

Dangerous and Scandalous Association with Maidens

~Other Speakers M-R: Clement of Rome:

Now, we are persuaded of you, my brethren, that your thoughts are occupied about those things which are requisite for your salvation. But we speak thus in consequence of the evil rumours and reports concerning shameless men, who, under pretext of the fear of God, have their dwelling with maidens, and so, expose themselves to danger, and walk with them along the road and in solitary places alone—a course which is full of dangers, and full of stumbling-blocks and snares and pitfalls; nor is it in any respect right for Christians and those who fear God so to conduct themselves.

Others, too, eat and drink with them at entertainments allowing themselves in loose behaviour and much uncleanness—such as ought not to be among believers, and especially among those who have chosen for themselves a life of holiness. Others, again, meet together for vain and trifling conversation and merriment, and that they may speak evil of one another; and they hunt up tales against one another, and are idle: persons with whom we do not allow you even to eat bread. Then, others wander about among the houses of virgin brethren or sisters, on pretence of visiting them, or reading the Scriptures to them, or exorcising them. Forasmuch as they are idle and do no work, they pry into those things which ought not to be inquired into, and by means of plausible words make merchandise of the name of Christ. These are men from whom the divine apostle kept aloof, because of the multitude of their evil deeds; as it is written: Thorns sprout in the hands of the idle; and, The ways of the idle are full of thorns.