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PLOTINUS

ON FELICITY

(TRANSLATION BY THOMAS TAYLOR)

INTRODUCTION

In the following translation I have endeavoured to render the profound meaning of Plotinus obvious to such as have been benefited by any of my former publications, and for whom alone the present work is designed. I shall present the reader with such additional information on the subjects which are here discussed, as I have obtained by a diligent study of Proclus and Olympiodorus, those two great luminaries of philosophy posterior to Plotinus, and by whom the doctrines of the ancients seem to have been interpreted in the greatest perfection possible to man.

1. In the first place, then, I shall observe, concerning FELICITY, that *every being is then happy when it acquires the proper perfection of its nature*; and consequently all vital beings are capable of receiving felicity that are capable of arriving at the perfection of their nature. Hence, as the *nature* or *being* of every thing consists in that part of the thing which is most excellent—for that which is most excellent is most principal, and nothing can have a more principal subsistence than being—as this is the case, human felicity consists in a perfect intellectual energy; for intellect is our principal part. Hence, too, as the form of life is different in different beings, the perfection likewise of each will be limited by different measures. The first form therefore of felicity, and which is at the same time all-perfect, is that of the universe. The second is that of the Mundane Gods, whom Plato

in the *Phaedrus* calls the *blessed* Gods, and represents following the mighty Jupiter. The third form of felicity is that which subsists in the genera superior to the human nature; for the virtue of angels is different from that of daemons, and this last from that of heroes. The fourth subsists in those unpolluted souls, such as Hercules, Theseus, Pythagoras, and Plato, who descend into generation without being contaminated with its defilements, and who preserve an untamed and undeviating life. The fifth form of felicity subsists in gregarious and multiform souls, such as those of the bulk of mankind: and the last takes place in irrational animals.

In the next place, observe, that though the human soul may in this life partake of true felicity, by converting itself wholly to Intellect, yet it can then only be uninterruptedly blessed, when it ascends with its ethereal vehicle perfectly pure to the pure spheres, or to the more sublime air or aether; for then, on account of the prosperous condition of the body with which it is connected, and the place in which that body subsists, it is by no means hindered in the energies of Divine contemplation. As the power and amplitude, too, of the more elevated are greater than the inferior spheres, and as the virtue of the soul in the former is more excellent than in the latter, by how much the one surpasses the other, by so much longer will the soul live in the superior than in the subordinate spheres. Besides, by how much more powerful Intellect, which is elevated to supernal natures, is than the imagination, which verges to sensibles, by so much longer is the life of the rational soul, when converted to the luminous visions of Intellect, than when bound as it were to the dark figured eye of the phantasy, and beholding nothing but the ever-flowing and fallacious objects of sense. Lastly, those souls live for a shorter time on earth, and for a longer time in the celestial spheres, who, from possessing prerogatives superior to those of the herd of mankind, originally belong to more excellent stars, and to daemons of a more exalted rank.

I only add further, concerning this book ON FELICITY, that when Plotinus asserts in it, that we possess an Intellect perpetually vigilant and in energy, without experiencing any remission, it is in consequence of his believing that the whole of the rational soul does not descend into body, but that its

supreme part, Intellect, always abides in the Intelligible World. This opinion he mentions explicitly at the end of his book *On the Descent of the Soul*; but against this opinion Proclus very justly objects that if our Intellect thus remains in the Intelligible World, it either perpetually understands without transition, or transitively: but if without transition, it will be Intellect alone, and not a part of the soul; and if transitively, that which is perpetually, and that which is sometimes intelligent, will form one essence. To which we may add (says he) the absurdity resulting from supposing that the summit of the soul is perpetually perfect, and yet does not rule over the other powers and give them perfection. The fact is, indeed, that our intellect, though it subsists in energy, has a remitted union with things themselves, and though it energizes from itself, and contains intelligibles in its essence, yet, from its alliance to the discursive nature of soul, and its inclination to that which is divisible, it falls short of the perfection of an intellectual essence and energy profoundly indivisible and united, and the intelligibles which it contains degenerate from the transcendently fulgid and self-luminous nature of first Intelligibles. Hence, in obtaining a perfectly indivisible knowledge, it requires to be perfected by an Intellect whose energy is ever vigilant and unremitted, and its intelligibles, that they may become perfect, are indigent of the light which proceeds from separate Intelligibles. Aristotle, therefore, very properly compares the Intelligibles of our Intellect to colours, because these require the splendour of the sun; and denominates an intellect of this kind, *intellect in capacity*, both on account of its subordination to an essential Intellect, and because it is from a separate Intellect that it receives the full perfection of its nature.

FELICITY

Since it is universally believed that to live well and to be happy are placed in the same subject, may we not inquire whether felicity is to be attributed to other animals besides man? For if it is allowed them, as far as the condition of their birth permits, to pass through life without impediment, what should hinder their living well, that is, in such a manner as to be happy? For whether living well is supposed to consist

in the sound and proper possession of *being*, or in acting agreeably to the design of nature, according to both these acceptations living well belongs to other animals as well as to man. Thus birds are well conditioned, or enjoy a sound existence, and sing agreeable to the institutions of nature in their formation, and after this manner they may appear to possess a desirable life. But if we constitute felicity as a certain end, which is something extreme in the appetite of nature, in this way all animals will be happy when they arrive at this extreme, and which, when obtained, nature in them makes a stop, as having accomplished the whole of their existence, and filled it with all that is wanting from beginning to end. But if anyone objects to felicity being transferred to brutes, asserting that in this case it must belong to creatures the most vile and abject, and even to plants, whose slender existence arrives at its proper end; such a one may appear to speak absurdly, while he affirms other animals cannot live well because they are reckoned of no worth; but he is not compelled to allow felicity to plants which he grants to all animals, because plants are destitute of sense. And, perhaps, some one may allow felicity to plants, since life is present even to these: but to live, partly happens well and partly the contrary; as a power is given to plants that they should be well conditioned and bear fruit peculiar to their nature, and sometimes that the contrary of this should take place. Hence, if pleasure is the end which all beings pursue, and living well consists in this, it will be absurd to take away living well from the brutes.

