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FO-HI

In considering Fo-hi it will be necessary to realize in some measure his relation to the Chinese Cosmogonic and Theogonic scheme, since in the earliest references to him he is portrayed as mythical in character and associated with that period immediately following the Golden Age of China previous to the dawn of actual history.

Before the beginning of things there was only Tai-chi, the Absolute. It had no cause or origin, neither was It created.

From It emerge the Yang and Yin, differentiated as regards Tai-chi, but immaterial and subjective.

From them spiritually arises Pan-ku, the Fashioner of the Universe. He is symbolically depicted with a hammer in one hand and a chisel in the other, with which he hews the Universe out of Chaos. He is attended by the Four Mythical Creatures: the LUNG or Dragon, the FENG or Phoenix, the LIN or Unicorn (or Dragon-Horse), and the KWEI or Tortoise, which are said to preside over the four quarters of the heavens: the Dragon over the East, the Phoenix over the South, the Unicorn over the West, and the Tortoise over the North.

Pan-ku is mystically said to have created the Universe in 18,000 years, his body being its fabric. His head became the mountains, his breath the wind and clouds, his voice the thunder,

his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his blood rivers, his flesh soil, his skin and hair plants and trees, and his bones minerals.

After the creation of the world there are said to have been the three mystical periods: those of Heaven, Earth, and Man, the first being under the rule of Yang, the second under that of Yin, and the third uniting both of these principles in Man.

Some authorities claim that there were ten fabulous ages; that Pan-ku himself presided over the first, that the second had five rulers corresponding to the notes of the Chinese musical scale, and that the records of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth epochs have been lost. The subsequent ages are variously designated, but they are extremely legendary in character and in no sense historical.

The first men were said to have been Nomads dwelling in caves; they were followed by the Nesting People who lived in trees; these in turn were succeeded by the Fire People who had learned to kindle flames.

Chuang Tsze tells of the Golden Age of China: "Primeval man rested in the perfect tranquility of nature; in the far-off ancient days the operations of the Yin and Yang were in perfect harmony, their stillness and movement were undisturbed,\* the four seasons followed their ordered course, suffering and violent death were unknown, men were possessed of knowledge, but they had no occasion to use it. This was the state of Perfect Unity and spontaneity." (Book XVI.)

It was necessary, however, for man to energize his faculties and actualize his knowledge, but in so doing he concerned himself with particular existences and his own personal purposes and desires, thus forgetting his Divine Parentage. This led to a decline from the condition of pristine purity and virtue. Following this period was one in which man was ruled by wise emperors, the first of whom were Sui-jen and Fo-hi, through whose rulership the decline was arrested.

Sui-jen, "the Man of the Burning Speculum," the Fire Producer, the Prometheus of China, is said to have ruled over the Fire People, but the first Emperor to be mentioned by Confucius is Fo-hi, the Great Illuminator, who is historical inasmuch as dates have been given for his birth and death (those most usually accepted being 2852-2737 B.C.), although very many of the narratives concern-

\* By the inordinations of man.

ing him are obviously mythical in character. Fo-hi was the direct successor of Sui-jen, having been one of his favourite disciples and chosen with general acclamation to succeed him. It is generally conceded that he was the founder of perfect government and kingly rule, by which the ruler endeavours to bring the people back to the normal and ideal course of humanity; and as such he is universally revered.

Mingled with the historical descriptions of the great benefits which Fo-hi bestowed upon his people are many narrations of a miraculous character.

It is recorded that his mother, whilst walking one day along the bank of a river, was enveloped by the beautiful arch of a Rainbow, a symbol of Spirit, and thus became pregnant by the inspiration of Heaven, and that after a gestation of twelve years she bore a son.

In that Chinese work known as *The Synopsis of History* his birth is said to have taken place at Chong-ki, near Kung-chang, in the province of Kan-su, which commentators have located in the vicinity of the modern Si-ngan Fu.

The name Fo-hi signifies Hidden Breath, or Spirit. He was said to have possessed perfect holiness and virtue, "resplendent as the glorious light of the sun and moon," from which his dynastic name Tai Hao, "The Grandly Bright," is derived. He is also sometimes called Pao-hsi, "The Sacrificer," as having instituted the periodic sacrifice of the fruits of the earth, which sacrifice he himself is said to have offered from one of the terraces of his palace. Another name by which he was revered was T'ien Huang Shih, "The Celestial Emperor" or "Mystical Sovereign."

One of the most interesting and significant discoveries or inventions which have been attributed to Fo-hi is that of the Eight Trigrams.

By some authorities these diagrams are considered to be the originals of written characters, replacing the knotted cords previously employed by the Chinese in their simple records, but they are of even greater importance since they are the basis of that mysterious work, the *Yi King* or *Book of Changes*, said to contain the hidden secrets of all things, and which has been venerated by Chinese scholars of all ages. This basis rests in the Yang and Yin, which in the diagrams are denoted by the whole and the broken lines respectively, as will be subsequently explained.

The Great Confucius himself wrote certain Appendices to the *Yi King*, in the third of which is to be found the following:

“In the ancient times when Fo-hi ruled over all under Heaven, looking up he observed the brilliant forms shown forth in the sky, looking down he beheld the patterns shown forth upon the earth. He further observed the adorning patterns of birds and beasts, together with products of the earth. Near at hand he selected his own body for consideration, and as to the remote, he included all things in his survey. Thus he devised the Eight Trigrams in order to show forth the attributes of Spiritual Intelligences, and to classify the natural dispositions of the myriad of things.”

This passage exemplifies the manner in which the trigrams relate (as do the Yin and Yang) the below with the above, and how the attributes of the Spiritual Intelligences are reflected in the myriad of things and may thus be classified.

A more legendary and symbolical account of the discovery of the trigrams was given by the scholar Kung Ngan-kwoh in the second century B.C. He declares that a Dragon Horse issued from the River Ho (the Yellow River) bearing a map of mysterious figures upon its back, from which Fo-hi derived his idea of the Eight Diagrams.

