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EXTRACTS FROM THE TREATISE TEN DOUBTS CONCERNING PROVIDENCE BY PROCLUS

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THE great Plato, in the tenth book of his *Laws*, compels us by adamantine arguments, as it were, to confess that Providence has a subsistence; and also elsewhere in many places, as in the *Timaeus*, he shows that the Demiurgus has elaborated the fabrication of things by His providential energies as far as to the last portion of intelligence, and this he likewise clearly asserts. But it is requisite that we should be persuaded by what Plato has demonstrated and by the most efficacious attestations given by the (Chaldean) Oracles to the demonstrations of Plato. For I conceive that this tradition of the Oracles to the worthy auditors of the Gods is a most manifest demonstration of the subsistence of Providence, in answer to whatever opposes It according to the conceptions of the multitude, and is sufficient to repel the phantasms which prevent them from believing that all things subsist conformably to the will of Providence, and to lead them from base garrulity on this subject to the truth of things. And we say this, not as if we thought that what has been written on this subject by those prior to us is not worthy of great attention, but because the Soul, though these things have been the occasion of doubt, and have been distinctly considered a thousand times, yet desires to hear and speak concerning them, to revolve them, and, as it were, discuss them in herself, and is not willing to receive information alone about them from others.

Let us, therefore, interrogate ourselves, and doubting in the secret recesses of the Soul, endeavour to exercise ourselves in the solution of doubts, considering it as of no consequence whether we discuss, or whether we do not, what has been said

by those prior to us; since as long as we deliver what we are persuaded is truth, we shall appear to assert and to write our own conceptions on this subject. To which may be added that we shall have Hermes for our common leader, who is said to insert anticipations of universal conceptions in every Soul.

1. And prior to everything else, let us investigate whether Providence extends to all things, to wholes and parts, and to the most individual things in the heavens and under the heavens, to eternal and corruptible natures. But it is requisite that Providence should either know the desert of the things for which It provides, or that It should not lead all things, according to their desert in consequence of being ignorant of their worth. We must also investigate the manner in which Providence knows all things, both wholes and parts, and corruptible and eternal natures, and what the characteristic is of Its knowledge. And if we are able to apprehend this, afterwards something else, and again another thing, will become the subject of doubt.

Considering, therefore, this in the first place, and invoking the common leader, Hermes, we must say that with respect to knowledge, one kind is connascent with irrationality and is called sense or phantasy; it also pertains to things of a partial nature, and which are not external to body, and therefore manifests that the cognitions themselves are directed to partial essences. But another kind of knowledge is essentially inherent in the rational life, and is called opinion and science; differing indeed from irrational cognitions in this, that it knows universals, they, as we have said, having a perception of partial qualities alone. These two kinds of rational knowledge likewise differ from each other, because the one, namely opinion, is the knowledge of mutable natures, but the other, namely science, is the knowledge of things permanently immutable. Prior to these, however, there is another knowledge, which is denominated intellectual, of which one kind apprehends all things at once and simply, but the other is a knowledge, not of all things at once, but of one thing at a time.[1] And in this they differ, one being the knowledge of an Intellect in every respect perfect, but the other being the knowledge of partial intellects; all intellectual essences indeed understanding all things, and in this transcending rational cognitions; but one Intellect having a total subsistence and

[1] And such is the knowledge of our intellect.

intellectually perceiving all things totally; while another apprehends all things partially, because being itself partial its intellections are also of a partial nature.

Beyond all these, however, is the knowledge of Providence, which is above Intellect and exists in *the One* alone, according to which every God is essentialized and is said to attend providentially to all things, establishing Himself in an energy prior to intellectual perception. By this *One*, therefore, according to which also He subsists, He knows all things. For if we admit that other cognitions necessarily remain connascent with the essences to which they pertain—as, for instance, phantasy and sense, which being irrational belong to the irrational life, and likewise the cognitions prior to these, which are rational as pertaining to rational Souls, and the intellectual to intellectual essences—it would be absurd not to admit that the cognitions of the Gods, so far as They are Gods, are defined according to an hyparxis[1] which is transcendently one, since from common conceptions we think that Divinity is something better than Intellect, and that the knowledge of everything is conformable to what the thing is.

If, therefore, Providence subsists according to *the One*, and is That which imparts good to all things, and *the Good* is the same with *the One*[2] through being which It provides for all things, in this One It likewise knows the things which are the subjects of Its providential energies. By *the One*, therefore, It possesses the power of knowing all things. To this *One*, however, there is no greater knowledge of wholes than of parts; of things which are according to nature, than of such as are preternatural; of species than of things which are without species. For as of all sensible things it is necessary that there should be some impartible power which forms a judgment of them, and likewise of the forms prior to sensibles, that there should be another judiciary power by which they are perceived; since if the judiciary power were divisible, and by one part of itself perceived one thing and by another part of itself another thing, it would be just the same as if I should perceive this thing, but you that; thus also

[1] Hyparxis signifies the *summit* of the essence of a thing, and is that according to which that thing *principally* subsists.

[2] *The Good*, according to Plato, is the same with *the One*, for in his *Republic* he celebrates the Principle of all things by the former of these appellations, and in the *Parmenides* by the latter.

it is requisite that there should be something prior to forms, which has one knowledge both of universals and individuals; or after what manner could it arrange them, these indeed as participants, but those as things participated? To these, however, there is nothing else common than unity. Prior, therefore, to forms, there is something gnostic which knows all things so far as they are one. But it is evident that this which knows according to *the One*, knows so far as the similar is known by the similar; I mean so far as that which proceeds from a cause is known by its cause. For everywhere and in all these there is *the One*. And, indeed, every being, of whatever kind it may be, does not subsist universally, since that which exists according to a part is different from that which exists as a whole.[1] Nor is everything species (or form) since there is something else which is not species; nor is everything according to nature, since there is also that which is preternatural. But everything which can be conceived, whatever it may be, is one in consequence of *the One* subsisting above all things. If, however, there is anything which does not participate of *the One*, neither will it wholly participate of being, nor will it be able to participate of Providence. If, therefore, nothing escapes *the One*, that which knows all things from itself will possess this knowledge *through a transcendency of union*; since it will know all things either by *the One*, or by that which is not *the One*. This latter mode of knowledge, however, is of a subordinate nature, and foreign from that of *the One*. By *the One*, therefore, Providence knows everything which is in any respect whatever one. For unity is common to all things, both to beings and to non-beings. (Hence, Providence, as we have said, being defined according to *the One* and *the Good*, and *the Good* being prior to Intellect [for Intellect aspires after *the Good*, since this is the object of desire to all beings, but *the Good* does not aspire after Intellect]—this being the case, it is necessary that Providential should be superior to intellectual knowledge; and in consequence of this, that Providence should know all things by Its own one, through which It benefits all things, the intellectual and the non-intellectual, the vital and the non-vital, beings and non-beings, inserting in all things *the One* as a representation of Its own one.) For *the One* of It is not like an individual one.

