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DIALECTIC

FROM THE WORKS OF PROCLUS AND THE WRITINGS OF
THOMAS TAYLOR*

I. Definition.—A broad and general definition of dialectic is to call it a discipline of the human soul, especially in relation to its intellectual activity. It is a method of training by means of which the latent knowledge or innate ideas of the soul may be educated, so that it is enabled to know itself, and to know how to apply perfectly all its powers to the ends for which they are designed.

Dialectic ranks highest among disciplines, for it is at the apex of the art of the discursive reason. It may be called a discipline of disciplines, since it provides the means for demonstrating not only the relation of all parts of truth to one another and to fundamental principles, but also the interrelation of basic ideas and their connection with the Principle of Principles, the Infinite Unity of Unities.

II. Purpose.—“The true end of man, according to the Platonic philosophy,” says Thomas Taylor, “is an assimilation to Divinity in the greatest perfection of which human nature is capable.” In pursuing this object “it is necessary to pass rapidly from things visible and audible to those which are alone seen by the eye of intellect.”

A beginning can be made with the study of the principles underlying the mathematical sciences, for such considerations lead from particulars and the concrete to the abstract and universal. When properly studied according to its principles, this science will “move the inherent knowledge of the soul, awaken

* All the quotations are from Thomas Taylor, or his translations of the authors mentioned, except where otherwise indicated.

its intelligence, purify its dianoetic power, and call forth its essential forms from their dormant retreats.

“Dialectic, however, or the vertex of the mathematical sciences, as it is called by Plato in his *Republic*, is that master-discipline which particularly leads us up to an Intelligible Essence. This first of sciences is essentially different from ordinary logic, and is the same with what Aristotle calls the first philosophy and wisdom.

“Dialectic differs from the mathematical sciences in this: that the latter flows from and the former is above hypothesis; that dialectic has a power of knowing universals; that it ascends to the Good and the Supreme Cause of all; and that it considers Good as the end of its elevation; but that the mathematical science, which previously fabricates for itself definite principles, from which it evinces things consequent to such principles, does not tend to the principle, but to the conclusion.

“Socrates, in the *Republic*, speaking of the power of dialectic, says that it surrounds all disciplines like a defensive enclosure, and elevates those that use it to the Good Itself, and the First Unities; that it purifies the eye of the soul; establishes itself in True Beings and the One Principle of all things, and ends at last in that which is no longer hypothetical. The power of dialectic therefore being thus great, and the end of this path so mighty, it must by no means be confounded with arguments which are only conversant with opinion, for the former is the guardian of sciences, and the passage to it is through these, but the latter is perfectly destitute of disciplinative science. To which we may add, that the method of reasoning which is founded on opinion regards solely that which is apparent; but the dialectic method endeavours to arrive at the One Itself, always employing for this purpose steps of ascent, and at last beautifully ends in the Nature of the Good.”

In the *Sophist* Plato says: “The spirit of dialectic is in no wise particular about fine words. . . . For it is the purification of the soul or intellect at which she wishes to arrive, and this we should understand to be her aim.”

III. Process and Methods.—Proclus, in his commentary on the *Parmenides*, describes the stages of the ascent through dialectic from the many to the One. “The multitude are ignorant how great the power is of dialectic, and that the end of this journeying is Truth and Intellect. For it is not possible for us

to recur from things last to such as are first except by a progression through the middle forms of life. For as our descent into the realms of mortality was effected through many media, the soul always proceeding into that which is more composite, in like manner our ascent must be accomplished through various media, the soul resolving her composite order of life.

“In the first place, therefore, it is requisite to pass beyond the senses as able to know nothing wholly and accurately, but possessing much of the confused, the material, and the passive, in consequence of employing certain instruments of sense. After this, it follows that we should dismiss imaginations, those winged stymphalidae of the soul, as possessing only a figured intellection of things, but by no means able to apprehend unfigured and impartible form, and as impeding the pure and immaterial intellection of the soul by intervening and disturbing it in its investigations. In the third place, we must entirely extirpate multiform opinions, and the wandering of the soul about these; for they are not conversant with the causes of things, nor do they procure for us science, nor the participation of an exempt Intellect. In the fourth place, therefore, we must speedily return to the vast sea of the sciences, and there, by the assistance of dialectic, survey the divisions and compositions of these, and in short, the variety of forms in the soul, and through this survey, unweaving our vital order, behold our dianoetic part. After this, it is requisite, in the fifth place, to separate ourselves from composition, and contemplate by intellectual energy true Beings; for intellect is more excellent than science, and a life according to intellect is preferable to that which is according to science. Many, therefore, are the wanderings of the soul: for one of these is in imaginations, another in opinions, and a third in the dianoetic power. But a life according to intellect is alone inerratic. And this is the mystic port of the soul, into which Homer conducts Ulysses after an abundant wandering of life.

“Three things are requisite to the contemplation of an incorporeal Nature, a naturally good disposition, skill, and alacrity. Through a naturally good disposition faith in a Divine Nature will be spontaneously produced; through skill the truth of paradoxical theorems will be firmly possessed, and through alacrity the amatory tendency of the soul to the contemplation of True Being will be excited.

“But the leader (teacher) in these speculations will not wish to unfold the Divine Truth in a long discourse, but will indicate it with brevity, framing his language to correspond with his intellections; nor will he accomplish this from things known and at hand, but supernally, from principles most profoundly one. Nor, again, will he so discourse as to appear to speak clearly, but he will be satisfied with indications. For it is requisite that mystical concerns should be mystically delivered, and that the most profound conceptions concerning Divine Principles should not be rendered popular. Such, then, is the leader, and such the hearer of these discourses. And in Parmenides you have a perfect leader of this kind; and hence, if we attend to the mode of his discourse we shall find that he teaches many things through a few words, that he derives what he says supernally, and that he only indicates concerning Divine Natures. But in Socrates you have a hearer of a naturally good disposition, indeed, and amatory, but not yet perfectly skilled;* whence also Parmenides exhorts him to exercise himself in dialectic, that he may obtain skill in the theorems, receiving, indeed, his naturally good disposition and impulse, but supplying what is deficient.

“Parmenides informs us that the end of this triple power is the being freed from deception in reasonings concerning Divine Natures: for he who is deficient in one of these three must be compelled to assent to many things that are false.”

