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THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

CONCERNING THE IMMOVABLE AND SELF-MOTIVE
PRINCIPLE, OR CAUSE

PROPOSITION XIV

Every being is either immovable or moved. If moved, it is either moved by itself or by another, and if indeed it is moved by itself, it is self-motive, but if by another, it is alter-motive. Every thing, therefore, is either immovable, or self-motive, or alter-motive

For it is necessary since there are alter-motive natures, that there should also be that which is immovable, and that the self-motive nature should subsist between these. For if every thing alter-motive is moved in consequence of being moved by another thing, motions will either be in a circle or they will proceed to infinity. But they will neither be in a circle nor have an infinite progression, since all things are bounded by the principle of things and that which moves is better than that which is moved. Hence there will be something immovable which first moves. But if this be the case, it is also necessary that there should be something which is self-motive. For if all things should stop what will that be which is first moved? It cannot be that which is immovable, for it is not naturally adapted to be moved; nor that which is alter-motive, for that is moved by something else. It remains, therefore, that the self-motive nature is that which is primarily moved, since it is this also which conjoins alter-motive natures to that which is immovable, being in a certain respect a middle, moving and at the same time

* For the previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. XVII, No. 65, p. 130, and No. 66, p. 141.

being moved. For of these, the immovable moves only, but the alter-motive is moved only. Every thing, therefore, is either immovable, or self-motive, or alter-motive.

Corollary

From these things, likewise, it is evident that of things which are moved, the self-motive is the first; but of things which move the immovable is the first.

CONCERNING AN INCORPOREAL ESSENCE, AND
WHAT THE PECULIARITY OF IT IS

PROPOSITION XV

Every thing which is converted to itself is incorporeal

For no body is naturally adapted to revert to itself. For if that which is converted to any thing is conjoined with that to which it is converted, it is evident that all the parts of the body which is converted to itself, will be conjoined with all the parts. For a thing is converted to itself when both that which is converted and that to which it is converted, become one. This however is impossible in body, and in short in all partible things; for the whole of that which is partible is not conjoined with the whole, on account of the separation of the parts, some of which are situated differently from others. No body, therefore, is naturally adapted to revert to itself so that the whole may be converted to the whole. Hence, if there is anything which has the power of reverting to itself, it is incorporeal and impartible.

PROPOSITION XVI

Every thing which is converted to itself has an essence separate from all body

For if it were inseparable from any body whatever, it would not have a certain energy separate from body.* For thus energy would be more excellent than essence, since the latter indeed would be more indigent of bodies, but the former would be

* That if an essence is inseparable from body, it is impossible that the energy proceeding from this essence should be separate from body, Aristotle also demonstrates in his treatise *On the Soul*.

sufficient to itself, and would not be in want of bodies. If, therefore, any thing is essentially inseparable from bodies, it is also in a similar manner inseparable according to energy, or rather it is in a still greater degree inseparable. But if this be the case, it will not revert to itself. For that which is converted to itself, being something different from body, has an energy separate from body, operating neither through, nor together with body, since the energy, and that to which the energy is directed, are not at all in want of body. Hence that which is converted to itself, is entirely separate from bodies.

PROPOSITION XVII

Every thing which moves itself primarily is convertive to itself

For if it moves itself and its motive energy is directed to itself, that which moves and that which is moved are at the same time one. For it either moves in one part but is moved in another part, or the whole moves and is moved, or the whole moves but a part is moved, or the contrary. But if one part indeed is that which moves, and another part is that which is moved, it will not be essentially self-motive, since it will consist of things which are not self-motive, but which appear indeed to be so, yet are not so essentially.

If however the whole moves but the part is moved, or the contrary, there will be a certain part common to both which according to the same subject moves and at the same time is moved*; and this is that which is primarily self-motive. If however one and the same thing moves and is moved, it will have the energy of moving to itself, being motive of itself. But it is converted to that towards which it energizes. Every thing, therefore, which primarily moves itself is converted to itself.

PROPOSITION XVIII

Every thing which imparts existence to others, is itself that primarily which it communicates to the natures that are supplied by it with existence

For if it gives existence, and makes the communication from

* For if the whole moves, the part which is moved will at the same time be motive.

its own essence, that which it gives is subordinate to its own essence (by the 7th Proposition). But that which it is, it is in a greater and more perfect degree; since every thing which gives existence to a certain thing is better than and not the same with it. For it is primarily, but the other is secondarily, that which it is. For it is necessary either that each should be the same, and that there should be one definition of both, or that there should be nothing common and the same in both, or that the one should subsist primarily, but the other secondarily. If however, indeed, there is the same definition of both, the one will no longer be cause, but the other effect; nor will the one subsist essentially, but the other by participation; nor will the one be the maker, but the other the thing made. But if they have nothing which is the same, the one will not give subsistence to the other by its very being, in consequence of communicating nothing to the existence of the other. Hence, it remains that the one should be primarily that which it gives, but that the other should be secondarily that to which existence is given; the former supplying the latter from its very being.

PROPOSITION XIX

Every thing which is primarily inherent in a certain nature of beings, is present to all the beings that are arranged according to that nature, and this conformably to one reason and after the same manner

For if it is not present to all of them after the same manner, but to some and not to others, it is evident that it was not primarily in that nature, but that it is in some things primarily and in others that sometimes participate of it secondarily. For that which at one time exists, but at another time does not, does not exist primarily, nor of itself, but it is adventitious, and is imparted from some other place to the things in which it is thus inherent.

PROPOSITION XX

The essence of Soul is beyond all bodies, the intellectual nature is beyond all Souls, and The ONE is beyond all intellectual hypostases

For every body is movable by something else, since it is not

naturally adapted to move itself, but by the presence of Soul it is moved of itself, lives on account of Soul, and when Soul is present is in a certain respect self-movable, but when it is absent is alter-movable, as deriving this self-motivity from Soul which is allotted a self-movable essence. For to whatever nature Soul is present, to this it imparts self-motion. Soul is, however, by a much greater priority that which it imparts by its very being. Hence it is beyond bodies, which become self-movable by participation in Soul which is essentially self-movable.

