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PLATONIST,

An Exponent of Philosophic Truth.

EDITED BY

THOMAS M. JOHNSON.

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*How charming is Divine Philosophy!
Not harsh nor crabbed, as dull fools suppose;
But musical as Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.*

OSCEOLA, MISSOURI.

THE PLATONIST.

In this degenerated age, when the senses are apotheosised, when materialism is absurdly denominated Philosophy, folly and ignorance popularised, and the dictum: "Get money, eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," exemplifies the actions of millions of mankind, there certainly is a necessity for a journal which shall be a candid, bold, and fearless exponent of the Platonic Philosophy—a philosophy totally subversive of sensualism, materialism, folly and ignorance. This philosophy recognizes the essential immortality and divinity of the Human Soul, and posits its highest happiness as an approximation to and union with the Absolute One. Its mission is: to release the soul from the bonds of matter, to lead it to the vision of true being,—from images to realities,—and, concisely, to elevate it from a sensuous to an intellectual life.

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Address all subscriptions, contributions and other communications to the Editor,

THOMAS M. JOHNSON,

Osceola, St. Clair County, Missouri, U. S. A.

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The Platonist.

“Platonism is immortal because its principles are immortal in the Human Intellect and Heart.” The Esoteric doctrine of all religions and philosophies is identical.

COMMENTARY OF PROKLOS ON THE FIRST ALKIBIADES OF PLATON.

Translated from the Original Greek.

COMMENTARY.

O son of Kleinias! you wonder I suppose that I, who was the earliest of your admirers, now, when all the rest have abandoned you, am the only one who still retains unalterably the same sentiments; and yet that for so many years I have never spoken even a word to you whilst the others were pressing through crowds of people to converse with you.

The prefaces of the Platonic dialogues accord with their whole scope; and are neither devised by Platon for the sake of dramatic allurements—since that style of composition is remote from the wisdom and majesty of the philosopher’s conceptions—nor do they pertain to historical narration alone, as some have apprehended. For it is neither credible, nor in short possible, that all which follow the things done or said can be assumed with reference to one perfection of the Platonic writings. But as it appeared to our teachers, and as elsewhere set forth by us, each preface was composed with special reference to the universal design of the dialogue to which it belongs; and many historical things accord with the present scope, and everything which pertains

to the proposed speculation, in the same manner as all things in the Mysteries are referred to the whole perfection of the particulars which are investigated. Platon, therefore, in the very beginning of the dialogue appears to me to indicate this dogma, and to show in a beautiful manner the scope of the whole work. For his chief design, as we have said, was to unfold our true nature, and the whole essence according to which each one is defined (constituted), and to set forth this by scientific and invincible reasonings of speculation; and to expound the real meaning of the Delphic mandate—*know thyself*—through demonstrative methods. But the preface itself to this dialogue converts the young man to himself, and represents him as investigating his own presubexisting conceptions; and while converting him to himself likewise leads him to a speculation (survey) of Sokratic science. For an investigation of the cause through which Sokrates alone of all his admirers does not change his admiration, but began to admire him prior to others, and is not altered when the rest abandon him, evinces him to be a speculator of the whole life of Sokrates. The species or forms of conversion therefore are three. For everything converted is either converted to that which is worse than itself, through apostatizing from its proper perfection; or is led back to that which is better than itself, through its own life and an energy according to nature; or is converted to itself according to a knowledge coordinate to and with itself, and a mediate form of motion. A conversion indeed to that which is worse is the passion of a soul whose wings suffer a defluxion, and that is now placed in oblivion alike of itself and of natures prior to itself. But a conversion both to itself and to a more excellent nature takes place not in souls alone but likewise in divine natures themselves; as Parmenides teaches us, when he posits two species of conversion, and shows how a divine

nature is converted to itself, and is in itself, and how it is converted to that which is prior to itself, so far as it is comprehended by and in another, and is united to a better nature.. Wherefore Sokrates at the end of this dialogue says, that he who is converted to and becomes a spectator of himself, will by this means contemplate the whole of a divine nature; and through a total conversion to himself, which is like a ladder as it were by which he ascends to higher things, will be conducted to a survey of Divinity itself, and therefore to a conversion to that which is better than himself. These things therefore, the preface indicates. For it leads Alkibiades from a life tending to externals to a survey of himself, and recalls him through self-knowledge to a love of Sokratic science; since a desire to learn the cause of the conduct of Sokrates is to become a lover of the presub-sisting science which he contains. This accordingly is in my judgment what Platon primarily intended to convey through the preface to this dialogue, to those who are able to apprehend his meaning.

The second principal thing, besides others, which Platon designed to show in this preface is: that a worthy man will always employ his knowledge about objects properly coordinated to and with that knowledge; and that he will never attempt to possess a stable, definite, and immutable knowledge of things contingent and mutable, nor a dubious, indefinite, and disordered apprehension of things necessary (absolute), which always have a sameness of subsistence. But, according to the distinction established by Sokrates in the Republic, he will conjointly contemplate all intelligibles with simple, uniform, and intellectual knowledge; and will survey the middle (mediate) reasons of things with a scientific and dianoetic evolution and synthesis. Again, with the sensitive power, which is the third from truth, he will apprehend through the instruments

of sense those things which fall within the domain of matter, distinguishing in an appropriate manner every object of sense. And lastly, by an assimilative power he will apprehend the images of sensuous things. And indeed, Timaios, defining cognitions analogously to the objects of knowledge, exhorts us to comprehend true beings by intelligence in conjunction with reason; but such things as are not true beings, but are perpetually conversant with generation and corruption, by opinion and sense. For the reasons (principles) of true beings cannot be refuted, and are indubitable; but those of things which are borne along in the rapid flux of generation, are conjectural and contingent. For everywhere reasons imitate the things of which they are the interpreters.

In the third place, Sokrates in the *Kratylos* says that the names of things eternal have a certain alliance with the things themselves; but that the names of things generated and corrupted are multifariously changed, and partake much of position through the unstable lation of their subjects. If therefore the knowledge of things which subsist perpetually the same differs from that of things contingent, and reasons (principles) are allotted an all-various mutation, and different names accord with different things,—is it wonderful that Sokrates who is here discoursing concerning an unstable nature, should use the word “*οιμαι*” (I opine or think), which signifies that the nature of the thing known is mutable, but does not accuse the Sokratic knowledge as being indefinite, mingled with ignorance, and dubious? For it is necessary, as we have said before, to collect probable conceptions of and about the objects of opinion and imagination; of intelligible and scientific objects we should acquire knowledge, and in the investigation of them use irrefutable reasonings. For it is not lawful, said Aristotles, for a geometer to argue by persuasion,

or a rhetorician by demonstration. Wherefore he who neither speaks opinionately about necessary things, nor logically and scientifically about the objects of conjecture, will at all times be a wise interpreter. Therefore when speaking about the objects of conjecture Sokrates rightly uses the word "*οιμαι*"—I opine.

It should be noted that the manners of the youth (Alkibiades) are viewed with disfavor and censured, he being ambitious; for the juvenile age is alike ambitious and contentious. In order therefore that he may not reflect on him from the beginning, he praises his ambition, a form of life eminently worthy of a youth, when it is present in moderation: dissembling in some respects in those things which he speaks about him, conjecturing indeed but not affirming them positively, he incites the discussion. For it is necessary that Alkibiades be thus disciplined in order that he may be properly prepared to hear the discourse and, ambition being discarded, his soul may partake of the reasonings flowing from a wise mind. It may easily be said with reference to the discourses which follow, that they are truly Sokratic, i. e. that they are moderate, public, and delivered in a non-arrogant manner. Since therefore Sokrates is led to speak about himself, it appears wonderful to Alkibiades that he had during so long a time previous, on account of his love for him, kept silent. The word "*οιμαι*" (I opine) is therefore very appropriately used by Sokrates; neither is it used alone for the sake of colloquial discourse, nor that it may show that there is something uncertain or dubious about the Sokratic knowledge [for there is not], but for the simple reason that one speaking such things of himself should discourse more timidly than imperiously.

And indeed the very beginning of the colloquy, which accosts the youth in the name of his father, is admirably adapted to the person and contents of the conversa-

tion. For the person (Alkibiades) being ambitious is rendered more friendly and amenable to reason through being addressed by his paternal name, since Kleinias was illustrious in the Koronean war. It is well known that the children of illustrious parents prefer to be named from them rather than from themselves; for one (i. e. the given name) is common to many men, but the other (i. e. the family) is a certain illustrious good derived from their parents. The memory of the noble deeds of an illustrious sire has a peculiar power exhortative to the practice of virtue. For it is an unworthy act to tarnish the fame of our ancestors; and, whilst their name and honor are revered and enjoyed, to neglect to follow their example. Indeed the imitation of the acts of a worthy parent by his children is a symbol of the recalling of the apparent and external man to the true father of souls. In these discourses Sokrates uses the Pythagorean method, believing that this contributes to the preservation of the soul,—since the Pythagoreans teach what is revealed in the Mysteries through symbols, and assert that what is shown by and in symbols is mere images or reflections of the power of those things which are delivered in the Mysteries. Sokrates, therefore, knowing these things, equally with the Pythagoreans, addresses the youth by the name of his father in opening a conversation with him, thinking that he would perhaps be led by such an appellation as by a certain mystical signal to recognize the invisible (true) causes of the descent of souls. If this mode of salutation be likewise Homeric neither is it therefore improper, since it is drawn from above according to the common custom of the Hellenes. For Homeros refers to each one of his characters by the name of his father, thus making all famous. For this species of salutation is familiarly pleasant, and philanthropic. Moreover we maintain, as likewise did the di-

vine Iamblichos, that this mode of salutation wonderfully harmonizes with the discourses on Love. For the addressing of one by his paternal name shows that the virile power of true love is active and efficacious in exciting the soul from her material bondage. And indeed every erotic order proceeds from an intelligible father (fount). For in all things (orders), as the Oracles say, the Father sowed the fiery bond of love; so that all things are conjoined by the indissoluble bonds of friendship, as the Platonic Timaios says. On this account the erotic association places the kindly feeling excited in the one loved by the use of the paternal appellation as the beginning of intimacy. For the memory of his father arouses the affection of the youth toward his friend, and this brought about the conference which was suggested to Sokrates [by his dæmon], and thereby arose the present philosophic conversation. Again, it appears to me that even the form of the words is wonderfully adapted to the discussion on Love. For it is right that it should convert the one loved to himself, and excite and move him in union with entheastic lovers. For these hold a mediate rank between divine beauty and those who need their aid and care,—since the faithful imitators of divine love attract and unite to themselves the life of those loved, and lead them with themselves to intelligible beauty, infusing into their soul, as Sokrates says in the Phaidros, whatever they draw from thence.* If therefore the erotic person is inspired by Love he will in the same manner as Love call and convert those who are born with erotic impulses to good. Thus Sokrates, demonstrating these things, excites through this first appellation the soul of the loved one to receive true beauty; arouses in him an admiration of the philosophic life, and gradually satisfies his desire for true love. For Sokrates especially exhibits the ama-

*i. e. Intelligible beauty.

tory form of life in this dialogue; he thence makes a beginning, and proceeds perfecting the youth until he declares that the lover wishes to be considered as the providence of the one loved, and this is the special good he seeks. And, concisely, through all the divisions of the dialogue, so to speak, he never loses sight of the characteristics of the erotic life.