In the Platonic dialectic four chief processes are used, namely, analysis, division, definition, and demonstration, and two or more of these methods are generally used in the same dialogue: e.g. The process of definition by the use of division is effectively used both in the *Politicus* and the *Sophist*, while definition, analysis, and demonstration are combined in the *Theaetetus*. In the Dialogues of Plato three kinds of analysis are employed: in the words of Alcuin “the first being an ascent from sensibles to the First Intelligibles, the second being an ascent through things demonstrated and sub-demonstrated to undemonstrated and immediate propositions; and the third proceeding from hypotheses to unhypothetical principles.

“Of the first of these species, Plato has given a most admirable specimen in the speech of Diotima in the *Banquet*. For there he

* This dialogue is represented as taking place while Socrates was a young man and a disciple of Parmenides.

ascends through the beauty about bodies to the beauty in souls; from thence to the beauty in right disciplines; from this, again, to the beauty in laws; from the beauty in laws to the ample sea of beauty; and thus proceeding, he at length arrives at the Beautiful Itself.

“The second species of analysis is as follows: It is necessary to make the thing investigated the subject of hypothesis; to survey such things as are prior to it, and to demonstrate these from things posterior, ascending to such as are prior, until we arrive at the first thing, and to this give our assent. But beginning thence we descend synthetically to the thing investigated. Of this species the following is an example from the *Phaedrus* of Plato. It is inquired whether the soul is immortal; and this being hypothetically admitted, it is inquired in the next place if it is always moved. This being demonstrated, the next inquiry is, if that which is always moved is self-moved: and this again being demonstrated, it is considered whether that which is self-moved is the principle of motion; and afterwards, if this principle is unbegotten. This, then, being admitted as a thing acknowledged, and likewise that what is unbegotten is incorruptible, the demonstration of the thing proposed is thus collected: If there is a principle, it is unbegotten and incorruptible. That which is self-moved is the principle of motion. Soul is self-moved. Soul, therefore, is incorruptible, unbegotten, and immortal.

“Of the third species of analysis, which proceeds from the hypothetical to that which is unhypothetical, Plato has given us a most beautiful specimen in the first hypothesis of his *Parmenides*. For here, taking as his hypothesis that the One is, he proceeds through an orderly series of negations, which are not privative of their subjects, but generative of things which are, as it were, their opposites, till he at length takes away the hypothesis that the One is. For he denies of It all discourse, and every appellation, and thus evidently denies of It not only that It is, but even negation. For all things are posterior to the One, namely things known, knowledge, and the instruments of knowledge. And thus, beginning from the hypothetical, he ends in that which is unhypothetical and truly ineffable.”

IV. The Modes of Application of the Dialectic Method.*—
 “There are three energies,” says Proclus, “of this most scientific

* See also *Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. V, No. 19.

method: the first of which is adapted to youth, and is needful for the purpose of arousing their intellect, which is, as it were, in a dormant state: for it is a true exercise of the eye of the soul in the speculation of things, leading forth through opposite positions the essential impression of reasons which it contains, and considering not only the Divine path, as it were, which conducts to truth, but exploring whether the deviations from it contain anything worthy of belief; and, lastly, stimulating the all-various conceptions of the soul.

“The second energy takes place when intellect rests from investigations, as becoming more familiar with the speculations of beings, and beholds Truth Itself, firmly established upon a pure and holy foundation. And this energy, according to Socrates, by a progression through Ideas, evolves the whole of an Intelligible Nature, till it arrives at That Which is First; and this by analysing, defining, demonstrating, and dividing, proceeding upwards and downwards, till, having entirely investigated the nature of Intelligibles, it raises itself to a Nature superior to beings.

“But the soul, being perfectly established in this Nature, as in her paternal port, no longer tends to a more excellent object of desire, as she has now arrived at the end of her search: and you may say that what is delivered in the *Phaedrus* and *Sophista* is the employment of this energy, giving a twofold division to some, and a fourfold to other operations of the dialectic art; and on this account it is assigned to such as philosophize purely, and no longer require preparatory exercise, but nourish the intellect of their soul in pure intellection.

“The third energy, which is exhibited according to truth, purifies from twofold ignorance when its reasons are employed upon men full of opinion; and this is spoken of in the *Sophista*.

“So that the dialectic energy is triple, either subsisting through opposite arguments, or alone unfolding truth, or alone confuting falsehood. Parmenides, by means of this dialectic, perfects the conceptions of Socrates about Ideas. For, as Proclus well observes, the mode of discourse is everywhere obstetric, but does not confute; and is explorative, but not defensive. But it differs, considered as sometimes proceeding from on high to such things as are last, and sometimes ascending from sensible particulars to such reasons as are accommodated to Divine Causes; but according to each of these it elevates Socrates, calls forth his

native conceptions concerning Ideas, and causes them to possess an expanded distinction. And in this respect, says Proclus, Parmenides truly imitates the Paternal Cause of the universality of things, Who from the Supreme Hypostasis of all beings preserves and perfects all things and draws them upwards by His unknown and ineffable Powers."

The modes of application of dialectic are dealt with from another point of view by Proclus in his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, where he says: "He who instructs should accurately know the aptitudes of those who are instructed, and conformably to these should direct his attention, since everyone is not to be disciplined in a similar manner. But he who is naturally a philosopher is to be led back to an incorporeal essence in one way, he who is a lover in another, and the musician in a still different way. And again, he who, through the imagination of that facility of energy which belongs to a divine nature, is astonished about pleasure, is to be led back in one way; he who through the desire of being sufficient to himself, desires the possession of riches, in another way; and in a still different way, he who through the conception of Divine Power, is busily employed about apparent power. For, images everywhere assuming the appearance of their principles, draw aside unintelligent souls; but it is requisite, departing from these, to press on to those true and real beings.