Again, however, Soul which is moved from itself, has an order secondary to the immovable nature, which subsists immovable according to energy. Because of all the natures that are moved, the self-motive essence is the leader; but of all that move the immovable is the leader. If therefore Soul, being moved from itself, moves other things, it is necessary that prior to it there should be that which moves immovably. But Intellect moves, being immovable, and energizing always with an invariable sameness of subsistence. For Soul on account of Intellect participates of perpetual intellectual energy, just as body on account of Soul possesses the power of moving itself. For if perpetual intellection were primarily in Soul, it would be inherent in all souls, in the same manner as the self-motive power. Hence, perpetual intellection is not primarily in Soul. It is necessary, therefore, that prior to it there should be that which is primarily intellective. And hence, Intellect is prior to souls.

Moreover, *The One* is prior to Intellect. For Intellect, though it is immovable, yet is not *The One*; for it intellectually perceives itself, and energizes about itself. And of *The One*, indeed, all beings, in whatever way they may exist, participate; but all beings do not participate of Intellect; for those beings to whom Intellect is present by participation necessarily participate of knowledge, because intellectual knowledge is the principle and first cause of gnostic energy. *The One*, therefore, is beyond Intellect; and there is not any thing beyond *The One*. For *The One* and *The Good* are the same. But *The Good*, as has been demonstrated, is The Principle of all things.

(To be continued)

ALBERTUS MAGNUS

Saint Albert the Great, called by his contemporaries "The Universal Doctor," was one of the most remarkable figures of the thirteenth century. The title "great" was usually given only to warriors, but in his case it was the spontaneous tribute of his own age to one great in holiness and in intellectual power, great as a philosopher, scientist, mystic, and trainer of souls, and as an administrator and counsellor.

Some general impression of the age in which he lived is necessary for the full appreciation of his outstanding qualities. Europe was almost continually the scene of wars, and although some of the bands of mercenaries and other warlike elements had been removed to the East during the Crusades, they were now returning. Learning of all kinds, the education of the young, the arts, and the science and practice of medicine centred mainly in the religious orders whose members enjoyed the settled conditions necessary for the reception, study, and transmission of tradition. The difficulty of communication and the necessity for copying manuscripts made the dissemination of new knowledge very slow: even the clergy were in many cases unlearned, and in the Church there was much corruption, extortion, and indolence. Warfare was the chief occupation of those not employed in agricultural pursuits, and consequently the laity were for the most part untaught.

Albertus Magnus, Count of Bollstadt, was born about 1206 at Lauingen on the Danube. His parents, pious members of the lesser nobility, represented the Emperor in that town. He had a free and happy childhood, as far as can be judged from the references in his writings to his youthful hunting and fishing expeditions, and the vividness of the descriptions of nature in his recollections of boyhood show that he had early developed the power of accurate observation. When he was still a youth, his parents died and, not wishing for a military career, Albert decided to undertake the long and difficult journey to the University of Padua, perhaps because his uncle lived there. From Paris he travelled on foot to Italy, making, no doubt, as on his other

journeys in later life, those careful observations of nature for which his writings are remarkable.

At Padua he studied philosophy and attended the small church of the Dominicans, then a new Order which concentrated upon the pursuit of learning. Here he would listen to the sermons of widely-travelled, scholarly men, among whom was Jordan of Saxony, the brilliant General of the Dominicans, called "The Siren of Souls," whose influence fostered Albert's growing desire to join the Dominicans. For some time he hesitated, uncertain of his power of perseverance, but finally he received the habit at Padua. His novitiate was probably passed at Bologna, where he would attend lectures at the University, and about 1233 he was ordained priest. Of these early studious years one of his biographers, Rodolphus, writes: "Albert bore a true love of wisdom even in his outward appearance and strove by every means in his power to plant in the garden of his soul what is sweeter far than honey—the flowers of every virtue. His superiors, being desirous to reward him for his labours which placed him at the head of his brethren, promoted him to the rank of lector." He thus entered upon his life-work of teaching.

In appearance he was slightly below medium height, unusually broad-shouldered, healthy, and vigorous. He was frank and cheerful in manner, and possessed an aptitude for friendship which gained the love and veneration of his students, many of whom paid glowing tributes to his greatness.

The schools of philosophy and theology set up under well-equipped teachers at the Dominican convents were frequently attended not only by all the brethren of the convent, but also by all the clergy of the city, and were also open to the laity. Albert spent two successful years in Cologne and was transferred to Freiburg to open a similar school. Thence he was sent to Strasburg and finally to Ratisbon, where he taught for some years, giving lectures on grammar, mathematics, astronomy, the natural sciences, logic and metaphysics, in relation to the writings of Aristotle.

In 1238, as delegate of the provincial chapters of the Dominicans, he attended the general chapter at Bologna and brought forward a number of regulations for the improvement of the schools. His name was proposed as General of the Order in

place of Jordan, who had died, but he refused to accept nomination. About 1243 he went to Paris to qualify for his doctorate. Here he taught under various professors, and his outstanding ability attracted large numbers of students. In the midst of his teaching activities he found time to begin the writing of the many treatises on theology, philosophy, and the natural sciences, some of which were no doubt used in his lectures. Before 1245 he received the degree of doctor of theology, and in 1248 he was recalled to Cologne in order to found a Dominican university on the lines of that of Paris. This he successfully accomplished. In addition to the ordinary curriculum he instituted classes open to the nobility and the country people, and arranged public lectures and discussions. Many of his students afterwards became eminent scholars, reformers, and preachers. Thomas Aquinas, one of his students at Paris, had followed him to Cologne. He became Albert's co-worker and greatest friend, and brilliantly completed his master's work of adapting the philosophy of Aristotle to the needs of the Church.