As therefore there are three sciences which Sokrates testified that he possessed, viz. the dialectic, maieutic, and erotic, you will find the form of the dialectic exhibited in this dialogue through its works; you may apprehend the characteristics of the maieutic in many places, permeating the words of Sokrates; and the effects (works) of the erotic science specially predominate in the whole dialogue. For when Sokrates is calling forth the conceptions of Alkibiades he still preserves the erotic character; and when he employs the dialectic science does not depart from the peculiarity of erotic arguments. Just as in the Theaitetos he is maieutic, is principally characterized according to this, and proceeds until he has purified Theaitetos of false opinions. Having effected this,—which is the business of the maieutic science, as he asserts in that dialogue—he dismisses him as then being able of himself to know the truth. Thus also he primarily exhibits the erotic science in this dialogue, and at the same time treats the dialectic and maieutic from the erotic standpoint. For everywhere Sokrates introduces discourses adapted to the subject persons. And as every kind of good presubsists in a divine nature, which is variously possessed by different beings according to the natural aptitude of each, so Sokrates, who comprehends all sciences in himself, employs a different science at different times, according to the aptitude of the recipients; elevating one through the erotic science; exciting another to the reminiscence of the eternal reasons of the soul through the mai-

eutic science; and conducting another according to the dialectic method to the speculations of beings. He also conjoins others to others, according to their respective capacities; some he unites to the first wisdom, and others to the Good itself. For through the erotic science we are led to the beautiful; through the maieutic, which calls forth our latent reasons, we become wise in things of which we were ignorant; and through the dialectic we ascend even to the Good itself,—as Sokrates says to the strenuous contemplators of truth, in the Republic. As therefore every one is allotted a characteristic aptitude so the youth is perfected (initiated) by Sokrates, and led to the divine according to his capacity and fitness. The divine is wholly beautiful, wise, and good, as it is said in the Phaidros. To these therefore there is an elevation and ascension; and through these there is salvation for souls. For by these they are nourished, evil and the wings of the soul are irrigated, but by what is evil and base and other similar contraries they wane and ultimately perish, as Sokrates says in this same dialogue. Therefore in this work it is shown that the perfection (initiation) through Love comes to those having the fitting nature or capacity, which Alkibiades was evidently allotted, since he was worthy of the love of Sokrates, and a conjunction with divine beauty, and through that an intimacy with everything divine. And the maieutic art of Sokrates, and the works of the dialectic science, conduct the soul of the youth to this end. For it is the office of the erotic science to bring about the perfecting (initiation) of the soul in this sphere, as we have said, and the other species of sciences cooperate with it to effect this object. And hence the prefaces of the colloquy, and also the conclusions, are full of erotic science, and all the media afford abundant

proof that the action of Sokrates is in accord with this species.

Let the investigation, therefore, about the formal exposition of the theory, so far as it has gone, be sufficient. Thence, turning to the investigation of the things themselves, we will speculate concerning Love whatever is germane to the present discourses.

[*To be Continued*]

IAMBlichos: ON THE MYSTERIES.

A NEW TRANSLATION BY ALEXANDER WILDER.

Others likewise are ranked between these, in the position of intermediaries between nature and pure intelligence, some being dismissed from both, others adopting a life mingled from them, but others freeing themselves from inferior races and changing to those more excellent.

Those having been, therefore, thus classified, that which comes after them becomes sufficiently plain. Those who govern themselves according to the nature of all things, and they who live according to their own peculiar nature, making use of the powers of nature, perform the worship which is according to nature and the bodily conditions which are created by nature, and seek to know places, atmospheres, matter and forces of matter, bodies and habitudes of bodies, qualities, actions and things pertaining to them, transformation of things in the objective world and other things, both in the other parts of religion and particularly in the part which relates to the Sacred Rites. Those, however, who live according to the higher intelligence alone and the life which is from intelligence, and are released from the bonds of nature, should pursue diligently the mental and incorporeal law of the sacerdotal art in regard to all the departments of theurgy. Those however, who are

intermediaries between those two classes should work diligently in the holy paths in various ways, according to their position between the different classes, either participating with both modes of worship, or standing aloof from one of them, or taking them as the foundation of things more exalted, for without them they may never attain the higher things; or, they ought, otherwise, thus to pursue the same objects.

XIX. In respect to this mode, however, there also is evolved this classification: Of the divine essences and potencies, those of the first class have a soul and nature subordinate and subservient to their creative functions in whatever ways they desire. Those of the second class are entirely separate from soul and nature—I mean from the divine soul and nature, and not only from the cosmic and creative.* Certain of these, however, are intermediaries† and make it in their power to preserve communication with each other, either by one undivided bond of union, or by a bountiful imparting of the more abundant benefits, or by an unchecked receiving of smaller things, or by an agreement of thought which binds the two.

When, therefore, we worship the gods that are kings of soul and nature, it is not at all out of the way with them to bring natural powers and bodily conditions supplied by nature. All the operations of nature are subservient to them and contribute to them for the orderly government of the universe. When, however, we endeavor to pay homage to those divinities that are

*Mr. Thomas Taylor amended this text, which was corrupt.

†Mr. Taylor classes the intermediary divinities as *archai* or “*principalties*” (*Ephesians*.) and *apolutoi*, or freed ones: one being supercosmic, and the other supercelestial, or next above the “visible gods” of the sky. The Chaldeans classed the gods as, *αἱ πηγαί, οἱ νοεροί, οἱ μέθοι, οἱ ὑπερκόσμοι, οἱ ἐγκόσμοι*—the sources, the intellectual, the intermediaries the supercosmic. Damaskios himself names the latter, *οἱ ὑπερκόσμοι, οἱ ἀζῶνοι, οἱ ἐγκόσμοι*.

simple in essence, it is proper to distinguish them by absolute honors. Spiritual gifts are in harmony with them, and things of the incorporeal life, such as virtue and wisdom present, and such good qualities of the soul as are perfect and entire. In regard to the intermediaries and those who are the authors of benefits of the middle class, sometimes gifts of a double character will be proper and sometimes those which are common to both classes, or those which are totally apart from the inferior class but pertain to the higher orders; or, to sum up the whole matter, those which will, in one of the modes, be amply sufficient for the intermediate.

XX. Hastening on, therefore, from another beginning—the universe and the cosmic divinities, the distribution of the four elements in it, the association of the elements together by allotment according to measure, and their circling revolution in orderly arrangement in respect to centres—we have an easy path to the true conception of the holy rites in respect to sacrifices. If we ourselves are in the universal order, if we are included as parts in the great all, if we are brought forth by it at the first, if we are perfected by the universal powers in it, if we have been organised from its elements and continue in existence by receiving an allotment of its life and nature, it is not necessary, because of these facts, for us to go beyond the universe and the cosmic arrangements. So then we must grant that there is this perceptible corporiety in every department of the universe, and also potencies in no sense corporeal divisible among the bodily substances. Hence the law of religious worship manifestly assigns similar things to their similars, and thus extends through all things from the highest to the last, incorporeal things to incorporeal substances, and corporeal things to corporeal natures, giving to each singly in due accord with their peculiar constitution.

Nevertheless, when any one happens to be made a partaker of the nature of the supercosmic theurgic divinities, but this is the rarest of all things, that person, from whatever region he may come, being united to the divine beings by a supercosmic force, is superior to bodily and material conditions in respect to the worship of the gods. That excellence however which is attained by a single individual with effort and at a late period as the chief end of the sacred experience, it is not proper to set forth as a matter common to every body, nor in particular is it proper that it be made common to those who are just beginning in the theurgic art, nor even to those who are midway in it; for in some way or other these give attention to religious matters after a corporeal manner.

XXI. I think, therefore, that all who love the sacred views of theurgic truth will further grant this proposition: that it is not necessary to interweave with the divine beings, partially or incompletely the homage which is bestowed upon them. Thus, prior to the manifestation of the gods as present, all the powers (potentates or dæmons)* that were present before them are set in motion, and so when they are about to move toward the earth these hasten to take the lead, and go before them as in a solemn religious procession. Hence the person who does not render to every one of them that which is suitable, and greet every one according to the honor that is due, departs not initiated and with no share in the communion of the gods; while he who conciliates them all, bringing to every one alike according to his ability the gifts which are acceptable, remains always secure and blameless, completing to full excellence, per-

*Proklos explains that there is an innumerable company of dæmons about every god, who bear his appellations, and express his characteristics. "In the most holy of the Mysteries (the Eleusinia) prior to the manifestation of the divinity as present, sallies of dæmons belonging under the earth appear calling attention from those purely good to material things."

fectly and absolutely, the entertainment* of the divine chorus.

This being the case, is it proper that the ceremonial of the Holy Rites should be simple, and consisting of a few particulars only, or complex and suited to all modes as if, in a word, it had been made up from every thing in the universe? If, then the divinity that was invoked was single and of one order alone, the ceremonial of the Sacred Rites would be necessarily also single; but if the multitude of other powers (dæmons and minor spirits) that are around when the gods descend and are in motion, can not be embraced in a simple ceremonial, —and if the theurgic priests alone know these things thoroughly, being experienced in respect to these performances, then they only are able to perceive what constitutes the complete observance in the Sacred Art; and they are also aware of the pernicious result of omissions, even though they are very few, that they defeat the whole performance of religious worship, as in the case of the breaking of a string in a musical instrument, the whole becomes out of tune and discordant. Thus, then, in the visible divine descents, the evil result to those who have left some one of the superior beings without an offering, becomes manifest. So, also, in the case of their invisible presence in the Sacred Rites, instead of paying attention to one and neglecting another, every one should be honored according to the work to which he is allotted.† He, however, who leaves any of them without an offering holds the whole fast and destroys the single and entire arrangement. He does not as some may therefore imagine, make the entertain-

*Greek ὑπεδοχή—a receptacle; reception; entertainment. Sacrifices were made on the supposition that they supplied food to the superior beings; hence this word is selected as best expressing the idea. “The fruit thereof, even his meat.”—*Malachi*, i. 12.

†It was the custom at the ancient sacrifices to invoke all the divinities—*diique, deaque omnes*,—as well as those whom it was intended to honor.

ment imperfectly, but on the other hand he absolutely overturns the entire Sacred Rite.

XXII. What, then, does not the highest part of the Sacred Art go up by itself to the One supreme above all gods, and include in itself at the same time the worship of the many essences and rulers?