The same consequences will ensue if tranquillity be supposed the universal end; as likewise from admitting that to live according to nature is to live well. But whoever denies felicity to plants because they are not endued with sentient powers, cannot assign this to all animated beings: since if by sensation they mean not to be ignorant of passion or affection, it is necessary that *good itself* should be a passion prior to that which is said not to be concealed, as this is the possession of a *being* according to nature, although such a possession is concealed; and in the same manner that which is peculiar, although it may not yet be acknowledged as peculiar: besides it is necessary that that which is sweet should exist prior to our perception of its being sweet.

Hence, then, if wherever good is possessed a being is well conditioned, why is it necessary to add sensation? Unless they place good not in a certain present affection or constitution, but rather in knowledge and sensation. But, in this case, they should affirm that sense itself, and the energy of a sensitive life, is good, and ought to confess that good is present to every percipient being considered as percipient.

But if they affirm good to be constituted from both, as from the perception of a certain thing, or affection, after what manner, since both passion and its perception, considered by themselves, are indifferent, can they assert that to be good which is the result of both?

But if they say that to live well is a certain good affection and that state of being when any one acknowledges good as present to himself, it is proper to interrogate such whether any one from simply acknowledging this as present, lives well, or whether it is necessary he should not only know it is pleasant but that it is good? But if it be necessary he should know it to be good, there will not for this purpose be any need of sense, but of some power more excellent than sense.

To live well, therefore, will not belong to him who is diffused all over with pleasure, but to him who is capable of knowing that pleasure is good. And so the cause of living well will not be pleasure, but that *power* which is able to judge that pleasure is good: and indeed, that which judges is more excellent than passion and affection, for it is either reason or intellect, but pleasure is passion only. But that which is irrational is by no means more excellent than reason. How then can reason, neglecting itself, place that which exists in an opposite rank as more excellent than itself? But those who attribute to plants, and to a sense of this kind, a well-conditioned state of existence, appear to conceal from themselves that they inquire after living well as after something superior to mere sensation, and that they place a better condition of being in a life more perfect and entire.

Again, whatever of felicity, they say, consists in a rational life, but not in life simply considered (not even if it be sensual), is, perhaps, rightly said. But it is requisite to interrogate such, on what account they place felicity about the rational soul? Whether they connect reason with felicity because reason is more sagacious, and can more easily investigate those things

which are first according to nature? Or whether it is united with felicity, though it should not be able to investigate with sagacity? But if reason participates more of felicity on account of its power of invention, felicity may be present where reason is absent, to those beings who are capable of pursuing things first according to nature. Reason, therefore, will perform the office of a minister, and will not by any means be eligible for its own sake, nor again will it be the perfection of that which we denominate virtue.

But if you should say that reason does not derive its dignity from things first according to nature, but is to be cultivated on its own account, it remains to inform us what besides this is the work of reason, what is its nature, and what causes its perfection? For, indeed, it is necessary it should be perfect, not on account of its inspection concerning things prior by nature, but that its perfection should consist in something else, and that it should inherit another nature; and again that it should not be in the number of things first according to nature, nor that from which these first beings are composed, nor at all of this kind, but that it should be of all these the most excellent; for otherwise I cannot see how they can be able to assign the cause of its venerableness and worth. But such as these, until they find out a better nature, must be permitted to doubt what it is to live well, to whom a power of this kind may belong, and after what manner, and among which of the preceding, felicity may be found.

Let us, therefore, resuming the question from the beginning, inquire in what felicity ought to consist: indeed, since we constitute felicity in life, if we should think life a term synonymous to vital beings, we ought to assign to all animals an ability of becoming happy, and should think that those beings live well in energy, to whom a life one and the same is present, and which all animals are naturally capable of receiving.

Nor ought we, on such a supposition, so to distribute a matter of this kind as to allow an ability of happiness to the rational nature and not to the irrational; for life will be that common something which, whoever participates, ought to be capable of obtaining felicity, since beatitude would consist in a certain life.

Hence those who affirm that felicity consists in a rational life, and not in life universal, do not, I think, sufficiently perceive that they establish felicity as something different from life: but they are compelled to call the rational power a quality, about which felicity abides. According to these, however, a rational life exists as the subject, since about the whole of this felicity is entirely conversant; on which account it seems to be placed about another species of life, distinguished from reason in the same manner as that which is prior from that which is posterior.

Since, then, life is multifariously predicated, and is diversified according to first and second, and so on in regular subordination; and since to live is affirmed equivocally in one respect of a plant, but in another of a brute, differing in plenitude and exility, certainly to live well, and simply to live, must be affirmed of all these in a certain analogical proportion. And if one vital being is but the image of another, doubtless one habit of living well ought to be judged but the image of another.

But if to whatever possesses a sufficiency of life, that is, which in no part is destitute of life, felicity belongs, certainly felicity will be present alone to beings possessing a sufficiency of life; since that which is best is present to these, and that is best in the order of beings which subsists truly in life, and is itself perfect life: for thus neither will its good be adventitious, nor will the approach of anything external cause its subject to be placed in good. For what can be added to a perfect life that it may become the best? But if any one should say that the nature of good must be added, his sentiments will be correspondent to our own, inquiring after this as abiding in the soul; for it has often been said by us that perfect and true life flourishes in an intellectual nature, but that others are imperfect, mere images of life, neither living perfectly nor purely; and again not possessing in reality more of life than its privation.

And now, since we have summarily affirmed that all vital beings live from one principle in such a manner as not equally to participate of life, it necessarily follows that the principle of life is the first life, and the first perfection.