The Dragon Horse is the LIN or Unicorn, previously mentioned as the third of the four Mystical Creatures which attended Pan-ku, the Chinese Creator. Ts'ai Yung asserts that it is the incarnate essence of the five elements: Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth. It is said to be the personification of gentleness, benevolence, felicity, wise administration, and perfect goodness. It will thus be seen that it was a fitting messenger for the conveying of the diagrams to the Divinely Enlightened Ruler.

With this legend of the Ho diagram is closely associated another, that of the writings of the River Lo. It is related that whilst the Emperor Yu (who came to the throne 2286 B.C.) was engaged in draining the land of floods, a Divine Tortoise presented to his gaze writings upon its back composed of the numbers from one to nine which were used by that wise ruler as the basis of his ninefold system of ethics and philosophy. The KWEI or Tortoise, the fourth of the Mystical Creatures, is an emblem of longevity, strength, and endurance: therefore it fittingly unfolds to men the meaning of numeration.

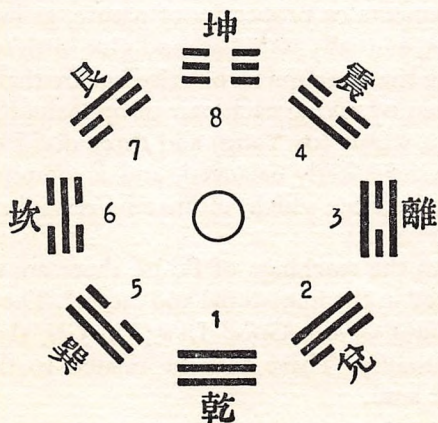
Kung Ngan-kwoh bases these legends on texts of still greater antiquity, for in the third Appendix of the *Yi King* it is written: "The Ho gave forth the map, the Lo the writings, and the sages adopted these as their patterns."

Again, in the *Li Ki* (*The Book of Rites*), we find: "The Ho sent forth the Horse with the plan on his back." (Book VII, Section IV.)

Confucius also alludes to the map in his *Analects*, when in a time devoid of inspiration he exclaims dejectedly: "The Feng bird does not come, the river sends forth no map: it is all over with me."

The FENG or Phoenix is the second of the four spiritually endowed creatures and denotes auspiciousness. It is said to appear when a Sage ascends the throne of the Empire. It had plumage of five colours, typical of the five virtues: Benevolence, Uprightness, Propriety, Enlightenment, and Sincerity. In its highest and most exalted significance it is a symbol of Bliss, and of Mystical Resurrection.

The Map of the diagrams on the back of the Dragon Horse was said to have been arranged in the form of a circle thus:



The threefold lines of the diagram have a close resemblance to the threefold Druidic symbol, or rays of light,\* for both are associated with the beginnings of the written word as it emerges from "the hiddenness of things."

The diagram consists of eight combinations of whole and divided lines, the former symbolizes the Yang or positive and the latter the Yin or negative element in all things† as they proceed from the Ultimate Unity.

The significance of each of the groups of three lines according to ancient tradition is as follows:

1. Heaven (Strength). This represents the complete Yang.
2. Still Water (Satisfaction).
3. Fire (Brightness).
4. Thunder (Energy).
5. Wind (Penetration).
6. Flowing Water (Permeation).
7. Mountains (Repose).
8. Earth (Docility). This represents the complete Yin.

This diagram is said to be a key to the phenomena of the universe, and also to philosophical and moral principles. A ceaseless process is held to be at work, in the course of which the various elements or properties of nature, as indicated in the figures, or KWA, mutually assimilate and give birth to one another, thus producing the phenomena of existence by their interaction.

It will be seen by taking each pair of opposite KWA that three of the lines are whole (or Yang) and three divided (or Yin), so that the figure is perfectly balanced, and is therefore a symbol of natural perfection, which ultimately rests in Supernatural Perfection.

According to the teachings of Fo-hi, there are three qualities which are united in the immaterial and eternal. They are (1) *Tang*, Fire or the Light of the Good Law; (2) *Chi*, the Subtle; and (3) *Shin*, Spirituality. These may be related to the powers or faculties of the soul.

\* See *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 54, p. 173.

† For further references to the Yang and Yin, see "The Simple Way of Lao Tsze" (*Shrine Manual*, No. 8) and also the writings of Chu Hsi in *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 38, 39, 40, and 41.

*Tang* is the means by which the will is directed to the most ordinate achievement in accordance with the highest moral precepts.

*Chi*, in its natural aspect, is the vapour which ascends when heat acts upon moisture. In man it is the vital force which gives him stamina, the energy of his heart, and his emotional nature.

*Shin* is the power or cause which operates by its own energy. In man it is the directing capacity of the mind, which determines the extent of his spirituality.

Fo-hi, as Emperor, is held in reverence for a great variety of achievements. He instituted religious worship and the veneration of Tai-chi. By the practice of Astronomy and the observation of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, he indicated the Solstices and Equinoxes, and kept them as festivals of high religious significance with appropriate rites and offerings. He invented a Calendar founded on the Cycle of Sixty, divided into minutes, hours, days, and years, and also a form of horary and cyclical notation with which to record them.

Marriage, which before his time had not been instituted in a definitely organized legal and religious form, became under his direction a solemn religious bond, invested with sacredness.

The custom of cooking food is also attributed to Fo-hi, it having previously been eaten raw. He likewise used fire in fusing iron for the fashioning of various utensils and implements. To him also is attributed the taming of the six domestic animals, namely, the horse, the cow, the hen, the hog, the dog, and the sheep.

In music he invented stringed instruments, especially the Kin and the Si. The Kin is a form of lute or harpsicord, having seven silken strings, but the Si is usually larger, being a species of lute with five, fifteen, twenty-five, or fifty strings, according to its size.

As the patron of healers Fo-hi became especially venerated in later years, for his Eight Trigrams form the basis of the philosophy of Chinese healing. This philosophy recognizes that by the conformity of man's outer nature with his inner and spiritual nature his balance may be restored and perfect health enjoyed.

Fo-hi's capital was called Ch'on, and was situated in the province now known as Ho-nan.