Precisely so, let me say. Nevertheless this takes place at a very late period, and only to the very few, and they will be content if it occurs at the sunset of life. Yet the present discourse does not give the ordinance for such a man, for he is superior to every law;* but it sets forth such a code of laws for those who are in bondage to passion.†

It says, accordingly, that as the universe is in a single system combined from many orders so likewise it is necessary that the complete ceremonial of the Sacred Rites, being without cessation and entire, should be connected with the whole catalogue of superior beings. If, however, on the other hand, the universe is vast and complete, and constituted in many orders (*ταξιεις*) it is necessary accordingly that the sacred performances shall copy its diverse kinds‡ on account of all the powers (spiritual beings) which they contain. Hence, in relation to these and the diverse kinds that are about ourselves, we should not be intimately connected with the divine causes (beings or energies) that rule over

*This is in harmony with the teaching both of Plotinos and the Apostle Paul. "If you are led by the spirit" (or interior mind), says the latter, "you are not under law." Plotinos was regarded as the living example of the superior man. "We receive the Infinite by a faculty superior to the understanding," says he; "entering into a condition of mind in which we are no longer ourselves, we participate of the divine."

†Greek, *θυμους*. Both Gale and Thomas Taylor amend by substituting *θεσμος*, or divine law: still, though this amendment seems perfectly congruous, I retain the original term, which denotes the psychic as distinct from the higher and lower natures.

‡"It is true, religion that we imitate the Being whom we worship.

them from a part of the qualities in them; nor, again, should we belong without initiation to their chief leaders.

XXIII. The diversified ceremonial of worship in the sacred performances, therefore, accomplishes the purifying of some, and the perfecting of certain other of the natures that are among us and about us, brings them into symmetry and orderly condition, and otherwise releases them from mortal error, and makes them all familiar with the beings superior to us. Indeed when divine causes and human inventions which closely resemble them come together in the same matter, the completing of the performance produces all perfect and great benefits of the Sacred Rite. It is not amiss however to add such statements as the following for a correct observation in respect to these things. An abundance of power is always present with the highest beings, and while it is superior to all things it is at the same time equally present with them without impediment. Hence, according to this fact, the very first of things illuminate the last, and those superior to matter are present with material things, but not after the manner of matter.

Let no one be astonished, therefore, if we declare that there is a pure and divine matter.* For it proceeds from the Father and Creator of all things, and possesses a completeness of its own suitable for a receptacle of divine beings.

*This is a doctrine in regard to which the later philosophers seem to be at variance. "The germs of evil exist in matter" says the Chaldaean Oracle. Yet that it is essentially evil in a moral sense is manifestly absurd. As being negative, it is the opposite of life and essential good, but not as the originator of wrong. Damaskios affirms that matter is derived from the same order with form or the essential idea. "Creation does not begin from that which is imperfect," Proklos declares; "so likewise in matter, prior to that which is formless and which has an evanescent being, there is that which is in a certain respect form, and which is beheld in one boundary and permanency." This undoubtedly is the "pure and divine matter."

At the same time, nothing intervenes to prevent the superior beings from being able to illuminate the inferior races from their own substance. Matter is by no means hindered from the participation of the higher natures. So far as it subsists perfect, pure and seemingly good it is not unfit to be a receptacle of gods. For as it is necessary to the races upon the earth to be in no case deprived of a participation in the divine endowments, the earth also receives a share from it, which suffices to contain the gods, The masters of the theurgic art, therefore, perceiving these things, and so having discovered in common with others the suitable receptacles of the divine beings according to the peculiarity of each, they frequently combine together stones, plants, animals, sacred, perfect and godlike aromatics, and so produce from them a receptacle pure and complete. For we ought not to scorn all matter, but only that which is alien to the divine beings. That is to be chosen which is proper to them, as being able to harmonize with the building of houses of the gods, the setting up of carved images, and the sacred performances at the holy rites. There can in no other way take place any participation of reception of superior beings in places upon the earth or by men dwelling here, unless such a beginning should be first established.

It is proper, however, to confide in the arcane declarations that by means of the blessed spectacles at the Rites, a peculiar material substance is transmitted from the divine beings. This is undoubtedly of the same nature with the very ones themselves by whom it is given. Does not, therefore, the sacrificing of material substance of such a character arouse the gods to a visible manifestation, invite them to come immediately to our perception, receive them when they become manifest, and cause them to be exhibited perfectly to view?

XXIV. The same things may be perceived both from

their assignment as guardians over places, and their divided authority over every being, as far as they are assigned, according to their different ranks, to these higher or inferior jurisdictions. For this is certainly plain that to the divinities having the charge over particular places, the things which are produced from them are most proper to be brought in sacrifice, the things of the governed to those who govern them. For to those who make them their own works are always especially gratifying, and to those who first of all produce certain things, such things are the things primarily agreeable. If, therefore, certain animals, or plants or other things upon the earth are under the rule of the superior beings, they participate together in their superintendence, and procure for us an inseparable union to them. Some therefore that are of this character that have been kept safe and preserved, make closer the kindred relationship of those who possess them, to the divinities, insomuch as by being kept inviolate they maintain the full power of the union between the gods and human beings. Some of the animals of Egypt are of this character, and in like manner, a human being is everywhere sacred. Some consecrated things, however, create a more manifest kindred relation, as through the analysis into the origin of the primal elements, they produce a more holy kinship to the superior races. This being always kept perfect, the benefits which are given by it are more perfect.

XXV. If, then, these were human ethics alone, and were made valid by our usages, one might have the right to say that the holy observances in honor of the gods were inventions of our own ingenuity. Now, however, God is the leader of them, and is thus invoked by sacred rites, and the gods and angels surrounding him constitute an innumerable multitude. Under him there is a common Overlord assigned to every nation upon

the earth, and a particular one to every sanctuary. A god is also guardian of the sacred rites to the divinities, an angel of those performed to the angels, a dæmon of those to the dæmons; and in other cases, after like manner, the superintendent is assigned of like filiation from each according to the particular race. When, therefore, we place our sacrifices before the gods by aid of the divinities who oversee and make complete the mystic rites, it is necessary at the same time to revere the holy ordinance of divine worship in the sacrifices; and likewise it becomes us to be of good courage as we are performing sacred rites under the immediate supervision of the ruling gods, but at the same time to exercise due circumspection, that we may not bring any gifts unworthy of the divine beings, or repugnant. In conclusion, then, we recommend at all events that the endeavor be made perfectly in relation to those about us every where, the gods, angels and dæmons, according to the races by which they are divided; and that an acceptable sacrifice shall be offered to them all alike. Thus alone may the holy rite be celebrated in a way worthy of the divine beings that preside over it.

XXVI. A part of the sacred rites, and by no means the least important, is that of the prayers.* They make the sacrifices in the highest degree complete, and every performance in the rites is established and perfected. They constitute the general end to religious worship, and join the sacred art in an indissoluble union with the divine beings. It will not, therefore be ill to relate a few matters in regard to it. For this very thing is of itself worthy of our knowing, and makes more perfect our insight in respect to the divinities.

*Proklos says: "Prayer is by no means an insignificant portion of the entire upward path of souls." Sacrifices and Sacred Rites were considered as the body of prayers; and prayers as the animating principle of Sacrifices.

I say, therefore, that the first form of prayer is collective in its operation, leading to contact and the genuine knowledge of the divine nature. The next after this is the bond of harmonious fellowship, which calls to our hand the gifts sent down from the gods, before the uttering of a word, and perfects our entire works before they were intellectually perceived. But in the most perfect form of prayer, the arcane union with the gods is sealed, every certainty assured, enabling our souls to repose perfectly in them. In these three modes in which every thing divine is measured out, prayer joins us by love to the divine beings and gives to us threefold the sacred aid from the gods.* The first of these tends directly to illumination, the second to a general performance of duties, and the last, to the perfect accomplishment, by means of the fire.† At one time prayer takes

*The version of Scutellius differs materially from this, and indeed seems to be more complete. The reading from his text may be thus rendered:

“I say, therefore, that the first form of prayer is collective in its influence, leading to contact and the genuine knowing as to the divine nature. The next after this is the bond of harmonious fellowship which calls to our hand the gifts sent down by the gods, before the uttering of a word, and perfects our entire performance before they were intellectually perceived. But in the last or most perfect form of prayer, the arcane union with the gods is sealed, every power and certainty established, and so the soul is enabled to repose in them as a ship in a secure harbor. In these three modes in which all the divine measures are contained, prayer not only assures to us the friendship of the gods, but brings to our hand three fruits, which are so to speak, three golden apples from the Hesperian garden.”

Proklos designates the three forms of prayer here enumerated, ἡ συνᾶφη, ἡ ἐμπελάσις and ἡ ἐνωσις—joining or contact, approaching, and perfect union. These are to be preceded by two conditions: the knowledge of the different ranks of divine beings, in which they belong, and adaptation, by which we yield our souls to the gods. We are then immaterially and intangibly made ready for the illumination.

†The Chaldean *Oracles* treat of the Supreme Divinity as fire,—creative, life-bringing, intellectual. “A whirlwind drew forth the bloom of the shadowy fire and impregnated the wombs of the universe.” “She is the producer of the work, because she is the giver of life-bringing fire.” The fire-symbol in the shrines of the temple, and the employment of fire to consume the consecrated parts of sacrifices, are thus shown to denote the Supreme Fire from which all things exist.

the lead of the Sacred Rites, at another it divides the holy service in two, while at another it accomplishes the entire purpose of the sacrifices.

No sacred matter ever succeeds without the supplications in the prayers. The unceasing perseverance in them invigorates the higher intellect, makes the reception, chamber of the soul far more spacious for the divinities,* opens the arcana of the divine world to human beings, accustoms us to the flashing irradiations of the Supernal Light,* and perfects gradually the qualities within us to fitness for the favors of the gods, till it exalts us to the highest excellence. It draws upward our habits of thought, and gives to us the virtues of the divine beings. Its persuasion arouses an intimate union and indissoluble friendship, augments the divine love, and inflames the divine quality of the soul. It cleanses away every thing of a contrary nature, rejects whatever is of a worldly tendency from the æther-like and luminous atmosphere around it, matures a good hope and faith in respect to the Light, and in short, makes those who employ it, if we may so express it, the intimate companions of the gods.

If this is what may be said of prayer, if it brings to pass in us benefits of such importance, and if it is in the close relations with the Sacred Rites which I have set forth, why does not the end of the sacrifices become apparent, that it participates the demiurgic connection? As through the rites it comes into close relations with the gods, the benefit from it is such as is conferred by the

*Proklos amplifies this statement, adding to its force: "It fills the entheast soul to its full measure."

*Greek, φῶς. The representation of the Divine Nature as light, is universally known. "In him was life and the life was the Light of men" was the philosophic doctrine of all antiquity. Hence the injunction of the *Oracles*: "When thou shalt see a very holy fire, without definable shape, leaping as it shines through the depths of the whole universe, hear the voice of the fire."

demiurgic divinities upon human beings.* Indeed, from that source the elevating, the consecrating and perfective benefit of prayer becomes manifest; how it is active, how it becomes united, and how it has a common bond which was given from the gods. In the third place, therefore, it is easy to perceive from what has been said, that the two, (prayer and sacred rites) are established by means of each other, and give to each other the sacerdotal initiating power of the holy rite.