(To be continued)

THE TEACHINGS OF ST. TERESA OF JESUS

The teachings of St. Teresa, all of which have to do with the threefold mystical path of right thought, right devotion, and right action which culminates in mystical union with the Divine, are contained chiefly in her *Life* written in 1561, *The Way of Perfection* written in 1565, and *The Interior Castle* written in 1577. In all her writings, which are based upon her own experience, her great love for God and humanity and her hunger and thirst for spiritual truth and life are clearly to be seen. Her counsels mirror her own strong faith, courage, sympathy and self-effacement.

In her *Life* her own experiences from childhood onward serve as a background for the main theme of the book, the life of prayerful meditation and contemplation.

In *The Way of Perfection* is given a beautiful series of reflections on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer which are related to the stages of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.

In *The Interior Castle*, written twelve years later in the light of deeper and richer mystical experience, the symbolism is used of a castle formed of a single diamond, containing many rooms disposed concentrically in seven series or "mansions" around an innermost central chamber, the dwelling-place of the Inner Lord, from which streams forth a light as of a great sun illuminating the whole castle.

The seven mansions correspond to seven stages in the soul's journey to conscious union with God. These stages, as in the other works, are described in terms of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.

Although the different states described pass imperceptibly one into another and have various degrees between which no sharp boundary can be distinguished, they are placed under four main headings—Prayerful Meditation or Mental Prayer, the Prayer of Recollection, the Prayer of Quiet, and the Prayer of Union. The following passages, taken from the *Life*, *The Way of Perfection*, and *The Interior Castle*, describe in turn each of these stages.

In the *Life* St. Teresa points out that the soul which consecrates itself to the service of God will desire, as she did, "to

spend more time with Him and also to withdraw from occasions of sin." But this is not enough: there must be the giving of the self to God as well as the practice of true prayer. "We think that we are giving all to God; but in fact we are offering only the revenue or produce, while we retain the fee-simple of the land in our possession. . . . We thought also that we gave up all desire of honour when we began the spiritual life, yet when we are touched on a point of honour we would seize it again. . . . So it is with everything else. A pleasant way, this, of seeking the love of God!"

The soul is compared to a gardener who, having tilled and planted, must water his garden. This may be done in four ways—by water drawn from a well by hand, by water drawn from the well by means of a machine, by water from streams and brooks running through the garden, or by showers of rain. The first method corresponds to the practice of mental prayer, that is prayerful meditation or prayer accompanied by thought.

At first it is difficult to maintain attention, and the unaccustomed exercise may be wearisome. "The senses have hitherto been accustomed to distraction . . . beginners must accustom themselves during the time of prayer to disregard what they hear and see and put it away from them." The effort to meditate may often seem entirely fruitless, but the beginner must not lose heart. "Let him take no account of evil thoughts. I am one who underwent these labours for many years. When I drew but one drop of water out of the well I considered it was a mercy of God. I know these labours are very great and require, I think, greater courage than many others in this world. . . . The soul which begins to walk in the way of mental prayer with resolution and is determined neither to rejoice nor to be greatly afflicted whether sweetness and tenderness fail it or our Lord grants them, has already travelled a great part of the road."

St. Teresa writes also of the self-inflicted anxieties of some who find meditation difficult. "It is not always right to omit prayer when the understanding is greatly distracted and disturbed, nor to torment the soul to the doing of that which is out of its power. There are other things to be done—exterior works of charity and spiritual reading.

"Take care, then, of the body, because at many other times

the body must serve the soul; and let recourse be had to recreations—holy ones. Let God be served in all things . . . it is of great importance that the soul should not be dragged, as they say, but carried gently that it may make progress.”

In *The Way of Perfection* St. Teresa writes, “To pray with entire attention and reflection is to practise mental prayer. Never address your words to God when you are thinking of something else. . . . We must withdraw our senses from outward things and keep them occupied within our souls. For the love of God, sisters, reckon your time well spent in acquiring this habit.”

For the encouragement of those whose “minds are as disorderly as unbroken horses that . . . rush about hither and thither and are never at rest,” she speaks of the fountain of living water to which, without knowing it, they may be very near, “from which flow many rivulets, some large, some small, while there are little pools for children—that is for beginners—who would be frightened at much water. . . . The waters of comfort are never so utterly wanting that thirst becomes unbearable.”

In *The Interior Castle* souls without prayer are likened to bodies with limbs so disabled as to be useless. “The gate by which to enter this castle is prayer and meditation . . . if it is prayer at all the mind must take part in it.” The first three outermost mansions correspond to those people who begin to pray and meditate. In the first the soul, still filled with thoughts and images of worldly things, is as though deaf and dumb, but here self-knowledge begins. Those in the second mansion are as though dumb but not deaf to the voice of Christ calling them through books, sermons, sickness, or trouble. In the third mansion are those who are charitable, who employ their time and order their lives well, but as yet lack detachment. Here they learn to begin to speak to God.

St. Teresa makes it clear that meditation and work must not be separated. “It is not so essential to think much as to love much. Perhaps you do not understand what love is. . . . Love does not consist in great sweetness of devotion, but in a fervent determination to strive to please God in all things. . . . Do not imagine that it consists in never thinking of anything but God, and that if your thoughts wander a little all is lost.”

A certain "sweetness or tenderness in devotion" may from time to time be experienced. This originates in the sensitive and natural disposition and is not a spiritual consolation. It "arises principally from the good works we perform: well may we feel happy at having thus spent our time! We shall find, on consideration, that many temporal matters give similar pleasure."

These natural joys produced by devotion begin in ourselves and end in God; whereas "spiritual consolations, on the contrary, arise from God and are communicated to us. Spiritual graces dilate the heart; the sensible devotion does not dilate, but generally appears slightly to narrow the heart."