"And this was the mode of the Socratic doctrine, to lead up everyone to the proper object of his desire. Hence, to the lover of pleasure he pointed out that which is pleasurable with purity and unmingled with pain; for it is evident that this will be more attractive to him who pursues pleasure than that which is mingled with its contrary. To the lover of riches he indicated where That Which is truly sufficient to Itself abides, and Which in no respect suffers indigence; for this must be more ardently pursued by him who aspires after self-perfection, and avoids poverty. But to the lover of dominion he showed where That Which is powerful and governs is to be found, and what the nature is of the Ruling Form of Life which is free from all subjection; for this will be considered as more honourable to the ambitious man than what is mingled with that which is to be avoided. Power, therefore, self-sufficiency, and pleasure are not to be found in material things. For matter is imbecility, and poverty, and the cause of corruption and pain. But it is evident that these, if they

are anywhere to be found, are in immaterial and exempt natures. These natures, therefore, are the proper objects of love, and to these an ascent is to be made. After this manner, therefore, he who instructs ought to introduce discipline from the physical aptitudes in each, to each imparting safety; but he who is instructed should submit himself to his instructor, and gradually be led to the truth, departing from images and subterranean caverns, to the light and true essence, on every side extending himself to that which is unmingled with its contrary, and dismissing that which is divisible and shadowy, but aspiring after that which is universal and impartible. For total Good, as Socrates says in the *Philebus*, is neither desirable only, nor alone perfect and sufficient and able to fill all other things, but It also comprehends in one all these, the perfect, the sufficient, the desirable. For It extends all things to Itself, and imparts to all well-being; but It is regarded by the multitude partially. Hence, some of them, looking only to the desirable which It contains, pursue the pleasurable, which is the image of It; but others, surveying only the perfect, are busily employed about riches; for in these the image of perfection subsists. And others, tending to the sufficient, are astonished about power; for power carries with it a phantasm of sufficiency. To dismiss, therefore, these partial apprehensions of the Good, to look to Its wholeness, and to be led back to Its all-perfect plenitude, liberates, in a becoming manner, those who are instructed from an association with images."

V. The Preparation of the Hearer for Dialectic Methods.—Proclus, in his *Commentary on the First Alcibiades*, shows how Plato; in the opening sections of the Dialogues, prepares the mind of the reader for the reception of truth, and how, throughout the whole of each dialogue, the main principle concerned is kept in view, and permeates the whole in a harmonious manner, so that the reader is led towards this principle in orderly stages, whatever the path taken.

"The prefaces of Plato's dialogues accord with the whole scope of them; and are neither devised by Plato for the sake of dramatic allurements, since this mode of writing is very remote from the magnitude of the philosopher's conceptions, nor are they merely historical; but each is suspended from the design of the dialogue to which it belongs.

"Everything in the dialogues of Plato, in the same manner as

in the Mysteries, is referred to the whole perfection of the particulars which are investigated. Agreeably to this, Plato, in the very beginning of this dialogue (the *First Alcibiades*), appears to me to indicate in a beautiful manner the scope of the whole composition. For this design, as we have said, was to unfold our nature, and the whole essence according to which each of us is defined, and to unveil the Delphic mandate "Know thyself" through demonstrative methods. But the preface itself converts the young man to himself, and represents him as exploring his own pre-subsisting conceptions; and at the same time that it converts him to himself, leads him to a survey, as from a watch-tower, of Socratic science. For an investigation of the cause through which Socrates, alone of all his lovers, does not change his love, but began to love him prior to others, and is not altered when the rest no longer love, evinces him to be a spectator of the whole life of Socrates. The forms of conversion, therefore, are triple. For everything which is converted is either converted to that which is worse than itself, through apostasizing from its proper perfection, or is led back to that which is better than itself through its own life, and an energy according to its nature; or it is converted to itself according to a knowledge co-ordinate in itself, and a middle form of motion.

"A conversion, indeed, to that which is worse is a passion of the soul whose wings suffer a defluxion, and which is now placed in oblivion both of herself and of natures prior to herself. But a conversion both to itself and to a more excellent Nature takes place not in souls only, but in Divine Natures Themselves, as Parmenides teaches us when he establishes two species of conversion and shows 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 in Another, and united with a better Nature. On this account, Socrates says at the end of this dialogue, that he who is converted to and becomes a spectator of himself will by this means behold the whole of a Divine Nature, and through a conversion to himself will be led to an elevated survey of Divinity, and to a conversion to That Which is better than himself.

"These things, therefore, the preface indicates. For it leads Alcibiades from a life tending to externals to a survey of himself, and recalls him through a knowledge of himself to a love of

Socratic science; since a desire to learn the cause of the conduct of Socrates is to become a lover of the pre-subsisting science which he contains.

“Again, Plato signifies in the preface, besides other things, that a worthy man will always employ his knowledge on objects properly co-ordinated to 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, and which always possess a sameness of subsistence. But, according to the distinction adopted by Socrates in the *Republic*, he will conjointly contemplate all intelligibles with simple, uniform, and intellectual knowledge; but will survey the middle reasons of things with a scientific and dianoetic composition: again, with the sensitive power, which is the third from truth, he will touch upon the proper objects of knowledge through instruments of sense, distinguishing in a becoming manner every object of sense. And lastly, by an assimilative power, he will apprehend the images of sensibles.”

JEWELS

Thy spirit should become while yet on earth the peaceful throne of the Divine Being, think, then, how quiet, how gentle, and pure, how reverent thou should'st be.

—*Gerhard Terstegen.*

He that is happy has no history, and the life that is in tune with the melodies of heaven, in tune because it is guided by a purer life, inspired by a loftier impulse than its own, cannot fail of being happy.

—*J. H. Shorthouse.*

ZAMOLXIS, ABARIS, AND HESUS

When serious consideration is given to the traditions of the past, it is found that facts are so interwoven with legends and actual events so blended with myths that it is often difficult to disentangle the one from the other. Perhaps too much stress has been placed upon historical and outward events, for is not the inner life of the soul more real than are its outward acts? Have not the great myths and legends of the past, the epics of Gods and Heroes, had a greater influence upon mankind than the tales of wars and of the rise and fall of nations?

The history of the spiritual life of the soul has never been fully recorded because it never began, even as it never will end, since it is altogether above and beyond time. The nearest approach to this history is to be found symbolically expressed in the lives of those venerable men of ancient days who have most nearly approached the Ideal.

Much of the lore of the Druids is stated to be derived from the Orphic Tradition. Orpheus himself is said to have had for his father a Thracian king and for his mother a goddess, the Muse Calliope, thus suggesting his Divine-human parentage.

Of the Arch-Druids, Zamolxis, Abaris, and Hesus, much that is recorded must be understood in a symbolical manner. They were contemporaries of Pythagoras (who lived about 576-497 B.C.), but their exact dates are uncertain, and although many of those who have written about them were not in sympathy with the Ideals for which they stood, yet nevertheless these Great Ones stand out as mighty figures against the background of time.

