clauses are isocola of fifteen syllables each, with accentual clausulae (~~~~) containing homoioteleuton (end rhyme: *dedecorat-contaminat*). Note also the paronomasia: *edaces-bibaces*. For the clausulae in Leo, cf. T. Steeger, *Die Klauseltechnik Leos des Grossen in seinen Sermonen* (diss. Munich; Haszfurt a. M., 1908); for the use of rhetoric, the dissertation by W. J. Halliwell, *The Style of Pope Leo the Great* (Catholic University of America Patristic Studies, LIX; Washington, 1939).

³² *Sermo XLII (De quadrag. IV)*, 4 (PL, LIV, 278B-279A).

³³ *Regula pastoralis*, III, 19 (PL, LXXVII, 83B).

had deemed necessary "rudi Anglorum genti." In this connection it had also been asked whether a woman "si menstrua consuetudine tenetur," may enter a church and whether she may approach the sacrament of Holy Communion. Gregory answers both questions affirmatively, taking support from Christ's own words (Matt. 15:11, 19) and also from Paul's words to Titus: "Omnia munda mundis." He applies these words to the problem proposed, as follows: "If, then, food is not unclean for one whose mind is not unclean, why should that which a woman of clean mind suffers by reason of her nature, be applied to her as uncleanness?"³⁴

In virtually all the examples reviewed thus far, St. Paul's statement to Titus on cleanness served a positive end, that is, to justify a Christian viewpoint or practice against objections arising in Jewish or heretical quarters or on the part of anxious or scrupulous Christians. But the verse is also adduced against practices not to be tolerated in a Christian. An example is found in a letter written by Pope Innocent I in the year 404 to Victricius, bishop of Rouen, to stress the necessity for the married clergy of leading a life of continence. When the priests of the ancient dispensation did not leave the temple during their year of service, when Paul recommends that even the married laity abstain from intercourse for a time in order to give themselves to prayer, how much more must Christian priests and levites preserve their chastity from the day of their ordination ("ex die ordinationis suae")! For them no day passes that they are not occupied with the office of praying, sacrificing, and baptizing. "With what feeling of propriety," asks the Pope, "could one contaminated with carnal concupiscence perform sacrifice, with what conscience could he believe that he deserves to be heard when it was said: 'For the clean all things are clean, but for the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean?'"³⁵

³⁴ *Registrum Epist.*, XI, 56a, 8 (edd. Ewald-Hartmann, *MGH, Epist.*, II, 338-40). The Gregorian authorship of these *responsa*, preserved by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History* (I, 27), has sometimes been questioned. The most recent defense of it is by F. Wasner, "De authenticitate 'Libelli Responsum' B. Gregorii M. Papae ad S. Augustinum Angliae Apostolum animadversiones," *Jus Pontificium*, XVIII (1938-39), 174-85, 293-99.

³⁵ *Epist.* II, 9, 12 (*PL*, XX, 475C-476B) (= Dionysius Exiguus, *Collectio Decretorum Pontificum Romanorum*, 16 [*PL*, LXVII, 243D-244A]).

Finally, that St. Paul's "Omnia munda mundis" has a limited sphere of application, that it cannot be appealed to by a Christian to vindicate questionable activities or occupations, is exemplified by Jerome in his treatise on virginity, the famous letter to Eustochium. Immediately before narrating the celebrated dream or vision in which he was condemned for being a *Ciceronianus* rather than a *Christianus*, he admonishes her not to wish to appear elegant in her speech or to dabble in composing lyrics. Nor is she to copy the sickening affectation with which some Roman women mark their speech, considering it countrified to converse naturally. This conduct Jerome characteristically terms finding pleasure in "even adultery of the tongue," and continues:

What is there in common between light and darkness? What agreement can there be between Christ and Belial? What has Horace to do with the Psalter, Vergil with the Gospels, Cicero with the apostle Paul? Is not your brother scandalized, if he sees you reclining at a pagan table? And, although 'for the clean all things are clean' and 'nothing is to be rejected that is accepted with thanksgiving' (I Tim. 4:4), still we must not drink the cup of Christ and at the same time the cup of devils.³⁶

