

THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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PLOTINUS ON PROVIDENCE*

Concerning the base actions of souls, as when such as are unjust hurt others that are just; or as when the unjust molest the unjust (unless perhaps some one should assign Providence as the cause of their depravity), is it proper to require of Providence the reason of the deed? Or ought we not rather to refer the cause to the election of the souls themselves? For it is said that souls ought to have their peculiar motions, and in the present world no longer exist as souls alone, but as animals: besides it is not wonderful, since this is the case, that they should possess a life aptly correspondent to their condition; for we must not suppose that because the world *was* they came hither, but prior to the world, considered as an effect, they reckoned they should shortly, as it were, take care of mundane concerns, become the causes of their support, and govern the fluctuating empire of bodies; in whatever manner these operations take place, whether by presiding they attribute something of themselves to the subjects they command, or by immersion into matter, or in some other way, become thus connected with body, however this may happen, Providence is not to be blamed.

But when any one considers the dominion of Providence by drawing a comparison between the evil and the good, and reflects that the good are poor but the evil rich, and that for the most part the basest of mankind possess more than the necessities of human nature require, and besides this rule over kingdoms and empires with arbitrary sway, what will such a

* For previous section see *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 82.

one say? Perhaps he will doubt whether Providence extends as far as to the earth.

But since all things else are constituted according to reason, we have a sufficient testimony that Providence descends to the earth; for animals and plants participate of reason, soul, and life. But it may be said, Providence extends thus far, but does not exercise dominion: however, since the universe is one animal, an assertion of this kind is just as if any one should say that the head and face of a man are constituted by nature, that is, by a supervening seminal reason, but that the other parts of the body arose from fortuitous or necessary causes, and on this account become secondary and inferior; or else proceed from the irrationality of nature. But surely it is neither holy nor pious to allow that even these are not beautifully disposed, and thus to accuse both the Artificer and His work.

It remains therefore that we inquire after what manner all these are rightly administered and preserve an invariable order; or if this is denied, it is proper to explain the mode of their constitution, or rather to show that they are not badly disposed. The supreme parts of every animal, I mean the head and face, are more beautiful than the parts situated in the middle and extreme. With respect to the universal distribution of things men are in the middle and inferior ranks: but in an order more sublime, the celestial regions, with the Gods they contain; and these Gods contain the greatest part of the world, and the heavens themselves confined in circular bounds: but earth is, as it were, the centre of the universe, and ranks among the number of stars.

Many are apt to wonder that man should live unjustly, because they consider him as a being highly venerable in the universe, as if there were nothing more completely wise. But in reality man is only the medium between Gods and brutes, and verges in such a manner to each, that some men become more similar to the Divinities, and others to brutes, while the many preserve an equal condition between both. Those, therefore, who by their depravity approach to the condition of brutes, seize those who exist in the middle ranks, and overpower them with superior force, but the vanquished are in this case better than the conquerors; they are, however, over-

come by subordinate natures, so far as they are themselves subordinate, destitute of good, and incapable of resistance.

If, therefore, we suppose that a number of boys well exercised and skilled in corporeal accomplishments, but possessing souls base and uninformed, should in the art of wrestling vanquish those who are equally unexercised in their bodies and souls, should seize their food and strip them of their soft effeminate garments, is there any thing in this case which appears hard, or ridiculous? Can it be shown why it is not right that the legislator should permit such to suffer the just punishments of an ignorant and luxurious life? Since, though previously acquainted with the nature of the gymnasium, through uncultivation and effeminacy, they have so neglected the cultivation of themselves as to become like delicate lambs the prey of voracious wolves.

To such, therefore, who perpetrate evil of this kind, the first punishment which impends is that they become as wolves and unhappy men; and afterwards a punishment is prescribed proportionate to the nature of their offences. For those who become evil are not suffered to die, but always follow a former state of being, such as is agreeable to reason and nature; things inferior, such as are inferior, and things superior, such as are superior: but not after the manner of the gymnasium or wrestling place, where nothing but sport is to be found. For it is necessary after the youths increase in years and stature, and have unskilfully grappled with each other, that they should both be armed and assume more excellent manners than they possessed in the school of wrestling. And now some of these are unarmed, and are consequently conquered by the armed; where indeed it is not necessary that a God Himself should contend for the imbecile, incapable of war. For the law says that safety is to be expected, not from impotent wishes, but by fortitude in battle. Nor is it fit that those who simply desire support, but that such as cultivate the earth, should collect its fruits; nor that those should be well who neglect the care of health; nor ought it to be a matter of grievous complaint if the evil gather a multiplicity of fruit, through a sedulous attention to agriculture. Besides, it is ridiculous to perform every other thing pertaining to life according to our own peculiar determination, though not in such a manner as may

be pleasing to the Divinities, but to require safety alone from the Gods, at the same time neglecting the means by which the Gods order mankind to be preserved. We may likewise add, that death to these is far better than a life of such a kind as the laws of the universe are unwilling should be endured. If, therefore, while things contrary to order and rectitude take place through the perseverance of folly and vice, Divinity should remain silent, and vengeance perpetually sleep, Providence might be accused of negligence, as if It permitted the dominion of depraved natures. But the wicked alone rule with arbitrary sway through the cowardice and indolence of the natures subject to their command; and this is more just than to accuse Providence of neglect.

But it is by no means necessary that Providence should operate in such a manner as to leave us entirely passive, for if Providence is all things, and alone the efficient, It will no longer be Providence; for how can it any longer reward or punish? since Divinity alone would be everywhere, and all things.