After a long and prosperous reign of 115 years, he was succeeded by Nu Kua Shih, who was either his wife or his sister.

The following legendary account of her was given by the historian, Sze-ma Cheng, in the eighth century A.D.

“Fo-hi was succeeded by Nu Kwa; she had the body of a serpent and a human head, with the virtuous endowments of a divine sage. Towards the end of her reign there was among the feudatory princes Kung Kung, whose function was the administration of punishment. Violent and ambitious, he became a rebel, and sought by the influence of water to overcome that of wood, under which Nu Kwa reigned. He did battle but was not victorious; whereon he struck his head against the Imperfect Mountain and brought it down. The pillars of heaven were broken and the corners of the earth gave way. Whereupon Nu Kwa melted stones of five colours to repair the heavens and cut off the feet of the Tortoise to set upright the four extremities of the earth. Gathering the ashes of reeds she stopped the flooding waters, and thus rescued the land of Ki, the early seat of Chinese sovereignty.”

Among the second-century sculptures on the Wu-chi-shan tombs in Shan-tung is to be found a representation of two figures, one male and the other female, with human bodies and the tails of serpents intertwined, which are said to be Fo-hi and Nu Kwa.

The former holds in his right hand a square, an emblem of the virtue and morality of his rule. The serpents' tails symbolize the wisdom of the two sovereigns.

Concerning the legend of Nu Kwa there may be various interpretations, but the following suggestions are given.

The whole legend is undoubtedly mystical and symbolical rather than a record of history or fact, and has a cosmological as well as a human significance. In some versions Nu Kwa is called “The Royal Lady of the West,” and is given deific rank as the Mother Goddess. She is said to have conferred upon mankind the gift of jade, the symbol of immortality.

The five elements, Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth, play an important part in Chinese Cosmology. According to Chu Hsi, they are not identical with the natural substances whose names they bear, but represent the subtle essences of these, which permeate all created things in various proportions.

Kung Kung, whose name means collective ingenuity or skill, when misapplied, symbolizes the unregenerate human will break-



ing all natural laws. He endeavours by means of Water, which is a negative Yin principle (considered in this aspect as allied to the Northern Quarter and Winter), to overcome Wood, a positive or Yang principle (here allied to the Eastern Quarter and Spring)\*, under which Nu Kwa reigned; but he is not successful: Spring always triumphs over Winter.

The Imperfect Mountain, Pu-chou Shan, symbolizes, as its name implies, the natural limitations which man must overcome before he can rise to his true lordship over nature. If he strikes his head against it, that is if he breaks the laws of nature, he only brings tribulation upon himself and his fellows. It is not by such misuse of force, but by conformity to higher laws that man progresses.

The pillars of heaven may be considered as symbolizing those higher laws through which man is related to the Spiritual Realms. Even these, in their manifested aspects, he is permitted to break, but in so doing he cuts himself off, in a relative and temporary sense, from the stability and security which they confer upon him. As a consequence of this event, a rent seems to be made in the heavens, and the foundations of his personal institutions and possessions are broken, disorder and destruction appearing everywhere.

It is here that Nu Kwa intervenes, and by her providential operations order is restored. Her melting of the stones of five colours can be taken to signify the perfect and ideal blending of the five elements, which in spite of misdirected human energy is always providentially accomplished. The feet of the Tortoise represent that stability which follows when all human concerns are ordained to the Divine.

The ashes of reeds with which she stops the floods are analogous to the transmutation of the human passions; the reeds symbolize human life, and the ashes the essential part of man remaining after the fiery purification. Nothing is ever wasted, but all by providential action is turned to good account.

Nu Kwa finally repairs the sky and restores the Kingdom, and as a proof of the truth of this it is naïvely recorded that the patch in the sky is still to be seen in the so-called "coal-sacks" near the Southern Cross!

By the consideration of legends such as the foregoing an

\* See *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 41, p. 121.

insight is obtained into the mystical truths which underlie them, for similar legends appear in all times and countries owing to the similarity of human ideals and the Realities towards which all men in some measure aspire. Thus to penetrate to the inner significance of the legends of one race is to touch those Universal Principles expressed in various ways by the most exalted minds of all races and times. The spiritual meaning is, however, only apprehended by soul-vision, which is above all barriers of time and place and condition, and in the completeness of this vision universal truth is possessed.

## PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

Behold, O God, we yield ourselves wholly both inwardly and outwardly in soul and body with all our powers and energies to Thy will. O Almighty Father, make us Thine own.

—*Hatermann.*

We commend ourselves to Thee, O Father, and to the gracious influence of Thy Holy Spirit. Watch over our senses and our thoughts, root out all pride in us, and give us humility and contrition of heart. Teach us to do according to Thy Will and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of Thy brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of Thy wisdom.

—*St. Augustine.*

We thank Thee, O God, with our whole hearts, and bless Thy name for ever and ever. Thou hast done all things well.

—*B. Albrecht.*

Almighty and Eternal God, we pray Thee enkindle by Thy grace in us to whom Thou hast given the first fruits of the Spirit, ever more of such holy and ardent desire after perfect union with Thyself, and complete enjoyment of that glorious freedom to which Thou hast called us.

—*R. Rothe.*

O Lord our God, holy and incomprehensible, Who hast bidden the light to shine out of darkness, make us to be children of the light and of the day and heirs of Thy everlasting inheritance.

—*Greek Church.*

## THE FIRST CAUSE

FROM SIMPLICIUS' COMMENTARY ON EPICETUS' ENCHIRIDION.\*

## CHAPTER XXXI

The beginning of our inquiry is to see what the name of God (*θεός*) means. Those who used it first gave it to the bodies that move about in the heaven, from their "running" (*θεεῖν*), that is, their quick and cursive movement. Later on they transferred the name to the incorporeal and intelligible causes of things, and so up to the One Principle and Cause of all; so that the name signifies the Principle of things that are, the First Supreme Intelligible Cause.