[1] Whole does not subsist universally, because some things are parts; or, in other words, everything is not a whole, because a part, so far as it is a part, is not a whole.

For this is the last of beings, and is inferior to that which is universal through the participation of which it is that which it is. *The One* of Providence, however, is more excellent than that which is universal; for the universal is a certain one, but it is not *the One* itself, because it is many things, and not one alone, in consequence of possessing the differences of the things which it contains. But neither is *the One* according to which Providence subsists such as a whole, for this is indeed partible, but that as being truly one, is also truly impartible.

(In short, therefore, since we assert that this *One* of Providence is productive of all things, we must also acknowledge that It is the Saviour of all things, having an hyparxis more true than all essence, and more manifest than all knowledge; not being distributed into parts together with things which are the objects of Its knowledge; nor moved about them, since these are the peculiarities of psychical[1] and intellectual knowledge. For every Intellect is *one-many*, both in its being and its intellectual perception; and every Soul, since it is essentialized in motion, perceives intellectually in conjunction with motion. But *the One* of Providence abiding in *the One*, is at the same time immutable and indivisible, and knows all things in a way which is eternally the same. Nor does it know man alone, and sun, and everything else of this kind, but also every particular thing. For nothing escapes *that One*, whether you speak of the being of a thing, or consider it as an object of knowledge.) And it is said, indeed, and is rightly said, that the whole circle exists centrally in the centre, since the centre is the cause, but the circle is the thing caused; and for the same reason every number subsists monadically in the monad. All things, however, exist in *the One* of Providence in a far superior manner, since It is in a much more transcendent degree one than a centre and the monad. As, therefore, if the centre had a knowledge of the circle, it would have a central knowledge of it, as it likewise has a central hypostasis, and would not distribute itself into parts with the parts of the circle; thus also the transcendently united knowledge of Providence is a knowledge of all divisible essences in the same impartible nature, and of each of the most individual and most total things; and as It gave subsistence to everything according to *the One*, so likewise by *the One* It knows everything.

[1] Pertaining to Soul.

And neither is its knowledge divided with the things known; nor are the things that are known confounded on account of the profound union of knowledge. This knowledge, however, being one, comprehends indeed all the infinity of the objects of knowledge, but is transcendently united above all the union that is in them. Such, therefore, is the answer to the first of the doubts concerning Providence.

2. If you are willing, however, we will direct our attention to a second object of inquiry. We say, then, that Providence knows things of a contingent nature; and by the ancients the profundity of this doubt has been sufficiently established: for on account of this profundity some of them, admitting the subsistence of Providence, have taken away from beings the nature of that which is contingent; but others, not at all contradicting the evidence which presents itself for the subsistence of contingent events, have denied that Providence extends as far as to these. Both these, however, pre-assume rightly that Providence subsists, that the thing known is definite to the gnostic nature, and that the indefiniteness of that which is known arises from its own nature. We, however, say that Providence knows the whole of this in consequence of possessing a definite knowledge of the indefinite; the indefiniteness being in that which is about to be, but not actually existing; and knowledge antecedently comprehending the cause of that which is indefinite. For Providence knows that something indefinite will take place, and looking to the cause of this, It knows the indefinite thing; so likewise It knows the indefinite thing to which it gave subsistence; not by the indefinite, but as It produced the indefinite by the definite: in like manner It knows the indefinite definitely, just as It knows incorporeally and without interval that which is distended into bulk and is corporeal. And if, indeed, the reason (or productive principle) which is in seed, being one and wholly in each part of the seed, and possessing the cause of the seed, should know that there would be a separation of its productive power from itself, existing, indeed, as the cause of a distribution into parts to that which is posterior to itself, but being itself impartible; in this case, it would say, I possess the whole of this partibility impartibly; not existing separately from either, but containing that which is subordinate in that which is more excellent; so that

neither is the distribution without a cause, nor does it pre-exist in the cause (distributedly), but it subsists there according to cause, and in its participants according to hyparxis. And if, indeed, it should investigate the cause of that partition, it would find it in itself, because in itself it is impartible; but when it becomes situated in another subject, and not in itself, it is the source to them of a distribution into parts, in consequence of which each of the parts is not everywhere. After this manner, therefore, we say that Providence, being the cause of all things, knows the things of which It is the cause, has a definite knowledge both of that which is definite and of that which is indefinite, and gives generation to things which will have an indefinite subsistence. Nor does anything impossible happen on account of this (the indefiniteness existing in things posterior to Providence), for in the knowledge of Providence they are antecedently comprehended, and in such a way as is adapted to causes. But this is now manifest.

SEED THOUGHTS

The whole life of the Spirit and its activity consists solely in the Divine likeness and in simplicity of intention; and the final peace abides on the heights in simplicity also, in simplicity of essence. —*Ruysbroeck.*

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God bringeth not a new or strange spirit into us; but He openeth with His Spirit our spirit, namely, the mystery of God's Wisdom, which lieth in every man. —*Jacob Boehme.*

ORPHEUS AND THE ORPHIC TRADITION

I. ORPHEUS

THE tradition concerning Orpheus relates that he was the son of Œagrus, King of Thrace. His mother was the Muse Calliope. He was the first poet and inspired singer of Hellas, and the invention of the hexameter is ascribed to him. The God Apollo presented him with the seven-stringed lyre and the Muses instructed him in its use. Such was his mastery over it that he charmed not only men and wild beasts, but even the trees and rocks, which moved from their places on Olympus to follow the sound of it. His earthly teacher is said to have been Linus.

He accompanied the Argonauts upon their expedition, and by his aid contributed greatly to their success. At the sound of his lyre the Argo glided down into the sea; the Argonauts tore themselves away from the pleasures of Lemnos; the Symplegades, the clashing rocks that crushed everything that ventured between them, were held motionless while the Argo passed through, and finally the Dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece was soothed to sleep.

After his return from the Argonautic expedition he took up his abode in a cave in Thrace, and employed himself in civilizing its wild inhabitants.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice tells how the nymph Eurydice or Agriope, the beloved wife of Orpheus, while fleeing from the importunities of Aristaeus, was bitten by a serpent and died in spite of Orpheus' efforts to save her. But so great was his love for her that he followed even across the portal of Hades, and there so charmed Pluto, King of the Dead, by his music that Eurydice was permitted to return, on one condition—that Orpheus should not look back. But at the last step he did so, and Eurydice vanished from his sight.

There are various accounts of the death of Orpheus. Some say that he died of grief at the second loss of Eurydice; others that he was consumed by the lightning of Zeus for revealing the Mysteries to mankind. A common tradition states that he was torn to pieces by infuriated Thracian Maenads during one of their wild orgies.