Earlier within the same letter Jerome brings a startling illustration of a misuse—of what is actually a prostitution—of St. Paul's aphorism on cleanness and the clean. "One is ashamed to mention," he states, "how many virgins daily go astray, what great numbers of them are lost to the bosom of Mother Church." They practice every vice: if unwed they can but hide their resulting pregnancy; if a squalling babe does not as yet discomfit them, they parade and trip along as if nothing were awry. Others, more provident of themselves, use certain potions that sterility may spare them such embarrassment; and if nature has survived, if they conceive nevertheless, they try abortion—frequently enough dying in the attempt, to be taken to hell, laden with their multiple crime. Jerome continues:

And they are the ones who are wont to say: "For the clean all things are clean." My conscience is sufficient guide for me. A clean heart is what God looks for. Why should I abstain from foods which God made for us to enjoy? And when

³⁶ *Epist.* XXII, 29, 6 (ed. Hilberg, *CSEL*, LIV, 188, 11—189, 7). My translation of the passage is indebted in part to C. C. Mierow, "An Early Christian Scholar," *Class. Journ.*, XXXIII (1937), 8.

they wish to appear smart and gay, swilling themselves with wine and coupling blasphemy with drunkenness, they say: 'Far be it from me to abstain from the blood of Christ!'³⁷

In this account, ever ancient, ever new, of what happens when children abandon their mother and their mother's old-fashioned code of living,³⁸ it is pertinent for us to observe that evidently St. Paul's sentence had been quoted so frequently as a ready and definitive answer to prohibitionist heretics,³⁹ that its applicability *in malam partem* was recognized by excuse-seeking wrongdoers. It was soon bandied about like a convenient *honi-soit-qui-mal-y-pense*, much in the same manner that persons with elastic consciences to-day accuse their betters of having unclean minds for seeing wrong in shady shows, books, and the like. That the unfortunates of whom Jerome speaks were well aware of the general import of St. Paul's word to Titus is evidenced by their identifying the *munda* with foods, *cibi*, which in turn they referred figuratively to their own lustful proclivities, claiming that God had created these, too, *ad utendum*. Lastly, it is also noteworthy that the travestied "omnia munda mundis" is followed by the equally modern-sounding "sufficit mihi conscientia mea." That this also was a current form of self-acquittal is indicated by its repetition elsewhere in Jerome's letters. He puts it into the mouth of his former companion in the desert, Heliodorus, as an argument that, having given up a hermit's life, he is not now seeking honor.⁴⁰ Again, Jerome exhorts the widow Geruchia not to use this trite answer—"illud e trivio"—or to say, in order to show her dis-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13, 1-3 (CSEL, LIV, 160, 3-161, 4): "Piget dicere, quot cotidie virgines ruant, quantas de suo gremio Mater perdat Ecclesia. . . . Istae sunt, quae solent dicere: "Omnia munda mundis." Sufficit mihi conscientia mea. Cor mundum desiderat Deus. Cur me abstinence a cibus, quos Deus creavit ad utendum?" Et si quando lepidae et festivae volunt videri et se mero ingurgitaverint, ebrietati sacrilegium copulantes, aiunt: 'Absit, ut ego me a Christi sanguine abstinence.'"

³⁸ The title, *Mater Ecclesia*, and the motif of this Mother holding her children to her bosom, of them getting down, running away and deserting her, were already an old tradition: cf. J. C. Plumpey *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity, V; Washington, 1943), especially the chapter on St. Cyprian, pp. 81-108.

³⁹ In the sentence immediately following the text quoted above in note 37, Jerome states further that when these sorry creatures see a woman of collected and serious mien, they call her a nun and *Manichaeon*: "monacham et *Manichaeam* vocant."

⁴⁰ *Epist.* XIV, 7, 1 (CSEL, LIV, 54, 9).

dain for what may be said of her if she associates with persons of questionable character: "Non curo, quid loquantur homines."⁴¹ Finally, this patting of one's own conscience is exemplified more than four centuries earlier, likewise in the more popular diction of a letter, by Cicero writing to his friend Atticus, upon the shipwreck of his political hopes (in the year 45 B. C.): "*Mea mihi conscientia pluris est quam omnium sermo.*"⁴²

⁴¹ *Epist.* CXXIII, 14, 1 f. (CSEL, LVI 89, 11 ff.).

⁴² *Ad Atticum*, XII, 28, 2. For further approximations, see A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 90.