For everything that is, either comes into being by chance or accident, or else has prior causes, by whose agency it comes into being. But what comes into being by chance or accident has no definite efficient cause, nor is there any definite aim for it; for the cause would not subsist by chance or accident but in priority and would make an aim. The origin of accidental things observes no consistent order or sequence; but in the case of everything that comes into being according to nature and plan, there is a definite aim for the maker. For example, the farmer sows and plants with the aim of production; the coition of animals looks to the birth of young; and the sequence and order of generation is observed from the beginning to the end, some things following it in the beginning, some in the middle, some in the end, in a constant series. In plants, for instance, the seed is cast into the ground, is moistened by water, puts forth roots and buds, then produces a stalk or branches, and so on in order up to the bearing and ripening of the fruit. And with animals the seed, nurtured in the womb, grows and is formed into the embryo, which is fostered and perfected, and at the proper time brought forth. The same ordered sequence of generation is always kept. If therefore that which comes into being according to nature and plan has a definite cause, if its maker has a definite aim, and it comes to fulfilment ever in the same sequence and order; the obvious conclusion is that what is according to nature and plan, everything in fact which comes into being with a purpose in the universe, is not the

\* Translated from the Greek by the Editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom*.

result of chance or accident, but in accordance with prior causes. So there must be prior causes of what comes into being. And if these causes are generated there must of necessity be other causes prior to them until we come to things which are not generated; these are no longer among things which are always becoming, but are more truly said to *be*, as they are altogether ungenerated, inasmuch as they have the cause of their being in themselves and not from without. Thus the first ungenerated causes are either self-subsistent, or even higher than self-subsistent, as the argument will show as it goes on.

In the same way, too, as we ascend from movement, we shall find that the first motive causes are either self-motive, or unmoved. For the alter-motive is moved by something else; and this other thing is either itself moved by another, and so on to infinity (which is impossible; for there will be nothing thus moving or moved, unless there is a principle of movement), or else the first alter-motive thing must be moved by what is self-motive, or by what is unmoved. But that which is entirely unmoved in respect of all movement rather stops and fixes things, making them stay always just as they are, without change. Therefore it must be the self-motive which first moves the alter-motive things which come into being and perish, grow and diminish, change in quality, move from place to place. For that which comes into being cannot do so of itself: if it did, it would have to *be* before it came into being; nor does that which grows grow of itself, for it grows by addition; nor does that which changes change of itself, for it is changed by an opposite quality. Neither does anything change its position of itself; for all things which are moved in this kind of movement will be shown to be bodies, which cannot be self-motive. So the proximate causes of things which come into being and are not self-motive must be self-motive. In fact, if one could suppose everything to be standing still, movement could not begin from anything else than the self-motive. For the unmoved always stays as it is, and what is not self-motive waits for the force of the mover.

Moreover, the principles must be simple: for composite things are derived from simple things; and the simple by nature precedes the composite. Let us, then, ascending from below, and starting from what is nearest, inquire whether bodies can be regarded as principles, such as our argument supposed the first principles to

be; or whether these bodies which are moved can be neither self-subsistent nor self-motive. For the self-motive is called self-motive either because part of it moves and part is moved; or because it moves itself as a whole, and is moved by itself. But if it moves in part and is moved in part, the same question must be asked about the part which moves, whether it is self-motive, or moves as it is moved from without; if so, either we shall proceed to infinity, or shall assume the first thing that moves to be self-motive, as wholly moving and wholly moved. The same must be said of the self-subsistent. For the first and supremely self-subsistent must wholly cause to subsist and wholly subsist. And being such it must immediately follow that it is impartible and indivisible. For in a partible and divisible thing the parts have not all the same relation with the whole; so that the whole is not both the mover and the moved, the cause of subsistence and that which subsists. Moreover, bodies cannot even be simple, inasmuch as they come from something underlying them, and from form, and many things which make up that form, such as size, shape, colour, and the like; which are not prototypes, but manifestations of the prototypes in something underlying and formless, which participates in them. For where the prototypes are, each is that thing which it is, and has no need of anything formless to participate. While where the participation in the prototypes is, there must necessarily be something else, itself formless, which participates.

If, then, the principles are incorporeal and indivisible, and simple, and archetypal, and self-motive, and self-subsistent, or something higher than these (and bodies cannot be such): then it is clear that bodies could not be principles. What then is the self-motive, which, we say, being the motive power of bodies which are not self-motive, has the place of principle in relation to them? Is it that which moves from within? But if this, too, were moved by another, it could not be said to be moved from within, but from without, as bodies are. For the real mover is the first mover; just as, if I move the stone with my hand and stick, I am the real mover. What is it, then, which moves bodies from within? What else but that which we call soul? For the ensouled is moved from within; and that which is moved from within we call ensouled. If, therefore, it is the soul that moves bodies from within, and that which moves bodies from within

is the self-motive, the soul would be the self-motive, the principle and cause of things which come into existence and are moved; containing in itself the reasons of these things, according to which what comes into existence comes into existence, and what is moved is moved. For if the forms in bodies are not archetypal, but subsist proximately from the self-motive, it is clear that of every form in bodies, and of generated things in common, the first principle is of soul, and the forms in soul are the more perfect and pure. For—to take a single example—bodily beauty is in flesh and sinews, and those things which make up the bodies of living creatures; it beautifies them, as far as is possible; but itself also partakes of their lack of beauty, and is immersed in it. But the beauty in the soul, freed from all these things, and no longer an image of beauty, but beautiful in itself, is perfect; not partly beautiful and partly not beautiful, but wholly and entirely beautiful. Therefore also when the soul sees the beauty in itself, or in another soul, it despises bodily beauty, and scorns it, comparing it with the other. So also each of the other ideas is primary and pure in the soul.