Hence, there is manifest through all things a common inspiration and joint working of the sacerdotal system within itself, the parts of it being more naturally united than those of an animal, and joined together everywhere by one continuity of substance; of which we ought never to be heedless, not accepting half of it but rejecting the rest as worthless, but exercising all alike; and it is proper that they who desire to be absolutely joined to the gods, should be initiated by means of them all. These things therefore may not be in any other manner.

ON THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE:

THE TRUE BOOK OF THE ABBOT SYNESIOS.

Translated from the original Greek MS.

Though the Ancient Philosophers have written diversely of this science, concealing under a multitude of names the true principles of the Art; yet have they not

*PLATO: *Timaios*, xvii. He (the Creator) charged the junior gods with the duty of constructing mortal bodies, as well as every thing additional that was required for the human soul, giving them dominion over these and all things consequent thereto, and bidding them rule over the mortal creation as nobly and honorably as they could, in order that it might not become the cause of evil to itself."

These "junior gods" are denominated *αἰτίαι* or *causes*, and are represented as the sources of all good to human beings. They are the "demiurgic causes" or divinities here mentioned.

done it but upon important considerations as we shall hereafter make appear. And though they are different in their expressions, yet are they not any way discordant one from another, but aiming all at one end, and speaking of the same thing, they have thought fit (above all the rest) to name the *proper Agent* by a term, strange, nay sometimes contrary to its nature and qualities.

Know then, my Son, that almighty God together with this Universe, created two *Stones*, that is to say, the *White* and the *Red*, both which are under one and the same subject, and afterwards multiplied in such abundance, that every one may take as much as he please thereof. The matter of them is of such a kind, that it seems to be a mean between *Metal* and *Mercury*, and is partly fixed and partly not fixed, otherwise it could not be a mean betwixt *Metal* and *Mercury*: and this matter is the instrument whereby our desire is accomplished, if we do but prepare it. Hence it comes that those who bestow their endeavors in this Art without the said *medium* loose their labor, but if they are acquainted with the *Medium*, they shall find all things feasible and fortunate. Know then that this *Medium*, being aerial, is found among the celestial Bodies, and that it is only there are found the Masculine and Feminine Gender, (to speak properly) having a constant, strong, fixed and permanent virtue, of the essence whereof (as I have told thee) philosophers have expressed themselves only by similitudes and figures. This they did, that the science might not be discovered by the ignorant, which if it should once happen, all were lost: but that it might be comprehended only by those patient souls, and subtilized understandings, which being sequestered from the foulness of this world, are cleansed from the filth of that terrene dunghil of Avarice, whereby the ignorant are chained to the earthiness of this world, which is (without this admirable quintess-

ence) the receptacle of poverty; it being certain, that those divine souls, when they have dived into *Democritus' Fountain*, that is to say, into the truth of Nature would soon discover what confusion might happen in all estates and conditions, if every one could make as much gold as he would himself. Upon this ground was it that they were pleased to speak by figures, types, and analogies, that so they might not be understood but by such as are discreet, religious, and enlightened by (divine) wisdom. All which notwithstanding, they have left in their writings a certain method, way and rule, by the assistance whereof the wise man may comprehend whatever they have written most obscurely, and in time arrive at the knowledge of it, though haply wading through some error, as I have done, praised be God for it. And whereas the vulgar ignorant person ought to submit to these reasons, and consequently adore what is too great to enter into his brain, he on the contrary accuses the Philosophers of imposture and impiety, by which means, and the scarcity of wise men, the Art falls into contempt.

But for my part, I tell thee, they have always expressed themselves according to certain truth, though very obscurely, and sometimes fabulously, all which I have deciphered in this little Treatise. and that after such a manner that the earnest desirer of Science shall understand what hath been mystically delivered by the Philosophers. And yet if he pretend to understand me and know not the nature of the Elements and things created, as also our rich Metal, he doth but lose his labor: but if he understand the concord and discord of natures, he will by God's assistance arrive to the rest? It is therefore my suit to God, that he who shall understand the present Secret may work to the glory and praise of the sacred Divinity.

Know then my dear Son, that the ignorant man can-

not comprehend the secret of the art, because it depends upon the knowledge of the true body, which is hidden from him. Know then my son, *pure* and *impure*, the *clean* and *unclean* natures, for there cannot come from any thing that which it hath not. For things that are not or have not, cannot give but their own nature: make use then of that which is most perfect and nearest in kind, thou shalt meet with, and it shall suffice. Avoid then that which is *mixed*, and take the simple, for that proceeds from the *Quintessence*. Note that we have two bodies of very great perfection, full of *Mercury*: Out of these extract thy *Mercury*, and of that thou shalt make the medicine, called by some *Quintessence*, which is a virtue or power that is imperishable, permanent, and perpetually victorious, nay it is a clear light, which sheds true goodness into every soul that hath once tasted of it. It is the knot and link of all the Elements, which it contains in itself, as being also the spirit which nourisheth all things, and by the assistance whereof Nature works in the universe. It is the force, the beginning and end of the whole work, and to lay all open to thee in a word, know that the *Quintessence* and the hidden thing of our Stone is nothing else then our viscous, celestial and glorious Soul drawn by our Magistry out of its mine, which engenders itself, and that it is not possible for us to make that water by Art, but nature alone begets it, and that water is the *most sharp vinegar*, which makes gold to be a pure spirit, nay it is that *blessed nature* which engenders all things, which through its putrefaction is become a Tri-unity, and by reason of its viridity causes an appearance of divers colours. And I advise thee, my son, make no account of any other things, (as being vain,) labor only for that *water*, which *burns to blackness*, *whitens*, *dissolves* and *congeals*. It is that which putrifies, and causes *germination*, and therefore I advise thee, that thou wholly em-

ploy thy self in the decoction of this water, and quarrel not at the expence of time, otherwise thou shalt have no advantage. Decoct it gently by little and little, until it have changed its false colour into a perfect, and have a great care at the beginning that thou burn not its flowers and its vivacity, and make not too much hast to come to an end of thy work. Shut thy vessel well, that what is within may not breathe out, and so thou mayst bring it to some effect. And note, that to *dissolve*, to *calcine*, to *tinge*, to *whiten*, to *renew*, to *bath*, to *wash*, to *coagulate*, to *imbibe*, to *decoct*, to *fix*, to *grind*, to *dry*, and to *distil*, are all one, and signify no more then to *concoct* nature, until such time as it be perfect. Note further that to extract the soul, or the spirit, or the body, is nothing else than the above-said calcinations, in regard they signify the operation of *Venus*. It is therefore through the fire of the extraction of the soul that the spirit comes forth gently, understand me. The same may also be said of the extraction of the soul out of the body, and the reduction of it afterwards upon the same body, until the whole be drawn to a commixtion of all the four elements. And so that which is below, is like that which is above, and consequently there are made therein two luminaries, the one fixed the other not, whereof the fixed remains below, and the volatile above, moving itself perpetually, until that which is below, which is the male, get upon the female, and all be fixed, and then issues out an incomparable Luminary. And as in the beginning, there was only one, so in this matter, all proceeds from one and returns to one, which is called a conversion of the element, and to convert the elements, is as much as to make the humid dry, and the volatile fixed, that so that which is thick may be made thin, and weaken the thing that fixeth the rest, the fixative part of the thing remaining intire. Thus happens the life and death of the ele-

ments, which composed germinate and produce, and so one thing perfects another, and assists it to oppose the Fire.

THE PRACTICE.

My son it is necessary that thou work with the *mercury of the Philosophers* and the wise, which is not the *Vulgar*, nor hath any thing of the *vulgar*, but according to them is the first matter, the soul of the world, the cold element, the blessed water, the water of the wise, the venemous water, the most sharp vinegar, the mineral water, the water of celestial grace, the virgin milk, our mineral and corporeal mercury. For this alone perfects both the stones, the *white* and the *red*. Consider what *Geber* says, that our Art consists not in the multitude of several things, because the *mercury* is but one only thing, that is to say, one only stone wherein consists the whole magistry; to which thou shalt not add any strange thing, save that in the preparation thereof thou shalt take away from it whatsoever is superfluous, by reason that in this matter all things requisite to this art are contained. And therefore it is very observable that he says, we must add nothing that is strange, save the sun and moon for the red and white Tincture, which are not strange [to it] but are its ferment, by which the work is accomplished. Lastly, mark my son, that these suns and moons are not the same with the vulgar gold and silver, for that our suns and moons are better in their nature than the vulgar suns and moons. For our suns and moons are in their nature living, and those of the vulgar are dead in comparison of ours, which are existent and permanent in our stone. Whence thou mayest observe that the mercury drawn out of our bodies, is like the aqueous and common mercury, and for that reason enjoys itself and takes pleasure in its like, and is more glad of its company, as it happens in the simple and compound, which

thing hath not been discovered by the Philosophers in their books. And the advantage therefore which is in this art, lies in the mercury, sun and moon. *Diomedes* saith, make use of such a matter as to which thou must not introduce any strange thing, neither poudre nor water, for that several things do not improve our stone, and thereby he sufficiently instructs him, who understands him, that the tincture of our Stone is not drawn from anything but the mercury of the Philosophers; which is their principle, their root, and their great tree, sprouting forth into boughs and branches.

THE FIRST OPERATION, SUBLIMATION.

It is not vulgar but philosophical whereby we take away from the Stone whatever is superfluous, which in effect is nothing else but the elevation of the not-fixed part by fume and vapor, for the fixed part should remain in the bottom, nor would we that one should be separated from the other, but that they remain and be fixed together. Know also that he, who shall sublime our philosophical mercury (wherein is all the virtue of our stone) as it ought to be done, shall perfect the magistry. This gave *Geber* reason to say that all perfection consists in *sublimation*, and in this sublimation all other operations, that is to say, distillation, assation, destruction, coagulation, putrefaction, calcination, fixation, reduction of the white and red tinctures, procreated and engendered in one furnace and in one vessel, and this is the ready way to the final consummation, whereof the Philosophers have made divers chapters purposely to amuse the ignorant.