One of the most valuable and important parts of Albert's work was his frequent and regular preaching to the large congregations which gathered to hear him. His sermons were vivid, clear, and methodical expositions of the Scriptures and the dogmas of the Church, illustrated by familiar images gathered from his own varied experiences. He entered sympathetically into the needs and problems of his people and spoke with a simple authority which made a direct appeal. Some of the sayings from his sermons were collected by one of his followers and were widely distributed so that in time they became almost proverbial. Of these the following passages are examples: "A suffering man often imagines that he is of no account in the sight of God, but when he is unable to pray or perform good works, his sufferings and desires afford him a deeper insight into the Divine than is vouchsafed to a thousand healthy men." "An egg given by a living man for God's sake is much more meritorious for him than a house filled with gold given after death." At the end of each sermon he gave a short summary of truths to be followed and errors to be avoided. As an aid to the devotional life of his people he made a short paraphrase of the Gospels in the form of prayers and added to the invocations in the litanies a short prayer in honour of each saint invoked. His prayers

after the Sunday and festival sermons were collected and translated into Flemish towards the end of the thirteenth century. From Cologne his influence rapidly extended throughout the surrounding districts, and people flocked to hear him and to ask for counsel, attracted by his simplicity and frankness, his charity and wise reasonableness.

In 1254 Albert was made German Provincial of the Order, with authority over forty convents covering a vast area which had to be traversed on foot in regular personal visits. On these journeys he crossed rough and dangerous country, begging his food and sleeping out of doors where there was no religious house. During his short periods of rest he composed many of his treatises and would often leave behind these writings as gifts to the convents in recognition of their hospitality.

In 1256 he was sent as Papal Legate to the mission stations in Poland, Prussia, and Livland, which had fallen into neglect. He tells of the barbarous conditions in these regions where the deformed and aged were killed, and of his efforts to reform such customs. His vigorous preaching and organization revitalized the missions, and he was ordered to Anagni to uphold the right of the Dominican friars to teach in Paris against certain charges brought against them by the university professors. Before the Pope and four judges Albert fully and logically refuted the charges, and clearly set forth and defended the claims of qualified members of the religious orders as teachers. He then probably travelled with the papal court for about a year in charge of the curial university, a school set up by the Pope wherever his court was held. During this period he engaged in a public discussion on certain doctrines of Averroes and also wrote an analysis and explanation of St. John's Gospel and a commentary on all the canonical books. He then returned to the university of Cologne, but in 1259 was appointed to serve on a commission at Valenciennes to construct an improved educational scheme for the Dominican universities. Early in the following year he was appointed Bishop of Ratisbon, a diocese in great need of discipline and reformation. Here he lived in the greatest simplicity, setting an example to the clergy of poverty and obedience to rule. Within a year he had checked the irregularities and set in order the affairs of the diocese, and in 1262, his work in that sphere being done, he resigned the bishopric in favour

of the writing and teaching which he regarded as more especially his own work. It has been suggested that he returned to Pope Urban as confidential adviser until his appointment as papal nuncio in 1263 to preach the crusades in Germany. This mission came to an end with Urban's death in 1264, and Albert spent the next three years with his brother at the convent at Wurtzburg. While there he acted as arbitrator in various serious disputes. Early in 1267 he went to Strasburg, where he lived for three years, returning to Cologne in 1270. He still travelled frequently in connection with his various duties and in 1276 he went to Paris for the purpose of vindicating the cause of Thomas Aquinas—who had died two years previously—against the Archbishops of Paris and Canterbury, who had condemned certain of his writings.

During these last years he continued to write and to follow his usual occupations as far as possible, but his strength gradually failed, and the end of his full and active life on earth came at twilight on November 15th, 1280, as he sat in quiet happiness surrounded by his brethren. Popular devotion to his memory continued down the ages. In 1662 the Pope authorized the celebration of the feast of Albert for the city of Ratisbon, and in 1760 this was extended to the whole Dominican Order, but his canonization did not take place until December 16th, 1931.

Albert was not only a philosopher and a theologian—he was above all a mystic. Peter of Prussia says: "Day and night he continued in meditation. He listened eagerly for the sweet whisperings of the Holy Spirit; with constant prayer he knocked at the fountain of life and thus procured for himself the waters of the wisdom of redemption for which he so longingly begged." His whole-hearted piety and devotion were universally recognized in his own time, so also was his readiness to encourage others and to give the fullest support and recognition to his co-workers. He has been called "A pattern of magnanimity," for he sought and recognized that which was great and good in all men and things. By his contemporaries he was frequently quoted as an authority, for he had studied all the chief authors, including Plato and Aristotle, the Neo-Platonists, the Hebrew and Arabian philosophers, and the Latin writers, and had made himself master of the learning of his day. On this account he was described by a contemporary as "A man so divine in his

knowledge that he may properly be called the wonder and miracle of his age." He was recognized also as a man of tremendous energy, unwearied in study and in the collection of facts in every possible field. In his critical examination of the writings of others he was primarily concerned with their intrinsic value. He never rejected the whole of the works of any philosopher or theologian, but selected those elements which he judged to be true. He never hesitated to give up his own opinion in favour of another which he considered more reasonable. He brought together and organized into a unity a vast mass of material never before collected and related—a tremendous accomplishment in view of the difficulties involved. In the philosophical field he has been described as "the first mediæval thinker not only to grasp the intrinsic value of Aristotle's scientific teachings, but also to see clearly the great importance of his philosophy for the construction of a Christian dogmatic system." Albert did not, however, exclusively follow Aristotle, but introduced certain Platonic teachings, and in many cases reconciled apparent contradictions in the statements of the two philosophers. He has been called "the mystical father of Christian Neo-Platonism."

At this time Aristotle had been studied and interpreted by many scholars, eminent among whom were the Neo-Platonists. Of the Arabian Neo-Platonists whose works had been introduced through Spain into Europe generally, Averroes was considered one of the greatest authorities on Aristotle, but many of the conclusions drawn from his theories were found, mainly owing to a misunderstanding of his real meaning, to tend towards pantheism and the denial of individual immortality. This had led to the condemnation by a certain section of the Church of the whole of the writings of Aristotle, and one valuable feature of Albert's work was the clear distinction he made between Aristotle's own teaching and that of his interpreters. For example, Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle's theory of intellect had given rise to the view that the human intellect, in attaining to Divine Ideas, was entirely passive, incapable of selection, merely receiving impressions like those of a seal upon wax, and having no active phase whatever. Since in the Scholastic view the active human intellect alone was immortal, this theory involved the denial of individual immortality. Albert solved the problem by showing that the human intellect is both

active (in its ascent from particulars, by the processes of selection and abstraction, to universals) and passive (in its reception of Divine Illumination), and that only by functioning in both these phases could the intellect attain to union with God.