But it is clear that, just as bodies differ, so also do the souls which move their own bodies—some being the souls of heavenly bodies, others of earthly. For it is absurd to suppose that the lower bodies are ensouled and live, while the higher are without souls and dead. So the souls have the same relation with one another as the bodies have, the heavenly being the causes of the earthly. And the soul is a truly noble and precious thing, especially the heavenly soul, and is fitted to take the place of a principle, but not of the First Principle. For the self-motive and self-subsistent, while it is prior to what is not self-motive and self-subsistent, yet has a kind of double nature, as mover and the moved, subsistence and that which causes subsistence. And before the composite must be the single, before the two the one. Again the self-motive is moved by itself; though it *is* moved, and changes, in its activities if not in its essence: being moved not in bodily movements (in respect of them it is unmoved), but in soul movements; the names of these are consideration, deliberation, intention, opinion; the soul itself, being moved in these, moves the bodies in bodily movements.

But before that which changes in any way must be the perfectly immutable, so that even what is mutable may remain mutable.

For movement and change exist in inanimate things both in heaven and on earth, the first motive principle being the mover. But whence comes it that the heavenly bodies move always in the same course, in the same manner, the same circuit, according to one system, one order? And whence in earthly things is the constant revolution from the same to the same, of the elements, and the seasons, and living creatures, and plants? For even if the things which revolve do not remain the same in number, as happens with the celestial bodies, in form they return to the same. For from fire is air; from air water, from water earth, and again fire: and after spring, summer, and autumn, and winter, and spring again; and from the grain the stalk, and the blade, and the ear, and again the grain; and from man the seed, and the conception, and again the man. Whence then is this sameness? For movement is unstable and causes change; so it is clear that the sameness comes from some unmoved and absolutely immutable cause which remains ever consistently the same. And prior to the power of engaging in sustained or varied activities there must be that which abides always consistently the same, and energizes all things in an indivisible and unmoved eternity. For it is obvious how much higher than the self-motive must be that which is immutable not merely in essence, but also in power and activity. And the higher must essentially be prior to the lower. And he who is ascending to the principles must inquire whether anything can be higher than the principle assumed; and if one is found he must inquire again from that, until he come to the loftiest conceptions, than which we have none more noble; and must not halt in his ascent. Nor must we fear that we may be walking on emptiness, in conceiving things greater, and higher than first principles. For it is not possible for our conceptions to take such a huge leap as to equal the dignity of first principles, far less outsoar them. For this is the one best upliftment to God, and as far as possible without pitfalls—that, in ascribing to Him the most noble, the most holy, the first, whether names or things, of those that we think to be good, we know surely that we ascribe nothing that is worthy of Him. Our sufficient pardon is that we have nothing higher than they.

Our argument, therefore, having ascended from the self-motive to the unmoved and absolutely immutable cause, which ever abides consistently the same, in essence, in power, in activity,

established in an eternity that underlies the time for moving things; we shall behold in this unmoved cause the sovereign causes of many principles which are contained in the unity of the self-motive principle. But in the unmoved they are eternal, perfect, and united with one another, so that through their union each is all, the intellectual distinction between them remaining unconfused. For whence is the distinction between the forms in the world, if the Creator Lord of the Cosmos did not produce them in accordance with their distinct causes in Himself? Yet one must not suppose such a distinction in Him of archetypal ideas, as there is of the images here; nor such a distinction in the relations of souls, as that of corporeal things. But just as each of the eight heavens, and the stars in them, is a part of the whole heaven, and a part complete in itself, having integral essence and its own powers and activities; and not only the heavenly things, but each of the permanent types on earth, such as that of man, of horse, of fig, or vine (for each of these is integral, even if not individually, as the heavenly bodies, still in their types, which with their own differentiations fill the cosmos). So also each of the more universal ideas from which the forms are produced, such as being, movement, position, identity, difference, beauty, truth, symmetry, and everything else in the corporeal world, is whole and perfect according to its own idea, although it has in itself many differences. And much more in the soul of all each thing subsists integrally, the principle and cause of the corporeal thing here, self-motive, containing the differences gathered together in itself. The things here are made in the image of this, which is more perfect, more pure, and more paradigmatic; and still higher than these are the archetypal ideas, intellectual and divine. For though the union in them (which, as I said, is not by touch or continuity or corporeal mixing, but by the blending into one of indivisible and impartible ideas, while the distinction remains unconfused), each thing here has its integrality. And each is the principle and archetype of its own forms right to the outermost of things. And the many principles of all things have the rank of principle from One Principle. For before the many must be the One, the Cause. Therefore each of the many is also one; but not such as the One before the many. For the one proceeding from the many is a part of the many, and in turn has received the singleness of the One.



But the One before the many, being the Cause of the many, primarily contains the many in Itself in one union, being the All before all, the Cause of causes, Principles of principles, and God of Gods, as He is naturally honoured by all. He is also the Goodness of goodnesses. For it is the first cause in each quality which all that come after it aim at; and what all aim at is good: and the Principles of principles is the Goodness of goodnesses, and likewise the Power of powers. For each principle has the highest power in its own order; and the Principle of principles, the highest power above all powers. But It must also have the highest knowledge. For He could not be ignorant of anything He creates; and all things have been easily created by Him. So of necessity, just as the argument has ascended in demonstration from the parts to the whole (for we could not have known the greatness and nature of the whole unless we had previously viewed the parts; often we hit upon one particular thing and think that the whole): so also our honour and awe must be uplifted through the parts to the whole, if indeed each of the principles is a principle and to this extent shares in the nature of the whole, as it has the same name. For it is not merely the name that is common; but the very rank of principle; and the pre-eminence of the principles over those things that come from them is granted to the many particular principles from the One Integral Principle. And if anyone dislikes calling the particular and the absolutely universal by the same name: in the first place his dislike is unreasonable, as the rank of principles really seems to be common to them; secondly, let him call them principles and It the Principle of principles. For even if each particular principle is a principle of principles, in that it has below it more particular ones still (for there is both a principle of soul-beauty, and another of bodily beauty, and a common principle of both, the principle of beauty as beauty): nevertheless the Supreme Principle of principles is That, than Which there is no higher principle; so with the Cause of causes, and the God of Gods, and the Goodness of goodness.

Moreover we must also understand that for the Cause of all things, Which is above all things that are, there is no individual name (for every name refers to some distant conception): but we attribute to Him the most honourable names from those below Him. The very name of God, as has been said, is transferred from the heavenly bodies, called so from their rapid movement

and "running." We call Him also Holy, and Beneficent, and Good, and Lord, and Strong, and think it no shame, though we are accustomed to apply these names to many men too.