In the three books many counsels are given as to virtues to be cultivated and faults to be avoided. In the *Life* it is pointed out that there should be right detachment from love of possessions, including the body and bodily comforts, and from love of honour, lest our aim should be "not to miss our ease in this world and yet to have the fruition of God in the next." But this "is the pace of a hen—it will never bring us liberty of spirit."

In *The Way of Perfection* she says "our first effort must be to cease loving our bodies . . . the body possesses this defect—the more you give it the more it requires."

It is recommended that the austerities practised should take the form of a forsaking of desires for precedence, approbation, "rights." Sensitiveness with regard to fancied injuries should be forsaken also. "To be undervalued in the least is unbearable to us, we at once cry out 'we are not angels nor saints!' That is true enough. . . . God deliver us, my daughters, when we fall into any imperfection from saying 'we are not angels, we are not saints.'" There should be a readiness to submit to blame without making excuses, also a freedom from resentment and from excessive scrupulousness about trifles. "I never heard any ill spoken of me that did not fall far short of the truth, if not in that particular matter, yet often enough in similar things. For a false accusation I care nothing, and in minor matters I follow my natural bent without thinking of what is most perfect. Time will show how your soul will benefit by this. You will gradually gain liberty of spirit and will not care whether or not you are well spoken of."

In the *Life* other common faults are pointed out. "When people begin to have pleasure in the rest and fruit of prayer they will have everyone else to be very spiritual also. Now to desire this is not wrong, but to try to bring it about may not be right except with great discretion, with much reserve, without any appearance of teaching."

False humility is a subtle failing. There is a certain pride which consists in having large desires to imitate the saints and to long for martyrdom. "We must see what those actions are which we are to admire, and what those are which we are to imitate; for it would be wrong in a person weak or sickly to undertake much fasting and sharp penances or any austerities of this kind."

A valuable counsel is given to those who begin to meditate. "In the beginning we should strive to be cheerful and unconstrained. Some think it is all over with devotion if they relax ever so little, but there are not many who are so perfect as to be able to relax themselves on the occasions which offer temptations to their natural temper." For their encouragement she adds, "God withholds Himself from no one who perseveres. He will little by little strengthen that soul so that it may come forth victorious. The labour is greatest at first . . . although they who are in the beginning, the middle and the end have their crosses to carry, the crosses are different."

A warning is given with regard to the stage of prayerful meditation which is also applicable to the other stages. "It is best for a soul which God has not raised to a higher state than this not to try to rise of itself. Let this be well considered, because all that the soul will gain in that way will be a loss." The soul may, however, "make many acts which may help the growth of virtues. It may also place itself in the presence of Christ and accustom itself to many acts of love directed to His Sacred Humanity. . . . Some may raise their thoughts to the consideration of the high things of heaven . . . or unto God and His great wisdom. . . . I myself had not the capacity for it, . . . others, however, will profit in this way, particularly those who are learned; for learning, in my opinion, is a great treasury in the matter of this exercise if it is accompanied with humility. That is why I am so very anxious that many learned men may become spiritual." A hint, however, is given to those

who delight in mental subtleties not to spend unduly long periods of time in meditation, especially on one subject, but to realize that practical duties have a value.

In all three works, before passing to the consideration of the next stage—the prayer of recollection—which partakes partly of the natural and partly of the spiritual, St. Teresa makes it very clear that the practice of the virtues in self-giving is more important than the receiving of spiritual consolations. “Unless you intend learning and practising them, continue your mental prayer all your life. . . . If we do not yield ourselves to Him as entirely as He gives Himself to us, He does what suffices by leaving us to mental prayer and visiting us now and then, as servants working in His vineyard. But the other souls (who forsake themselves utterly) are His beloved children whom He will not allow to quit His side.”

Contemplation, on the other hand, is a gift of God which is not necessary for salvation. “Let her not be disheartened who is without it, nor give up prayer. For more than fourteen years I could not meditate without a book.” And again, “If contemplation, mental and vocal prayer, nursing the sick, the work of the house, and the most menial labour, all serve the guest who comes to eat and drink and converse with us, why should we choose to minister to Him in one way rather than in another? . . . Humility, mortification, detachment, and other virtues are the safest: there is no cause for fear, nor need you doubt that you may become as perfect as the greatest contemplatives. . . . I believe that those who lead the active life, when they see that contemplatives occasionally receive consolation, imagine that their life consists of nothing else; yet perhaps you might not be able to bear such trials as theirs for a single day.”

In the *Life* the prayer of recollection is described in conjunction with the prayer of quiet, but St. Teresa without naming this condition also describes it, in connection with graces received during prayer, as a feeling of the presence of God which “would come over me unexpectedly so that I could in no wise doubt either that He was within me or that I was wholly absorbed by Him. The soul is suspended in such a way that it seems to be utterly beside itself. The will loves: the memory is as it were lost and the understanding, so I think,

makes no reflections—yet it is not lost: it is not at work, but stands as if amazed at the greatness of the things it understands; for God wills it to understand that it understands nothing whatever of that which His Majesty places before it.”

In *The Way of Perfection* the prayer of recollection is attained when by realizing that “God dwells within the soul and that it may remain there with Him in converse, talking silently with Him in humility, the soul collects together all the faculties and enters within itself to be with God. . . .” The soul seems to rise from play, for it sees that earthly things are but toys and therefore mounts to higher things. . . . In the beginning it requires a painful effort, for the body claims its rights, not understanding that its rebellion is suicidal, yet by persevering in the habit and by controlling ourselves the benefits that result will become clear.”

“Oh, if only I could describe how the soul holds intercourse with this Companion in the Holy of Holies, whenever it seeks to retire within itself with its God into this heaven, shutting the door against all the world. I say ‘the soul seeks,’ because you must understand that this is not a supernatural state, but something which by the grace of God we can desire and obtain for ourselves.”