In the introduction to his Aristotelian books Albert says: "It is our intention to throw open all these writings to Latinists." This in itself was a formidable undertaking, for Aristotle was available for the most part only in Greek or Arabic manuscripts. The few Latin translations were poor and faulty and many of the manuscripts were scattered in the libraries of various convents. Commentaries were frequently intermingled with the text, but Albert spared no pains in comparing texts and discovering manuscripts, while his discrimination, knowledge of his authors, and keen critical sense enabled him usually to arrive at a correct reading.

His great work was the explanation, unification, and reconciliation of Aristotelian theories in relation to Christian doctrines. While impartially presenting the available knowledge on any subject, he never lost sight of the universal basis of all things, thus he laid the foundation of a complete system of Christian philosophy and theology which was brought into its final form by Thomas Aquinas. Albert was one of the first to put forward an organized system of moral theology based on the Idea of the Good. He related the psychological conceptions of Aristotle with those of St. Augustine and made evident the bearing of these teachings upon practical affairs, bringing the physical into relation with the psychical and giving detailed instruction for the right ordering of life. He also wrote several philosophical treatises dealing with particular subjects, such as *On that which is Intelligible through Itself*.

His chief theological works are the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, the *Summa Theologia*, and the *Summa de Bono seu de Creaturis*. He also wrote commentaries on the Four Gospels, St. Paul's Epistles, the Apocalypse, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs xi, the Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Baruch, and the twelve Minor Prophets. In these he gave a detailed analysis of the text, using the literal interpretation, occasionally employing the allegorical method, and sometimes combining the two.

In his scientific works, which in the Middle Ages came under

the heading of philosophy, he followed what was evidently a marked natural bent. He never forgot to relate all natural things to their Divine Cause. Concerning his purpose he writes: "We are not seeking a reason or explanation of the Divine Will, but rather investigating natural causes which are as instruments through which God's Will is manifested. It is not sufficient to know these in a general kind of way; what we are looking for is the cause of each individual thing according to the nature belonging to it." Although some of the "facts" he reported would not be accepted to-day, modern research has confirmed several of his theories once discredited. He always tried to obtain experimental verification of the opinions of others, and his Aristotelian commentaries contain many of his original observations. His paraphrases of Aristotle include works on astronomy, physics, zoology, botany, anatomy, anthropology, and psychology, which formed part of a course on Aristotelian philosophy in forty-five books. He also wrote a number of philosophical lectures given to students and various treatises on particular philosophical problems. His fame as a scientist brought him also the reputation of a magician, for in the Middle Ages very little distinction was made between these two spheres of knowledge, and after his death many books on magic written by others were attributed to him. His attitude towards magic is shown by references in his writings in which he distinguished between a good, a natural, and an evil magic. The good magic was such as that which led the Magi to Bethlehem; the natural, that in which the influences of the stars and the hidden forces of nature played a part; the evil, that which was served by diabolical arts and reprehensible practices—this he uncompromisingly condemned, as in the passage: "To make use of magical invocations, conjurations, sacrifices, or similar operations is evil and apostasy from the faith." He also said that the use of "astrological forces, images, rings, mirrors, or characters must be avoided."

In his work on minerals he refers to alchemy, a term then used to cover not only the transformation of metals into gold, but also such general experiments with minerals as are now classed under chemistry. He writes: "Natural science is not simply receiving what one is told, but the investigation of causes in natural phenomena. For this reason I investigated

the transmutation of metals among the alchemists in order that I might observe something of the nature and characteristics of the metals." He held the opinion that the transmutation of metals was possible, but that alchemists had not yet found the right method, and quotes a suggestion made by Avicenna that possibly different materials, when reduced to the most simple form, could then by human art be transformed into the desired materials—a statement which modern opinion would not deny.

With regard to Astrology he says: "There is in man a double spring of action, namely nature and the will; and nature, in itself considered, is ruled by the stars, while the will is free; but unless it resists it is swept along by nature and is as though mechanical." Similarly in a discussion on physiognomy he makes it clear that on account of the freedom of the will no human being is compelled by his physical form to a particular type of action. He quotes Aristotle's story of Hippocrates, whose disciples submitted a perfect likeness of him to a physiognomist who described it as the portrait of a man given to luxury, deceit, and animal lusts. The disciples were angered, but Hippocrates told them that this judgment of his natural tendencies was correct, and that only by a love of philosophy, integrity, and a life of study and effort had he overcome them.

Albert reconciled the inevitable and the Providential aspect of events by the definition of Boethius: "Fate is the disposition inherent in the things that are moved, by which Providence binds each by its order." Hence, he points out, there is no necessary conflict, but the wise man rules his stars, and what the stars do, they do contingently, so that, although we may be inclined, we are never compelled by their influence.

The mystical writings of Albert are chiefly to be found in his commentaries on the works of Dionysius "The Areopagite." He also wrote three devotional works on the Eucharist, and two short works, *De Adhaerendo Deo* and *Paradisus Animae*, are usually attributed to him, although there is some difference of opinion on this point.

In his analysis of the works of Dionysius he discussed the text almost line by line, restoring it where necessary, and explaining the more difficult points in correspondence with the Scriptures. For example, he explained the counsel to refrain

from intellectual activity as referring to "the natural intellectual operation, not to that which is in us by virtue of the Divine Light." Thus he guarded against the danger of false mysticism. At this time the influence of Dionysius on Christian mysticism was supreme and of the highest value, and the work done by Albert in preserving it in an acceptable form gives him a distinguished place in the history of mysticism. The significance of Dionysius is thus described by Heiler: "An equally continuous curve of development leads from the Orphic-Dionysian mysticism through Plato and the late Hellenic mystery cults to Plotinus' Neo-Platonic mysticism of the Infinite which is the source* of the mystical theology of Dionysius 'The Areopagite.' His writings became the treasure-house whence all the later Christian mystics took much of their material. It is not without justice that he is called the father of Christian mysticism. Dionysius nourished the whole mysticism of the Eastern Church. Brought to the West by Scotus Erigena and the Victorines, he exercised a decisive influence on her piety and on her theology."