Concerning the first of the three questions, which it was proposed to demonstrate, that there are first principles of things, and God, the Cause of all, let this suffice.

## SEED THOUGHTS FROM EMERSON

The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this generation of circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force of truth in the individual soul.

These laws (the perfect laws of the soul) execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus, in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled. He who puts off impurity thereby puts on purity . . . if a man dissemble, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being. . . . The man who renounces himself, comes to himself.

A man of thought is willing to die, willing to live; I suppose because he has seen the thread on which the beads are strung, and perceived that it reaches up and down, existing quite independently of the present illusions.

When in innocency, or when by intellectual perception, man attains to say "I love the Right; Truth is beautiful within and without for evermore. Virtue, I am thine: save me, use me: thee will I serve, day and night, in great, in small, that I may be not virtuous but virtue," then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased.

## THE CELESTIAL HIERARCHIES

BY DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE\*

## CHAPTER VIII

*Of the Dominions, Virtues, and Powers, and their Middle Hierarchy.*

Now we must pass on to the middle Order of the Celestial Intelligences, contemplating with supermundane sight, as far as we may, the Dominions and the truly majestic splendour of the Divine Virtues and Powers. For the names of these supernal Beings denote the divine characteristics of their likeness to God.

The name given to the holy Dominions signifies, I think, a certain unbounded elevation to that which is above, freedom from all that is of the earth, and from all inward inclination to the bondage of discord, a liberal superiority to harsh tyranny, an exemptness from degrading servility and from all that is low: for they are untouched by any inconsistency. They are true Lords, perpetually aspiring to true lordship, and to the Source of lordship, and they providentially fashion themselves and those below them, as far as possible, into the likeness of true lordship. They do not turn towards vain shadows, but wholly give themselves to that true Authority, forever one with the Godlike Source of Lordship.

The name of the holy Virtues signifies a certain powerful and unshakable virility welling forth into all their Godlike energies; not being weak and feeble for any reception of the Divine illuminations granted to it; mounting upward in fullness of power to an assimilation with God; never falling away from the Divine Life through its own weakness, but ascending unwaveringly to the Supersensual Virtue Which is the Source of Virtue; fashioning itself, as far as it may, in Virtue; perfectly turned towards the Source of Virtue, and flowing forth providentially to those below it, abundantly filling them with virtue.

The name of the holy Powers, co-equal with the Divine Dominions and Virtues, signifies an orderly and unconfined order in the Divine receptions, and the regulation of intellectual and supermundane power which never debases its authority by

\* For Chapters I-VII see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. XV, Nos. 58 and 59.

tyrannical force, but is irresistibly urged onward in due order to the Divine. It beneficently leads those below it, as far as possible, to the Supreme Power Which is the Source of Power, Which it manifests after the manner of Angels in the well-ordered ranks of its own authoritative power.

This middle rank of the Celestial Intelligences, having these Godlike characteristics, is purified, illuminated, and perfected in the manner already described, by the Divine Illuminations bestowed upon it in a secondary manner through the first hierarchical Order, and shown forth in a secondary manifestation by the middle choir.\*

The knowledge which is said to be imparted by one Angel to another may be interpreted as a symbol of that perfecting which is effected from afar and made obscure because of its passage to the second rank. For, as those say who are wise in the sacred Mysteries, the direct revelations of the Divine Light impart a greater perfection than those bestowed through an intermediary; and in the same way I consider that the Order of Angels which is established nearest to the Godhead participates directly in a more resplendent light than is imparted to those who are perfected through others.

For this reason the First Intelligences are called in our priestly tradition perfective, illuminative, and purificatory powers for the lower orders which are uplifted by them to the Superessential Principle of all, and as far as is right for them are made partakers of the mystical purifications, illuminations, and perfections. For this universal ordinance is divinely established, that the Divine Light is imparted to secondary natures through Primary Natures.

You will find this variously set forth by theologians, for when the Divine and Fatherly Love for man reproved the Israelites and chastened them for their salvation by delivering them for their correction into the hands of cruel and barbaric nations, and with providential guidance led them back by many paths to a better condition, and mercifully recalled them from captivity to

\* "Thus does God beam forth with firmness, wisdom and love in the Thrones, Cherubs and Seraphs, which threefold system of the Divine Ray goes forth, and causes that in the Powers, Virtues and Dominions there should be reflected His divine and firm Power, His wise Virtue, and the most loving Dominion; and that the Trinity of God, coequal in Itself, should shine with softened lustre, filling now the second place under that first one."—Colet.

freedom and their former happy state, one of the theologians named Zachariah sees one of those Angels which, as I believe, are first and nearest to God (for the name Angel, as I have said, is common to all), receiving from God Himself the words of comfort, as they are called, and another Angel of lower rank going to meet the first as if to receive and partake of the light, and then receiving from him, as from a hierarch, the Divine purpose, being directed to reveal to the theologian that Jerusalem should be inhabited by a great and fruitful nation.

Another theologian, Ezekiel, says that the most sacred edict came forth from the Supremely Glorious Godhead Itself, exalted above the Cherubim. For after the Father, as has been said, had in His Mercy led the Children of Israel through disciplines to a better condition He decreed in His Divine Justice that the guilty should be separated from the innocent. This is first revealed to one below the Cherubim, who was girt about the loins with a sapphire, and was robed in a garment reaching to the feet, the symbol of a hierarch. But the Divine Law ordained that the other Angels armed with battle-axes should be instructed by the former respecting the Divine judgment in this matter. For He directed the one to go through the midst of Jerusalem and to set a mark upon the foreheads of the innocent; but to the other Angels He said, "Go into the city, following him, and strike, and turn not aside your eyes; but draw not near unto those upon whom is the mark."