But the truth is that Divinity is indeed present, and inclines Itself to every one, yet not so as to destroy the essence of any thing: but, for example, when It approaches to man, preserves that in him which constitutes his essence: but this is no other than defending vital beings by the immutable laws of Providence, and this preservation consists in acting agreeably to the injunctions of law.

But this law ordains that a good life shall be the portion of the good after death, but to the evil the contrary; but it is impious to suppose that the evil who alone confide in indolent wishes should be constantly guarded by the presence of Divinity: nor is it proper that the Gods, by an intermission of Their own peculiar happy life, should dispense particular employments to the wicked corresponding to their base desires; since it is even improper that good men, leading a life superior to the common condition of humanity, should be employed in the government of subordinate affairs.

The human genus, therefore, is indeed an animal, yet not the most excellent of all things, but obtaining and choosing a middle order, at the same time, by the care of a beneficent Providence, is not sent to be destroyed in this inferior station, but is assiduously recalled to a more exalted state of being, by

every means which Divinity employs, for the purpose of giving strength to its virtue and goodness.

Hence it is that the human kind never loses the rational faculty, but participates, though not in the highest degree, of wisdom and intellect, and art and justice, each of which men mutually exercise among themselves; so that those who treat others injuriously, think they act justly; for they judge every one worthy of punishment whom they intentionally injure.

In short, man is as beautiful a work as is possible in his present condition, and is so constituted in the universal series of existence as to enjoy a better portion than every other terrene animal; since no wise and prudent being would blame other animals inferior to man, when he considers how much they confer to the ornament of the earth: for it would surely be ridiculous to detract any thing from the nature of animals because they sometimes devour men; as if it were proper that men should live, in perfect security, a life of soft ease and inglorious sloth. But it is necessary, to the order of the whole, that even savage animals should exist, whose utility is partly self-evident, and is partly brought to light by the future circulations of time; so that nothing either relative to themselves or to man appears to be in vain. But he who blames the disposition of things because many animals are of a wild nature, is alone worthy of laughter; because this is even the province of men; and though many are not obedient to the will of man, but reluctantly obey, we ought not to wonder at their resistance.

But if men are unwillingly evil, neither those who injure others nor those who are injured can be justly accused; indeed if there is a necessity that men should be evil, whether from the celestial motion, or from a certain principle producing in an orderly series all that is consequent, evil must be naturally produced: but if Reason is the Artificer of all things, how can It be excused from acting unjustly?

Perhaps it may be said that the evil are not spontaneously guilty, because the crime itself is not voluntary; but this does not prohibit their acting from themselves, for guilt is the result of their operations, or they could not be guilty if they were not the authors of such actions. If it be said they are evil from necessity, this is not solely to be admitted externally, but because they are guilty from a certain common condition. And

with respect to what is said of the celestial motion, we must not allow so much to its influence as if nothing remained in our power; for if all things are produced externally, they must certainly be produced in such a manner as their authors please, on which account, mankind can have no ability of acting contrary to their determinations, and will be no longer impious, if the Gods are the perpetrators of all that is evil and base; though in reality this proceeds from the conduct of mankind themselves. But a principle being once given, consequences will everywhere be connected with their causes: and mankind are the principles of their actions, and are therefore spontaneously moved to whatever is honest and good, which principle is itself spontaneous and free.

But it may be asked whether particulars are not produced from certain physical necessities and consequences, and are, as far as possible, the best? Perhaps not in this manner, but ruling Reason Itself produced all things, and willed them in that order in which they now exist, so as rationally to produce whatever is called evil, being unwilling that all things should be equally good: for as the Artificer in the formation of an animal does not make every part an eye, so neither does Reason fashion every thing a God; but some things it appoints in the order of Gods, and others of a following nature in the ranks of angels, and after these, men and subordinate animals: nor is it on this account to be accused of envy, since it operates as reason possessing an intellectual variety.

But we who repine at the order of things are affected in a manner similar to those who, unskilled in the art of painting, condemn the painter because the colours of his piece are not everywhere equally beautiful and bright; while the painter, in the meantime, has assigned to every part that which is proper and the best. Cities, too, that are well instituted, are not equally disposed in all things: besides, who that is not destitute of understanding, would blame a comedy or a tragedy because all its characters are not heroes, but sometimes a servant, or a clown, with a ruder voice, is introduced, performing his part? But the poem would not be beautiful if the subordinate characters were taken away, since it is complete alone from the combination of the parts.

(To be continued)

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Twin-saint, as he has been called, to St. Teresa and filled with the same burning enthusiasm for the cause of reformation within the Carmelite Order and the extension of its work in Spain, St. John of the Cross played a greater part, perhaps, than any of her fellow-workers in the establishment within the Order of a more rigidly disciplined branch of contemplatives—the discalced or bare-footed Carmelites. This work, begun in the particular field of his own Order, was expanded by means of his writings into a more universal work—the training of souls in mystical theology according to the universal principles on which depends a conscious experience of the Divine.

Judged solely by his external life, St. John appears as a man of great physical activity, an accomplished organizer and director, and a brilliant and successful teacher. His writings show him as a man of vigorous and highly cultured mind, trained in all the learning of the schools and turned towards the study and practice of mystical theology; a great contemplative who, through fullest self-giving in dedication to, and union with, the Divine, became a living channel of Divine Wisdom.