The three books on the Eucharist written towards the end of Albert's life are of importance in the history of the liturgy, for they explain the nature of the Sacrament of the Mass, the meaning of the symbolism and language used, and the disposition necessary in the participants, while the whole is filled with the spirit of adoration and devotion. Albert composed many Eucharistic prayers for general circulation, a book *De Forma Orandi*, expounding the Lord's Prayer, and *De Laudibus Mariae*, consisting of questions and answers. The *Paradisus Animae* deals with the nature of the true Christian virtues—the love of God and one's neighbour, humility, obedience, compassion, faith, joy, peace, and many others. Of peace it is said: "True peace with God is when our senses and all the parts of the body and all our inward and outward works are disposed according to the guidance of reason, and when all our thoughts, affections, wills, intentions, and all our exterior actions are made according to the ordination of reason, and when that reason is wholly ordered according to the Will of God. But as often as anything is done without the consent of the reason, rightly disposed, immediately our peace of mind is disturbed."

* Proclus is the direct source, but he was trained in the Plotinian school.

In the treatise *De Adhaerendo Dei* a simple description is given of the *Via Negativa* by which the Soul may be led to union with God along the path of renunciation, which Albert himself followed, and in which he found the fulfilment of all his desires. The opening passage of the work sets forth its purpose: "I have felt moved to write a few last thoughts describing, as far as one may in this waiting-time of our exile and pilgrimage, the entire separation of the soul from all earthly things, and its close, unfettered union with God." In the second chapter he gives instructions for the attainment of this ideal. "Close, as it were, thine eyes and bar the doors of thy senses. Suffer not anything to entangle thy soul nor permit any care or trouble to penetrate it. Shake off all earthly things, counting them useless, noxious, and hurtful to thee. Strive with all thy powers unwearingly to reach God through Himself, that is, through God made man, that thou mayest attain to the knowledge of His Divinity through the wounds of His Sacred Humanity. In all simplicity and confidence abandon thyself in whatsoever concerns thee without reserve to God's unfailing Providence 'casting all your care upon Him' Who can do all things." And again: "This is, in truth the end of all thy labours, that thou mayest draw nigh unto God and repose in Him within thy soul, solely by thy understanding and by a fervent love, free from entanglement or earthly image." "Accept all things, whatsoever their cause, silently and with a tranquil mind, as coming to thee from the Fatherly Hand of Divine Providence." "Strive with all thy might to obtain habitual cleanness of heart, purity of mind, quiet of the senses: gather up thy affections, and with thy whole heart cleave unto God." "Abide in God in the secret place of thy soul as tranquilly as though there had already risen upon thee the dawn of Eternity, the unending Day of God." It is pointed out that there are many difficulties and distractions which cannot be overcome by human strength alone, therefore those who desire to follow this path are exhorted to persevere until they "dwell as by habit in the Sovereign Good, and become at last inseparable from It."

"Many are the obstacles which hinder us from tasting this rest, and of our own strength we could never attain to it; . . . for the mind is distracted and preoccupied, for it is blinded by phantoms, . . . vitiated by the passions. Even the desire of

interior joys and spiritual delights fails to draw it inward. It lies so deeply rooted in things sensible and transitory that it cannot return to itself as to the image of God. How needful is it, then, that the soul, lifted upon the wings of reverence and humble confidence should rise above itself and every creature by entire detachment, and should be able to say within itself: 'He Whom I seek, love, desire, among all, more than all, and above all, cannot be perceived by the senses or the imagination for He is above both the senses and the understanding. . . . Above all else He is sweet and love-worthy; His Goodness and Perfection are Infinite.'

"When thou shalt understand this, thy soul will enter into the darkness of the spirit and will advance further and penetrate more deeply into itself." "Set ever before thine eyes the eternal life in God which awaits thee, and think on that only good of which the Lord said: 'One thing is necessary.' A great grace will then descend upon thy soul, which will aid thee in acquiring purity of mind and simplicity of heart."

JEWEL

I find that there is nothing sweeter, more glorious, more acceptable to God, . . . than for the soul to unite itself completely to the highest and changeless Good, which abideth ever from all eternity immovable, and which no accidents can reach, for It standeth not in need of time or place. . . . The soul standeth, passeth on, and goeth forward with God and in God, and is so much the greater in God as it is less in itself because in all things it hath forgotten itself and hath passed over into God.

And it is clothed with the light of the Eternal Wisdom as with a garment, and it is surrounded on all sides by Truth and Equity as by an impregnable shield and is aglow with burning charity.

For as iron when heated becomes all fire, so the soul united with love becomes all love, though keeping its own essential nature, which must needs remain different for ever.

—*Gerlac Petersen.*

PLATO ON THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING
OF THINGS

FROM THE SEVENTH EPISTLE

Thomas Taylor's Translation

I shall say respecting all those who either have written, or shall write, affirming that they know those things which are the objects of my study (whether they have heard them from me or from others, or whether they have discovered them themselves), that they have not heard any thing about these particulars conformable to my opinion: for I never have written, nor ever shall write, about them. For a thing of this kind* cannot be expressed by words like other disciplines, but by long familiarity, and living in conjunction with the thing itself, a light as it were leaping from a fire will on a sudden be enkindled in the soul, and there itself nourish itself.

But if it appeared to me that the particulars of which I am speaking could be sufficiently communicated to the multitude by writing or speech, what could we accomplish more beautiful in life than to impart a mighty benefit to mankind, and lead an intelligible nature into light, so as to be obvious to all men? I think, how ever, that an attempt of this kind would only be beneficial to a few, who from some small vestiges previously demonstrated are themselves able to discover these abstruse particulars. But with respect to the rest of mankind, some it will fill with a contempt by no means elegant, and others with a lofty and arrogant hope, that they should now learn certain excellent things. I intend, therefore, to speak further about these particulars: for thus perhaps I shall say something clearer respecting them than I have yet said. For there is a certain true discourse which is adverse to him, who dares to write about things of this kind, and which has often been delivered by me before, and as it seems must be delivered by me at present.