In *The Interior Castle* St. Teresa tells how the powers of the soul are effortlessly recalled from externals as to a centre. “There is no occasion to retire or to shut the eyes, nor does it depend on anything exterior; involuntarily the eyes suddenly close and solitude is found. Without any labour of one’s own the temple is raised in which to pray: the senses and exterior surroundings appear to lose their hold while the spirit gradually regains its lost sovereignty. . . . This recollection helps us greatly when God bestows it upon us, but do not fancy you can gain it . . . by imagining Him as present in your soul. This is a good practice . . . it is not, however, the prayer of recollection.”

A warning is given against the wrong use of the will in these matters. “Some books advise that as a preparation for hearing what our Lord may say to us we should hold our minds at rest, waiting to see what He will work in our souls. But unless His Majesty has begun to suspend our faculties, I cannot understand how we are to stop thinking without doing our-

selves more harm than good. St. Peter of Alcantara agreed with me that the mind must act until called to recollection . . . the imagination would be made more restless than before by the very effort to refrain from thinking . . . any forcible restraint does more harm than good. . . . How can we be self-oblivious while keeping ourselves under such strict control that we are afraid to move or even to think or to leave our minds enough liberty to desire God's greater glory? . . . God gave us our faculties for use. . . . Let us permit them to do their work until divinely called to something higher."

"As a rule all our anxieties come from misunderstanding our own nature. . . . Let the mill clack on while we grind our wheat."

Following upon the prayer of recollection may come the gift of the prayer of quiet—a supernatural state to which no effort of the soul can raise it; yet with the supernatural is still combined something of the natural, so there is more room for delusion here than in the higher states into which the natural does not enter.

Many souls who are truly following the mystical path may enter the prayer of quiet—so named because the will rests in quiet in the Divine Will. In the *Life* this prayer is compared to the drawing of water from a well by means of a windlass which greatly lessens the labour.

The prayer of quiet "is a gathering together of the faculties of the soul within itself . . . but they are not lost, neither are they asleep; the will alone is occupied in such a way that, without knowing how, it has become a captive. . . . It gives a simple consent to become the prisoner of God. . . . How pressing is Thy Love! It binds our love in bonds so strongly that it is not in its power at this moment to love anything but Thee!"

The other faculties, by seeking to represent to it that in which it rests, may hinder the soul, but the will should remain unmoved. "Everything that takes place in this state brings the very greatest consolation and the labour is so slight that prayer . . . is never wearisome. The reason is that the understanding is now working very gently and is drawing very much more water than it drew before out of the well."

In *The Way of Perfection* the description is very similar. While

reflecting on the petition "Thy Kingdom come," she says, "This prayer is a supernatural state to which no effort of our own can raise us because here the soul rests in peace, or rather our Lord gives it peace by His presence—thus all the faculties are calmed and in some manner in no way concerned with the exterior senses the spirit realizes that it is close to its God and that if it drew a little nearer to Him it would become one with Him by union.

"The spirit is supremely satisfied and so delighted at finding itself near the fountain that before even tasting the water its thirst is quenched. Two of the faculties are free, the will alone is captive. The mind centres itself on one thing only and works but little and the memory tries to remember nothing else, for both see that this is 'the one thing needful' and that anything else disturbs them. Sometimes the quiet is great and lasts for two or three days and the soul is conscious of not giving entire attention to whatever it may be doing—the chief factor, the will, being wanting—united to God—leaving the other two powers free to attend to His service. This state cannot be retained at will. Sometimes while the soul is thus at peace the imagination is much distracted. The will should then remain fixed."

In *The Interior Castle* St. Teresa says: "When His Majesty wishes the mind to rest from working He employs it in another manner, giving it a light and a knowledge far above any it could acquire by its own efforts and absorbing it entirely into Himself. Then, though it knows not how, it is filled with wisdom such as it could never gain for itself by striving to suspend the thoughts." And again, "This joy, these celestial waters, appear to originate in the very centre of the soul and flow through all the faculties, even down to the body . . . they appear to dilate and enlarge us interiorly and benefit us in an inexplicable manner, nor does the soul itself understand what it receives." While the will is united to God the other powers of the soul are not so united, but stand absorbed and astounded at the marvel before them.

"The after-effects on the soul and the subsequent behaviour of the person show whether this prayer was genuine or not." If it has truly experienced the prayer of quiet the soul will possess much more liberty of spirit. "It has lost servile fear and feels sure that it will one day possess its Lord."

Many never go beyond this point, yet though great is the grace here given it is but "a little spark of the true love of Himself which our Lord begins to enkindle in the soul." Mental and vocal prayer should not now be abandoned, while a willingness to "walk in the way of the cross from the very first and not to desire any sweetness at all" preserves the soul from delusions.

On the subject of delusions St. Teresa in *The Interior Castle* writes, "Some persons of weak constitution may so exhaust themselves in their efforts to attain to this state as to fall into slumber and imagine that it is a trance. . . . Others are unable to receive even the natural and sensible consolations without falling into insensibility and thinking that they experience the prayer of quiet." There are also "people whose minds and imaginations are so active as to fancy they see whatever they think about, which is very dangerous."

Following the warning comes the positive and practical reminder that the preparation for the reception of spiritual gifts consists in true love of God and mankind shown in works. "We should be most vigilant in little things . . . it is amusing to see souls who while they are at prayer fancy they are willing to be despised and publicly insulted for the love of God, yet afterwards do all they can to hide their small defects; if anyone unjustly accuses them of a fault, God deliver us from their outcries! . . . When I see people very anxious to know what sort of prayer they practise, covering their faces and afraid to move or think lest they should lose any slight tenderness or devotion they feel, I know how little they understand how to attain union with God. . . . No, sisters, no, our Lord expects *works* from us. If you see a sick sister whom you can relieve, never fear losing your devotion, compassionate her; when there is need, fast that she may eat. . . . If someone else is well spoken of, be more pleased than if it were yourself . . . feel sorry for the fault you see in another as if it were yours; hiding it from the sight of others. . . . Forget your self-interests for theirs, however much nature may rebel—do not fancy it will cost you nothing."