What could be said concerning the Angel who said to Daniel, "The Word has gone forth?" or concerning that highest one who took the fire from the midst of the Cherubim? Or what could establish more clearly the distinction between the Angelic ranks than this, that the Cherub cast the fire into the hands of him who was clothed with the sacred vestment? Or that He who called the most divine Gabriel to Himself said, "Make this man understand the vision"? And many other similar things are related by the venerable theologians regarding the Divine Order of the Celestial Hierarchies.

By moulding itself after their likeness our own hierarchy will, as far as possible, be assimilated to it and will, in very deed, show forth, as in images, the Angelic Beauty; receiving its form from them, and being uplifted by them to the superessential Source of every Hierarchy.

## CHAPTER IX

*Of the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels, and of their last Hierarchy.*

There remains for us the reverent contemplation of that sacred Order which completes the Angelic Hierarchies, and is composed of the Divine Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. And first, I think, I ought to explain to the best of my ability the meanings of their holy names.

The name of the Celestial Principalities signifies their Godlike princeliness and authoritativeness in an Order which is holy and most fitting to the princely Powers, and that they are wholly turned towards the Prince of Princes, and lead others in princely fashion, and that they are formed, as far as possible, in the likeness of the Source of Principality, and reveal Its Superessential Order by the good Order of the Princely Powers.

The choir of the holy Archangels is placed in the same three-fold Order as the Celestial Principalities; for, as has been said, there is one Hierarchy and Order which includes these and the Angels. But since each Hierarchy has first, middle, and last ranks, the holy Order of Archangels, through its middle position, participates in the two extremes, being joined with the most holy Principalities and with the holy Angels.

It is joined with the Princedoms because it is turned in a princely way to the Superessential Principality and, as far as it can attain, moulds itself in His Likeness, and it is seen to be the cause of the union of the Angels with its own orderly and invisible leadership. It is joined with the Angels because it belongs to the interpreting Order, receiving in its turn the illuminations from the First Powers, and beneficently announcing these revelations to the Angels; and by means of the Angels it shows them forth to us in the measure of the mystical receptivity of each one who is inspired by the Divine Illumination. For the Angels, as we have said, fill up and complete the lowest choir of all the Hierarchies of the Celestial Intelligences since they are the last of the Celestial Beings possessing the Angelic nature. And they, indeed, are more properly named Angels by us than are those of a higher rank because their choir is more directly in contact with manifested and mundane things.

The highest Order, as we have said, being in the foremost

place near the Hidden One, must be regarded as hierarchically ordering in a hidden manner the second Order; and the second Order of Dominions, Virtues, and Powers, leads the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels more manifestly, indeed, than the first Hierarchy, but in a more hidden manner than the Order below it; and the revealing Order of the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels presides one through the other over the human hierarchies so that their elevation and turning to God and their communion and union with Him may be in order; and moreover, that the procession from God, beneficently granted to all the Hierarchies, and visiting them all in common, may be with the most holy order.

Accordingly the Word of God has given our hierarchy into the care of Angels, for Michael is called Lord of the people of Judah, and other Angels are assigned to other peoples. For the Most High established the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the Angels of God.

If someone should ask why the Hebrews alone were guided to the Divine Illuminations, we should answer that the turning away of the nations to false gods ought not to be attributed to the direct guidance of Angels, but to their own refusal of the true path which leads to God, and the falling away through self-love and perversity, and similarly, the worship of things which they regarded as divine.

Even the Hebrews are said to have acted thus, for he says, "Thou hast cast away the knowledge of God and hast gone after thine own heart." For our life is not ruled by necessity, nor are the Divine Irradiations of Providential Light obscured because of the freewill of those under Its care; but it is the dissimilarity of the mental eyes which causes the Light streaming forth resplendently from the Goodness of the Father to be either totally unshared and unaccepted through their resistance to It, or causes an unequal participation, small or great, dark or bright, of that Fontal Ray Which nevertheless is one and unmixed, eternally changeless, and forever abundantly shed forth.

For even if certain Gods not alien to them presided over the other nations (from which we ourselves have come forth into that illimitable and abundant sea of Divine Light which is outspread freely for all to share), yet there is one Ruler of all, and to Him the Angels who minister to each nation lead their followers.

Let us consider Melchisedeck, the hierarch most beloved of God—not of vain gods, but a priest of the truly Highest of Gods—for those wise in the things of God did not simply call Melchisedeck the friend of God, but also priest, in order to show clearly to the wise that not only was he himself turned to Him Who is truly God, but also, as hierarch, was the leader of others in the ascent to the true and only Godhead.

Let us also remind you in connection with your knowledge of hierarchy that Pharaoh was shown through visions by the Angel who presided over the Egyptians, and the Prince of Babylon was shown by his own Angel, the watchful and overruling Power of Providence. And for those nations the servants of the true God were appointed as leaders, the interpretations of angelic visions having been revealed from God through Angels to holy men near to the Angels, like Daniel and Joseph.

For there is one Sovereign and Providence of all, and we must never suppose that God was Leader of the Jews by chance, nor that certain Angels, either independently, or with equal rank, or in opposition to one another, ruled over the other nations; but this teaching must be received according to the following holy intention, not as meaning that God had shared the sovereignty of mankind with other Gods, or with Angels, and had been chosen by chance as Ruler and Leader of Israel, but as showing that although one all-powerful Providence of the Most High consigned the whole of mankind to the care of their own Angels for their preservation, yet the Israelites, almost alone of them all, turned to the knowledge and light of the True God.

Therefore the Word of God, when relating how Israel devoted himself to the worship of the true God, says, "He became the Lord's portion." Moreover it shows that he, too, equally with other nations, was given into the charge of one of the holy Angels, in order that he might know through him the One Principle of all things. For it says that Michael was the leader of the Jews, clearly showing that there is one Providence established superessentially above all the invisible and visible powers, and that all the Angels who preside over the different nations lift up to that Providence, as to their own Principle, as far as is in their power, those who willingly follow them.

*(To be continued)*



## A GENERAL PRAYER

BY JOHN NORRIS

I adore Thee, O Thou infinitely Great and Good God, Maker and Lord of Heaven and Earth: Worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive all Honour and Power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy Pleasure they are and were created.