Take then in the name of the great God, the venerable matter of the Philosophers, called the first *hyle* of the sages, which contains the above named philosophical mercury, termed the first matter of the perfect body, put it into its vessel, which must be clear, diaphanous and round, and closely stopped by the seal of seals, and

make it hot in its place, well prepared, with temperate heat, for the space of a philosophical month, keeping it six weeks and two days in the sweat of sublimation until it begins to be putrefied, to ferment, to be coloured and to be congealed with its metallic humidity, and be fixed so far that it do no more ascend in airy fumous substance, but remain fixed in the bottom, turned from what it was, and divested of all viscous humidity, putrified and black which is called the sable robe, night or the crowes-head. Thus when our stone is in the vessel, and that it mounts up on high in fume, this is called sublimation, and when it falls down from on high, distillation, and descension. When it begins to partecipe of the fumous substance, and to be putrefied, and that by reason of the frequent ascent and descent it begins to coagulate, then it is putrefaction and devouring sulphur, and lastly through the want or privation of the humidity of the radical water is wrought *calcination* and *fixation* both at the same time, by decoction alone, is one only vessel, as I have already said. Moreover in this sublimation is wrought the true separation of the elements, for in our sublimation the *elivir* is turned from water into a terrestrial element dry and hot, by which operation it is manifest, that the separation of the four elements in our stone is not vulgar but Philosophical. Hence also is it, that in our stone there are but two *formal* elements, that is to say, earth and water; but the earth hath in its grossness, the virtue and drought of fire, and the water contains in itself the air with its humidity. Thus we have in our stone visibly but two elements, but effectually there are four. And by this thou mayst judge, that the separation of the four elements is absolutely physical not vulgar and real, such as the ignorant daily employ themselves in. Continue therefore its decoction with a gentle fire, until all the black matter appearing in the superficies be quite

dissipated by the magistry, which blackness is by the Philosophers called the dark mantle of the stone, which afterwards becomming clear is termed the cleansing water of the earth, or rather the Elixir. And note, that the blackness which appears is a sign of putrefaction. And the beginning of the dissolution is a sign of the conjunction of both natures. And this blackness appears sometimes in forty days, more or less, according to the quantity of the matter, and the industry of the operator, which contributes much to the separation of the said blackness. Now my son, by the grace of God thou art acquainted with one element of our stone, which is the black earth, the raven's head, by some called the obscure shadow, upon which earth as upon a base all the rest is grounded. This terrestrial and dry element, is called, *Laton*, the *Bull*, *black Dregs*, *our Metal*, *our Mercury*. And thus by the privation of the adust humidity, which is taken away by Philosophical sublimation, the volatile is fixed, and the moist is made dry and earth; nay according to *Geber*, there is wrought a change of the complexion, as of a cold and humid nature into dry choler; and according to *Alphidius*, of a liquid into a thick. Whence is apprehended what the Philosophers mean when they say that the operation of our stone is only a transmutation of nature and a revolution of elements. Thou seest then how that by this incorporation the humid becomes dry, the volatile fixed, the spiritual corporeal, the liquid thick, water fire, air earth, and that there happens an infallable change in their true nature, and a certain circulation of the four elements.

THE SECOND OPERATION, DEALBATION.

It converts our *mercury* into the *white* stone, and that by decoction only. When the earth is separated from its water, then must the vessel be set on the ashes, as is usual in a distilling furnace, and the water be dis-

tilled by a gentle fire at the beginning, so that the water come so gently that thou mayst distinctly number as far as forty names, or pronounce fifty six words, and let this order be observed in all the distillations of the black earth, and that which is in the bottom of the vessel, that is the *faeces* remaining to be imbibed, with the new water, will be dissolved, which water will contain three or four parts more than those *faeces*, that so all may be dissolved and converted into mercury and *argent vive*. I tell thee that this must be done so often, that there shall remain nothing but the murc. For this distillation there is no time limited, but it is done sooner or later according to the greater or lesser quantity of the water proportionably to the quantity of the fire. Then take the earth which thou shalt have reserved in a vessel of glass, with its distilled water, and with a soft and gentle fire, such as was that of distillation, or purification, or rather one somewhat stronger, continue it till such time as the earth be dry and white and by reason of its drought drunk up all its water. This done, put to it some of the abovesaid water, and so as at the beginning continue on the same decoction, until that earth is become absolutely white, cleansed and clear, and have drunk all its water. And note that the said earth will be washed from its blackness by the decoction, as I have said, because it is easily putrefied by its own water, and is cleansed, which is the end of the magistry, and then be sure to keep that white earth very carefully. For that is the *white mercury, white magnesia, foliated earth*. Then take this white earth rectified as abovesaid, and put it into its vessel upon the ashes, to a fire of sublimation, and let it have a very strong fire until all the coagulated water, which is within, come into the alembick, and the earth remain in the bottom well calcined: then hast thou the earth, the water, and the air, and though the earth have

in it the nature of the fire, yet is it not apparent in effect, as thou shalt see, when by a greater decoction thou shalt make it become red; so that then thou shalt manifestly see the fire in appearance, and such must be the proceeding in order to fermentation of the white earth, that the dead body may be animated and enlivened, and its virtue be multiplied to infinity. But note, that the ferment cannot enter into the dead body but by the means of the water, which hath made a contract and a marriage between the ferment and the white earth. And know that in all fermentation the weight is to be considered, that so the quantity of the volatile exceed not the fixed, and that the marriage pass away in fume. For, as Senior says, if thou convert not the earth into water and the water into fire, there cannot be a conjunction of the spirit and body. To do this take a *Lamen* or plate red hot and cast on it a drop of our medicine, which penetrating, it shall be of a perfect colour, and will be a sign of perfection. If it happen it do not tinge, reiterate the dissolution and coagulation, until it do tinge and penetrate. And note, that seven imbibitions, at the most, are sufficient, and five at the least, that so the matter may be liquified, and without smoke, and then the matter is perfect as to whiteness, for as much as the matter sometimes requires a longer time to be fixed, and sometimes is done in a shorter, according to the quantity of the medicine. And note that our medicine from the creation of our mercury requires the term of seven months to compass the whiteness, and, to arrive at the redness, five; which put together make twelve.

OF THE THIRD OPERATION, RUBIFICATION,

Take of the white medicine, as much as thou wilt, and put it with its glass upon the hot ashes, till it becomes as dry as the ashes. Then put to it some water of the sun, which thou hast kept purposely for that end, and

continue the fire to the second degree, until it becomes dry, then put to it again some of the abovesaid water, and so successively imbibe and dry, until the matter be rubified, and fluxible as wax, and cover with it the red *Lamen*, as hath been said, and the matter shall be perfect as to *redness*. But note that at every time, thou needst put no more of the water of the sun then is barely necessary to cover the body, and this is done that the Elixir sink not and be drowned, and so the fire must be continued unto desiccation, and then must there be made a second imbibition, and so proceed in order to the perfection of the medicine, that is to say, until the force of the digestion of the fire convert it into a very red powder, which is the true Hyle of the Philosophers, the bloody stone, the purple red coral, the precious Ruby, red mercury, and the red Tincture.

PROJECTION.

The oftener thou shalt dissolve and coagulate it, the more will the virtue of it be multiplied to infinity. But note that the medicine is multiplied later by solution, then by fermentation. Wherefore the thing dissolved operates not well, if it be not before fixed in its ferment. Nevertheless the multiplication of the medicine by solution is more abundant than that of the ferment, by reason there is more subtilization. Yet I advise thee that in the multiplication thou put one part of the work upon four of the other, and in a short time there will be made a powder, all ferment.

THE EPILOGUE ACCORDING TO HERMFS.

Thus art thou to separate the earth from the fire, the gross from the subtile gently, with great judgment, that is to say, separate the parts that are united to the furnace, by the dissolution and separation of the parts, as the earth from the fire, the subtile from the gross, &c. that is to say, the more pure substance of the stone, until thou hast got it clean, and free from all spots or filth.

And when he saith, *it ascends from the earth up into Heaven and returns again into the earth*, there is no more to be understood by it then the *sublimation* of the bodies. Further, to explain what distillation is, he says *the wind carries it in its belly*, that is, when the water is distilled by the alembick, where it first ascends by a wind full of fume and vapor, and afterwards returns to the bottom of the vessel, in water again. When he would also express the congelation of the matter, he says *its force is absolute if it be turned into earth*, that is to say be converted by decoction. And to make a general demonstration of all that hath been said, he says, *it shall receive both the inferior and superior force*, that is to say, that of the elements, for as much as, if the medicine receive the force of the lighter parts, that is to say, air and fire, it shall receive that of the more grave and weighty parts changing itself into water and earth, to the end that the matters being thus perpetually joined together, may have permanence, durance, constancy, and stability. Glory be to God.

FINIS.

NOTE.—The Abbot Synesios probably flourished during the eleventh century of the Christian era. In addition to the work "On the Philosopher's Stone" he wrote "Scholia to the book of Demokritos on the Sacred Art," inscribed to Dioskoros a priest of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria. These two works have been attributed to Synesios the philosopher, but they are presumably the products of a later age. The original Greek of the valuable and extremely *suggestive* treatise "On the Philosopher's Stone" has never been printed. The translation, which we have reprinted, was made from a manuscript, and was published at London in 1678.

It is not generally known that many of the learned Greeks, especially of the mediæval ages, were assiduous and profound cultivators of the Sacred or Hermetic Art, and attained to great proficiency therein. The large majority of their writings still remain in manuscript. The celebrated Leo Allatius proposed to publish a complete collection of the Greek Hermetic writers, but was unfortunately not able to carry out his design. It would be a precious boon to the Hermetic student if these valuable and recondite writings were made accessible. We expect *light* from the far East, and it is well; but we should not ignore the treasures of occult wisdom bequeathed to us by Hellenic masters, and which now lie, neglected and forgotten, in the recesses of the European libraries. Measures should be taken at once for the publication of all the Greek Hermetic writings, and for their translation into English. Who will move *first* in this important matter?

In our next issue we hope to give a brief account of these manuscript writings.

NOTES ON THE KABBALAH.

We now come to the origin of the Kabbalah. Nothing can be more evident than that the cardinal and distinctive tenets of the Kabbalah in its original form are derived from Neo-Platonism. Any doubt upon this subject must be relinquished when the two systems are compared. The very expression *En Soph* which the Kabbalah uses to designate the Incomprehensible One, is foreign, and is evidently an imitation of the Greek *απειρος*. The speculations about the *En Soph*, that he is superior to actual being, thinking, and knowing, are thoroughly Neo-Platonic (*επεκεινα ουσιας, ενεργειας, νου, και νοησεως*); and R. Azariel candidly tells us that in viewing the Deity as purely negative, and divesting him of all attributes, he followed the opinion of the philosophers. When R. Azariel moreover informs us that "the *En Soph* can neither be comprehended by the intellect, nor described in words; for there is no letter or word that can grasp him," we have almost the very words of Proklos who tells us that, "although he is generally called the unity (*το εν*) or the first, it would be better if no name were given him; for there is no word which can depict his nature—he is the inexpressible, the unknown (*αρρητος, αγνωστος*.)"