(*To be concluded*)

ON TRUTH

THE TYRANT AND THE SAGE

A FABLE BY NIZAMI

There was a king, who oppressed his subjects : in his fondness of false evidence he had the manners of Hejjây (a tyrant of Basrah).

Whatever in the night time was born (or conceived), in the morning was repeated in his palace at early dawn.

One morning a person went to the king, more apt to disclose secrets than the orb of the moon.

Who from the moon acquired nightly stratagems, and from the dawn learned the art of the informer.

He said: "A certain old man in private has called thee a disturber and a tyrant, and bloodthirsty."

The king was enraged by his speech: he said, "Even now I put him to death."

He spread a cloth and scattered sand on it (to catch the blood): the devil himself fled from his madness.

A youth went, like the wind, to the face of the old man: he said, "The king is ill-disposed towards thee.

"Before this evil-minded tyrant has pronounced thy doom, arise, go to him, that thou mayst bring him to his right state of mind."

The sage performed his ablutions; took his shroud; went before the king, and took up his discourse.

The dark-minded monarch clapped his hands together, and, from a desire of revenge, his eye was bent back towards the heel of his foot.

He said: "I have heard that thou hast given loose to thy speech; thou hast called me revengeful and mad-headed.

"Art thou apprized of my monarchy like that of *Soliman*? Dost thou call me in this manner an oppressive demon?"

The old man said to him: "I have not been sleeping: I have said worse of thee than what thou repeatest.

"Old and young are in peril from thy act; town and village are injured by thy ministry.

“I, who am thus enumerating thy faults, am holding a mirror to thee both for bad and good.

“When the mirror shows thy blemishes truly, break thyself: it is a crime to break the mirror.

“See my truth, and apply thy understanding to me: and if it be not so, kill me on a gibbet.”

When the sage made a confession with truth, the veracity of the old man had an effect on him.

When the king saw that veracity of his before him, he perceived his rectitude, his own crookedness.

He said: “Take away his spices and his shroud, bring in my sweet odours, and robe of honour.”

He went back from the height of injustice: he became a just prince, cherishing his subjects.

No virtuous man has kept his truth concealed; for a true speech no man has been injured.

Bring truth forward, that thou mayst be saved: truth from thee is victory from the Creator.

Though true words were all pearls, yet they would be harsh, very harsh, for “truth is often bitter”.

SEED THOUGHT

Be able to be alone. Lose not the advantage of Solitude—but delight to be alone and single with Omnipresency.

He who is thus prepared, finds the Way is not uneasy, nor the Night black unto him. Darkness may bound his Eyes—not his imagination.

In his bed he may lie like Pompey, and his sons, in all quarters of the Earth, may speculate the Universe and enjoy the whole world in the Hermitage of himself.

Thus the old ascetic Christians found a Paradise in a Desert, and with little converse on earth held a conversation in Heaven; thus they astronomized in Caves, and though they beheld not the Stars, had the Glory of Heaven before them!

—*Sir Thomas Browne*

FLOYER SYDENHAM ON HUMAN EVILS*

Human evils must be divided into three kinds; and each kind must be considered by itself distinctly; because each of the three kinds proceeds from a cause, different from the causes of the other two; and, farther, because the whole manifested human nature being divisible into three parts—namely, body, irrational soul, and mind—one only of these three parts suffers immediately, and of necessity, from one only of those three kinds of evil.

In one kind we include not only the many ills which immediately affect the human body, but such also as directly affect the outward circumstances of a man's life, and by means of these, his body, too, more or less. Now all the evils of this kind—some or other of which every day befall many individuals of the human species, either naturally or accidentally†—arise from the perpetual flow and mutation of corporeal things. For every particle of all bodies, whether elementary or compounded, is continually changing its situation, or migrating from one compound body to another. But such of these evils as human foresight can perceive the danger of at a distance, nature has endued men with abilities either to secure themselves against or to fly from and avoid. And such as are unavoidable, or too rapid and sudden to be foreseen, must be considered, if beheld in their true light, as the consequences of those motions of the elements which, violent as they sometimes are, yet are necessary to prevent such a putrifying stagnation in some one element, as would soon spread a mortification through the whole frame of nature and bring it to a thorough dissolution.

There is also another kind of human evil, more numerous and of larger extent than the kind already mentioned; and in this we include all those evils which immediately and in the first place affect the irrational or merely animal-soul, but often reach up to the mind, and often also down to the body and

* See also *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 58, 59, 68, 69, 70, and 78. In this article several terms have been substituted by more suitable ones.

† This term is used in the philosophical sense, as what is not necessarily involved in the essential nature of anything.

the external circumstances. The principal evils of this kind are sensuality and luxury, cowardice and effeminacy, avarice and ambition, a vicious pride and a lust of power: and these evils arise from the immoderate and ungoverned passions of this irrational soul—passions heightened by the strong fancies of a boundless imagination. The persons who are made unhappy by any of these evils within themselves are very unjust if they ascribe them to any power in the nature of things, any cause extraneous to themselves. For, in the frame of human nature, every individual of the human species hath the Divine Gift of Mind and Reason bestowed on him for these very purposes, namely, to set bounds to the fancies and to moderate and over-rule the passions of the soul. And this particular mind, this reason of a man's own, is always assisted by the great Universal Mind (in Whom Right Reason dwells eternally), if the man's heart be sincere and sound, disposed to receive that Divine Assistance gratefully, and to confide therein firmly. Hence it follows, that the sufferers, under the internal evils of this kind, have themselves only to accuse and blame, for all such sufferings. . . .