After his death the Muses collected the fragments of his body and buried them at Leibethra, at the foot of Olympus, where the nightingale sang sweetly over his grave. His head and lyre were carried by the Hebrus down to the sea; the waves carried them to Lesbos, where the head was buried at Antissa and the lyre was hung up in a sanctuary of Apollo.

The traditions regarding the life of Orpheus may be taken in a symbolic as well as in a literal manner. Proclus says: "Orpheus, on account of his perfect erudition, is reported to have been destroyed in various ways; because, as it appears to me, men of that age participated *partially* of the Orphic harmony: for they were incapable of receiving a universal and perfect science. But the principal part of his melody (i.e. of his mystic doctrine) was received by the Lesbians; and on this account, perhaps, the head of Orpheus, when separated from his body, is said to have been carried to Lesbos. Fables of this kind, therefore, are related of Orpheus no otherwise than of Bacchus, of whose mysteries he was the priest."

And again: "Orpheus, because he was the leader in the Rites of Dionysius, is said to have suffered the same fate as his God." The descents into darkness or Hades of which the myths tell, symbolize the descent of the Soul into manifestation, while the lacerations and dismemberments of Divine Beings or heroes stand for the mystical splitting up or division of the unity of Spirit or Intellect.

Some students of the Orphic tradition have been puzzled by the fact that Orpheus is said at one time to have been a worshipper of Apollo, while at another he is celebrated as the institutor of the Mysteries of Dionysus or Bacchus.

Thus Eratosthenes says: "Orpheus did not honour Dionysus, but believed the sun to be the greatest of the Gods, whom also he called Apollo. Rising up in the night, he ascended before dawn to the mountain called Pangaeon that he might see the sun first, at which Dionysus, being enraged, sent upon him the Bassaridae (Maenads), as the poet Aeschylus says, who tore him in pieces and scattered his limbs abroad."

Apollodorus, on the other hand, says that Orpheus invented the Mysteries of Dionysus, while Diodorus, after relating how the Mysteries of Dionysus were revealed to Charops, grandfather of Orpheus, and handed down to him by his father

Œagrus, says that Orpheus, "being a man gifted by nature and highly trained above all others, made many modifications in the rites of the Mysteries: hence they call the rites that took their name from Dionysus, Orphic."

This apparent contradition is easily resolved when the real nature of the Greek mystery-religion is understood. The Greek philosophers and sages were not polytheists; all the wealth of Divine Names which is to be found in Greek mythological tradition is simply an evidence of the depth of their theological conceptions. All the Names signified to the enlightened Greek different aspects of the One God.

Thus Apollo and Dionysus are two complementary aspects of God, as the myths symbolically reveal.

Dionysus, as the Divine Life proceeding into all things, is in a mystical sense lacerated or torn in pieces by the Titans, who symbolize the artificers of the manifested universe in which the Divine attributes are expressed in inconceivable variety.

Apollo, as the Divine Light, is the collector of all things into unity, and as the Sovereign Sun, of Which the physical sun is a symbol, He is at once the Father of all beings and the Goal to which they return.

That Apollo and Dionysus were not separate Deities, but simply different aspects of the Supreme One, is evidenced by the fact that at the temple at Delphi Apollo was worshipped for nine months of the year and Dionysus for the remaining three.

Thus the Mysteries of Dionysus were instituted in order to lead human Souls from the darkness and separation of a life apart from God into the full light of Apollo, the Sovereign Sun.

Many mystery-cults have, in the course of time, become debased, either through the failure of those who transmitted them to understand their true meaning, or through a gradual falling away from the ideal. The orgies of Dionysus became at various periods associated with wild license and various abuses. It is probable that the work of Orpheus himself was to purify and elevate the Dionysiac Rites existing in his time, rather than to institute a completely new form of religion. At any rate, the Orphic teachings in their purity contained the most sublime and truly mystical doctrines, and the Orphic Rites were characterized by the utmost beauty, solemnity, order, and self-control.

The date of Orpheus is uncertain. Thomas Taylor, in his

Introduction to the *Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, gives a list of five musicians and teachers of that name, and remarks that the second of these is said to be more ancient than the Trojan War. There is, indeed, a tradition that Homer was a descendant of Orpheus. It was a common practice for successors in any line of tradition to assume the name of its founder, and it is probable that the first and original Orpheus flourished about the fourteenth century B.C.

The following works are attributed to Orpheus:—

1. AMOCOPIA—a word of unknown meaning, but which may possibly stand for "The Art of the Good Shepherd."
2. ARGOLICA—probably an epic poem.
3. ARGONAUTICA—the story of the voyage of the Argonauts.
4. ON ASTRONOMY.
5. THE BACCHIC RITES.
6. ON PLANTS.
7. ON AGRICULTURE—dealing especially with the influence of the moon.
8. THE DEPOSITS—sacred oracles.
9. THE NET.
10. TWIN NATURES.
11. THE TWELVE-YEAR CYCLES, WORKS AND DAYS, AND THE CALENDAR.
12. EPIGRAMS.
13. THE THEOGONY—the mystical "genealogies" of the Gods.
14. THE ENTHRONINGS OF THE GREAT MOTHER.
15. INCENSING.
16. THE SACRED SAYINGS (*hieroi logoi*).
17 and 18. THE SACRED VESTITURE AND THE RITE OF THE GIRDLE.
19. THE DESCENT INTO HADES.
20. THE REGIONS OF THE EARTH.
21. ON THE CORYBANTES.
22. THE CHALICE (*crater*).
23. ON STONES—the properties of stones, common and precious.
24. THE MAKING OF MYTHS—the science and rules of this art.
25. ON THE BUILDING OF TEMPLES.
26. THE ART OF NAMES.
27. THE ORPHIC OATHS—pledges taken in the Mysteries.
28. THE VEIL.
29. ON EARTHQUAKES.

30. The Sphere.
31. Salvation (*soteria*).
32. Initiations (*teletai*).
33. The Triads.
34. Hymns.
35. Natural Science (*phusica*)—the investigation of the hidden principles of Nature.
36. The Oracles (*chresmoi*).
37. Oomancy—divination by means of the eggs of certain birds.

Of these, all that remain are the *Hymns*, the work *On Stones*, the *Argonautica*, and some fragments.

The Orphic hymns were those used in the Mysteries—that is to say, the Eleusinian Mysteries. There were many sacred places in Greece at which Mysteries were celebrated, but those of Eleusis so far eclipsed in their majesty all the rest that they are referred to by ancient writers simply as "the Mysteries" without any other distinction.

This high honour was not paid even to the Homeric hymns, because, although their poetry was more graceful than that of the Orphic hymns, they had not the same profound mystical significance.

The dialect in which the hymns were originally written was an ancient form of Doric, and the alphabet in which Orpheus wrote them was, according to Diodorus, Pelargic or old Etrurian.