* Plato here means by *a thing of this kind*, true being, the proper object of intellect.—T. T.

There are three things belonging to each of those particulars through which science is necessarily produced. But the fourth is science itself. And it is requisite to establish as the fifth that which is known and true. One of these is the name of a thing; the second its definition; the third the resemblance; the fourth science. Now take each of these, desiring to learn what we have lately asserted, and think as follows concerning them all. A circle is called something, whose name we have just expressed. After this follows its definition, composed from nouns and verbs. For that which everywhere is equally distant from the extremes to the middle, is the definition of that which we signify by the name of a round, and a circumference, and a circle. But the third is the circle which may be painted, or blotted out, which may be made by a wheel, or destroyed. None of which affections, the circle itself, which each of these respects, suffers, as being of a different nature. But the fourth is science and intellect, and true opinion about these. And the whole of this again must be established as one thing which neither subsists in voice, nor in corporeal figures, but is inherent in soul.* It is therefore manifest that this fourth is different from the nature itself† of the circle, and again different from the three we have previously mentioned. But among the number of these, intellect, by its relation and similitudes, proximately adheres to the fifth, while the rest are more remote from its nature. The same may likewise be affirmed of a straight and a crooked figure, of colour, and of the good, the beautiful, and the just. And again of every body, whether fashioned by the hand, or the work of nature, whether fire or water, and the rest of this kind; likewise of every animal, and the manners of souls; and of all actions and passions. For unless among these some one after a manner receives that fourth, he will never perfectly participate the science about the fifth. For, in addition to what has been said, these four no less endeavour to evince about every thing the quality which it possesses; but likewise its being, through the imbecility of reasons. On this account, no one endued with intellect will

* Namely, in the dianoetic part of the soul: for the forms, or essential reasons subsisting in this part, are the objects of science.—T. T.

† For the circle itself is an *intellectual form*, and is not to be apprehended by the discursive energies of the dianoetic part, but by the simple projections of intellect.—T. T.

ever dare to consider as equally immutable, things which are the objects of intellectual vision, and such as have a subsistence in corporeal figures.

But again, it is requisite to attend to what we have just now said. Every circle, which by the hands of men is either painted, or fashioned by a wheel, is plainly contrary to our fifth: for it everywhere participates of the right line. But we must affirm that the circle itself has neither more nor less of any thing whatever; that is, it possesses in itself nothing of a contrary nature. Besides, none of these is endued with any stability of name: for nothing hinders our applying the appellation of straight to that which we now denominate round, and calling the straight by the denomination of the round, nor will there be any less stability in these, when their names are changed into the contrary. The same reasoning is likewise true of definition, since it is composed from nouns and verbs which possess no stability. And in a variety of ways it may be proved that no one of these four is certain and firm. But the greatest thing of all, as I just before observed, is this, that since there are two things, essence and quality, when the soul seeks to know not the quality of a thing, but what it is, unless it first investigates each of these four, and sufficiently discusses them by a reasoning process and sensible inspection, and this continually through every thing which is asserted and shown, it will be filled, as I may say, with all possible ambiguity and obscurity.

In such things, therefore, as through a depraved education we are not accustomed to investigate the truth, but are contented with an image exhibited to our view, we do not become ridiculous to each other, when being interrogated, we are able to discuss and argue about those four. But in such particulars as we are compelled to separate that fifth from other things, and evince its nature, he who wishes to subvert what we have evinced, vanquishes, and causes him who explains this fifth, either by speech, or writing, or answers, to appear to the multitude of his hearers entirely ignorant of the things about which he attempts either to write or speak; men sometimes being ignorant that it is not the soul of the writer or speaker that is confuted, but the nature of each of the above-mentioned four particulars, when it is badly affected. But the procession through all these, and the transition to each upwards and downwards, scarcely at

length produces the science of that which naturally subsists in an excellent condition, in the soul of one naturally well affected. But when any one is naturally ill affected, as is the case with the habit of soul possessed by the multitude, who are badly disposed, with respect to learning, and whose manners are depraved, not even Lynceus himself can enable such as these to see. But in one word, neither docility nor memory will confer on any one the power of perceiving things of this kind, who is not allied to them: for they are not inherent from the first in foreign habits. So that those who are not naturally adapted and allied to what is just, and other things that are beautiful, though they may be docile, and of a good memory with respect to other particulars; and again, those that are allied to the just and beautiful, but are indocile and of a bad memory, will never learn, as far as it is possible to learn, the truth pertaining to virtue and vice. For it is necessary to learn this, and at the same time the falsehood and truth of the whole of essence, with all possible exercise, and a great length of time, as I said in the beginning. But after agitating together the several names and reasons, and sensible perceptions of these things, confuting in a benevolent manner, and employing questions and answers without envy, then striving as much as is possible to human power, prudence and intellect about each of these will scarcely at length shine forth.

On this account, every worthy man will be very far from writing* about things truly worthy, as he will thus subject himself to envy and ambiguity. But in one word, it is requisite to know from these things, that when any one sees the writings of another, whether of a legislator on the laws, or on certain other subjects, he will see that these are not such writings as are considered by him to be the most worthy of all others, if he is himself a worthy character: but the objects of his pursuit are situated in a most beautiful region. And if he should find in writings such things as truly deserve the highest regard, it might then be said that not the Gods indeed, but men destroy the intellects of men. And thus much for this fable and digression, which he who acutely follows will well understand.

* Viz. he will be unwilling to write perspicuously about the most sublime truths, unless the age in which he lives renders it necessary so to do, in order to preserve them to posterity.—T. T.

THE MYTH OF DIONYSOS

WITH SUGGESTED INTERPRETATION

The worship of Dionysos with its sacred Mysteries is said to have been introduced into Thrace by Orpheus, and the myth of Dionysos is considered to be of Orphic origin. Many traditions are connected with his name; the myths relating to his birth, education, and adventures are given in varying forms by different writers, but each version has its own symbolical value and significance. The interpretations also differ according to the sphere of activity to which they are referred.