There are two kinds of greatness: an outward greatness of material achievement which may be revealed by the historian, and an inner greatness of soul which is not of this world and which can never be outwardly recorded.

Sometimes, as is the case with the Great Saviours and Teachers of men, the two are united, and posterity is the richer for the records and inspiration of their lives; yet even with them there is much which of necessity must remain untold, for the highest achievements of the soul are incommunicable, and the greatest attainments have no outward sign.

It is sometimes difficult to discover from the records of the

lives of the enlightened rulers and sages of antiquity whether they should be regarded as gods walking the earth in human form, or as divinely inspired men, the embodiment of ideal rulership and wisdom.

The legends that have grown up around them deserve the most careful consideration, for in them is preserved much that is worthy of veneration.

When the Wisdom of Mystical Druidism is considered, it must be realized that the most precious of these doctrines were never committed to writing, but were handed on from teacher to pupil by word of mouth alone, and then only after a long probation and a most carefully graduated training. In this respect the system of the Druids was similar to that of the Venerable Master Pythagoras, trainer of souls, but whether they derived their teachings from him, or he from them, or both from a common source, cannot with certainty be determined. That Pythagoras and certain of the Arch-Druids met and discussed together the philosophical and mystical treasures of the mind has been recorded by various writers, as subsequent quotations will show. Also it is quite evident that they were closely united in their aim of leading men out of the tumultuous unrest of the changing sea of transiency, which the Druids named ABRED, into the calm tranquillity of the Heavenly Kingdom of GWYNVYD.

I. ZAMOLXIS

One of the earliest of the Arch-Druids of whom we find any record was Zamolxis. He is variously mentioned as the teacher, the pupil, and the slave of Pythagoras.

Strabo, in his *Geography*,* gives the following information: "It is said that one of the nation of the Getae named Zamolxis had served Pythagoras, and had acquired with this philosopher some astronomical knowledge, in addition to that which he had learned from the Egyptians, amongst whom he had travelled. He returned to his own country, and was highly esteemed both by the chief rulers and the people, and eventually was asked by the king to unite with him in the government as an organ of the will of the Gods. At first he was chosen as priest of the

* Translated by W. Falconer.

Divinity most revered by the Getae, but afterwards was esteemed as a god, and having retired into a district of caverns, inaccessible and unfrequented by other men, he passed his life there, rarely communicating with anyone except the king and his ministers.

“The mountain, likewise, where Zamolxis retired was also held sacred, and was thus distinguished, being named Cogaeonus.”

A further mention of Zamolxis is to be found in Grote’s *History of Greece*.

“The mythical age was peopled with a mingled aggregate of gods, heroes, and men, so confused together that it was often impossible to distinguish to which class any individual name belonged. In regard to the Thracian god, Zamolxis, the Hellepontic Greeks interpreted his character and abilities according to the scheme of Euhemerism.* They affirmed that he had been a man, the slave of the philosopher Pythagoras at Samos, and that he had by his abilities established a religious ascendancy over the minds of the Thracians, and obtained from them divine honours.”

Still another mention of Zamolxis is to be found in the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus.

“The Celtic Druids applied themselves to the Pythagorean philosophy, being urged to this pursuit by Zamolxis, the slave of Pythagoras, a Thracian by birth, who came to those parts after the death of Pythagoras and gave them opportunity of studying the system. And the Celts believe in their Druids as seers and prophets.”

The foregoing quotations are confirmed and further light is thrown on them by Iamblichus in his *Life of Pythagoras*.† He writes: “Zamolxis being a Thracian and the Slave of Pythagoras, after he had heard the discourses of Pythagoras, having obtained his liberty and returned to the Getae, gave laws to them, and exhorted the citizens to fortitude, having persuaded them that the soul is immortal. Hence even at present, all the Galatae and

* “The theory held by Euhemeris that the gods of mythology were but deified mortals, and their deeds only the amplification in imagination of human acts; hence, interpretation of myths as traditional accounts of historical personages and events.”—*Webster’s Dictionary*.

† Translated by Thomas Taylor.

Trallians and many others persuade their children that the soul cannot be destroyed, but that it remains after death, and that death is not to be feared but danger is to be encountered with a firm and manly mind."

In the *Charmides* of Plato, Socrates discourses concerning healing as expounded by "one of the Thracian physicians of Zamolxis," a slave and disciple of Pythagoras. This physician is said to be able to render men immortal and is further quoted by Socrates: "Zamolxis our king, being a god, says that it is not proper to cure the eyes without the head, nor the head without the body, so neither is it proper to cure the body without the soul: and that the reason why many diseases are unknown to the Grecian physicians is because they are ignorant of the whole, to which attention ought to be paid. For when this is not well disposed it is impossible that a part should be well affected. For all things, said he, originate from the soul, and emanate from thence into the body and the whole man, just as things flow from the head to the eyes. It is requisite therefore that the maladies of this should in the first place and especially be healed, in order that the head and the whole body may be well affected. But he said that the soul was cured of its maladies by certain formulas, and that these formulas were beautiful reasons from which temperance was generated in souls, that when this was present it was easy to impart health, both to the head and the rest of the body."

The Arch-Druids were true healers of souls, being well-versed in the ancient lore, enlightening the minds of those who listened to their doctrines, through the "beautiful reasons" of which Plato speaks.

Porphyry, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, names Zamolxis as a disciple of the latter, and mentions that he was given his name because "he was born wrapped in a beaver's skin, called in Thracian, *Zalmus*." He further records that Pythagoras loved him and instructed him in sublime speculations concerning sacred rites and the worship of the Gods.

He most certainly possessed that quality of wisdom which is akin to godliness. With his benignity and wide knowledge it is not surprising that the simple people over whom he ruled should have considered him divine, and that one of the legends handed down to us should tell of his resurrection after death.

II. ABARIS (620-508 B.C.)

The Arch-Druid who became the successor of Zamolxis was Abaris, a Scythian by birth and the son of Scuthus.

His name signifies "Father," or "Master of Knowledge," and it is probable, as more than one writer has pointed out, that there is a connection between the word Abaris and Abred, the Druid Circle of Manifestation through which men are led to the greater realities.