From this general home-charge, however, three sorts of persons have very fair pretensions to a right of being excepted. In the first sort we place idiots, the mad, also, and the lunatic; in a word, all persons, who want capacity to attain to reason through some accident happening to them in their embryostate; and all such as are deprived of their rational faculties by disease, or other accident, at any time of their lives. In the second sort we rank those who are in the state of infancy, or of so early a nonage, that all human laws presume them not to have arrived at the age of reason or moral prudence, and consequently not to be moral agents. In the third sort we class all persons of riper years, who in their youth, the age of instruction, never received any precepts of sound and immutable morality, either from their parents or from any other teachers, but were left to the leading of their own wills; together with all those, who, by a fate still worse, were brought up under parents or guardians void of all true virtue; and who never had any other patterns of life before their eyes, to copy after in their actions, than such as were governed, in all their own actions, by passion and imagination: to these may be

added all those unfortunate slaves, who are entirely in the power of their despotic masters, and compelled to obey their absolute commands, without questioning the lawfulness or justice of them, under pain of suffering death, or some other punishment, dreaded by them more than any moral evil. Now, as far as any of these three sorts of persons are excusable to themselves, for the evils which their souls suffer; in other words, as far as they are not among the proper subjects of self-condemnation, so far, other particular persons seem to be justly chargeable with being the causes of those evils: to the first sort of persons, either legislators or magistrates are the causes of them; to those of the second sort, parents or guardians; and to those of the third sort, tyrannical princes or unjust and cruel lords and masters; but in none of these only exceptional cases ought nature to be accused, or any want of Goodness or of Power in the Divine Government of the world.

Human evils also there are of a third kind, evils which immediately and directly affect the rational nature, or mind. Evils of this kind are impiety, injustice and a want of goodness; a contempt of truth, simplicity, and innocence; and an opposition or a disregard to just reasoning, and to the eternal relations of things, one to another: and these are the worst evils possible to befall a man, because they are the most of all things contrary to the nature of his better self, the mental being, which is imparted to him from Above. For this, by its divine origin, and innate principles, is pious, grateful, and conscientious; friendly, social, and benevolent; a lover of truth and right reason, of universal justice and equity; an enemy to falsehood and deceit, and to sophistical and inconsistent reasoning.

Now if, with unprejudiced and honest minds, we inquire into the cause of these evils, so destructive in their nature and so often (it is to be feared) incurable, we shall find them for the most part to have sprung out of those other evils spoken of before; those disorders and tumults in the animal nature which had arisen in her from her immoderate appetites, lawless passions, and inordinate affections, augmented or heightened by her imagination. For if the rational nature happen not to have been previously strengthened and fore-armed by right culture, if she be not also kept in the proper exercise of her

powers, if, beside, she seek not aid from those pure and Divine Ideas, which are ever present in her inmost recesses, and ever ready to assist her (unless the intercourse between them be, through her own fault, obstructed), and if she be not constantly on her guard against those evils, those seditions, violent commotions and insurrections to which her blind and irrational partner below is always obnoxious, her own peace (or peaceful slumbers) will be disturbed, and her supineness will be roused to the pursuit of Good; but not perceiving it in herself, not apprehending it to be so near to her, and ignorant in what quarter of the wide region around her the chase lies, or which way to take so as to get a sight of it, she will readily embrace every false intelligence of good, which outward sense and imagination, her only intimate acquaintance, ignorantly and confidently report to her; she will follow the directions given by these false reporters, and instead of governing her lower part—an office, assigned to her by nature—she will servilely yield herself to be governed by it in her whole conduct, and in all her own energies or internal motions. The principal evils, into which she will be then insensibly led by her blind guide, are those above mentioned: and happy will it be for her, if ever she becomes so sensible of her condition, as to feel within herself sharp pain (the sting of conscience) from the wounds which they have given her. For such pain will be a sign that mental life is still strong in her, though latent; and that her wounds are not mortal: and beside these encouraging prognostics, after she has in vain consulted the numerous quacks all around her and has experienced their boasted specific medicines to be equally burdensome and useless, she will naturally have recourse to the truly Divine all-healing power, Whom she will then perceive to be deep within her own being, the provident and watchful Preserver of it: with a firm trust and comfortable hopes she will use the remedies prescribed by Him—remedies ready at hand to be found only within herself, and vainly sought for elsewhere: as she must then also be conscious that she had fallen into those pernicious evils through a conduct contrary to her own nature, as well as to the laws of Nature Universal, she will accuse neither of these (for so she would still be unjust and impious), she will condemn only her own perverse will.

And the subject of these mental evils, self-condemnation, admits of no exception in favour of those persons whom we classed together as a third sort, in speaking of the evils which immediately and primarily affect the lower soul—persons who are exempted from the sharpest stings of conscience, in their personal sufferings for their personal irregularities and immoral behaviour, if their volitional natures remain unperverted and they have never violated the sacred law of universal justice; for an exception is made of such persons, because others, rather than themselves, appear to be the causes of the evils which they suffer, and seem therefore to be responsible for those evils in the judgment of conscience.

But on the subject of such evils as wound the rational nature, the case is quite different. For the Ideas of Truth and Justice, Equity and Fairness, the affections of Piety and Gratitude, Unitive Love and Universal Benevolence, are so innate in the human mind, and though at first wrapped up and hidden within the seeds or principles of mind, yet unfold and expand themselves so early in the state of childhood and so quickly attain stability and strength sufficient to endure, that no want of culture, no blighting winds of bad doctrine, not even the blasts of impious and inhuman religions, have the power of totally destroying them.