The hymns were later rendered into more modern Greek, perhaps by the Athenian Onomacritus, who flourished about 520–485 B.C. He was a priest and theologist in the Orphic succession and re-edited the works of Orpheus and Musaeus.

The long list of Orphic works demonstrates that the original Orpheus was regarded not only as a great hierophant, seer, and prophet, but also, like many other great teachers, as a founder of civilization and an instructor in the art of agriculture. His "music" was both literal and symbolic, for his teachings embraced all the essentials which would enable a devout follower to lead a happy and harmonious life upon earth and to ascend at death with the re-born Dionysus to Heaven.

He was thus venerated as the "inventor" of all the arts and sciences, father of civilization, poet, interpreter of destiny, master of the healing art, inaugurator of sacred music, and friend and teacher of mankind.

II. THE ORPHIC TRADITION

In order to understand the true place which Orpheus holds in the great line of teachers of mankind in which he appears, it is necessary to realize that the essentials which underlie the Orphic theology did not arise with him. He built upon the already existing tradition, purified it when it had become corrupt, and handed it on in a deeper and more integral form to those who succeeded him.

Tradition relates that Orpheus visited Egypt and there learnt the Wisdom of the Gods. But although the essentials which underlie both the Egyptian and Greek, and indeed all other theological systems, are, when rightly understood, seen to be the same, yet it was Orpheus who gave to it the peculiarly systematic and intelligible Hellenic form.

The Grecian theology, says Thomas Taylor, which originated from Orpheus, was not only promulgated by him, but also by Pythagoras and Plato; who, for their transcendent genius, will always be ranked by the intelligent among the prodigies of the human race. By the first of these illustrious men, however, it was promulgated mystically and symbolically; by the second, enigmatically and through images; and scientifically by the third. That this theology, indeed, was derived from Orpheus is clearly testified by those two great philosophic luminaries, Iamblichus and Proclus. For by them we are informed that what Orpheus delivered mystically through arcane narrations, this Pythagoras learned when he celebrated the mystic rites in the Thracian Libethra and was initiated by Aglaophamus in the wisdom concerning the Gods.

This sublime theology, though it was scientifically disseminated by Plato, yet conformably to the custom of the most ancient philosophers, was delivered by him synoptically, and in such a way as to be inaccessible to the profane; but when, in consequence of the beginning of a degraded and barren period, this theology became corrupted through the negligence and confusion of its votaries, then such of his disciples as happened to live when it was thus degraded and deformed found it necessary to unfold it more fully, in order to prevent its becoming utterly extinct. The men by whom this arduous task was accomplished were the last disciples of Plato: "men who, though they

lived in a dark age, possessed a divine genius, and who, having happily fathomed the depth of their great master's works, luminously and copiously developed their recondite meaning, and benevolently communicated it in their writings for the general good" (Introduction to the *Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*).

Thus this golden chain, as they have been called, of philosophers, teachers, and mystics, handed on and enriched by their own original work the Wisdom of the Gods.

In the Orphic works the presentation is mythological and mystical, for the Hymns would be meaningless to one who did not possess the key to their significance.

From Orpheus the tradition descended through Musaeus and Aglaophamus to Pythagoras, thence through Philolaus and Archytas to Plato. Between the third and fifth centuries it was further explained and unfolded in the works of the great Neo-Platonists, the chief of whom are Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Proclus. It is still available to-day in the works of these great teachers of men, for those who can enter into its spirit and receive its illumination.

JEWELS

Truth abideth, and she is the strength, and the kingdom, and the power, and the majesty of all ages. She liveth and conquereth evermore. —*First Book of Esdras.*

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O thou Earth, wherefore hast thou brought forth, if the mind is made of dust, like as all other created things.

—*Second Book of Esdras.*

* * *

He who knows what God is, and who knows what man is, has attained. Knowing what God is, he knows that he himself proceeded therefrom. —*Chuang Tzu.*

PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

O Thou Breath of the Mighty Love of God, fan the dim spark of Thy Spirit within me, that I may begin to hunger and thirst after Thee. O Thou Abyss of Love, draw the desires of my Soul unto Thyself, and lead me out of death into Thy resurrection. Quicken me, O Lord, and raise me up as a living Soul.

—*Jacob Boehme.*

* * *

O Thou Holy Spirit, bring forth in me the true fruits of faith; guide my will, sanctify and govern my Soul, dwell in me, and bear witness with my spirit that I am in deed and truth a child of God. —*Stark.*

* * *

Lord, sanctify us wholly, that our whole Spirit, Soul, and body may become Thy temple. Do Thou dwell in us, and be Thou our God and we will be Thy servants. —*Bishop Ken.*

* * *

O God, with Whom is the well of Life, and in Whose Light we see Light, increase in us, we beseech Thee, the brightness of Divine knowledge, whereby we may be able to reach Thy plenteous Fountain. Impart to our thirsting Souls the draught of Life; restore to our darkened minds the Light from Heaven. —*Mozarabic.*

* * *

O Thou Who art the Light of the minds that know Thee, the Life of the Souls that love Thee, and the Strength of the thoughts that seek Thee; help us so to know Thee that we may truly love Thee; so to love Thee that we may fully serve Thee.

—*Gelasian Sacramentary.*

* * *

Thou knowest, O Lord, what most I require; help me, and out of the treasury of Thy Goodness, succour Thou my needy Soul. —*E. B. Pusey.*

SIMPLICIUS ON FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Extracts from Simplicius' "Commentary on the Enchiridion of Epictetus"

All things may be divided into two groups: those which are, and those which are not in our own power. In the former group are our opinions and notions about things, our impulses, desires and aversions, and all our actions.—Epictetus.

The things within our own power, says Epictetus, are those which we have within ourselves, which are not received from another; of which no other person can deprive us, and which we may call our very own possessions. Of this nature are the activities of the Soul, which is moved from within by her own opinions and judgments. It is impossible that our choice should be determined from without, for although the things which we seek are outside us, the desire for them is within us. Again, the opinions we hold are our very own, our judgments, for example, that riches, death, or anything whatsoever, are good or bad or of no consequence. For even though we may form our opinions from things which we are told by others, yet we believe them, and do not merely repeat them as do parrots who call for spiced wine, chattering just as they have been taught, not knowing what they say. When we make a statement, the judgment and decision are from our own activity, and though these may be called forth by something outside ourselves, still by such instruction they are brought out from us, and not placed within us.

Our impulse to action is also of this kind, for though the object to which our action is directed is outside us, and although the incentive to action may come from some external event, yet the impulse itself is wholly within: for such a movement is not like that given to an object by an external force, but is like the movement of a man's body by his own inner power. Hereafter we shall use the term inclination or desire for the tendency of the Soul towards that which she seeks, and aversion for the opposite tendency—the flight from that which she desires to avoid.