According to one version, Zagreus or Dionysos was the son of Zeus and his daughter Persephone with whom he was united in the form of a serpent. The young god gave promise of great and wonderful powers, and Hera, wife of Zeus, in jealousy incited the Titans to kill the child. They accordingly gave him toys among which was a mirror. While he was playing with this they killed him, afterwards tearing in pieces his body* and devouring all but the heart, which Pallas Athene saved and brought to her father, Zeus, who swallowed it, thus receiving his son essentially into himself. With his thunderbolt and flames Zeus destroyed the Titans and from their ashes sprang the race of mankind, who thus possess in themselves something of the Divine Dionysos and something of the Titans, while in virtue of the heart of Dionysos swallowed by Zeus, they are essentially rooted in the Divine.

According to another myth Dionysos was born of Semele, Cadmus' daughter, to whom Zeus had made known his name, but had not revealed his form. Hera in jealousy contrived the destruction of Semele by appearing to her in the form of her aged nurse and instilling doubt into her mind as to the real nature of the lover whom she had not seen. Semele, urged on by Hera, determined to make a test of Zeus. She first obtained his promise to grant whatever she might ask, then demanded to see him arrayed in the might of his Divinity. Zeus, unable

* In another version the body was cut up and thrown into a cauldron by the Titans, but he was restored to life by Rhea or Demeter.

to prevent her speech, and obliged to fulfil his promise, appeared before her in his lesser panoply; but the divine fire immediately consumed her body, while it deified her child, as yet unready for birth. Zeus* snatched the infant from the flames and sewed him within his own thigh, whence in due season Dionysos was born.†

According to one tradition he was sent in charge of Hermes to Ino and Athenas, sisters of Semele, to be brought up disguised as a girl, but Hera sent madness upon the sisters and in order to save his son, Zeus‡ changed him into a ram and carried him to the holy mount Nysos in Thrace, where alone grew the sacred vine. Here, in the care of the nymphs of the mountain he grew safely to manhood.

There are many different accounts of his education, but they agree that on reaching manhood he travelled from place to place, planting the sacred vine and bringing to man the gift of wine, but to his own followers the gift of the sacred Mysteries, to be approached only by the pure in heart.

According to one tradition Hera afflicted Dionysos with madness, and he wandered through Egypt, Syria, and parts of Asia until at last in Phrygia the Goddess Rhea healed him, taught him her Rites, and sent him again into Asia and finally to Thebes, his birthplace. He is said to have spent some years in India, where he founded cities, gave laws, taught the arts of civilization, and instructed the people in the worship of the Gods.

Wherever he appeared he was gladly received and many women followed the beautiful youth, proclaiming him Bacchus, son of Semele. In some places he met with opposition from those in authority, but in the end he overcame his enemies. There are many traditions of his adventures and contests, such as that of his apparent defeat in Thrace at the hands of the violent king Lycurgus, who kept a troop of savage horses fed on raw

* According to another account, Hermes saved Dionysos from the flames.

† In a version of the myth found by Pausinias in Laconia, Semele and the newly born Dionysos were placed by Cadmus in a chest which was thrown upon the sea. The chest was cast ashore at Brassiae, where Ino found it. Semele was dead, but Ino took Dionysos to her own house.

‡ Another version gives Hermes as the conductor of Dionysos to Nysos.

flesh to increase their ferocity. Here the followers of Dionysos were captured and imprisoned and he himself was driven into the sea where he was sheltered by Thetis. His followers were soon released, and fled to the hills, but the country became barren, and at last in despair the people seized Lycurgus and he was sentenced to death from his own horses. Dionysos then returned and, concealing his divinity under the form of a young Lydian devotee of the god, gathered his scattered band and journeyed to Thebes, now ruled by Pentheus, grandson of the aged Cadmus. They entered the city singing and dancing, calling upon the name of Bacchus, son of Semele, proclaiming his godhead. They were robed in bright colours, girt with fawnskins, crowned with ivy and garlanded with vine leaves, and carried thyrsi, long wands entwined with vine-leaves and ivy and tipped with fircones. The citizens with one accord derided them, and poured scorn on the name of Semele: the women, however, led by the king's mother and sisters, yielding at last to the divine frenzy, rushed to join the Bacchanalian throng, followed by Cadmus and the blind seer Tiresias, the only two men wise enough to worship the god.

Pentheus, enraged, seized and imprisoned Dionysos, still in the form of the Lydian; but he easily escaped from the fetters and, appearing in another form, brought madness upon Pentheus and persuaded him to disguise himself as a woman and spy upon the sacred Mysteries of the worshippers. Thus led to his doom, Pentheus was torn in pieces by the frenzied women of his own household, while for this crime his mother and sisters became outlaws, reaping the penalty of their disdain and doubt of Semele and of her divine son. But Cadmus and his wife Hermione were given immortality in the form of serpents.

Other journeys, feats, and adventures of Dionysos are described in various traditions, and after he had established his throne throughout the world, he descended into Hades and led forth his mother, raising her to the dignity of the Immortals and changing her name to Thyone. Then with her he ascended to Olympus.

SUGGESTED INTERPRETATION

The myth can be interpreted in various mutually consistent ways which refer to different aspects of reality, and the different

versions of any particular event can sometimes be regarded as applying to different spheres of operation of the same principle. One suggestive interpretation is here given.

The name Dionysos is derived from Dios = of Zeus; and Nysos, a sacred mountain of the Gods. Iacchus, the mystic name of Bacchus, comes from a word meaning a voice, and refers to the shouts of joy with which the God was proclaimed by his followers. The title Dithyrambos, under which Dionysos was worshipped, and from which is derived the name dithyramb, the hymn sung in his honour, has been interpreted as "He of the double door"—a reference to his two births, hence the twice-born. Another suggested derivation is from the Phrygian word dithrera, meaning tomb. This also has its significance.

The name Semele is the Greek equivalent of the name of the Phrygian Goddess of Earth, Zemelo.