The Kabbalah propounds that the *En Soph*, not being an object of cognition, made his existence known in the creation of the world by the Sephiroth, or Emanations, or Intelligences. So Neo-Platonism. The Sephiroth are divided in the Kabbalah into a trinity of triads respectively denominated the *Intellectual World*, the *Sensuous World*, the *Material World*, which exactly corresponds to the three triads of Neo-Platonism, *νους*, *ψυχη*, and *φυσις*. The Kabbalah teaches that these Sephiroth are both infinite and perfect, and finite and

*Theol. Plat. ii. 6.

imperfect, in so far as the source from which they emanate imparts or withholds his fulness from them. Neo-Platonism also teaches that "every emanation, though less perfect than that from which it emanates, has yet a similarity with it, and so far as this similarity goes remains in it, departing from it so far as it is unlike, but so far as possible being one with it and remaining in it."*

Even the comparison between the emanation of the Sephiroth from the *En Soph*, and the rays proceeding from light to describe the immanency and perfect unity of the two, is the same as the Neo-Platonic figure employed to illustrate the emanations from one principium (*οιον εκ φωτος την εξ αυτου περιλαμβιν*).†

—§—

Now the multitude conspires only against veritable powers; it has not the knowledge of what is true, but by instinct it knows what is strong. It was reserved for the eighteenth century to deride alike Christianity and Magic, even while infatuated with the homilies of Rousseau and the fascinations of Cagliostro. Notwithstanding, the basis of Magic is science, as the foundation of Christianity is love, and in the gospel symbolism we find the incarnate Logos adored in his childhood by three Magi, who are conducted by a star—the triad and the sign of the microcosmos—and receiving from them gold, frankincence, and myrrh—a second mysterious triplicity, beneath whose emblem the highest Kabbalistic secrets are allegorically contained. Tradition further applies to these Magi the title of kings, because initiation into Magic constitutes a true kingdom, and because the grand Art of the Magi is called by all adepts the *royal art*, or holy kingdom, *sanctum regnum*. The

*Proklos, *Inst. Theol.* 7, 31.

†The Hebrews did not originate the Kabbalah though they were at one time, and probably are still, its principal students and expositors.

star which led them is that Blazing Star whose symbol is to be met with in all initiations. For the alchemists, it is the sign of the quintessence; for the magicians, the great Arcanum; for the Kabbalists, the sacred and mysterious Pentagram.

Singular fact! In the sacred books of the Christians are included two works which the infallible Church does not pretend to understand, and never ventures to explain—the prophecy of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse—two Kabbalistic claviculae, doubtless reserved by heaven for the commentaries of Magian kings, books which for faithful believers are sealed with seven seals, yet are perfectly clear to the infidel who is an initiate of the secret sciences.

There exists also another book, but this, though in a certain sense it is popular and circulates everywhere, is of all the most hidden and unknown, because it is the key of all the rest; it is in circulation without being known by the public; where it is no one expects to discover it, and should anyone suspect its existence, he would a thousand times over vainly waste his time if he sought it under any but one form. This book, more ancient perhaps than that of Enoch, has never been translated, and it exists only in primitive characters, on single leaves, like the tablets of antiquity. A distinguished scholar has revealed, though no one appears to have noticed it, not exactly its secret but its antiquity and extraordinary preservation; another scholar, though of a genius more fantastic than judicious, passed thirty years in the study of this book, and has barely divined its importance. It is in truth a monumental and phenomenal work, strong and simple as the architecture of the Pyramids, durable therefore as are those; a book which epitomises all sciences, and whose infinite combinations can solve all problems; a book which speaks by evoking thought, the inspirer and controller of all possible con-

ceptions, the masterpiece perhaps of the human mind, and undoubtedly one of the finest things which antiquity has bequeathed to us, a universal *clavicula*, whose name was understood and explained by the learned *illumine*, William Postel; a unique text, whose first characters alone ravished into ecstasy the devotional spirit of St. Martin, and might have restored reason to the sublime and unfortunate Swedenborg.*

On penetrating into the sanctuary of the Kabbalah one is seized with admiration at the sight of a doctrine so simple and at the same time so absolute. The necessary union of ideas and signs, the consecration of the most fundamental realities by primitive characters, the trinity of words, letters and numbers; a philosophy simple as the alphabet, profound and infinite as the Logos; theorems more luminous and complete than those of Pythagoras; a theology which may be epitomized by counting on the fingers; an infinity which can be held in the hollow of an infant's hand; ten numerals and twenty-two letters, a triangle, a square, and a circle—such are the elements of the Kabbalah, such are the primary principles of the written word, shadow of that spoken Logos which created the world!

All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabbalah and returned therein; whatever is scientific and grandiose in the religious dreams of all *illuminati*—Jacob Boehmen, Swedenborg, Saint Martin, and the rest—has been borrowed from the Kabbalah; all masonic associations owe their secrets and their symbols thereto. The Kabbalah alone consecrates the alliance of universal reason and the Divine Word; it establishes, by the counterpoise of two forces in apparent opposition, the eternal balance of existence; it reconciles reason with

*It is almost unnecessary to remark that the mysterious book, so eloquently characterized by Eliphas Levi, is the Taro. An article on the Taro appeared in No. 8, Vol. II. of THE PLATONIST.—Ed.

faith, power with liberty, knowledge with mystery; it has the keys of the present, past, and future.

To be initiated into the Kabbalah it is insufficient to read and digest the writings of Reuchlin, Galatinus, Kircher, or Mirandola; it is needful also to study the Hebrew writers in the collection of Pistorius, the *Sepher Jezirah* above all, and then the philosophy of Love by Leon the Israelite. We must also master the great book of Sohar printed in the collection entitled *Kabala Denudata*, the treatise on Kabbalistic Pneumatics, and that of the Revolution of Souls; then enter boldly into the luminous obscurity of the whole dogmatic and allegorical substance of the Talmud; after which we shall understand William Postel, and confess in an undertone that, his exceedingly premature and over-generous dreams of female emancipation set aside, this famous and erudite *illumine* was not such a maniac as is pretended by those who have not read him.

All religions have preserved the remembrance of a primeval book, written in emblems by the sages of the first centuries of the world, and whose symbols, afterwards simplified and made common, furnished letters to the art of writing, characters to speech, and to occult philosophy its mysterious signs and pantacles. This book, attributed to Enoch, seventh lord of the earth after Adam, by the Hebrews; to Hermes Trismegistus by the Egyptians; to Cadmus, the mysterious founder of the sacred city, by the Greeks, was the symbolical synthesis of primeval tradition, since called Kabbalah, or Cabala, from a Hebrew word which is the equivalent of tradition.

This tradition wholly reposes on the single dogma of Magic—that the visible is for us the proportional measure of the invisible. Now the ancients having observed that equilibrium is the universal law of physics, and one which results from the apparent opposition of

two forces, argued from physical to metaphysical equilibrium, and asserted that in God, i. e. in the first living and active cause, two properties necessary to one another must be recognized—stability and movement, necessity and liberty, rational order and volitional autonomy, justice and love; consequently also, severity and mercy; and it is these two attributes which, in a certain sense, the Kabbalistic Jews personified under the names of *Geburah* and *Chesed*. Above *Geburah* and *Chesed* dwells the supreme Crown, the equilibrating power, designated under the name of *Malchut* in the occult and Kabbalistic verse of the *Paternoster*, which is found in the Greek text of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and in several Hebrew copies—“Ὅτι σὴ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις, καὶ ἡ δόξα, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, Ἀμήν.” “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end. Amen.”

Malchut based on *Geburah* and *Chesed* is the Temple of Solomon, having *Jakin* and *Bohas*, unity and the duad, for its pillars; it is the Adamic doctrine founded on the resignation of *Abel* for the one part, and on the labors and remorse of *Cain* for the other part; it is the demonstration of the universal lever sought in vain by *Archimedes*. But *Geburah* and *Chesed*, maintained in equilibrium by the Crown above and the Kingdom beneath, are two principles which may be viewed in their abstract nature or in their realization. As abstract or idealized, they take the superior names of *Chocmah*, wisdom, and *Binah*, intelligence. In their realization they are called stability and progress, i. e. eternity and victory, *Hod* and *Netsah*.

Such according to the Kabbalah is the basis of all religions and all sciences, the primal and immutable conception of things, a threefold triangle and a circle, the idea of the triad explained by the balance multiplied by itself in the domains of the ideal, then the realization of

this idea in forms. Now the ancients attached the first principles of this simple and sublime theology to the essential conception of numbers, and thus qualified all the figures of the primitive decade:

1. *Keter*. The Crown, the equilibrating power.
2. *Choemah*. Wisdom, equilibrated in its immutable order by the impulse of intelligence.
3. *Binah*. Active Intelligence, equilibrated by wisdom.
4. *Chesed*. Mercy, Wisdom in its second conception, ever benevolent because it is strong.
5. *Geburah*. Severity, necessitated by Wisdom itself and by Goodness. To permit evil is to prevent good.
6. *Tiphereth*. Beauty, luminous conception of equilibrium in forms, intermediate between the Crown and the Kingdom, mediating principle between the Creator and Creation.
7. *Netsah*: Victory, i. e. the eternal triumph of intelligence and justice.
8. *Hod*. Eternity of the mind's conquests over matter, of the active over the passive, of life over death.
9. *Jesod*. The Foundation, i. e. the base of every creed and truth, what in philosophy we call the ABSOLUTE.
10. *Malchut*. The Kingdom, i. e. the universe, entire creation, the work and mirror of Deity, proof of the Supreme Reason, formal consequence which obliges us to go back to virtual premises, the enigma whose answer is God, that is, the Supreme and Absolute Reason.

These ten palmary notions attached to the ten first characters of the primeval alphabet, signifying at once numbers and principles, are what the masters in Kabbalah call the ten Sephiroth.

The Kabbalists, when multiplying the Divine Names, have joined them all either to the unity of the Tetragram or to the figure of the triad, or to the Sefiric scale of the decade; they trace the scale of these Divine

Names and numbers in a triangle, which may be rendered as follows into Roman letters:

J
 JA
 SDI
 JEHV
 ELOIM
 SABAOT
 ARARITA
 ELVEDAAT
 ELIM GIBOR
 ELIM SABAOT

The total of these divine names, formed from the single Tetragram, but outside of the Tetragram itself, is one of the bases of the Hebrew Ritual, and composes the occult force which Kabbalistic rabbins invoke under the name of Semhamphoras.

The Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John, which contains all the Kabbalistic secrets of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, is a book no less obscure than the Sohar. It is hieroglyphically written with numbers and images, and the apostle appeals frequently to the intelligence of initiates. St. John, the beloved disciple, and the depository of the secrets of the Savior, did not therefore write to be understood by the multitude.

□ The Sepher Jezirah and the Apocalypse are the master-pieces of Occultism; they contain more meanings than words, their expression is as figurative as poetry and as exact as mathematics. The Apocalypse epitomises, completes, and surpasses all the science of Abraham and Solomon, as we shall prove in explaining the keys of the transcendent Kabbalah.

The Sohar is a Genesis of light, the Sepher Jezirah is a scale of truths. Therein are explained the thirty-two absolute signs of speech, numbers and letters; each letter reproduces a number, an idea, and a form, so that

mathematics are applied to ideas and forms no less rigorously than to numbers in an exact proportion and by a perfect correspondence. By the science of the Sepher Jezirah the human mind is grounded in truth and reason, and can take account of all possible progress of intelligence by the evolutions of numbers. The Sohar represents therefore absolute truth, and the Sepher Jezirah provides the means of attaining, appropriating, and using it.