During the century before the birth of St. John, the vigorous life of the Renaissance had been energizing men's minds to new activity. Spain was one of the leaders in European culture. Her great universities of Alcala de Henares and Salamanca were world-famous and attended by large numbers of students from many countries. The teachings of the great Neo-Platonists had long been brought back to Europe through the Arabian philosophers after their exile in the East. Plato and Plotinus were widely read in Latin translations, and highly valued by leaders of thought. The works of the Christian Neo-Platonist, Dionysius, were well known, and the writings of Eckhart*, Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroek were in circulation with their application to Christianity of many Neo-Platonic

* Although the writings of Eckhart were prohibited soon after his death, they were circulated under other names and used by his disciples in their own works.

ideas, such as the idea of the Logos, transcendent, yet also immanent in the Divine "spark" within the soul; of the Ideal World, the eternal Thought of God in the image of which the material universe is formed; of the nature of evil as a negation or deficiency of good, having therefore no essential reality; of the ascent of the soul to union with the Divine by the stripping away of all that veils it from Him, so that alone it may approach the Alone.

In the writings of St. John, which are more concerned with the practice of the mystical art of the perfect life than with the doctrines of theology, the effect of these influences is present, but is rather implied than expressed directly, except in the case of his basic teaching of detachment, in which he closely follows St. Dionysius, though at the same time he shows that it has a certain positive aspect in addition to the negative.

Several of St. John's contemporaries, including Juan d'Avila, Louis de Leon, Louis de Granada and Pedro Malon gave out in their writings many doctrines characteristic of Christian Neo-Platonism, but during the lifetime of St. John some of their books, with those of Tauler and Suso, were placed on the Index Expurgatorius of the Inquisition, while some writers were imprisoned or else obliged to flee into exile.

Juan de Yepes, who afterwards became St. Juan of the Cross, was the son of a noble of Toledo who had been disinherited on his marriage to Catalina Alvarez, a beautiful peasant girl of Fontiveros in Old Castille.

Of their three sons, Juan, born in 1542, was the youngest. The second son died in infancy, and a few years after Juan's birth Catalina was left a widow. By working hard at her craft of weaving, she managed to send her two sons to the village school where Juan's exceptional ability and keen intelligence quickly brought him to the fore, while Francisco, the elder, showed so little promise that he soon left school and learned to weave. In spite of the difference between them, the brothers remained throughout their lives the closest friends, and whenever possible Francisco joined his brother, giving his labour in the service of the Church.

At an early age Juan's love for religion had shown itself, and this may have influenced Catalina's decision to move to Medina del Campo, a busy trading centre where her talented son would

have greater opportunities. Here, again, his outstanding qualities were quickly recognized, and at the age of fourteen the director of one of the city hospitals gave him employment on certain days of the week. In the intervals of hospital work, Juan was able to attend the new Jesuit College where, under a famous master, he studied grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. His special bent was towards psychology, the key to which he began to seek within his own soul through an interior life of meditation and contemplation. During these years of training he was described as attending earnestly and thoroughly to everything he did, so that both at the hospital and the college he won the confidence and good opinion of the authorities.

At the age of twenty-one he was offered the chaplaincy of the hospital but, feeling more and more strongly the call of the religious life, he entered a Carmelite monastery at Medina under the name of John of St. Matthias, taking the habit in 1563.

Although this community followed the mitigated, less severe, rule which had been sanctioned for Carmelite houses, he began here to practise the discipline of the original order. In the next year he was sent to the Carmelite college of the University of Salamanca where he studied for four years before being ordained priest. By this time he had a thorough knowledge of the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and had studied the leading authorities of the Church, including St. Dionysius and St. Augustine. He had a remarkable knowledge of the Scriptures which he used continually in his writings. It is recorded in the annals of the university that he had exceptional intellectual power and that he was made lecturer in certain subjects.

Throughout these years he kept strictly the original Carmelite rule, practising additional self-imposed discipline, and the desire grew in him to enter an order which followed a stricter rule. At the age of twenty-five, while on a visit to Medina, he was persuaded, rather against his inclination, to meet Teresa of Jesus, now fifty-two years old, who was engaged on a foundation there. At the meeting, each quickly recognized the rare quality and spirituality of the other, and Fr. John was soon satisfied that his duty lay with her in the reform of the Carmelite Order.

In a letter written soon after their meeting, Teresa said of him :

“He is little in body, but to my mind great in the eyes of God. He is wise and has all the qualities required by our way of life. Though he is still quite young, everyone has some good to say of him. It is clear that God leads him by the hand; for in spite of the trying circumstances in which he has been placed and the tests to which I myself have put his virtue, the slightest imperfection has never been perceived in his conduct. He has a brave heart and great gifts of mind of which indeed he has need to embrace with so great confidence this new way of life.”

Fr. John, now John of the Cross, was the first to enter Teresa's foundation for bare-footed friars at Duruelo. His mother and brother joined in the preparation of the cottage, and in this small and barely habitable place with a bed of straw and a stone pillow, he began a life not only of solitude and contemplation, but of active ministrations to the peasants of the scattered villages.

After several months he was joined by Fr. Antonio who had been Prior of Medina, and Fr. Joseph from the same monastery. Within two years many others of a like spirit had been attracted and in 1570 they moved into a new monastery built for them at Mancera by a wealthy noble. Here Fr. John was Prior. Fr. Antonio had been given charge of the new monastery at Pastrana, and later Fr. John joined him there as master of the novices, but was soon made head of a newly-founded college for friars of the Reform at Alcala de Henares, which was connected with the university of that town.

Under the leadership and example of this brilliant and sympathetic teacher who was a contemplative, an intellectual and an able administrator, the college quickly became famous, and many men of great spiritual and mental ability were sent out from it into the world.