Abaris was said to have been a Hyperborean Priest of Apollo, or the Sun God. There is a legend that he secured from Apollo Himself an arrow which possessed the power of transporting him through the air wherever he wished to travel. This has sometimes been interpreted in a material manner, the arrow being regarded as representing a mariner's compass, but when the properties which the arrow or dart are said to possess are considered, it becomes fairly obvious that it has a mystical significance, and may more properly be regarded as symbolizing the exalted flight of the mind in prayer and prophecy, as well as the inspiration through which these wise men were enabled to confer benefits upon mankind.

The Hyperboreans were "Those who lived beyond the North," in an island identified by Hecateus as Britain.

From his native land of Scythia, Abaris journeyed to the land of the Hyperboreans, probably at an early age, and after being educated and trained by the Druids, he rose to eminence amongst them.

It was the custom in ancient times for the wisest sages to journey from one country to another in order that they might share in the benefits of the wisdom each possessed, and for this purpose Abaris, at an advanced age, travelled from Britain to Greece.

The following account of him is preserved in the writings of the Sophist and Orator Himericus: "Abaris was easy in his address, agreeable in his conversation, active in the despatch and secret in the management of great affairs; quick in judging of present occurrences, and ready to take his part in any sudden emergency; provident, withal, in guarding against futurity; diligent in the quest of wisdom; fond of friendship; trusting very little to fortune; yet having the entire confidence of others,

and trusted with everything for his prudence. He spoke Greek with so much fluency that you would have thought that he had been bred, or brought up, in the Lyceum, and had conversed all his life with the Academy of Athens."

From Greece Abaris journeyed to Italy, and in *The Life of Pythagoras*, by Iamblichus, are to be found records of much that took place between these two great teachers of men, from which the following slightly abridged version is taken.

"When Abaris, the Scythian, came from the Hyperboreans, uninitiated in the Grecian Learning, he was of an advanced age. Pythagoras did not introduce him to erudition through various theorems, but instead of silence and other trials he immediately considered him adapted to be an auditor of his teachings, and instructed him in the shortest way in his treatise *On Nature*, and in another treatise, *On the Gods*. For Abaris came from the Hyperboreans, being a priest of Apollo, Who is there worshipped, an elderly man, and most wise in sacred concerns; but at that time he was returning from Greece to his own country, and passing through Italy and seeing Pythagoras, he especially assimilated him to the God of Whom he was the priest. And believing that he was none other than the God Himself, and that no man resembled him, but that he was truly Apollo, both from the venerable indications which he saw about him, and from those which the priest had known before, he gave Pythagoras a dart which he took with him when he left the temple, as a thing that would be useful to him in the difficulties that would befall him in so long a journey. For he was carried by it in passing through inaccessible places, such as rivers, lakes, marshes, mountains, and the like, and performed through it, as it is said, lustrations, and expelled pestilence and winds from the cities that requested him to liberate them from these evils.

"We are informed, therefore, that Lacedaemon, after having been purified by him, was no longer infested with pestilence, though prior to this it had frequently fallen into this evil. And many other similar particulars are related of the power of Abaris. Pythagoras, however, receiving the dart, and neither being astonished at the novelty of the thing nor asking the reason why it was given to him, but as if he were in reality a god, taking Abaris aside, he showed him his golden thigh, as an indication that he was not wholly deceived in the opinion he had formed

of him; and having enumerated to him the several particulars that were deposited in the temple, he gave him sufficient reason to believe that he had not badly conjectured. Pythagoras also added that he came into the region of mortality for the purpose of remedying and benefiting the condition of mankind, and that on this account he had assumed a human form, lest men being disturbed by the novelty of his transcendency, should avoid the discipline which he possessed. Thus, therefore, Pythagoras unfolded to Abaris, who remained with him, physiology and theology in a compendious way."

Much of this account is symbolic and should not therefore be taken literally; it lays especial stress on what Abaris received from Pythagoras, but it is unquestionable that Pythagoras in his turn must have received many precious truths from the venerable Arch-Druid, as symbolized by the gift of the dart or arrow.

It is further recorded by Iamblichus that Pythagoras and Abaris journeyed to Sicily together: "For when he was detained in captivity by Phalaris, the most cruel of tyrants, a wise man whose name was Abaris was his associate, who came with him for the sake of conversing with him, and asked him many questions, and especially such as were of a sacred nature, respecting the most holy worship, the providence of the Gods, celestial and terrestrial natures, and many other things of a similar kind. But Pythagoras, being under the influence of divine inspiration, answered Abaris vehemently, and with all truth and persuasion, so as to convince those who heard him. Then, however, Phalaris was inflamed with anger against Abaris, because he praised Pythagoras, and was ferociously disposed towards Pythagoras himself. He also dared utter blasphemies against the Gods Themselves, and such as he was accustomed to put forth. But Abaris gave Pythagoras thanks for what he said; and after this, learnt from him that all things are suspended from and governed from the heavens; which he evinced to be the case from many other things, and also from the energy of sacred rites. And Abaris was so far from thinking that Pythagoras, who taught these things, was an enchanter, that he beyond measure admired him. To these things, however, Phalaris replied by openly denying the efficiency of things which are performed in sacred rites. But Abaris transferred the discourse from these particulars to such as are clearly apparent to all men; and endeavoured to persuade him that there is a

Divine Providence, from those circumstances which transcend all human hope and power, whether they are immense wars or incurable diseases, or the corruption of fruits, or the incursions of pestilence, or certain other things of the like kind, which are most difficult to be borne, and deplorable, arising from the beneficent energies of certain divine powers.*

“Phalaris, however, shamelessly and audaciously opposed what was said. Again, therefore, Pythagoras, suspecting that Phalaris intended to put him to death, but at the same time knowing that he was not destined to die by Phalaris, began to address him with great freedom of speech. For looking to Abaris he said that a transition was naturally adapted to take place from the heavens to aerial and terrestrial beings. And again, he showed that all things follow from the heavens, from instances most known to all men. He likewise indubitably demonstrated that the deliberative power of the soul possesses freedom of will. And proceeding still further, he amply discussed the perfect energy of reason and intellect. Afterwards also, with his usual freedom of speech, he spoke concerning tyranny, and all the prerogatives of fortune, and concerning injustice and human avarice, and solidly taught him that all these are of no worth. In the next place, he gave him a divine admonition concerning the most excellent life, and earnestly entered on a comparison of it with the most depraved life. He likewise most clearly unfolded to him how the soul and its powers and passions subsist; and what is the most beautiful thing of all, demonstrated to him that the Gods are not the causes of evils, and that diseases and such things as are the calamities of the body are the seeds of intemperance; reprehending at the same time mythologists and poets for what they have badly said in fable on this subject.”