Send down Thy Holy Spirit, O Most Merciful Father, upon me Thy Servant; and so fill me with Thy Heavenly Grace and Benediction, that I may become a Living Temple, sanctified and devoted to Thy Honour and Service; and such wherein Thou may'st delight to dwell, and make the place of Thy Rest and Abode both now and for ever.

And to this end grant me seriously to consider what Thou art, what I myself am, and what I ought to be—that Thou art a God greatly to be fear'd for Thy Power and Justice, greatly to be loved for Thy Infinite Perfection and Goodness, and greatly to be praised for Thy Liberal Bounty and Loving-kindness—that Thou art both the Author and the End of my Being, my true and only Good, the Cause of all my Joy and Happiness; and the great Centre and Stay of Thy Whole Creation.

Grant me also seriously to consider what I myself am, that I am a Creature; one that once was not, a poor, empty, weak, and imperfect being—that I have nothing but what I receive from Thee, that I can do nothing but what I do by Thee, that I can know nothing but what I know in Thee and in Thy Light; and that in Thee I have my Life, my Motion, my Being, my Happiness, and my All.

Grant me also seriously to consider that I am not only Thy Creature, but my own; not only a Creature, but a sinful Creature; a Creature acting against the End of his Creation; against the Law of his Creator; against the Dignity of his Nature, and against his true Interest, both here and hereafter—that I have not loved Thee as in strictness I ought, with my whole Heart, Soul, and Mind and Strength, nor as I might, according to the measure of Thy Grace and my present Abilities; nor indeed as I have loved this World, and the Vanities of it, having been a lover of Pleasure more than a lover of God.

Grant me also, lastly, Thy Grace seriously to consider what I should be both towards Thee, my neighbour, and myself, that I ought to be Holy, Just, Charitable, and Temperate, that I ought not to live carelessly and at random, as those that have no sense of Thee, nor of their Duty, and that believe neither Heaven nor Hell; but as one that now lives in Thy Presence, and must hereafter give Thee an Account—and that therefore denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts I should live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world; looking for that blessed Hope and the Glorious Appearing of the Great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Fix, O Lord, these Considerations in my Mind and let them sink down so deep into my Heart that they may bring forth in me the Fruits of good living; that so my Spirit may be Pure and Right within me, my life may be holy, my death comfortable, my resurrection joyful, and my Eternal State happy and glorious with Thee my God for ever.—Amen.

## JEWELS

Which man is most likely to achieve his object?

He who discards whatever is superfluous and takes the short road.

—*Ibn Gabirol.*

No one can understand a king but a king; therefore God has made each of us a king in miniature, so to speak, over a kingdom which is an infinitely reduced copy of His own. . . . Each of us is entrusted with a little kingdom, and charged not to be careless in the administration of it.

—*Al Ghazzali.*

## PROCLUS ON DEFINITION\*

Should it be inquired whether it is possible to define forms or not, such as the beautiful itself and the just itself; for forms, as Plato says in his Epistles, are only to be apprehended by the simple vision of intelligence; to this we reply that the beautiful itself, the just itself, and the good itself, considered as ideas, are not only in intellect but also in soul and in sensible natures; and of these some are definable and others are not. This being the case, intellectual forms, though they may be in many and partial natures, cannot be defined on account of their simplicity, and because they are apprehended by unitive intelligence, and not through composition; and likewise because whatever is defined ought to participate of something common, which is as it were a subject and is different from itself. But in Divine Forms (Ideas) there is nothing of this kind; for Being, as Timaeus says, does not proceed into anything else, but though it makes a certain progression from itself, yet after a manner it is the same with its immediate progeny, being only unfolded into a second order. Forms, however, belonging to soul and subsisting in sensibles can be defined; and in short such things as are produced according to a paradigmatic cause and such as are said to participate of forms. Hence dialectic speculates first forms by simple intuitions, but when it defines or divides it looks to the images of these. If, therefore, such a science is the purest part of intellect and prudence, it is evident that it employs pure intellections through which it apprehends intelligibles, and multiform methods by which it binds the spectacles derived from intelligibles, and which subsist in secondary orders.

But it is by no means wonderful if we also define certain other particulars of which there are no ideas, such as things artificial, parts, and things evil. For there are in us reasons of wholes which are according to nature and also of things good; and in consequence of this we know such things as give completion to wholes, such as imitate nature, and such as have merely a shadowy subsistence. For such as is each of these, such also is it known and defined by us; and we discourse about them from the definitely stable reasons which we contain.

\* Translated by Thomas Taylor.

The road through dialectic is irreprehensible and most expedient; being connate indeed with things but employing many powers for the apprehension of truth; imitating intellect, from which also it receives its principles, but beautifully extending through well-ordered gradations to true being, and giving respite to the wandering about sensibles; and, lastly, exploring everything by methods which cannot be confuted till it arrives at the occult residence of *THE ONE* and *THE GOOD*, through an orderly progression which makes our ascent secure and irreprehensible.

Socrates was only deficient in skill,\* whence Parmenides exhorts him to apply himself to dialectic through which he would become much more skilful, being exercised in many things and perceiving the consequences of hypotheses; and when he has accomplished this, Parmenides advises him to turn to the speculation of forms. For such particulars as are now dubious are very easy of solution to those that are exercised in dialectic. And this is the whole end of the words. The exercise of dialectic, however, must not be thought to be such as that which is called by logicians the argumentative method, for that looks to opinion, but dialectic despises the opinion of the multitude. Logic delivers many arguments about one problem; but dialectic uses the same method about many and different problems, and is more beautiful than logic, for it begins from on high, employing as its instruments, division and definition, analysis and demonstration. If, therefore, we exercise ourselves in this method, there is much hope that we shall genuinely apprehend the theory of ideas, distinctly evolving our confused conceptions, dissolving apparent doubts, and demonstrating things of which we are now ignorant. But till we can effect this we shall not be able to give a scientific definition of every form.

\* This dialogue is represented as taking place when Socrates, as a young man, was seeking instruction from Parmenides.