After two years at Alcala de Henares, John of the Cross became chaplain and confessor to the Convent of the Incarnation at Avila where Teresa had been made Prioress with the difficult task of restoring order after a period of great laxity. This work was welcome to him as an opportunity for withdrawal from a life of administration to one of contemplation. With an aged friar as companion he lived near the convent and observed the primitive rule. Here he could study and meditate in solitude. The effects of his ministry were soon seen in the life of the

convent and in the rapidly increasing number of the citizens of Avila who came to him for consolation and advice. Towards the end of 1572 Teresa wrote to Philip II: "The city is in amazement at the exceeding great good he is doing here. The people take him for a saint. In my opinion he is one and has been one all his life."

His association with Teresa as her spiritual director and his knowledge and understanding of the heights to which her soul had risen, and which were confirmed by his own interior experiences, must have been of the greatest value in giving him a clearer insight into the nature of the path to Divine union and all that lies within this consummation. He knew her writings well, and made references to them in his own works.

During these years at Avila, when the Reform was encompassed with difficulties and was meeting with great opposition from a section of the authorities and from the "Observant" or "Mitigated" branch of the Carmelite Order, John of the Cross was, in a sense, the centre of its life. He took no part in administration or disputes, but from his solitude there flowed a stream of spiritual strength and encouragement to his fellows.

In 1577 came a critical point in the life of the Reform. The papal Nuncio who had been sympathetic to Teresa's ideas died and the new Nuncio, being informed through the Observant section, began a vigorous suppression of the bare-footed Carmelites. Fr. John and his companion had been licensed by the late Nuncio to live outside their own monastery, but the renewal of the licence seems to have been overlooked, and in December 1577 on a charge of rebellion the two friars were seized and removed to the Observant monastery at Avila. Next day Fr. John was sent to the Observant monastery at Toledo and was imprisoned in a cell about ten feet by six into which light and air entered only through a small opening high in the wall communicating with another room. Here he had a bed of planks with a single cover, and was given one meal of bread and water daily in the refectory, after which he was scourged by each of the brethren in turn. He was not allowed speech with anyone but the friar who guarded him. The only book he was given was his own breviary which he tried to read in the almost complete darkness of his cell. At times the friars would

talk to one another outside the cell door of rumours about the complete downfall of the Reform. In time the scourgings became less frequent, and at last ceased. Fr. John had borne all his sufferings with the greatest patience and without resentment. Though at times he was heavily oppressed by desolation of soul, at other times he experienced the fulness of ineffable bliss in divine union, and even the cell itself was filled with light. It was during this imprisonment that he composed the mystical poems of which the books he wrote later were explanations.

In the following summer a new warder was appointed who, impressed by the saintly character of his prisoner, did what he could to lighten his hardships. When the friars were engaged together in some distant part of the building he would allow Fr. John to walk in the room adjoining the cell. One night the saint had a vision in which he was shown a window at the end of a corridor and was told to escape through it. On the next day he was taken by the kindly guard into the corridor leading from the room in which he had been walking, and at the end of it he saw the window of his dream. That night the warder left his lantern in the cell. Fr. John made a rope from strips of his bed-cover, succeeded in opening his cell-door, passed safely several sleeping guests in the room, and let himself down through the corridor window. The rope was too short and he fell on a heap of stones two feet from a precipice above the Tagus. His own account tells of miraculous guidance through which, at last, he gained the street and reached the Convent of the Reform, where he lay hidden while search was made for him. Later he went secretly to Almodovar del Campo where he found the Priors of the Reform sitting in Chapter, discussing a crisis which had arisen. The king, hitherto their powerful friend, had been alienated by an ill-advised action of one of their leading members, and in self-defence the priors suggested the separation of the Reformed section from the main body of Carmelites by the election of a Provincial from among themselves.

Fr. John earnestly begged them not to commit this illegal act, but to seek first the Pope's sanction. His advice was swept aside, a Provincial was elected, and a deputation appointed to go to Rome for the papal sanction. On hearing of this the

authorities retaliated by excommunicating all those who had taken part in the act, and imprisoning the leading Priors. Teresa was ordered to stay in Toledo and the Observant branch was given full power over the friars of the Reform.

Fr. John, who had never sought leadership, passed unnoticed and took duty at the Monastery of Calvary at Veas. On the way there he visited the convent at Veas where the prioress asked him to write a commentary, for the instruction of her nuns, on one of the mystical poems composed in his prison, telling of the mystic's overwhelming joy in the Divine union, and which he had used in his discourses at the convent. This formed the book *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul* written in 1584. Two other mystical works, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night of the Soul*, were written in 1578 during his happy and peaceful seclusion in the beautiful surroundings of the monastery.

Here, among his friars who knew him well and were devoted to him, he led the life nearest to his heart—that of prayer and contemplation—and the little community under his direction grew in grace and holiness. He would not allow them to beg alms, and though sometimes they seemed likely to be without food, yet their needs were always supplied.

This much-needed period of refreshment was followed by his appointment to another important directorship—that of the new college for friars of the Reform founded in 1579 in connection with the university of Baeza. The authorities had at last sanctioned Teresa's foundations, and the college was one of the first fruits of their approval. The members of the community were drawn from among those at the Monastery of Calvary and others who came with the desire to be admitted.