The passage concludes: “On the very same day in which Phalaris put Pythagoras and Abaris in danger of death, he himself was slain.”

After the journey to Sicily with Pythagoras it is recorded that Abaris returned to the Land of the Hyperboreans, where he spent the remainder of his long life, teaching and writing. He is

* These energies are called beneficent because they are of a purifying character. Hence Plato in the *Timæus* says that a deluge is the consequence of the Gods purifying the earth by water.—Note, by Thomas Taylor.

said to have composed many books, but only the titles of some of these remain. They were :

1. *The Arrival of Apollo among the Hyperboreans.*
2. *The Marriage of the River Hebrus.*
3. *A Theogony of the Gods.*
4. *A Collection of Oracles.*
5. *A Book of Expiatory Prayers.*

III. HESUS or HU

Following Abaris in the succession of the Arch-Druids was Hesus or Hu, better known as Hu Gardan, or Hu the Mighty. He has been called the Priest-King of the Cymric Celts. His name, Hu, is an epithet of Deity, and in bardic theology connotes omniscience.

The chief sources of information concerning Hu Gardan are the Historical Triads, *The Triads of the Island of Britain*, that is to say, the triads of memorial and record. *The Myvyrian Archaeology* gives 126 of these Historical Triads, of which seven mention Hu Gardan.

In the 4th Triad he is referred to as one of the three pillars of the nation of the Isle of Britain: "Hu the Mighty, who conducted the nation of the Cymry into the Isle of Britain from the summer country called Deffrobani, over the hazy sea, to the Isle of Britain, where they continue."

In the 5th Triad are named the three social tribes of the Isle of Britain: "The first was the nation of the Cymry, that came with Hu the Mighty into the Isle of Britain, because he would not possess lands and dominions by fighting and pursuit, but through justice and in peace."

In the 54th Triad Hu is represented as one of the three guardians against oppression in the Isle of Britain.

In the 56th Triad he is named as one of the three benefactors of his countrymen, "Who first showed the method of ploughing the land to the nation of the Cymry when they were in the Summer Country, before they came to the Isle of Britain."

In the 47th Triad Hu is referred to as one of the three Systematizers of the nation of the Cymry, and as having invented method of movement (Clud) and unity of array (Gosgordd) amongst his people.

In the 92nd Triad he is commemorated as having been the first to adapt vocal song to the preservation of memorial and record.

Lastly, in the 97th Triad, a most mighty deed of his is celebrated, which is considered to be one of the three principal achievements of the Isle of Britain. "The Prominent Oxen of Hu the Mighty that dragged the *Avanc* out of the Lake of the Floods (Llyn Llion) so that the lake burst forth no more."

This is a remarkable legend, about which many theories have been formulated. The bursting of the Lake of the Floods is considered by some writers to allude to the deluge, the purification of the earth by water. Those who hold this theory associate Hu with the Patriarch Noah.

The *Avanc*, which has been variously translated as Crocodile, Beaver, Tortoise, and "Water-confined animal," may be interpreted as the personification of inordination, the removal of which from the lake causes the deluge to cease.

It is interesting in this connection to remember that in Hindu Mythology, Vishnu is said to destroy the monster which was the cause of the deluge.

The pair of Oxen that draw the *Avanc* from the lake are named *Piebilo* and *Ninis*, and their names suggest the pairs of opposites, positive and negative, by the harnessing of which inordination is removed.

They are the oxen
Of Hu the Mighty with a piece of his chain;
And his five angels you see,
With golden harness of active fiery flame.*

It is recorded that the drawing of a symbolic monster from a lake by two white Oxen was duly celebrated at certain times as a Druidic Rite, and the lakes associated with this ceremony were considered sacred. The names of many of the lakes amongst the Cambrian Mountains, such as *Llyn Creini* (the Lake of Adoration) and *Llyn Urddyn* (the Lake of Consecration) bear witness to this.

The deluge celebrated in the Druidic Ritual performed by the Priest-King, Hu the Mighty, may be considered as symbolic of a final purification, for after it, according to the legend, "The

* By Llywelyn Moel, a bard of the fifteenth century.

lake burst forth no more," Hu Gardan being the wise teacher and ruler who enables men to attain to the purification of their lower natures.

Taliesin describes him as "The dispenser of good," and Iolo Goch (1370-1420), the illustrious bard of Gwynedd, sings of him:

The Mighty Hu is a sovereign, who is a steady protector,
A king distributing the wine and the praise;
Emperor of the land and sea.

This lays emphasis on the material kingship and majesty of Hu, but there is another aspect that may be found in all the legends that gather about his name and those of the other Arch-Druids, namely, the divine aspect.

This more profound truth is most significantly evident in the poem of the sixteenth-century Bard, Rhys Brydydd:

The smallest of the small
Is Hu the Mighty in the judgment of the world;
And the greatest and Lord over us,
Let us well believe, and our Mysterious God;
Light and swift is His course,
A particle of lucid sunshine is His car;
He is greatest on land and sea:
The greatest Whom I shall behold,
Greater than the worlds.

The word *Hu* means that which pervades or overspreads, as does the omniscience of Deity.

Hu may thus be considered as the Universal Lord, and much that has been previously inexplicable becomes clear.

He is the smallest of the small as well as the greatest and Lord over us, because His magnitude is immeasurable and may only be paradoxically suggested.

With His car of lucid sunshine He draws the *Avanc* of inordination and darkness from the sacred lake, so that all who consciously unite their souls with Him are purified unto life eternal.

It is thus that the ancient legends lead us from the consideration of material things and outward events to the vision of Immutable Reality, for although the Universal Lord has many Names He is One, and union with Him is union with God.