Notwithstanding therefore, that the teachers of atheism, or of antitheism, godless sophisters, or priests of false gods, and preachers of religious cruelties which they impiously style acceptable offerings and due honours paid to the Deity, or acts of religious faith, do indeed partake in the guilt, and consequently must some time or other partake also in the punishment of such persons as are the ministers and agents in those cruelties; yet the last-mentioned persons—those, who are either sophisticated, or blindly and implicitly follow their leaders into extreme evils—incur not the less guilt on account of their being betrayed into perdition by others; nor are they less inexcusable; because, as these others argue or persuade, so do those act—both parties against the light of reason and natural conscience; often without being hurried on, or misled, blindfold by any strong appetites, passions, or affections of their animal nature. All of them, therefore, the deceived as well as the deceivers, in these cases must equally be self-condemned. And, in condemning

themselves thus justly, they exculpate nature, and acknowledge the equity and goodness of her divine mind. This sentiment, Homer, like a true philosopher, has given to Jupiter, near the beginning of the *Odyssey*; where he introduces him delivering his mind in a council of the Gods, with all that mildness of genuine majesty, which the prince and father of poets everywhere attributes to the King and Father of the Gods, in these words:

Ah! how unjustly men accuse the Gods!
 Charging on us their sufferings: when themselves,
 Thro' their own crimes, bring on themselves more ill,
 Than is the fated lot of human life.

THE PRACTICE OF RESIGNATION

Remember, in this life no one ever left himself so much but he could find something more to leave. Very few can stand it who know what it really means. It is just a give and take, a mutual exchange: thou goest out of things so much and just so much, no more and no less, does God go in: with all of His if thou dost go clean out of all of thine.

Try it, though it cost thy all. That way lies peace, and none elsewhere.

People ought not to mind much what they do, they ought to mind more what they are. If folks are good, their natures, their deeds would show it soon enough. If thou art righteous, so too are thy works. Think not to vest holiness in doing, holiness depends on being. It is not the work which hallows us, it is for us to sanctify the work. . . . The moral of which is that all our efforts should be spent on being good, not caring so much what we do, the sort of work, as about the grounds of action.

—*Eckhart*

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

PROPOSITION CIII

All things are in all, but appropriately in each

For in Being there is Life and Intellect; and in Life, Being and Intellection; and in Intellect, Being and Life. But in Intellect, indeed, all things subsist intellectually; in Life, vitally; and in Being, all things are truly beings. For since every thing subsists either according to cause, or according to hyparxis, or according to participation; and in the first, the rest are according to cause; in the second, the first is according to participation, but the third, according to cause; and in the third, the natures prior to it are according to participation: this being the case, Life and Intellect have a prior or causal subsistence in Being. Since, however, each thing is characterized according to hyparxis, and neither according to cause (for cause pertains to other things—that is, to effects) nor according to participation (for that of which it participates is elsewhere derived)—hence in Being there are truly Life and Intellection: essential Life, and essential Intellect. And in Life, there is Being indeed according to participation, but Intellection according to cause. Each of these, however, subsists there vitally; for the hyparxis is according to Life. And in Intellect, Life and Essence subsist according to participation, and each of these subsists there intellectually; for knowledge is the Essence and the Life of Intellect.

PROPOSITION CIV

Every thing which is primarily eternal has both its essence and its energy eternal

For if it primarily participates of the perpetuity of eternity, it does not partially participate of it, but entirely. For, if not, either it participates of it in energy, but not in essence (this, however, is impossible; since in this case, energy would be more excellent

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 65 to 78.

than essence), or it participates of it according to essence, but does not participate of it according to energy. In this case, however, that which is primarily eternal and that which primarily participates of time will be the same. And time, indeed, will primarily measure the essence of certain things, but eternity, which is more excellent than all time, will not measure the essence of any thing, if that which is primarily eternal is not essentially contained by eternity. Hence every thing which is primarily eternal has both an eternal essence and energy.

PROPOSITION CV

Every thing immortal is perpetual; but not every thing perpetual is immortal

For if the immortal is that which always participates of life, but that which always participates of life participates also of being, and that which always lives, always is, then, every thing immortal is perpetual. But the immortal is that which is unreceptive of death, and always lives. And the perpetual is that which is unreceptive of non-being, and always is. If, however, there are many beings, some more and others less excellent than life, which are unreceptive of death, but exist always—if this be the case, not every thing which is perpetual is immortal. That, however, there are many beings not immortal, which exist always, is evident. For there are certain beings, indeed, which are destitute of life, but which exist always, and are indestructible. For as being is to life, so is the perpetual to the immortal: since the life which cannot be taken away is immortal, and the being which cannot be taken away is perpetual. But being is more comprehensive than life, and therefore the perpetual is more comprehensive than the immortal.

PROPOSITION CVI

The medium of every thing which is entirely eternal both in essence and energy, and of every thing which has its essence in time, is that which is partly indeed eternal, and partly is measured by time

For that which has its essence comprehended by time, is

entirely temporal, since by a much greater priority, this will be allotted a temporal energy. But that which is entirely temporal is in every respect dissimilar to that which is entirely eternal. But all progressions are through similars. Hence there is something between these. The medium therefore, is either that which is eternal in essence but temporal in energy, or vice versa. This latter, however, is impossible, for thus energy would be more excellent than essence. It remains, therefore, that the medium is the former of these.

PROPOSITION CVII

Every thing which is partly eternal and partly temporal is at one and the same time being and generation

For every thing eternal is being, and that which is measured by time is generation. So that if the same thing participates of time and eternity, yet not according to the same, it will be both being and generation.

COROLLARY

From these things it is evident that generation, indeed, having a temporal essence, is suspended from that which partly partakes of being, and partly of generation, participating at once of eternity and time. But this is suspended from that which is in every respect eternal; and that which is in every respect eternal, is suspended from being which is prior to the eternal.

(To be continued)

As water-drops, which slowly fall,
 A pitcher fill by ceaseless flow;
 So learning, virtue, riches, all
 By constant small accessions grow.

VRIDDHA CHANAKYA