The Kabbalists held all that resembled idolatry in detestation; they gave, nevertheless, a human figure to God, as we have seen, but it was purely hieroglyphic. They held God to be the intelligent, loving, and living Infinite. He was for them neither the collection of existences, nor abstract existence, nor a philosophically definable Being. He is in all, distinct from, and greater than all; His very name is ineffable, and yet this name expresses only the human Ideal of His Divinity. What God is in Himself it is not given to man to understand.

The Kabbalists write the Divine Tetragram in four chief ways—JHVH, which they do not pronounce but spell, *Jod, he, vau, he*, and which we pronounce Jehovah, contrary to all analogy, for the Tetragram thus disfigured is composed of six letters—ADNI, which we pronounce *Adonai*, and which means Savior—AHH, which we pronounce *Eieie*, and which signifies Being—finally, AGLA, which is pronounced as it is written, and which hieroglyphically encloses all the mysteries of the Kabbalah. In fact, the letter *Aleph* is the first of the Hebrew Alphabet; it expresses unity and represents the dogma of Hermes hieroglyphically. "That which is above is as that which is below." This letter has in fact two arms, one of which points to earth and the other to heaven with a similar gesture. The letter *Ghimel* is the third of the alphabet; it expresses numerically the

triad and hieroglyphically child-birth, fecundity. The letter *Lamed* is the twelfth; it is the expression of the perfect cycle. As a hieroglyphical sign it represents the circulation of the perpetual movement, and the relation of the radius to the circumference. The letter *Aleph* repeated is the expression of the synthesis. Thus the name *Agla* signifies unity, which by the triad accomplishes the cycle of numbers to return into unity; the fruitful principle of Nature which is one with unity; the primal truth which fertilizes science and directs it back to unity; syllepsis, analysis, science, and synthesis; the three Divine Persons, who are one God; the secret of the *magnum opus*, i. e. the fixation of the Astral Light by a supreme projection of will-power, which the adepts represented by a serpent transfixed by a dart, and forming therewith the letter *Aleph*; then the three operations—to dissolve, to evaporate, and to condense, corresponding to the three indispensable substances—salt, sulphur, and mercury, all expressed by the letter *Ghimel*; then the twelve keys of Basilius Valentinus expressed by *Lamed*; finally, the work accomplished conformably to its principle, and reproducing the principle itself.

Such is the origin of that Kabbalistic tradition which comprises all magic in a word. To know how to read and pronounce this word, that is, to understand the mysteries of and translate into practice these absolute branches of knowledge, is to have the key of prodigies. To pronounce the word *Agla*, we must turn to the East, i. e. unite ourselves in intention and knowledge with Eastern tradition. We must not forget that, according to the Kabbalah, the perfect word is speech realized by acts, whence comes that expression frequently found in the Vulgate, *facere verbum*, in the sense of accomplishing an action. To pronounce the word *Agla* Kabbalistically, is therefore to undergo all the trials of initiation

and fulfil all its works.

The name of Jehovah is subdivided into seventy-two explanatory names which are called *Schemhamphoras*. The art of employing these names and finding therein the keys of universal science, is what Kabbalists have called the *claviculae* of Solomon. As a fact, at the end of the collection of evocations and prayers which bear this title, there are usually found seventy-two magic circles forming thirty-six talismans. This is four times nine, i. e. the absolute number multiplied by the Tetrad. Each of these talismans bears two of the seventy-two names with the emblematic sign of the number, and of that one of the four letters of Jehovah's name to which they correspond. It is this which gave rise to the four emblematic decades of the Tarot—the club represents the *Jod*; the cup, the *He*; the sword, the *Vau*; and the denier the final *He*. In the Tarot the complement of the ten is added, which synthetically repeats the character of unity.

The popular traditions of magic declare that the possessor of the Clavicles of Solomon can converse with all orders of spirits and compel all natural forces into his service. Now these Keys, several times lost and again rediscovered, are nothing more than the talismans of the seventy-two names, and the mysteries of the thirty-two paths symbolically reproduced in the Tarot. By help of these signs, and by means of their combinations, which are as infinite as those of numbers or letters, we may in effect attain to the mathematical and natural revelation of all Nature's secrets, and consequently enter into communication with the whole hierarchy of intelligences and genii.

THE THEOSOPHICAL LEADERS.

For ten long years Henry S. Olcott has toiled for the elevation and enlightenment of the human race in gen-

eral and the oppressed Asiatic in particular. On the burning plains of Hindostan, amid the eternal snows of the Himalayas and the dense jungles of Ceylon, he has worked like a slave in the cause of human freedom. Suffering privations and incurring dangers which would have disheartened and baffled the most of mortals he has pressed steadily onward and upward, with but one goal in view, to-wit, the redemption of himself and his fellow men and women from the debasing bondage of ignorance and passion, the twofold cause of all the evils that have existed, or will exist, in this world.

And what has been his reward? Impeachment and distrust of his motives; doubts of his ability to execute his chosen work; malignant criticisms of his management of the Theosophical Society; brutal insinuations that he is a dupe etc.,—in brief, everything derogatory that the fertile minds of envious and censorious people could suspicion. It should be unnecessary to say that their suspicions and insinuations are utterly baseless, and the offspring of morbid or corrupt imaginations.

The character of Henry S. Olcott is safe. His acts, spiritual and material, speak for him. His name will forever be held in grateful remembrance by the thousands for whom he has unselfishly and unweariedly labored.

And Madam Helen P. Blavatsky! What of her? A woman of noble birth and large estate, she was driven forth from her family and caste by an insatiable thirst for *knowledge*. She wanders for years amid the cities of Europe, the trackless forests of South America, the steppes of Mongolia, Egyptian sands, the wilds of Hindostan, the vales of Kashmir, the vast deserts of Tartary, the extensive territories of Cathay, and the weird land of Bod, with spirit and soul intent on but one object, viz. the acquisition of occult lore. And then she secludes herself in mountain fastnesses for seven long years, disciplining mind and body alike, under the direction of

able Masters. Impelled by a desire to benefit mankind she emerges from her retreat, and after due preparation gives to the public that monumental and epoch-making book—*Isis Unveiled*.

And what has been *her* reward? Slanders numberless; accusations of charlatanism; charges of being one of the most despicable of beings, a spy; insinuations that she is at the head of a conspiracy to dupe and swindle people,—in short, this abnormal woman has been abused and vilified without measure by some who knew her not, and by others who *did* know her, and well knew that they were engaged in a contemptible and mendacious business. She must, like all of us, be judged by her deeds. She has faults, many of them, no doubt; but, compared with some of her traducers, she appears as an angel of light and wisdom. Be she angel or fiend, what matters it to the thousands whom she has benefitted? Who *are* the accusers of this woman who has said grand words, and done grand deeds? For the most part a couple of worthless adventurers and disreputable parasites, who fattened off of her substance, and then attempted to assassinate her reputation for a consideration! All the miserable Coulombs, multiplied a thousand fold, cannot injure her one jot or tittle. They have already returned to that deep obscurity from which they temporarily emerged into a ridiculous visibility.

Madam Blavatsky will go down to posterity as one of the most wonderful characters of this generation.

ON THE FIRST PRINCIPLE.

By THOMAS TAYLOR.

[Reprinted from the Monthly Magazine for April, 1797]

That the intellectual philosophers and theological poets of antiquity, entertained more exalted conceptions of and venerated in a far greater degree the

highest principle of things, than any philosophers and theologists posterior to them, will I doubt not appear paradoxical to many of your readers; but will I persuade myself be fully evinced by the following most respectable testimonies.

In the first place the Egyptians, according to Damascius,* celebrated the one principle of the universe as an unknown darkness, and this thrice pronounced; and the same author informs us, that the Babylonians passed over this principle in silence. Hesiod too in his Theogony, when he sings,

Ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτις αὖ χάος γενετ'.

Chaos of all things was the first produc'd:

clearly insinuates that there must be some cause prior to chaos, through which it was produced, as there can be no effect without a cause; and besides this, as Simplicius beautifully observes, he insinuates that the first cause is above all knowledge, and every appellation. It was doubtless for the same reason, that Homer, in his poems, ascends no higher than Night, whom he represents Zeus as reverencing: for, according to all the ancient theologists, and the doctrine of Pythagoras and Plato, Zeus, or the immediate artificer of the universe, is not the highest god. Homer, therefore, is not only silent with respect to the first principle, but likewise with respect to those two principles immediately posterior to the first, the *æther* and *chaos* of Orpheus and Hesiod, and the *bound* and *infinity* of Pythagoras and Plato.‡

*Περὶ ἀρχῶν.

‡In my Introduction to the Parmenides of Plato, p. 260, I have shown that in the opinion of all antiquity *γενετο* was considered as meaning in this place *was generated*, and not *was simply*.

‡Theology was delivered *symbolically* by Orpheus, —*in images* (εἰκονικῶς) by Pythagoras, —and *scientifically* by Plato. Hence, the *æther*, *chaos* and *phanes*, of the first; —the *monad*, *duad* and *tetrad*, of the second; —and the *bound*, *infinite*, and *that which is mixed from both*, of the third, respectively, signified the first procession from the ineffable principle of things; or certain mighty powers rooted in this principle, like trees in the earth; and which have a distinct energy of their own, at the same time that they energize in conjunction with their cause.

But, as in order to gain a glimpse though a far distant one of this highest deity it is necessary to give him a name: hence he was denominated by Plato, *the one* and *the good*; the former of these appellations signifying his surpassing simplicity and productive power (for all multitude must originate from unity) and the latter his superlative excellence and subsistence as the ultimate object to which all things tend. For all things tend to the supreme good. However, though Plato gives him a name for the reason just assigned; yet, well knowing that he was in reality ineffable, he asserts in the Parmenides that *the one* "can neither be named, nor spoken of, nor conceived by opinion, nor be known, nor perceived by any being." And in the Republic he says that "*the good* is more excellent than essence, surpassing it both in dignity and power."

It is from these sources that the following sublime passages of the latter Platonists are derived: "To that God (says Porphyry)* who is above all beings, neither external speech ought to be addressed, nor yet that which is inward, when it is defiled by the passion of the soul: but we should venerate him in pure silence, and through pure conceptions of his nature." Proclus, with his usual magnificence of expression, says of this highest principle. "That he is the God of all gods, the Unity of unities, and beyond the first adyta. That he is more ineffable than all silence, and more occult than all essence. That he is holy among the holies, and is concealed amidst the intelligible gods." And lastly, Damascius observes: "This highest God is seen afar off, as it were obscurely; and if you approach nearer he is beheld still more obscurely; and, at length, he takes away the ability of perceiving other objects. He is therefore truly an incomprehensible and inaccessible light, and is profoundly compared to the sun: upon which the more at-

*Περὶ Ἀποχῆς Ἐμφυχῶν.

tentively you look, the more you will be darkened and blinded; and will only bring back your eyes stupified with excess of light."