It is clear that the chief of the activities under consideration is the power of judgment based on rational thought and in

accordance with human dignity. When this relates to our own good and evil, whether true or only apparent, the inclination or aversion is always first excited, then follows the impulse to action. For the inclination or aversion must necessarily be present before the desired object is sought, or the repulsive object avoided. The Stoics, however, regarded these impulses to action as prior to desire and aversion, and as being the causes of these tendencies.

The irrational passions, anger and sensual appetites, are so closely linked with the body and with animal life that they seem to spring from the particular temperament of the body, and to a great extent are aroused from without, so that they seem to be not wholly within man's power nor subject to his will, although these movements also originate from within. And even the rational Soul herself, when she occupies herself with the body's sensations, identifies herself with body, is forcibly hurled hither and thither, and has no longer her normal liberty and independence. But when once more she acts according to her true nature and power, she moves herself freely and spontaneously from within. In such a Soul it is easy to distinguish clearly that which is within our own power and control.

In order to understand this matter more perfectly, and to make it clear that the happiness and well-being of mankind depend upon a life in accordance with this principle (of right choice), we will trace it to its first cause.

* The fountain and principle of all things is *the Good*: for that which all things desire, and to which all things are extended, is the principle and end of all things. *The Good* also produces from Itself all things, first, middle, and last. But It produces such as are first and proximate to Itself, similar to Itself; one Goodness, many goodnesses, one Simplicity and Unity which transcends all others, many unities; and one Principle, many principles. For *the One*, the Principle, *the Good*, and Deity, are the same: for Deity is the First and the Cause of all things. But it is necessary that the First should also be most simple: since whatever is a composite and has multitude is posterior to *the One*. And multitude and things which are not good desire *the Good* as being above them: and, in short, that which is not itself the Principle is from the Principle.

* The part between the two asterisks is a translation by Thomas Taylor.

But it is also necessary that the Principle of all things should possess the highest and all power. For the amplitude of power consists in producing all things from Itself, and in giving subsistence to similars prior to things which are dissimilar. Hence the one Principle produces many principles, many simplicities, and many goodnesses, proximately from Itself. For since all things differ from each other, and are multiplied with their proper differences, each of these multitudes is suspended from its one proper principle. Thus, for instance, all beautiful things, whatever and wherever they may be, whether in Souls or in bodies, are suspended from one Fountain of Beauty. Thus, too, whatever possesses symmetry, and whatever is true, and all principles, are in a certain respect connate with the First Principle, so far as they are principles and fountains and goodnesses, with an appropriate subjection and analogy. For what the one Principle is to all beings, that each of the other principles is to the multitude comprehended under the idiom of its principle. For it is impossible, since each multitude is characterized by a certain difference, that it should not be extended to its proper principle, which illuminates one and the same form to all the individuals of that multitude. For *the One* is the leader of every multitude; and every peculiarity or idiom in the many is derived to the many from *the One*. All partial principles, therefore, are established in that principle which ranks as a whole, and are comprehended in it, not with interval and multitude, but as parts in the whole, as multitude in *the One*, and number in the monad. For this First Principle is all things prior to all: and many principles are multiplied about the One Principle, and in the One Goodness many goodnesses are established. This, too, is not a certain principle like each of the rest: for of these one is the principle of beauty, another of symmetry, another of truth, and another of something else, but It is simply *Principle*. Nor is It simply the principle of beings, but It is the Principle of principles. For it is necessary that the idiom of principle, after the same manner of other things, should not begin from multitude, but should be collected into one monad as a summit, and which is the Principle of principles.

Such things, therefore, as are first produced by the First Good, in consequence of being connascent with It, do not recede from essential goodness, since they are immovable and unchanged,

and are eternally established in the same blessedness. They are likewise not indigent of the good, because they are goodnesses themselves. All other natures, however, being produced by the One Good, and many goodnesses, since they fall off from essential goodness, and are not immovably established in the hyparxis of Divine Goodness, on this account they possess the good according to participation.*

Things of the lowest rank, those which are externally moved, such as bodies, have both their essence and activity from another and cannot govern themselves, since on account of their partial and unstable nature they cannot be present to themselves in every part, so as to be the cause of unity to themselves, nor can they move themselves, because in essence they are without life and intellect: thus they receive their good from another.

There is a middle class of beings, lower than those which are changeless, but higher than those which are moved from without, and which move external things such as bodies, but are themselves self-moved. These are Souls which move both themselves and their bodies, and on this account we call those bodies which are moved by something other than themselves, but internal to themselves, animate, and those which are externally moved, inanimate.

The Soul, then, moves both herself and body. For if she moved the body through some force which had been imparted to her from without, both Soul and body would be moved by that which moved the Soul.

Now these things which are moved by their own intrinsic motion are lower than eternal (stable and unmoved) natures, and receive their good only by participation. They tend, indeed, to the good, and are moved by their own power, not by that of another, in seeking the objects of their desire. The activities proper to Souls are these: longing, appetite, impulse, choice. The first among these Souls are the direct offspring of That which is essentially good, but, nevertheless, are inferior to This, because they themselves are not the Good. Such Souls desire, above all, to know the essential and unitive Good, and this end they pursue unswervingly, never falling away to that which is below.

The human Soul is analogous to a chain which links together that which is eternally above and that which is always below,

and must in consequence be able to tend towards either of these. If the Soul turns wholly to that which is above, her inclinations and will are simple (unitive) and superior to injury, but when, instead of ascending, she turns to that which is below, she chooses actions which are base and unworthy. For her true nature has the power to impart life and movement to those bodies which are lifeless, to move and rule natures which are unable to receive good except from another, and to direct not only herself, but also others as she wishes.

The Soul, however, which has attached herself closely to temporal and corruptible things, both suffers a deprivation of true good, and also subjects her will to that which is harmful; yet she still seeks those things which she believes to be good and desirable. Sometimes these things are truly good, but sometimes we are attracted by things which only appear good because of the unlawful pleasure which accompanies them.

True good is always accompanied by enjoyment, and this is why the ignorant Soul, whenever she perceives the least appearance of pleasure, rushes towards it, heedless whether it be real, and proceeds from a true good, or from a false and empty shadow of good, and forgetful of the many severe and long-continuing troubles such pleasure brings.

Bodily pleasure is always accompanied by an element of need which may be called pain. There would be no pleasure in eating unless one were hungry, nor drinking, except when thirsty. Hence, if drinking is checked while it is still pleasurable, a sensation of thirst will remain. For such pleasure only lasts as long as there is still some pain, and where there is hunger, thirst, cold, or any such pain, as soon as these are removed, the accompanying pleasure changes to nausea. It follows that even more severe pain must result from an unbridled indulgence in bodily pleasures.

This pursuit of apparent good is the cause of all our errors, and, as has been already said, it is through our own free choice that we seek both our true good and its opposite; for when the will is unconstrained and pure, and is under the government of reason, in which consists our essential nature, the Soul seeks reality and truth. It is for this reason that the Greeks named the true good of the Soul, virtue, αρετη like αιρετη, which shows that it is both desirable and the true choice of the Soul. But

when the Soul follows the animal inclinations and appetites, and complies with their demands, she clings to a false good.