Under the inspiration and wise leadership of Fr. John the college prospered. The course followed was very similar to that at Alcalá de Henares. Discussions of theological and philosophical problems were encouraged in connection with the principles studied, and in the personal and communal life the truths seen could be applied. Fr. John, though able at any time to retire into the sanctuary of his soul, never held aloof from his fellows, but with ready sympathy made himself accessible to all who sought counsel or help. Whatever austerities he saw fit to practise personally, he made sure that others

did not attempt what lay beyond their strength. The influence of his humility and spirituality was soon felt among the citizens by whom the community was regarded as a body of saints, with himself as their shining example. As one writer said: "Instances of the wonderful blend in him of a great mind with a good heart, and the most complete personal detachment from creatures, with the most affectionate consideration for their needs and the utmost compassion for their weaknesses and failings, was soon spread abroad and there was not a house of the Reform but would gladly have welcomed him as Prior."

These outer virtues were but the reflection of inner virtues which could not be entirely concealed from those around him. Often at the celebration of Mass he became entranced, and at other times his face was seen to shine with an unearthly brightness, while his words in preaching "were accompanied by a supernatural heat which without making any impression upon the senses, penetrated to the deepest recesses of the heart, there to enkindle the fire of divine love." Yet his simplicity was such that he could bring the high truths he taught within the grasp of the most ignorant to whom his great learning could make no direct appeal. His very presence brought serenity, and it is recorded that various miracles of healing were wrought through him.

In 1581 the Papal sanction for the establishment of the Reform as a separate province came into effect and Fr. John was made a definator. In the same year he was appointed Prior to the Monastery of The Martyrs, Granada, where again he was in beautiful surroundings and among beloved friends. Here he wrote *The Living Flame of Love* as well as *A Spiritual Canticle*. In 1585 he was made Vicar Provincial of Andalusia with authority over thirteen houses of the Reform. This position entailed much travelling and an active interest in the organization, administration and business affairs of the communities under his supervision. While holding this office he had to do with the foundation of several monasteries. In 1589 he was set free from his position as Visitor and again made Prior of the same monastery at Granada.

In 1587 the Provincial, Fr. Nicholas Doria, acting without consultation, had drawn up a scheme for a new form of government under which the whole body of the Reform should be

controlled by a Vicar General and six Consultors. The Roman Rite was to replace the Carmelite, and all affairs, including the choice of priors, sub-priors, preachers, and confessors for all the communities, were to be decided by this body. At a Chapter in 1588 Fr. Doria was elected Vicar General and the first of the Consultors was Fr. John of the Cross. When the new scheme came up for discussion he strongly opposed it for, like Teresa, he knew the need for as great a degree of freedom as possible in administration and especially in the choice of confessors and, now that she was dead, he took up the defence of her principles. This attitude brought him into disfavour with the Provincial whose distrust increased when the Mother Superior at Madrid, to whom Fr. John was spiritual director, acting on her own initiative and responsibility, appealed to the Pope against the changes in Teresa's constitution. The brief granting her petition was an unpleasant surprise to Fr. Doria who suggested that Fr. John was the real author of the move.

In 1591 the new Pope gave another brief sanctioning more complicated rules for the government of the Reform and Fr. John was appointed Provincial in Mexico where he would be unable to use his influence in support of Teresa's constitution. When at the general Chapter the subject of the three hundred new rules was brought forward, Fr. John pleaded for their postponement and reconsideration at a later time. This was so contrary to the general feeling that he was privately asked to resign his new position in Mexico. This he gladly did and was sent not as Prior, but as a friar to Penuela where he was warmly welcomed. Fr. John on his part rejoiced that he was free at last to spend his days in solitude and fullest communion with the Divine, but in obedience to the request of the Prior he gave spiritual discourses to the brethren at which they were encouraged to discuss their problems.

He lived now entirely in that state of union wherein God continually acts through the soul, which is an unimpeded channel for the Divine Wisdom.

In this last year of his life St. John underwent a very severe trial. Fr. Diego produced a document consisting of false and scandalous accusations based on imaginative constructions given to the answers to ambiguous questions put to certain

of Fr. John's former penitents, and the scandal spread quickly. Fr. John ignored it, taking no steps whatever to refute it. At the next meeting of the Chapter this document was presented, but so great was the outcry against it that the papers were burned on the spot. It was decided, however, to send him as one of a company of friars going to the Indies.

He received the command quietly, only asking when he was to leave Spain. Before the appointed day, however, he fell ill with severe fever, such as could not be properly treated at Penuela. The Prior was given permission to send him either to Ubeda, where the Prior was a close friend of Fr. Diego, or to Baeza, where the Prior was a devoted adherent of Fr. John of the Cross. Fr. John chose the former monastery and entered upon a period of real martyrdom.

At Ubeda, after the difficult journey, his illness increased, his body becoming a mass of painful sores. His submissiveness and gentleness at once won the love of the friar who nursed him, but the Prior visited him only to censure him and tell him of the expense and trouble that he caused, and forbade the brethren to visit one who, he said, sought only his own ease and broke the rules of the house. The friendly nurse was replaced by an unsympathetic friar, and the offer of certain ladies to provide clean dressings for his body was refused. It was evident that Fr. John could not live long, and the friar who had originally nursed him found means for sending word to the Vicar Provincial, one of Fr. John's first brethren at Duruelo.

The Provincial, shocked at the conditions he found, severely rebuked the Prior, recalled the former nurse, and ordered that members of the community should be allowed to visit Fr. John. During the few days spent by the Provincial among the brethren the Prior's resentment and bitterness vanished, and he bent all his energies to the task of easing the sufferings of the dying saint.

On December 13, 1591, the brethren were told that the end was at hand. Several times during the morning Fr. John asked what time it was, adding, "I keep asking because, glory be to God, I have to chant Matins with Our Lady in Heaven." In the evening, after his last communion, he sent the brethren to bed promising that they should be called before his death.