I only add, that the Jews appear to have ascended no higher in their theology than the *immediate* artificer of the universe; (for the Jehovah of the Jews is evidently the same as the Zeus of the Greeks), and that they differed from the above-mentioned theologians and philosophers in this, that the latter suspended every thing from Deity; whereas Moses introduces a darkness on the face of the deep, without even insinuating that there was any cause of its existence.

THE KABBALAH.

BY

T. H. BURGOYNE.

All instruction consists in making definitions, and all knowledge in knowing definitions. We know only that which we encompass and put under the limitation of our power. Philologists tell us the original signification of the words *know* and *can* was the same, and has its equivalent in the words "*to be able*." Doubtless the deceit and pretence of men made a separate coinage of them, in an attempt to conceal or *excuse* ignorance, when power was so manifestly deficient in them that a fool might read that truth: But confession of inability was a humiliation which men in the heroic ages especially shrank from, and the evasion of it by a verbal art need not evoke our severest reprimands.

The "Boundless" is the infinite mystery and the great Arcanum, which the finite can never know, limit or define, because the latter being but a part cannot encompass the former, which is the whole. But in that degree in which the part surrounds or outgrows its finite state and moves towards the infinite whole, it becomes *itself*

infinite, and enjoys the powers and prerogatives of the infinite. All growth, aspiration or development, is a progression into the infinite—which is but another name for the En Soph of the Kabbalist, the monad of the Pythagoreans, the God of the Christians, and the “One Life” of Hermetic philosophy. All degradation is movement from them into the finite, which is multiplication and separation from the source of power, knowledge or cause. Cause and effect are at opposite poles, and as there is nothing antecedent to cause so there is nothing consequent to effect. All that is, was or shall be, lies at or between them. Effects are, let us say, beads of action strung upon a cord of cause; all power lies in cause, and all subserviency in effect. THE SECRET MYSTERY which we aspire to know, “*to be able*” with—to define and encompass or become actively united to and co-equal with, *is cause*. The name by which we speak of it is of less importance than the clear and precise understanding of its modes of action. The foregoing is in part the basic principles upon which rests the Kabbalah, Hermetic Science, Theosophy, Occultism, Platonism, or the Wisdom religion, by whatsoever name known. Its votaries have defined the Kabbalah to mean esoterically, “the Concealed Mystery” or “Divine Wisdom,” etc. These terms are doubtless somewhat comprehensible to them, but the average reader gets but feeble enlightenment therefrom, as “the concealed mystery” &c., is thus defined by words which convey no meaning to them except concealment and mystery, and so might as well be written in Assyrian Cuneiform. His comprehension is left bewildered, as in the phrase upon Coleridge wherein we are facetiously advised to

“Let observation, with extensive observation,
Observe mankind extensively.”

The neglect and disrespect which the Glorious Phi-

losophy of the Kabbalah has suffered, is largely due to the oily vacuity of terms used, and *the painfully erudite scholarship, displayed in its exposition*. Verily it has been a priest-ridden and scholar-bound system, whose day of deliverance it is hoped is not far distant.

The Kabbalah is really only a system of Philosophy devoted to the interpretation and exposition of an assumed secret or mystical knowledge concealed behind the literal sense of the Jewish Bible. It is divine, in so far as it divines the past, present and future of *Cause* and *Effect*. It is valuable to us in so far as it discloses to our comprehension the

One Law,
One Principle,
One Truth,
One Word,

all of which are summarised in the Hermetic term "ONE LIFE." "*To be able with*" these four or this One is the aspiration of every worthy seeker, and whatever measure of success may attend his endeavours it comes only through his contact with them; for *contact* is the "sine qua non" of Effects (progression or retrogression). But the *kind* and *direction* of contact becomes a very important consideration, for contact by *impulsion* is destructive in its nature, while contact by *attraction* or *assimilation* is constructive: the latter signifies cumulation, confluence, harmony; and the former, divergence and discord.

In the quadrupled unity of Law, Principle, Truth and Word* the latter is but the sensible expression of the other three, and in relation to them is the subordinate and dependent result of their action. But being more confluent with our physical equipment of sense than the others are, we make easier conquest of it. Hence,

*The word is not the cause '*per se*' but the manifestation, or let us say, the echo of cause. As an echo it has sounded three times; once in the celestial plane, once in the astral, and once in the physical.

only as a matter of diplomacy or accommodation to our senses, which are often punctilious, and strict upon trivial matters of etiquette, the Kabbalah permits us to approach the superior through the medium of the inferior; but by no means does it authorize us to make the WORD into a Golden Calf, as was once done with "jewels" borrowed of the Egyptians. Herein many otherwise worthy men *have failed in giving proper direction* to their aspirations, and also in *their expectations* of the Kabbalah. Their fault and disappointment lay in this, namely, *they remain with the Word*, just as modern scientist do, instead of using it merely as a stepping-stone to reach the higher Arcanum. The true Kabbalist or Occultist, no matter whether he be of the Occident or Orient, has his *workshop within himself*. He uses the Word or externals, only as patterns, symbols, and analogies. It has to say the least of it an *injurious significance*, that the Kabbalah locates the ten sephiroth *in the body* of Adam Kadmon, or the typical first man, "whom God made in his own image." The true import of this should not escape us. These ten Sephiroth stand for the *whole*: they are alleged to be the keys which unlock all doors of the Arcanum. They are the exponents of all action, every angle, every mode, affection and quality that exists in *the whole*—and these are located *in the human form*, so that "he who runs may read."

As a matter of courtesy to our familiar tongue, and also as an obliging condescension to his confreres, the Kabbalist gives names to them, which are as follows: Love, Wisdom, Crown, Intelligence, Beauty, Justice, Foundation, Firmness, Splendor, and Kingdom. These ten are the "curriculum" of the Kabbalah. But let no man fall into the delusion that he *knows them* because he can write or articulate them. He must needs learn their characters, methods, angles, genealogies and re-

lation each to each, *and each to the whole*. And further, he must not only *know* them but *he must "do"* them in Love, in Wisdom and in Justice. Then the divine Arcanum is disclosed to his aspiring view; the crooked is made straight; darkness is made light; the rough is made smooth; and his journey is indeed to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the principles here enunciated, —and *in measure* his success will be certain.

At this point we would offer a few pertinent remarks which may be accepted or rejected by the reader, for what they are worth, as they are not put forth "*ex cathedra*" by any means.—It is a valuable acquisition to man to be able to read; but if in reading he fails to understand what he has been reading about, the value of his ability to read will then be reduced in exact proportion to such failure of comprehension. Therefore to further assist many, who doubtless possess but very imperfect ideas upon the subject, we would point out the fact, that the whole teaching of the Kabbalah is but an elaboration of the deific "one life," in its infinite ramifications upon the various planes of manifested being.

"THE GLORIOUS EN SOPH," the starting point of the Kabbalist is the pure realm of "*unmanifested being*" and as such it is the "*ne plus ultra*" of his exalted conceptions.—It is this infinite "one life" principle that forms the solid foundation of the sublime philosophy of the Hermetic Brotherhoods of the west, a school of thought by the way, which is purely active and practical, and as such is the exact antipodes of many oriental systems of dreamy inactive metaphysical contemplation. While the occidental system is directly active, the oriental is purely negative. Both are roads, however, to the mountain top, and are especially suited and adapted to the respective races with which they deal. But to resume. Speaking of this "one life" we have a beautiful conception presented to our view in "Isis Unveiled" which is somewhat as follows: "*It is enough for us to know that it exists, that it is all wise: enough that in com-*

mon with our fellow creatures we possess a spark of its essence. This supreme whom we revere is THE BOUNDLESS AND ENDLESS ONE, the grand, central, spiritual sun by whose attributes and the visible effects of whose inaudible voice we are surrounded,—the God of the ancient and the God of the modern seer."

This "Boundless, endless one" is the En Soph of the Kabbalah, from which sprung the first emanations of LOVE and WISDOM. From the dual action or union of this celestial King and Queen is born a third power, called the CROWN, which unites the two, and thus forms the *triume* center of divine Force, which may be conceived as the pure white light of divinity itself. This divine center then gives birth to, or rather evolves from, its radiant Bosom, seven other emanations or Sephiroth, which make up the ten Emanations, the names of which have already been stated.

To better illustrate this teaching, and to enable some of our readers to form a clear, definite conception of the esoteric doctrines involved in this Kabbalistical system, we will suppose or imagine that this "one life" of the divine triad, (love, wisdom and crown) which are the first born of the En Soph, is the white light of the sun. It is well known that if we cause the solar rays to pass through a prism of glass they become decomposed or divided into their original elements, and we obtain seven differently tinted rays, which may further be taken to illustrate seven states of action, or seven forces, all in harmony with, but differing in degree from each other. So it is with the seven active Sephiroth of the Kabbalah. They are the seven attributes, powers and principalities which constitute in their combined total the pure white rays of the great "ONE LIFE". A careful study of the above illustration will greatly assist many of our readers in their progress amid the heaps of unprofitable mystical rubbish that bestrews their path at every turn. From what has been stated, it will be seen that the mysteriously talked of hidden secrets of the Kabbalah are very few, and even these few when right-

ly understood exist more in the realm of fanciful imagination than upon the plane of reality. The teachings are valuable to us in so far as they illustrate for our conceptions the grand primal truth of all truths, the action of the triune ONE LIFE, taught by our Egyptian forefathers. It is true that they taught such in many diverse forms to deceive the profane; it is also true that many of the popular teachings contradict this principle; but, apart from this external sacerdotalism, they always, to the chosen few, taught and recognized therein "Osiris the mighty, Isis the glorious, and Horus the living," as but various manifestations of the glorious "Boundless One," the En Soph: The triune, one life embodied as universal Humanity, yesterday, to day, and forever. It is enough in conclusion to remark, that this sublime system of Philosophy, associated as it was with a completed science of practical Psychology, has formed the greatest life work of the noblest minds that have trod this earth. The ages have only left our scholars the former, and they in their learned conceit think the latter lost, but in this they are mistaken. To this very day it exists and is flourishing in all its original purity, treasured up by the noble sacred few, as the highest achievement on this plane of the true perfected man. To all earnest seekers, therefore, we say "Try," and whether you succeed or fail in your attempts to realise this ideal height of perfection, you will be no less noble, none the less divine* for having in your souls' aspirations striven to attain unto a companionship with those who by right divine are now the sole guardians and rightful heirs to "THE WISDOM OF THE AGES."

*Latterly many assertions have emanated from various quarters, to the effect that for the Neophyte to fail in his attempt for adeptship is to become lost. This is a monstrous and most abominable delusion, and we here assert, (and defy contradiction), that such statements are false, and those who make them LIE. Such dogmas are exactly upon the same plane as those of the Christian Church which asserts, Believe in the Blood of Christ or be damned eternally. Both dogmas should be treated by all lovers of free thought with unmitigated disgust.

T. H. B.

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