ON THE DUTY OF THE WISE MAN*

By SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

“For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips” (Prov. viii. 7). It is the general custom of the multitude, which the Philosopher (Aristotle, *Top.* 2, c. 1) deems worthy of being followed in the matter of bestowing names on things, to call those “the wise” who arrange their affairs properly and manage them well. On this account, among the other conceptions which mankind entertains regarding a wise man, it is laid down by the Philosopher (*Metaphys.* proem. c. 2) that it pertains to him to *ordinate*. But it follows of necessity that in managing and arranging anything in regard to its purpose, the criterion of good management and arrangement must be derived from that purpose, for everything, be it what it may, is best arranged when it is ordered agreeably to the furtherance of its purpose. Now the purpose of everything is the Good. Hence we see that in the arts one art controls and is, as it were, chief over others, because it pertains to the purpose of the latter. As an example, the medical controls the pharmacological art and determines its developments, because health, with which medicine is concerned, is the purpose for which drugs are made. And the same is evident in the art of navigation with respect to that of shipbuilding, and in the military art with respect to horsemanship and warlike preparation generally. Now these arts which lead other arts are called “archetonic,” or principal arts, whence, furthermore, those who practise these arts, called as they are “masters of their trade,” claim for themselves the title of wise men (or experts). But since these same, dealing as they do with the purposes of particular things, do not reach to the Universal Purpose of all things, they are styled wise only in regard to each his special province. According to this it is written: “As a wise masterbuilder I have laid the foundation” (1 Cor. iii. 10).

But the ultimate purpose of anything whatsoever is that which is intended by the first author or promoter of that thing, and the first Author and Promoter of the Universe is Intellect, as shall be made plain hereafter (L. II, cc. 23 and 24). Hence it necessarily

* New translation by the editors of the *Shrine of Wisdom*.

ensues that the ultimate end of the Universe is the *Good of Intellect*, which is Truth. Therefore it must be that Truth is the ultimate end of the entire Universe, and that, above all else, it is upon the consideration of Truth that philosophy must insist. For this reason did the Heavenly Wisdom, when clothed in flesh, testify that He had come into the world for the manifestation of Truth: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth" (John xviii. 37). But the Philosopher lays down (*Metaphys.* II, text. comm. 3) that philosophy, in its primary aspect, is the Science of Truth, not of any sort of truth, but of that Truth which is the source of all Truth, in a word, which pertains to the first universal Principle of Being of all things; from which it ensues that the Truth of that philosophy is the source of the Principle of all Truth (*Metaphys.* II, text. comm. 4). For the disposition of things is the same in truth as it is in being, since it is the same thing to advocate one of two contradictories or to refute the other, just as medicine at one and the same time assists us to health and protects us from sickness. Whence it follows that just as it is the office of the sage to meditate above all else upon the first Principle of Truth, and likewise to discourse concerning other aspects of Truth, so 'tis also his task to refute that error which is contrary to the Truth. So, conformably with what we have written, this double office of the wise man is set forth in the words which stand at the beginning of this chapter, to wit, to meditate upon Divine Truth, which is that Truth which was ere even the word existed, and thereafter to promulgate that which has been the subject of meditation, this being indicated by the words, "My mouth shall speak truth," and to refute error, which is indicated by the words, "And wickedness (Latin, impiety) is an abomination unto my lips." By this last is meant that falsehood which is opposed to Divine Truth and which is also hostile to religion. For piety is born of religion, whence it is that that error which is contrary to religion takes unto itself the name of impiety.

JEWEL

'Tis not change of place, but glorious principles well practised that establish Heaven in the life of the soul.

—*Traberne.*

ON THE UTILITY OF THE MATHEMATICAL
AND METAPHYSICAL SCIENCES

(INTRODUCTION TO THEORETIC ARITHMETIC)

By THOMAS TAYLOR

PART III*

Such, then, is the utility arising from the proper study of the mathematical sciences, among which theoretic arithmetic, as is shown in the first chapter of this work, is pre-eminent, and the leader of the rest.

With respect to the work itself, in the first and second books, and the additional notes, I have incorporated whatever appeared to me to be most important in the arithmetical writings of Nicomachus, Theo, Iamblichus, and Boetius,† these being the

* For Parts I and II see S.O.W. Nos. 54 and 55.

† With respect to these celebrated men, the exact period in which Theo and Nicomachus lived is uncertain. And all the information that can at present be obtained concerning them is that Theo flourished, as the learned Bullialdus judiciously conjectures, between the age of Tiberius Caesar, and the times of Antonius Pius. He wrote *An Exposition of such things in the Mathematics as are useful to the Reading of Plato*; and that part of this work which relates to Arithmetic and Music, is all that is published at present, though what he wrote on Astronomy is extant in some libraries in manuscript, as we learn from the accurate Fabricius. But Nicomachus, who was a Pythagorean philosopher of Gerasa, a city bordering on Bostra in Arabia, was, according to Fabricius, somewhat posterior to the age of Antonius Pius, as he mentions Ptolemy the astronomer who lived under the reign of that Emperor. This great man was eminently skilled in the mathematical disciplines, and particularly in theoretic arithmetic, so that his extraordinary attainments in this science became proverbial. Hence, the author of the dialogue among the works of Lucian, which is inscribed *Philopatris*, p. 468, says *καίγαρ αριθμεις ως Νικομαχος ο Τερασηνος*, "You numerate like Nicomachus of Gerasa." And Iamblichus, in the Commentary on his Arithmetic, p. 3, says, "I find that Nicomachus has delivered everything pertaining to this science of arithmetic, conformably to the doctrine of Pythagoras. For this man was great in the mathematics, and had for his preceptors men in the highest degree skilled in these disciplines. And independent of these things, he has delivered an admirable order and theory, accompanied with an accurate demonstration of scientific principles." For

only ancient authors extant in print that have professedly written on THEORETIC ARITHMETIC. Indeed, I have given nearly the whole of the last-mentioned author, both because he has written more clearly on this subject than the others, and because, as Fabricius rightly conjectures, he appears to have availed himself of a greater arithmetical work of Nicomachus, which has not been transmitted to the present time. The third book was added by me, in order to show how the Pythagoreans philosophized about numbers, and to unfold as much as possible their mystical and theological arithmetic; conceiving that such an addition was wanting to the completion of the theory of numbers. The reader will also find some things entirely new.

In the last place, I am desirous of adding, for the sake of the liberal reader, the following extract from the Introduction to my translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. It relates to the contemplative, or intellectual energy, the employment of the highest part of our nature.