His pain ceased and he became exultant as with the spirit of triumph. When the brethren returned, the aged Provincial on his knees begged for the blessing of Fr. John upon them all. In his humility the saint kept silence until commanded by his superior. As the sound of the matins bell was heard he smiled joyfully upon them all and said, "Farewell, I go to sing them in Heaven," then commending his spirit to God, he passed away.

Many persons in different places testified that he had appeared to them at the moment of his death. The citizens thronged to the monastery to pay homage to his body, and on the next day the crowds were so great that the body was placed in the church so that all might go who wished. Many miracles were recorded in connection with his tomb and with relics of his body.

He was beatified in 1675, and canonized in 1726. In the Bull of Canonization he was said to be "a wonderful man, most dear to God, feared by the demons, gentle in character, constant in adversity, renowned throughout Spain for his gifts of miracle and prophecy, and divinely instructed, like Teresa, in the secrets of mystical theology which he has explained in his writings."

THE PILLARS OF MEMORY

THE SYMBOLS

The pillars of memory and history: vocal song, letter, and symbol. A symbol is a form that is understood, and, being understood, shows at sight that that really exists which would require many letters, or much of vocal song, or speech and oration, before it could be properly understood.

There are three symbols: the symbol of number; the symbol of sound or tone, from which is justly shown the voice and tone of harmony; and the symbol of form and the sign which is understood by its formation.

—(*From Barddas*).

APRIL

1. To Aphrodite (G.), Venus (R.), Goddess of Beauty and Harmony.
D. Floyer Sydenham, English Platonist, d. 1787 (b. 1710 A.D.).
To Sanctus Uriel (C.), Archangel.
3. Crucifixion of Jesus Christos. (s.c.)
4. D. Isidore of Seville (C.), d. 636 A.D.
D. Ambrosius of Milan (C.), d. 397 (b. c. 340 A.D.).
5. To Kwan-Shi-Yin, Goddess of Mercy, in China; Kwan-On, in Japan.
To Avalokiteshvara, "The Down-looking Lord" (B.).
6. D. Asoka, Great Buddhist Emperor (s.d. 270-230 B.C.).
7. D. Samanta Bhadra (B.), Yogacharya Sage (3rd cent. A.D.).
8. Lorenzo de Medici, "The Magnificent," Florentine Neoplatonist, d. 1492
(b. 1/1/1448 A.D.).
9. William Law, English Mystic, d. 1761 (b. 1686 A.D.).
10. General Booth (C.), b. 1829 A.D. (d. 1912).
11. Pope Leo the Great (C.), d. 10/11/461 A.D.
12. R. Culverwell, Cambridge Platonist (1618-1651 A.D.).
13. D. Madame Guyon (C.), b. 1648 (d. 9/6/1717 A.D.).
14. D. Justin Martyr, Christian Platonist, d. c. 164 (b. c. 103 A.D.).
15. D. Al Fārābī, Arabian Neoplatonist (c. 870-950 A.D.).
16. D. Patañjali, Founder of Yoga System (s.d. 200-300 A.D.).
17. D. Proclus, the Platonic Successor, d. 485 (b. 8/2/410 A.D.).
D. Thomas Vaughan, Hermetist, b. 1622 (d. 27/2/1666 A.D.).
18. D. Brom-Ton, Tibetan Buddhist, Disciple of Atisha (s.d. 11th cent. A.D.).
19. D. Chuang Tsz, Taoist Philosopher and Mystic (c. 4th cent. B.C.).
20. Sun enters Taurus.
21. Foundation of City of Rome, 743 B.C.
D. Anselm of Canterbury (C.), d. 1109 (b. 1033 A.D.).
22. D. Sañkarācārya (H.), the Great Vedantist (s.d. 9th cent. A.D.).
23. Shakespeare, b. 1564 (d. 23/4/1616).
St. George's Day, Patron Saint of England, d. 303 A.D.
24. D. Buddhagosha (B.), "Voice of Buddha" (s.d. 390-450 A.D.).
25. D. Mark, Apostle (C.), d. c. 68 A.D.
D. Franciscus Patricius, Christian Platonist, b. 1529 (d. 6/2/1593 A.D.).
26. Hierocles of Alexandria, Neoplatonist (c. 450 A.D.).
27. R. W. Emerson, d. 1882 (b. 25/5/1803 A.D.).
29. D. Ibn Tufail, Arabian Neoplatonist (s.d. 1100-1180 A.D.).
30. To Departed Kindred.
D. Catherine of Siena (C.), Mystic, d. 1380 A.D.