Opinion, inclination, aversion, and impulse are steps towards choice, and are internal movements of the Soul, not external forces. Therefore the Soul is master of these. And this is why God and His Law, and the judgment of the wise, concur in the mode of distinction made between good and evil deeds, for the intentions are judged rather than the actions, which, considered in themselves, may not be in our power. For it is in our choice and intention that we do well or ill.

To kill another accidentally against our own wish and intention is pardonable, and when done in the cause of justice may be even praiseworthy. Hence actions in themselves are not to be praised or blamed, but we must look at the choice and intention, whether good or bad.

But some will deny that we have in our own power anything whatsoever. Some say that our actions and passions are determined by necessity; others, that we are moved by chance, at random, and mechanically; and although sufficient may have been said already, yet it may be well to refute those who would rob us of our freedom of choice.

If those who deny our freedom and attribute all events to chance believe that men act without any forethought or purpose, this is not true; and even if it holds to some degree, it is not true of all our activities. For even in the arts and in all nature there is some goal and end to which are directed all actions from first to last. And every kind of living being is incited to action on account of some good which, though it may not be a true good, has yet a semblance of good. Even the flight from that which is harmful is for the attainment of some good, and is seen to be advantageous.

Those who hold that our opinions, desires, and judgments do not originate from within, thence proceeding outward, and therefore are not within our control, advance two arguments in support of this view. First, that hunger, thirst, cold, and sickness are the origin of the desires for food, drink, warmth, and health; secondly, that the things which a man pursues or avoids are inevitably drawn to him and affect him. Everyone (they say) who has even a slight knowledge of arithmetic believes that twice two equals four. How can this be through choice?

Is it not rather a natural compulsion arising from the nature of the thing itself? And in the search for goodness and beauty, and the flight from their opposites, are we not impelled by the things themselves? For, say they, the careful investigation of nature makes it clear that the object of desire is the origin of the activity. If this be true, and everything is moved of necessity from without, how can anything be in our own power?

Others say that a man's disposition is the cause of the compulsion, because of necessity those things come to him of which his own nature stands in need, and that he cannot do otherwise than desire in accordance with his own particular nature. Thus the man of temperate disposition desires moderation in his actions and mode of life, the intemperate man desires excess, and it is not in the power of either to cease from seeking that which he desires. Some, indeed (they say), are troubled by their desires, and wish to subdue them, yet are so overruled by long habit that they are forcibly impelled by their desires and violently hurled away by their aversions, and are unable to act otherwise. They add that the ignorant are only capable of having false notions, and the intelligent of having true opinions; but if anything were in a man's own power, this could not be, for the stupid do not wish to hold false opinions, and if the wise man had it in his own power to think rightly, he would also be able to hold wrong opinions, but such men, they say, cannot think falsely about anything, even if they wish to do so. And just as it cannot be denied in the case of sense-objects, that the senses respond accurately and perfectly, so it is with the objects of the reason.

These are the arguments commonly brought forward by those who deny to man freedom of choice, but there are also many people who believe that there is a fatality in the position of the heavenly bodies, that their movements determine all other things, and among them our desires, our opinions, and even our choice. In support of this belief they put forward the testimony of astrologers who, from the position of the stars at a man's birth, foretell that one will be a lover of pleasure, another will be avaricious, and a third a friend of the Muses or devoted to wisdom. They even predict the character of the man when full grown. If this were indeed true, it would follow of necessity that our desires were implanted in us by Fate, and

it would be impossible for us to exhibit any other inclinations. How, then, would anything be in our power, even to the extent of desiring anything, if we were obliged inevitably to be urged, whether we would or no, to this desire or that?

These sum up the objections opposed to man's freedom of choice, and from them it appears that neither inclinations, nor aversions, nor judgments seem to be in our own power.

In reply to the first argument, that of man's natural needs, we say that need and poverty are not, in our experience, inseparable from desire. For, in the first place, many unconscious things such as the stems of plants are frequently in need of some quality, such as moisture, dryness, heat or cold, yet they do not desire it, because they are incapable of desire. In order to desire, there must be first the consciousness of the desired quality, then the movement of the inclination towards it. Need, therefore, is not inseparable from desire, but those things which have the power of desire put forth inclination, when feeling the need of anything, in the direction of their need: similarly, itching does not cause us to have hands, but the hand is applied for the relief of the itching when it is present. Neither did the necessities of life produce the arts, but the mind of man devised the arts, and applied them to the relief of human necessities.

All inclination is an interior activity of the Soul which desires, arising from within, not brought into existence from without. The life of brute animals which is irrational, and in its nature is very little above body, is characterized by desires of one kind only, such as supply the needs of the body. Hence we see that animals are under constraint, and not free. But the Soul of man which is endowed with reason possesses, on account of her middle position, a triple activity. By the first she can turn downward to the level of body and of the animals, by the second she can turn inward to herself, by the third she can turn upward towards the Natures superior to herself. And when she submerges herself in body and the irrational animal life, she seeks the satisfaction of the corresponding bodily needs, and this is the kind of desire which has caused men to doubt their freedom of choice. But when the Soul lives in conformity with her own essential nature, or with superior Natures, her desires accord with that excellent life for which she longs.

Now the power of the Soul consists in this, that she can

desire many different kinds of things, some lower, some higher. Through the former she debases herself and weakens her powers, while through the latter she increases in virtue, for in choosing these she chooses rightly. Hence often when the body feels a need, desiring food or drink, the Soul overrules this, replacing it with the desire for fasting, either in obedience to a law or for the sake of bodily health. It is evident that the Soul might have yielded to the body's desires, as is the case with many, but she exerted another desire for a greater good.

Epictetus, therefore, says, justly with regard to the rational Soul, that it is in our power to desire such things as we choose.

In the next objection of those who say that desire is aroused by the object desired, there is some truth, but less than they imagine, for the thing desired does not move the Soul which desires it in the same manner as an object is moved from without, but it presents itself to the Soul in a form which the Soul recognizes as allied to herself, and desirable, and thus calls forth the response which corresponds with her own nature. For just as the object of sense does not infuse the sensation into him who is aware of it, nor affect him by some violent external force which draws him to it, but presents itself as allied and adapted to the bodily sense which is capable of perceiving it, so also the object of desire reveals itself to the Soul as something harmonious with herself, and calls into activity the corresponding inclination.

We can see that this is the case, because when desirable objects are presented some people seek them, others do not. But if the desirable object had the power of compelling a desire and enforcing movement towards it, all people who had the power of desiring would of necessity seek it, though perhaps not all to the same degree. But such a thing could hardly be called inclination or desire, for it would be a violent external impulse, attraction, or repulsion, such as we see in bodies.