Aristotle denominates the metaphysical science, at one time *wisdom*, at another time *the first philosophy*, and at another *theology*; signifying by each of these appellations, that it does not rank among those arts and sciences which are conversant with the knowledge of things necessary, or which inquire into things subservient to the advantages and conveniences of the mortal life, but that it is a knowledge and science to be pursued for its own sake, and which speculates the first principles and causes of things; for these are beings in the most eminent degree. Hence, in the sixth book of his Nicomachean Ethics, he defines wisdom to be the most accurate of sciences, the science of things most honourable, that is, principles, and the summit of all disciplines. With the multitude, indeed, merged in sense, whatever does not contribute to the good of the merely animal life is considered as a thing of no value; and hence, by the better part of them, it is regarded with indifference, and by the greater number with contempt. It is vain to talk to such as these of a

an account of Iamblichus, who was one of the most eminent of the genuine disciples of Plato, and who in the opinion of the Emperor Julian was indeed posterior in time to Plato, but not in genius, I refer the reader to the History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology at the end of my *Proclus on Euclid*. And as to Boetius, his life and works are too well known to need any discussion of them at present.

good purely intellectual, which is independent of chance and fortune, which is desirable for its own sake, and which confers the most pure and permanent felicity on its possessor; for what passion can it gratify? what sense can it charm? Ignorant of the mighty difference between things necessary and such as are eminently good, they mistake means for ends, pursue the flying mockeries of being, for such are all sensible natures, and idly attempt to grasp the phantoms of felicity.

The conceptions of those experimental philosophers who expect to find Truth in the labyrinths of matter are, in this respect, not much more elevated than those of the vulgar: for they are ignorant that Truth is the most splendid of all things, that she is the constant companion of Divinity, and proceeds together with Him through the universe; that only the shining traces of her feet are conspicuous in *form*; and that in the dark windings of *matter* she left nothing but a most obscure and fleeting resemblance of herself. This delusive phantom, however, the man of material science ardently explores, often unconscious that he is running in profound darkness and infinite perplexity, and that he is hastening after an object which eludes all detection and mocks all pursuit.

It is well said, indeed, by Aristotle, that wisdom is the science of principles and causes, since he who knows these, knows also the effects of which they are the source. Such a one knows particulars so far as they are comprehended in universals, and this knowledge is superior to that which is partial, and coordinated to a partial object: for does not everything energize in a becoming manner when it energizes according to its own power and nature? As, for instance, does not nature, in conformity to the order of its essence, energize naturally, and Intellect intellectually? for, this being admitted, it follows that knowledge subsists according to the nature of that which it knows, and not according to the nature of that which is known. Particulars, therefore, when they are beheld enveloped in their causes, are then known in the most excellent manner; and this is the peculiarity of intellectual perception and resembles, if it be lawful so to speak, the knowledge of Divinity Himself. For the most exalted conception we can form of His knowledge is this, that He knows all things in such a manner as is accommodated to His nature, namely, divisible things indivisibly, things multi-

plied uniformly, things generated according to an eternal Intelligence, and totally whatever is partial. Hence, He knows sensibles without possessing sense, and, without being present to things in place, knows them prior to all local presence, and imparts to everything that which everything is capable of receiving. The unstable essence, therefore, of apparent natures is not known by Him in an unstable but in a definite manner; nor does He know that which is subject to all-various mutations dubiously, but in a manner perpetually the same; for by knowing Himself, He knows everything of which He is the cause, possessing a knowledge transcendently more accurate than that which is co-ordinate to the objects of knowledge. Hence, in order to know sensible natures, He is not indigent of sense, or opinion, or science; for it is Himself Who produces all these, and Who, in the unfathomable depths of the intellection of Himself, comprehends an united knowledge of them, according to cause, and in one simplicity of perception.

Wisdom, therefore, considered as a causal knowledge of particulars, resembles the knowledge of Divinity, and consequently is most honourable and most excellent. And hence, the wise man, from resembling, must be the friend of Divinity. Beautifully, therefore, is it observed by Aristotle, "That the man who energizes according to Intellect, and is mentally disposed in the best manner, is also it would seem most dear to Divinity. For if any attention is paid by the Gods to human affairs, as it appears there is, it is also reasonable to suppose that they will be delighted with that which is most excellent and most allied to Themselves; but this is Intellect; and likewise that They will reward those who especially love and honour this, as taking care of that which is dear to themselves, and acting rightly and well.

The contemplative or intellectual energy indeed, when it is possessed in the highest perfection of which our nature is capable, raises its possessor above the condition of humanity. "For a life according to Intellect," says the Stagirite, "is more excellent than that which falls to the lot of man; for he does not thus live so far as he is man, but so far as he contains something divine. And as much as this divine part of him differs from the composite, so much also does this energy differ from that of the other virtues. If, therefore, Intellect compared with man is divine, the life also which is according to Intellect will be divine with respect to

human life. It is, however, requisite that we should not follow the exhortations of those who say that man should be wise in human, and a mortal in mortal concerns, but we should endeavour as much as possible to immortalize ourselves, and to do everything which may contribute to a life according to our most excellent part. For this, though it is small in bulk, yet far transcends all the other parts in power and dignity." After this, he shows that Intellect is the true man, from Its being that which is most powerful, principal, and excellent in our nature; "so that," says he, "it would be absurd not to choose that which is our proper life, but that which belongs to something different from ourselves."

Ridiculous, therefore, as well as grovelling, are those conceptions which lead men to value knowledge so far only as it contributes to the necessities, the comforts, and the refinements of the merely human life; and partial and unscientific is that definition of virtue, which makes its highest energies to be those of morality; for moral virtue is more human, but intellectual more divine. The former is preparatory to felicity; but the latter, when perfect, is accompanied with perfect beatitude. Virtuous, therefore, is the man who relieves the corporeal wants of others, who wipes away the tear of sorrow, and gives agony repose; but more virtuous he who, by disseminating wisdom, expels ignorance from the soul, and thus benefits the immortal part of man. For it may indeed be truly said, that he who has not even a knowledge of common things is a brute among men; that he who has an accurate knowledge of human concerns alone is a man among brutes; but that he who knows all that can be known by intellectual energy, is a God among men.

SEED THOUGHT

Be patient with every one, but above all with yourself. I mean do not be disturbed because of your imperfections, and always rise up bravely after a fall. I am glad that you make a daily new beginning; there is no better means of progress in the spiritual life than to be continually beginning afresh, and never to think that we have done enough.

—*Francis de Sales.*