MAY

1. Beltaine Day, Druidic and Gaelic Summer Festival.
Nativity of Lord Buddha (623 B.C.).
To the Great World Mother.
To Maia and Latona (G.), Aspects of Hidden Spiritual Mother.
DD. Philip and James (the Lesser) (C.), Apostle and Martyrs (60-62 A.D.).
2. Wesak, Festival of the Birth, Renunciation, Enlightenment and Nirvana of Buddha.
3. The Finding of the Cross—"Invention."
4. Revelation of the Esoteric Doctrine of Buddha to his disciples.
5. D. Ānanda (Skr. Bliss) (B.), beloved disciple of Buddha (c. 600 B.C.).
6. The Mysteries of Serapis (E.).
Buddha, named "Siddārtha"—"Fulfilling all things"—5 days after birth.
7. R. Browning, Poet, b. 1812 A.D. (d. 12/12/1889).
8. D. Dante, b. 1265 (d. 14/9/1321 A.D.).
To Sanctus Michael, Archangel (C.).
9. D. Gregory of Nazianzen, Christian-Platonist, d. 390 (b. c. 326 A.D.).
10. D. Huai-Nan-Tsze, Taoist Mystic and Writer, d. 122 B.C.
12. D. Ammonius Saccas, "The God-taught," Founder of Neoplatonism (c. 162-243 A.D.).
13. D. Chaitanya (H.), Great Vaishnava Sage (15th cent. A.D.).
14. The Finding of Osiris and Rejoicings of Isis (E.).
15. D. Thomas Taylor, the Great English Platonist, b. 1758 A.D.
16. Thales, Founder of Ionian School, and one of the Teachers of Pythagoras (c. 650-550 B.C.).
17. To Dea Dia, the Great Mother (R.).
18. To Apollon (G.), Aspect of the Sovereign Sun.
19. D. Asvaghosha, Mahāyāna Buddhist (c. 50 B.C.-50 A.D.).
20. To Mañjushrī, Aspect of Buddhist Trinity.
21. Sun enters Gemini.
D. Plato, the Master Philosopher and Father of European Mysticism (429-348 B.C.).
22. Wagner, d. 1883 A.D. (b. 1813).
23. G. Savonarola (C.), Martyr, d. 1498 (b. 21/9/1452 A.D.).
24. D. Hermes Trismegistus, The "Thrice-Greatest"—Father of the Hermetic Wisdom (s.d. 4000 B.C.).
25. D. Lieh Tsze, Taoist, Sage and Mystic (c. 4th cent. B.C.).
26. The Enlightenment of Buddha under the Bodhi Tree.
Tommasco Campanella, Philosopher, d. 1639 (b. 5/9/1568 A.D.).
27. Venerable Bede (C.), English Ecclesiastical Historian, b. 673 (d. 735 A.D.).
28. D. Solomon (c. 970 B.C.).
30. Numenius, Pythagorean Platonist (s.d. 150/160 A.D.).
31. D. Jeanne D'Arc, burnt 1431 (b. 6/1/1412 A.D.).
D. Angela of Foligno (C.), d. 1300 A.D. (b. 1248).

JUNE

1. Nirvāna of Lord Buddha, and the Great Renunciation (543 B.C.).
2. D. Abraham, Hebrew Patriarch (s.d. 19th cent. B.C.).
3. Speusippus, Successor of Plato, d. 339 B.C.
4. Marinus, Neoplatonist, Disciple and Successor of Proclus (s.d. 485 A.D.).
5. D. Vasubandhu, Mahāyāna Buddhist (s.d. 5th cent. A.D.).
6. D. Onomacritus, Orphist in Hermetic Succession (s.d. 520-485 B.C.).
7. To MITHRAS, Aspect of the Sovereign Sun.
D. Muhammad, d. 632 (b. 20/8/570 A.D.).
9. D. Santideva, Mahāyāna Buddhist Philosopher and Writer (7th cent. A.D.).
10. Sir Edwin Arnold, b. 1832 (d. 24/6/1904 A.D.).
11. D. Roger Bacon, Hermetist, d. 1292 A.D.
D. Barnabas (C.), Apostle and Martyr, 1st cent.
12. To Hermes (G.), The Divine Messenger and Conductor of Souls.
To Sanctus Raphael (C.), Archangel.
13. All Souls' Day in Tibet (B.).
To Unconquerable Jove (R.).
14. D. Basil the Great, of Cæsarea (C.), b. c. 330 (d. 1/1/379 A.D.).
Day of Meditation on the Salvation of all Beings.
15. Sallustius, "The Elegant," Platonist (s.d. 4th cent. A.D.).
16. D. Tauler (C.), Mystic, d. 1361 (b. 1300 A.D.).
17. D. Orpheus (G.), Teacher and Founder of Grecian Civilization and
of the Orphic Mysteries (s.d. 1350 B.C.).
18. D. Vyasu (H.), Reputed Founder of Vedanta Philosophy.
John Wesley (C.), b. 1703 (d. 2/3/1791 A.D.).
19. D. Elizabeth of Schoenau (C.), d. 1165 A.D.
20. Isidorus of Gaza, Neoplatonist, successor of Marinus (c. 509-557 A.D.).
21. Summer Festival—The Solstice.
Sun enters Cancer.
Greek New Year's Day.
To Oraca, Goddess of Summer.
22. D. Asanga, Mahāyāna Buddhist (s.d. 250 A.D.).
23. D. Enoch (s.d. 3000 B.C.).
24. Druidic Festival of Fire.
Egyptian Festival of the Burning Lamps at Sais.
D. John the Baptist, d. c. 5 A.D.
25. Phtah-hotep, Egyptian Philosopher (s.d. 3550 B.C.).
Zamolxis, Druid, predecessor of Abaris.
26. Ralph Cudworth, Cambridge Platonist, d. 1688 (b. 1617 A.D.).
Julien the Emperor (R.), Neoplatonist, d. 363 (b. 17/11/331 A.D.).
27. D. Avicenna, Arabian Neoplatonist, d. c. 1037 (b. 980 A.D.).
28. Charles Eckharthausen (C.), Mystic, b. 1752 (d. 12/3/1803 A.D.).
29. DD. Peter and Paul (C.), Apostles and Martyrs, d. c. 66-67 A.D.
30. Padma-Sambhava, Buddhist Missioner (c. 8th cent. A.D.).
D. Shāriputra (B.), one of the principal disciples of Buddha (s.d. 600 B.C.).
D. Raymond Lully, Hermetist, d. 1315 (b. 25/1/1235 A.D.).