The name Titan is derived from a word meaning "to extend." The Titans symbolize the Divine powers which extend to the furthest bounds of space and which uphold the universe. The destruction of the Titans represents the bringing into operation of Divine Principles upon a lower plane of manifestation, with reference to which the former sphere of activity is unmanifested, hence the symbolism of disappearance or destruction, but from the ashes spring men, made in the form of Dionysos, and rooted through him in the Creator, while also possessing the same principles as are manifested in the universe.

In the older version of the myth the serpent, as the form assumed by Zeus, symbolizes Divine Wisdom, and Dionysos, as the offspring of Persephone and Zeus, is the ideal, perfect and essential aspect of men, regarded as the spiritual principle through which man is what he is. Persephone symbolizes the principle of soul from which all souls are derived.

The love of Zeus both for Goddesses and mortals, of which many myths tell, symbolizes in the former case the union of two Divine Principles in the manifestation of one Creative Idea, and in the latter, the mystical and spiritual union of the human soul with the Divine, which may be either the essential contact with the indwelling Spirit, the cause of all effort towards perfection, or the ultimate full and conscious union with the Divine which expresses itself in works of a perfect and perfective nature in every sphere of human activity.

The opposition of Hera symbolizes the mutually opposing forces, motions, and operations of the natural and physical world necessary for the actualization of the inherent forms in the soul; for Hera imparts life to the forms created by Zeus.

Dionysos may be regarded as the perfect ideal man, hero and saviour, in the fullness of his powers, son of heaven, divine-human, destined to uplift, guide, and redeem mankind. In this connection Hera's opposition symbolizes the difficulties which arise when the soul begins to ordinate and control the irrational nature. But Hera, as the cause of the vital powers of the soul, also gives, on a higher plane, as Rhea, the spiritual power to transmute the irrational nature in the service of the Ideal. Dionysos, the Saviour, is victorious over all that opposes him.

The mirror with which Dionysos was beguiled symbolizes the natural and material realm in which the soul sees its reflected image: entranced by its beauty, the soul becomes subject to the laws of the temporal world, symbolized by the Titans.

The dismemberment and devouring of Dionysos by the Titans symbolize the coming forth of the soul from the unity of the Spiritual or Intelligible Realms of Divine Reality into the multiplicity of the mundane universe. The soul exchanges its unitive perception and activity for a variety of different perceptions and activities.

The rescue of the heart of Dionysos by Pallas Athene and its return to Zeus represent the eternal union of the essential and ideal aspect of soul with its Divine Source, the heart or essence being indestructible. Mankind, as springing from the ashes of the Titans after they had devoured Dionysos, essentially participates in the divine Dionysos, and also potentially possesses the same principles as are expressed in the universe.

As the son of Zeus and Semele, Dionysos symbolizes the soul employing natural and material vehicles. The doubt and destruction of Semele symbolize the incapacity of the irrational nature of the soul to know and be consciously united to that which is spiritual. The deification of the infant Dionysos and his transference to Zeus represent the spiritual nature of the essence of man, which is rooted in the Creator.

The destruction by fire also stands for the transmutation of the lower vehicles, and the ultimate deification of Semele by

Dionysos is a symbol of resurrection, the spiritualization of the whole human nature.

Lycurgus with his ferocious horses represents the uncontrolled lower mind. Thrace means rugged and unformed. Spiritual truth cannot be expressed by the mind until the impulses, prejudices, and opinions of the lower mind are brought under the control of the higher mind.

The incident represents the unreadiness of a world devoted to material pursuits for the reception of spiritual teachings; but the destruction of Lycurgus and the triumph of Dionysos symbolize the ultimate victory over evil of that which is spiritual. Thetis, as a goddess of the sea, symbolizes the essential aspect of human life which holds the ideal purpose until the time is ripe for its fulfilment.

The gift of the vine brought from the Mount of the Gods represents the spiritual life which inspires the perfected soul, and which is the response of God to the worship of the devotee, filling him with divine entheasm or mania, as Plato names it, by which the mystic is rendered temporarily oblivious of the physical world, as though intoxicated with wine. The madness sent upon Dionysos and the frenzy of his followers signify the divine rapture which possesses the soul united to Zeus; while the madness and destruction of Pentheus and of others who rejected the god represent the intense fury of disappointment and misery that takes possession of the soul which persistently turns away from the vision of spiritual truth and the worship of the Gods. The disguise of Dionysos symbolizes the hidden and spiritual Mysteries which are at the heart of all things. His train of women signifies the receptivity and obedience necessary for those who would truly serve the inner Lord, and for all who would approach the Divine Mysteries.

The thyrsus borne by the Bacchanalians signifies the means for the reception of the Divine Light into the soul.

It is significant that the last work of Dionysos, after establishing his worship on earth, was to descend into Hades for the rescue of Semele, whom he raised to the level of his own divinity. Her new name, Thyone, is related to a Greek word meaning offering, and may be regarded as signifying the dedication of the vehicles of the soul to the Divine, and their ultimate transmutation and resurrection in the Divine Service.

From the ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES

O Thou Wise Lord, Who when Thy world was young
 Didst pierce the grim night of the eastern sky
 With gladsome rays of truth and purity,
 Forgive the error of this vent'rous song
 That strives to hymn Thy bounty. May my tongue
 Tell of Thy seer, and how against the lie
 Pure thoughts, pure words, pure actions' victory
 Rang from his herald trumpet loud and long:—
 So from the blaze wherein Thy glories dwell
 Once more athwart the sunless gloom a star
 Shall flash its guiding message, and from far
 The sage of Iran answer to the spell,
 And speed with trophies of a faith long dim
 To find his Lord and bow the knee to Him.

YASNA 45—ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURE

I will speak forth: hear now and hearken now, ye who from near desire (instruction), ye who from far. Now observe Him (i.e. Ahura) in your mind, all of you, for He is manifested.

I will speak of that which the Holiest declared unto me as the word that is best for mortals' hearing: He, the Wise Lord (said), "They who at my bidding render to him (Zarathushtra) obedience, they all shall attain unto health and immortality by the deeds of the Good Spirit."

I will speak of what is best of all, praising Him, O Thou the Right Who art boundless to all that live. By His Holy Spirit may the Wise Lord hear, in whose praise I have been taught by good thought. By His wisdom let Him teach me what is best.