Desire is something proceeding towards that which is sought, yet remaining within, as a man might move his hand without moving his whole body. Desire is therefore an interior activity, so also are opinion and the like. This motion is sometimes rightly directed, adapted to the desired object, and in harmony with its nature; at other times it is directed wrongly, as when something is regarded as desirable which seems to be so, but in reality is such as should be avoided. For a spurious good displays

an attractive quality capable of arousing desire, but hides within itself repulsive qualities, which, because of the appearance of good, are not perceived. The thief, for example, carried away by the longing for wealth, neither recognizes nor fears the evils bound up with such riches, the chief of which is the defilement of his Soul. In the fury of his desire he is heedless of the imprisonment and punishment which will result, remembering only the many who commit crimes without discovery.

It is in our power to examine the object of our desire, whether it be of real value, or nothing more than the appearance and shadow of that which is worth seeking, as in the case of the wealth already mentioned. But we can go further than this, for we may train our inclinations and teach them to seek true good, avoiding the delusive shadow.

There are others who consider that our desires and opinions are irresistibly carried to their objects, just as a clod of earth or a piece of iron falls downwards, and that it is not possible to direct them otherwise. In answer to this we say that necessity is twofold: in one of its aspects it is opposed to our free choice, in the other it collaborates with it. The kind of necessity which proceeds from external things takes away our freedom of action, for no man can be said to act freely when compelled by external force; but the internal necessity which compels all things to act according to their own nature greatly contributes to our freedom. For everything which is self-moved can of necessity be moved only by itself, and by nothing outside itself; external force cannot constrain it, but that necessity which is allied to its own nature preserves it and alone prompts it to the appropriate actions. For if the Soul herself is truly the cause of those habits, whether good or bad, which follow from her upright or debased mode of life, then she is also the cause of the actions resulting from these habits.

It must not, however, be supposed that freedom of choice is to be inferred only from man's power of opposing one thing to another, for those Souls who are united to the Good always choose good, yet keep their freedom of choice, and they ever contemplate the Good, and withdraw themselves from Its contrary. Our Souls, on the other hand, while they are well-disposed, desire good, but when they are ill-disposed, desire evil. Yet all Souls are able to rise from vice to virtue by making

the Good their aim, or to descend from virtue to vice by neglecting their true good, and each can make her own choice without constraint.

Therefore we cannot accuse the Almighty Father of being the cause of evil. He indeed created the Soul, which can do evil, for she is not established entirely in First Natures, but also in middle and lower natures, and thus the perfection of the universe is shown forth; First Natures remain first, abiding in Themselves, and are such that They do not mingle with extremes, with natures which are impotent and weak, nor is it consistent with Their nature to be submerged in matter: therefore God, Who is the Good, out of the riches of His Goodness created a middle nature, the human Soul, which is capable of tending towards good or evil, but is never subjected to evil except by her own consent.

There are still others who deny man's freedom of choice. These say that by the fatal revolution of the heavens, not only all our actions, but even our desires, are determined, thus denying us our freedom and making liberty itself an empty name.

Now if the rational Soul be eternal and immortal (which I do not now intend to prove, but shall take as granted, though the Stoics do not all agree on the point), she cannot be rightly said to have been created and formed by a mutable cause; only the animal nature, which is body animated by Soul, and is the instrument of Soul, can be affected by such causes.

Moveable causes produce the material diversity of the world, and the effects correspond with the causes; thus a material instrument is made for the Soul which accords with her needs. And just as the difference between the tools which workmen use in their trades enables us to say that these belong to the trade of the carpenter, those to that of the builder, and others to that of the blacksmith, and not only to recognize the trade, but also to judge the skill of the worker and his execution of the work (for the most skilful workmen use the most delicate tools); so when astrologers, by observing the constellations, carefully study the Soul's instrument (the body), they can even draw conclusions as to the character of him whose instrument it is: and often they conjecture rightly. For many Souls, especially those engaging in public affairs, become degraded, and suffering, as it were, a kind of punishment for the falling away from their first purity, eagerly surrender themselves to their bodies, using

them no longer as instruments, but being moved together with them, as though the body were part of the Soul herself; in short, adjusting the inclinations of the Soul to the appetites of the body. In such cases there is accordingly some connection between the fatal revolutions of the heavens and the movements of Souls which take bodies at certain times: not, indeed, that the aspects of the heavens compel Souls to desire this or that, but they are concordant with their desires. For just as in cities there are sacred seasons and holy places for the assembling of the more serious among the people, and also places devoted to display and popular pleasure where gather the lower kind of people, the idle and wanton; and thus from the places and seasons we can form an opinion as to the habits and character of those who frequent and celebrate them, so in a similar manner we may say that from the aspects of the heavens we can infer the characters of the Souls on account of their bodies, which are generated in correspondence with these aspects.

For since the Justice of the Divine Goodness has decreed under Fate the effects that the stars shall produce in their respective positions, He sends down at the appropriate times those Souls who require certain disciplines for their purification. For all these things are brought into the right relation through the power of necessity and natural affinity.

Fate, therefore, does not coerce the inclinations of the Soul, nor constrain her freedom, but the Souls themselves fit themselves for this fate or that, and each according to her true dignity has an instrument corresponding to her needs. Hence, as has been said, it is not surprising that the tendency of the Soul's inclinations can be judged from the constellations in the heavens.

But although the particular kind of life embraced by each Soul is chosen in accordance with a former disposition and dignity, each human being has it within his own choice to use his abilities for good or evil. Thus it may happen that he who has chosen the life of a merchant may live worthily, while he who has preferred the study of philosophy may act unworthily. And because each kind of life, whether of a farmer, sailor, or musician, is chosen by the Soul herself according to her former disposition, and assigned to her by the Creator according to her merit, but the Soul herself decides the degree of excellence

of her own life, we praise or blame men according to their behaviour in their callings (and not for the callings themselves).

Further, no wickedness in men can be attributed to the action of the constellations (though some have asserted that this is the case). No man is doomed from birth to be deceitful or dishonourable. And though astrologers may indeed predict such things, they come to pass through the manner in which we express the tendencies arising from within, whether moderately or immoderately. For from the perversion of discretion comes the most unscrupulous cunning, and he is the servant and benefactor of mankind who uses wisely his natural endowments, but he becomes a scourge and a source of corruption when they are unbridled and misdirected. As, for example, he who gazes upon the midday sun without blinking becomes unable to see, although the sun is the giver of life to all creatures.

How can the astrologers know which person will employ his inborn talents rightly, and which will pervert them? How can they tell that the acts of one man will be good, and those of another evil? It is, indeed, hardly likely that the observation of the heavens could furnish a true prediction of such things: on the other hand, some correspondences are quite evident, as, for example, that when the sun is in Cancer our bodies are likely to suffer excessive heat; but others are doubtful and obscure to those who have not studied the subject deeply.