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS *

PROPOSITION XCVIII

Every thing which is in the Gods pre-exists in Them according to Their peculiarities; and the peculiarity of the Gods is unical and superessential. Hence all beings are contained in Them unically and superessentially

For if everything subsists in a three-fold manner, namely, either according to cause, or according to hyparxis, or according to participation, but the first number of all things is the Divine number, nothing will be in the Gods according to participation, but all things will subsist in Them either according to hyparxis, or according to cause. Such things, however, as They antecedently comprehend, as being the causes of all things, They antecedently comprehend in a manner appropriate to Their own union. For every thing which is the leader of secondary natures causally, contains the cause of things subordinate in a way naturally adapted to itself. All things, therefore, are in the Gods unically and superessentially.

PROPOSITION CXIX

Every God subsists according to superessential goodness, and is good neither according to participation, nor according to essence, but superessentially; since habits and essences are allotted a secondary and manifold order from the Gods

For if the First God is The One and The Good, and as He is The One, He is also The Good, and as The Good, The One; if this be the case, every series of the Gods has the form of The One and the form of The Good, according to one peculiarity, and each of the Gods is not a unity and goodness according to anything else. But each, as He is a unity, is also a goodness, and

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom* Nos. 65 to 82.

as He is a goodness, is also a unity. So far also as the Gods posterior to the First God proceed from the First, They have the form of The Good and the form of The One, since the First is The One and The Good. But since They are Gods They are unities and goodnesses. As, therefore, The One of the Gods is superessential, so likewise is Their goodness, since It is nothing else than The One. For each of Them is not any thing else than The Good, but is good alone; as neither is each any thing else than The One, but is one alone.

PROPOSITION CXX

Every God possesses in His own hyparxis a providential inspection of the whole of things. And a providential energy is primarily in the Gods

For all other things, being posterior to the Gods, energize providentially through the participation of Them: but Providence is connascent with the Gods. For if to impart good to the subjects of providential energy is the prerogative of the providential peculiarity, but all the Gods are goodnesses, either They do not impart of Themselves to anything, and thus nothing will be good in secondary natures (and whence will that be derived which subsists according to participation except from those natures that primarily possess peculiarities?); or if They do impart of Themselves, They impart good, and in consequence of this providentially attend to all things. Providence, therefore, subsists primarily in the Gods: for where is the energy which is prior to Intellect except in superessential natures? But Providence, as the name signifies, is an energy prior to Intellect. The Gods, therefore, from being Gods, and from being goodnesses, provide for all things, and fill all things with the goodness which is prior to Intellect.*

* We may further infer the necessity of Providence in the Gods from considering that as They are the producing causes of all things, so all things abide, and are radically established in Their natures. (For where can anything subsist which is not contained in Their unknown and all-pervading comprehension?) But if this be the case, since all things are in reality the offspring of the Gods, they must continually be the objects of Their providential operations. For as goodness is the characteristic of these Divine natures, it is

ON THE SUPREME GOD

The Pythagoreans called God The One, as the cause of union to the universe, and on account of His superiority to every being, to all life, and to all-perfect intellect. But they denominated Him the measure of all things, on account of His conferring on all things illumination, essence, and bound; and containing and bounding all things by the ineffable supereminence of His nature, which is extended beyond every bound.

Syriannus

That which is The One, and the measure of all things, is not only entirely exempt from all things and mundane concerns, but likewise from intelligibles themselves: since He is the venerable Principle of beings, the measure of intelligibles, ingenerable, eternal, and alone, possessing absolute dominion, and Himself manifesting Himself.

Clinius the Pythagorean

impossible that They should abandon Their progeny, or cease to impart Their beneficent, unenvying, and all-powerful communications.

Nor must we think that these providential operations are laborious to the Gods; since, as Proclus observes, that which is according to nature is not laborious to any thing. "For neither (says he) is it laborious for fire to give warmth, nor for snow to refrigerate, nor for bodies themselves to energize according to their peculiar powers. Nor prior to bodies, is it laborious to natures themselves to nourish, or generate, or increase: for these are the operations of natures. Nor again, prior to these, is it laborious to souls to exert their peculiar energies: for many of their energies are attended with delight, many are the result of their essence; and many motions are produced by their presence alone." Hence if the communication of good naturally belongs to the Gods, Providence also is natural to Them, which They express in a tranquil, unpolluted, and incorporeal manner.

(To be continued)

HOW TO OBTAIN THE HIGHEST GOOD

(From the *Sutta-Nipata*)

By what virtue, by what conduct, and from the performance of what works, will a man be perfectly established in the precepts and obtain the highest good?

Let him honour old people, not be envious, let him know the right time for seeking his teachers, let him know the right moment for listening to their religious discourses, let him assiduously hearken to their well-spoken words.

Let him in due time enter the presence of his teachers, let him be humble after casting away obstinacy, let him remember and practise what is good, the Dharma*, self-restraint, and chastity.

Let his pleasure be in the Dharma, let him stand fast in the Dharma, let him know how to enquire into the meaning of the Dharma, let him not raise any dispute that pollutes the Dharma, and let him spend his time in uttering well spoken truths.

Having abandoned ridiculous talk, lamentation, corruption, deceit, hypocrisy, greed and haughtiness, glamour and harshness, depravity and foolishness, let him live free from infatuation, with a steady mind.

The words, the essence of which is understood, are well spoken, and what is heard, if understood, contains the essence of the meditations; but the understanding and learning of the man who is hasty and careless does not increase.

Those who delight in the Dharma proclaimed by the Venerable Ones, are unsurpassed in speech, thought, and work; they are established in peace, tenderness, and meditation, and are rooted in the essence of learning and understanding.

* Dharma signifies religion, law, and duty.