Now those things which act constantly in accordance with natural law and preserve the form imparted to them by the Creator are endowed with the greatest power: these, it is evident, act altogether in conformity with the will of good and are never the cause of evil. All evil arises from deficiency of power, for power is in its own nature good. Even by excess of good,[1] man can often bring evil upon himself. This, then, is the answer to those who on account of Fate deny to man freedom of choice.

To all who deny freedom of choice it may further be said that those who would take from the Soul her freedom, and that which is in her power, are attempting in their ignorance to destroy the very essence of the Soul herself.

In the first place, they deny that very self-motion in which her essential nature is established. For either she must possess

[1] Good which is not adapted to the capacity of the nature which receives it, as in the case of the sun already given.

this self-motion by which she is inwardly urged to seek and secure that which she desires, or she must be entirely mechanical.

Secondly, they deny both the vital power of the Soul and her power of sanction and refusal. But who can be unaware of his own likes and dislikes, assent and dissent, all of which are inward activities of the Soul herself, and not forces of attraction or repulsion acting upon her from without, as in inanimate things.

In addition, those who deny our freedom of choice, refusal, opinion, desire, aversion, and similar movements of the Soul, also must deny our power to distinguish between virtue and depravity. They leave us no ground for assigning praise or blame, they even overthrow the highest laws, and if all these are cast aside life becomes empty. Certainly, if this is the case, there is no difference between man and the beasts.

"But," some will say, "are we not often compelled to act either through the tyranny of man or through our own passions, or through love or hate, and to endure many things whether we will or no? In what manner, therefore, can these be shown to be in our power?"

I answer that even in these cases the choice is within our control. For if of two courses open to us we are obliged to follow the less preferable, yet when compared with other less desirable things, it is seen to be to some extent desirable, and therefore is chosen by us. It is impossible to do anything whatsoever without first endorsing the action in the Soul. For even when we do something with reluctance, still we choose to do it.

Again, we see that people under the same conditions may act differently: some, through fear of a greater evil, choose to do as they are ordered; others refuse because they consider it a greater evil to obey than to endure the resulting punishment. Thus, even in the case of one who seems to do something which he dislikes, both the power to act and freedom of choice are his own.

We must distinguish between that for which we wish and that which is in our power. That for which we wish is that which we chiefly long for; that which is truly in our power is that which we can choose either for its own sake or in order to avoid something worse. Sometimes, indeed, that which we choose is mingled with reluctance, when the thing sought is not sought

primarily for its own sake, but for the sake of avoiding something worse. Such a mingling is aptly described by Homer when he says:

"I will that which my heart declines."

These things have been enlarged upon because almost the whole of the *Enchiridion* deals with the distinction between what is and what is not in our own power. In order to instruct the Soul, Epictetus explains clearly at the beginning that in which lies all our good and evil, and because we are spontaneously self-moved he teaches that this good and evil lie in our own actions. Things which are moved from without have both their good and evil from the impressions made upon them from without; but those which are truly moved from within are the causes of their own operations upon which depend their good and evil. Now those operations which are related to knowledge are opinions about the things around us, while those related to the regulation of our life and appetites are desires, aversions, and impulses. When, therefore, we hold just opinions and accordingly preserve the balance between our inclinations and aversions, we enjoy the happiness and perfection adapted to our nature; but if we fall short of this we are correspondingly deprived of the other.

The activities which are most truly our own are decided upon and carried out by ourselves alone. Those actions which are directed to outer things such as the arts, or those connected with the necessities of life, and even the imparting and learning of knowledge and other things regarded as superior, are not entirely within our own power in that they depend to some extent upon external aid, whereas the judgments and conceptions of the mind are really our own activities, and are within our own power. Hence it is that our good and evil lie in ourselves, for no one is forced to be responsible for that which he has not in his power.

Epictetus says that these are the things not in our power: the body, fame, possessions, position, everything indeed except our choice of actions. This is not because the deliberations of the Soul have nothing to do with such things, for both the body and all that belongs to it are rightly directed under the care of the Soul, and suffer if neglected; and the Soul makes her own accomplishments, fame, and preferment, for no leadership in

public affairs could be obtained unless the Soul made the choice; but these things are not entirely under her control because many other causes concur in bringing them about.

The body, for example, needs first a sound stock and healthy constitution, next adequate and wholesome food, exercise, a good situation, pure air and water. Even if all these are forthcoming, it is liable to accident, however powerful and strong it may be. None of such things is entirely within our power, for we can neither draw them to ourselves nor reject them. At the advance of a strong hostile force we would gladly make ourselves invisible, and when sick we should like to recover suddenly, but such things are not possible. The same is true of wealth, which is the product of many favourable conditions, and through unforeseen events this also may be lost.

Our reputation is not in our power, for though a man may become famous through his own actions, yet the opinion of his fame is in the minds of others, and they can hold such opinions as they choose. Thus it often happens that men who profane with their impiety the Divine Ruler, are yet regarded by themselves, and by others, as religious. On the other hand, men who venerate the Gods wholeheartedly and rightly, never attributing to Them any human imperfections, are thought by some to be impious, and temperate men are sometimes considered stupid.

Again, authority cannot be exercised without people to comply with it, and officials to administer it. And in those states in which office is corrupt and honours are knocked down to the highest bidder, those lacking wealth can seldom rise to power, however much they may long for it. Hence preferment is not in our own control, because it is not entirely concerned with our own actions.

To sum up, in the class of those things which are not in our power, we place the body first, because for the sake of its welfare we stand in need of many other things which are not in our power. Money, for example, is the cause of wars, and this we seek to acquire for the sake of the nourishment and adornment of the body.

MAXIMS OF IBN GEBIRAL[1]

Four things destroy a man: pride, stubbornness, indolence, and rashness.

Who has chosen righteousness as a guiding principle, it becomes for him a strong shield.

In truth is the stability of all things; in falsehood is their ruin.

Know that wisdom comes through study, study through reflection, constant application, and diligence; for not the organs of sight, but the heart is blind.

No man's reproof will be of avail to a person if he is not reproved by his own intellect.

Evidence of a man's mind is his choice; and his faith is not perfected until his mind has been perfected.

Man is only wise during the time that he searches for wisdom: when he imagines that he has completely attained it, he is a fool.

Know that the superiority of Intellect over faith is like the superiority of the head over the body; when the head perishes the body perishes.

The crown of the intelligent man is humility; the sequel of humility is ever peace.

To a tranquil mind there is both beginning and end: its beginning is wisdom, and its end peace. He who has a tranquil mind, his life is happy, his joy abiding, and the vagaries of fortune trouble him not.

If thou wilt commit all thine affairs to the care of God, thou attainest the path of happiness.

In much silence reverence develops.

[1] From *Choice of Pearls* by Ibn Gebiral. Translated by Cohen.